

Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford 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 Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford, 4,862 children live in poverty – 21% of the child population in the constituency. According to figures by The Children's Society, 2,340 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 2,263 general needs lettings in Wakefield (CORE data). This compares to 1,638 lettings in the same period of 2012/13 (a 38.2% increase).



Data released by the Department of Communities and Local Government in October shows that a total of £644,505 was allocated to Wakefield Council in Discretionary Housing Payment funding. Of that, £406,282 has been committed (63%). The greatest demand on this (£298,647.81) was to support 725 households affected by the removal of spare room subsidy in the social rented sector.

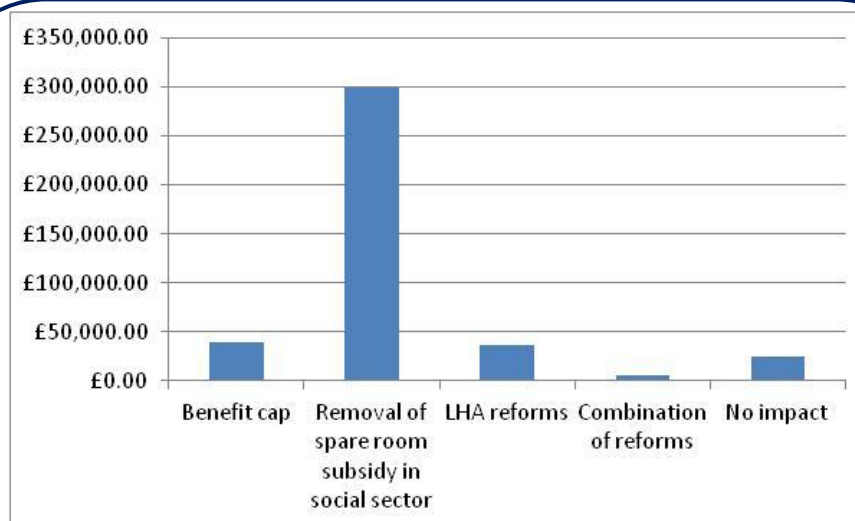


Figure 1: Summary of DHP Awards

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 151 homes were bought in Wakefield with support of the scheme. This represents 20.8% of the 726 completed equity loans in West Yorkshire.



Average house prices in Wakefield in February 2014 stood at £99,736 an increase of 0.9% on the same period in 2013. This is driven by sales volumes being on a general upward trend, ending on 346 in December 2013 compared with 294 in December 2012.



Vacant dwellings have been on a general downward trend since 2008. In October 2013 there were a total of 4,500 vacant dwellings in Wakefield compared with 6,101 in 2008. Of the 2013 figure, 260 were owned by housing associations. Long-term vacants have fallen by 43.5% since 2008.



In 2012/13, Wakefield Council made a total of 626 homeless decisions. Of these, 204 applicants were accepted as being homeless and in priority need (32.6%). The number accepted as being homeless equates to 1.42 per 1,000 households in the borough – up from 1.23 in 2011/12 from 0.94 in 2010/11.

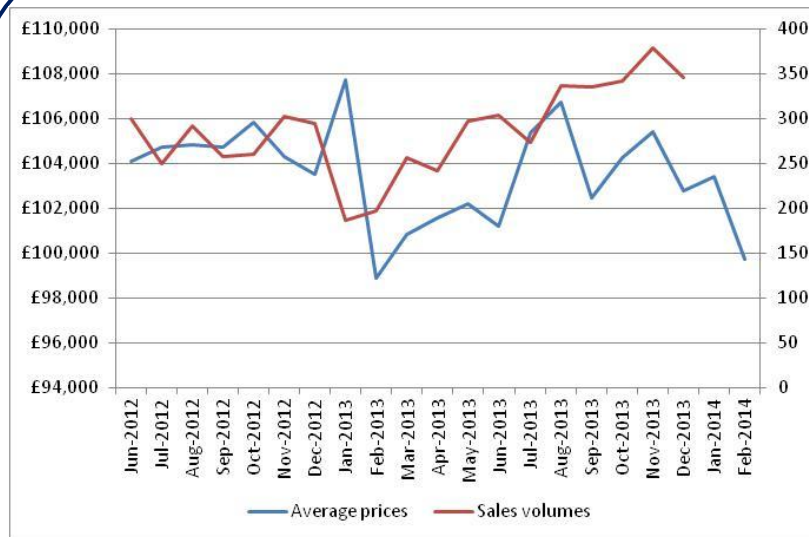


Figure 2: Change in house prices and sales volumes

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