

City of Chester 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 City of Chester, 3,036 children live in poverty – 17% of the child population in the constituency. According to figures by The Children's Society, 2,435 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 917 general needs lettings in Cheshire West and Chester (CORE data). This compares to 829 lettings in the same period of 2012/13 (a 10.6% increase). Lettings of one-bedroom properties fell by 18.1% (Q3 2013/14 compared to Q3 2012/13).



Data released by the Department of Communities and Local Government in October shows that a total of £450,773 was allocated to Cheshire West and Chester Council in Discretionary Housing Payment funding. Of that, £240,105 has been committed (53.3%). The greatest demand on this (£154,228) was to support 558 households affected by the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector.

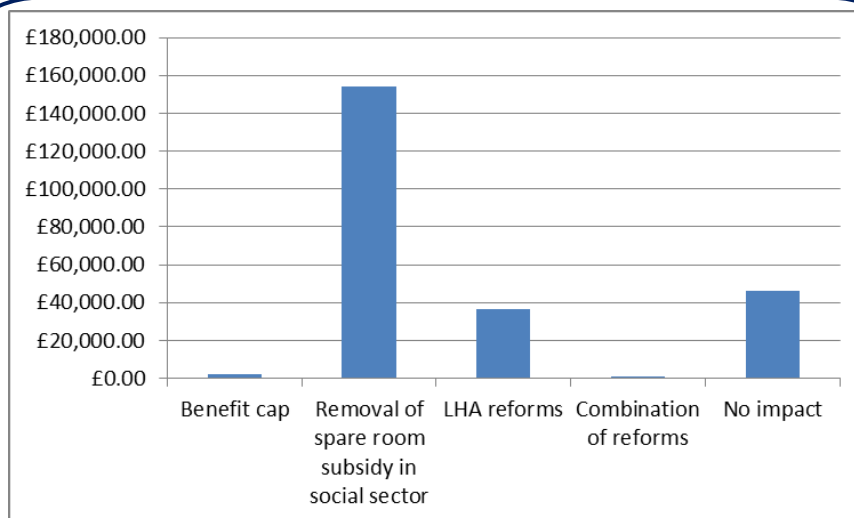


Figure 1: Summary of DHP Awards

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 145 homes were bought in Cheshire West and Chester with support of the scheme. This represents 38.2% of the 380 completed equity loans in Cheshire.



Average house prices in Cheshire West and Chester in February 2014 stood at £148,734 a decrease of 1.8% on the same period in 2013. This is despite sales volumes being on a general upward trend, ending on 410 in December 2013 compared with 313 in December 2012.



Vacant dwellings have been on a general downward trend since 2008. In October 2013 there were a total of 4,266 vacant dwellings in Cheshire West and Chester compared with 4,752 in 2009. Of the 2013 figure, 117 were owned by housing associations. Long-term vacants have fallen by 0.8% since 2008.



In 2012/13, Cheshire West and Chester Council made a total of 258 homeless decisions. Of these, 109 applicants were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (42.2%). The number accepted as being homeless equates to 0.78 per 1,000 households in the borough – up from 0.73 in 2011/12 and from 0.53 in 2010/11.

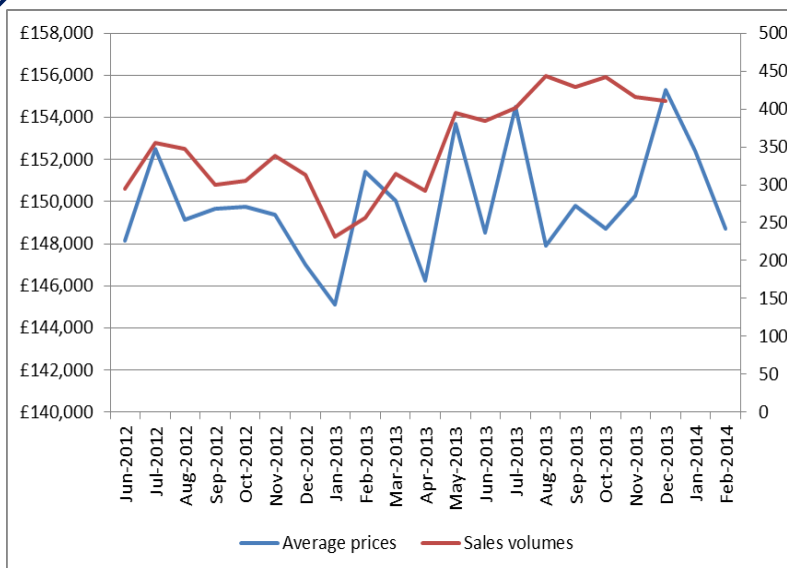


Figure 2: Change in house prices and sales volumes

If you have any queries regarding the content of the APPG briefings, please contact:
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