

St Helens North Parliamentary Constituency

This is the second 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

Financial Distress



According to The Poverty Site, using data from Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), 21.8% of employees in St Helens are paid less than £7 per hour (below their low paid threshold) compared to 22% in the North West.



Census data shows that in the Constituency, 27.9% of 16 to 74 year olds in employment worked part-time and that of these, 27.9% worked 15 hours or less. As Figure 1 below shows, Rainford (34.9%) has the highest proportions of part-time workers working 15 hours or less.



Across the North, the number of people claiming Housing Benefit whilst in employment (and not on a passported Benefit) has risen by 7% between May 2013 and May 2014. There is a similar picture in the Constituency where there has been a 1.1% increase from 1,317 to 1,332 during this time (DWP).



A survey carried out by Which? estimates that 45% of people in the constituency are worried about their level of household debt and 52% are worried about the level of their savings and investments. It also shows that 8% have defaulted on a loan, bill or housing costs.

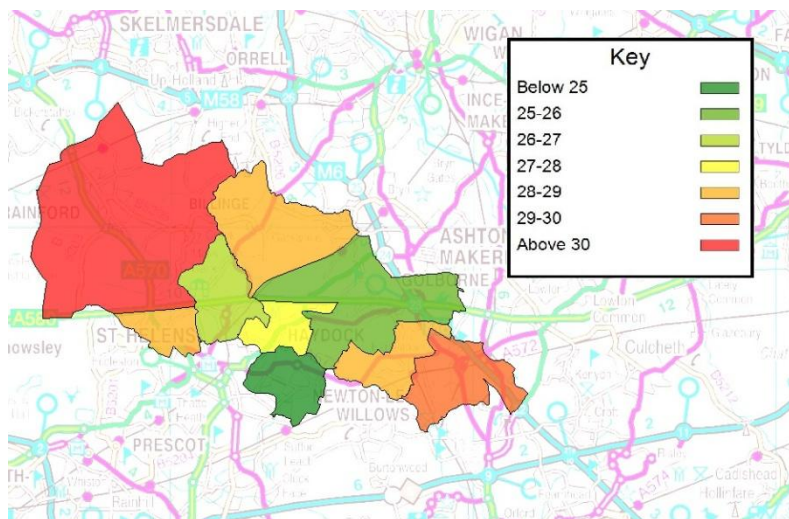


Figure 1: Working 15 hours or less

Housing Market



The National Housing Federation report "[Broken Market, Broken Dreams](#)" warns how the first rung of the property ladder is becoming further out of reach for many prospective buyers, saying that the average first time buyer now needs a £30,000 deposit to buy their first home. ONS figures show that in the third quarter of 2011 first-time buyers in the North West needed an average deposit of £30,117.



The Shelter report "[The Clipped Wings Generation](#)" showed that the lack of affordable housing is by far the main reason that people aged 20–34 and in work give for living at home with their parents. In St Helens, some 7,724 (34%) working 20–34 year olds live at home with their parents.



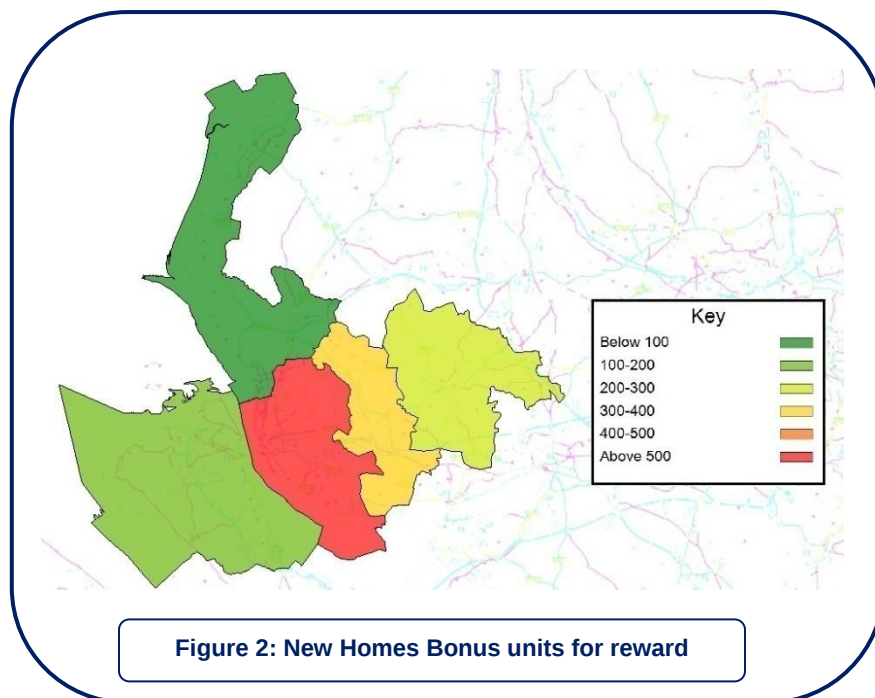
The supply of new affordable housing in St Helens as a proportion of total build has decreased recently. In the first two quarters of 2014, there were 60 homes were completed by registered providers out of a total of 200 (30%) in the period. This compares with 60 social homes out of 160 (37.5%) in the same period in 2013.



The National Audit Office has found "little evidence" that the New Homes Bonus has made a significant change to local authorities' behaviour in terms of planning approvals and "has shifted cash from poor northern councils to rich areas in the south" (Inside Housing). Since 2011/12, the three northern regions have received 19.4% of NHB payments to English LAs, although they brought 41.5% of the net empty homes back into use under the scheme.



So far in 2014-15, St Helens Council has received £356,554 in NHB payments for providing 252 additional homes (324 new homes and bringing -72 empty homes back into use). This represents 9.1% of the total Merseyside units for award.



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