

Barrow and Furness Parliamentary Constituency

This is the first bulletin of 2014 produced by Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) providing analysis of housing-related data for the Parliamentary Constituencies in the North of England. The report provides analysis of the impacts of welfare reform and the housing market in the constituency.

We have used the following symbols to indicate your performance against the relevant regional or national statistics.



Above average



Reference point



Below average

Welfare Reform



The third [Real Life Reform](#) report found an increase in the average debt of respondents taking part in the study (£3,503) with debt repayments increasing by 58% since October. 46% of participants report having nothing left each week to live on once rent and essentials such as food and bills have been paid.



Last year we reported that in Barrow and Furness, 3,702 children live in poverty – 20% of the child population in the constituency. According to figures by The Children's Society, 2,970 children in poverty are estimated to miss out on the [warm home discount](#) in the constituency.



A number of sources report that households affected by the spare room subsidy cannot move due to a lack of suitable accommodation. In the first three quarters of 2013/14, there were 291 general needs lettings in Barrow-in-Furness (CORE data). This compares to 203 lettings in the same period of 2012/13 (a 43.3% increase).



Data released by the Department of Communities and Local Government in October shows that a total of £99,921 was allocated to Barrow-in-Furness Council in Discretionary Housing Payment funding. Of that, £32,195 has been committed (32.2%). The greatest demand on this (£12,013.82) was allocated to support 69 households affected by the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector.

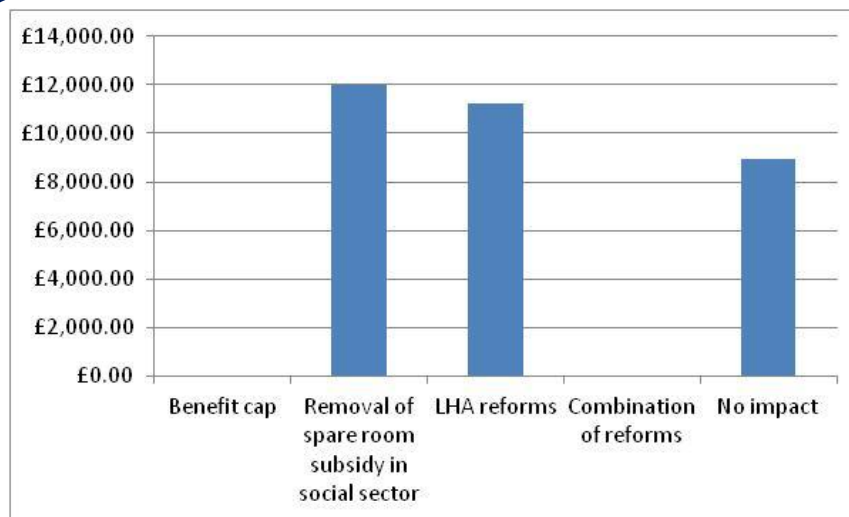


Figure 1: Summary of DHP Awards

Housing Market



The Chancellor announced in his Budget Statement that the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme will be extended until March 2020. Since its launch on 1st April 2013 to the end of February 2014, a total of 8 homes were bought in Barrow-in-Furness with support of the scheme. This represents 10.7% of the 75 completed equity loans in Cumbria.



Average house prices in Cumbria in February 2014 stood at £127,574 an increase of 5.6% on the same period in 2013. This is driven by sales volumes being on an upward trend, ending on 673 in December 2013 compared with 505 in December 2012.



Vacant dwellings have been on a general downward trend since 2008. In October 2013 there were a total of 1,660 vacant dwellings in Barrow-in-Furness compared with 1,825 in 2008. Of the 2013 figure, 2 were owned by housing associations. Long-term vacants have fallen by 38% since 2008.



In 2012/13, Barrow-in-Furness Council made a total of 116 homeless decisions. Of these, 29 applicants were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (25%). The number accepted as being homeless equates to 0.94 per 1,000 households in the borough – a similar level as in 2011/12 and up from 0.84 in 2010/11.

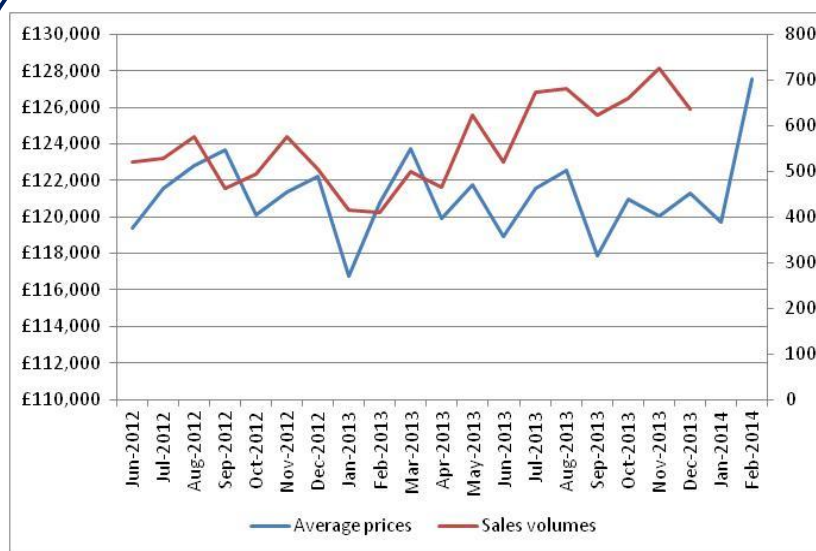


Figure 2: Change in house prices and sales volumes

If you have any queries regarding the content of the APPG briefings, please contact:
Barry Turnbull, Policy Services Officer, 0191 5661030 or barry.turnbull@northern-consortium.org.uk