

West Area Welfare Reform Update

West Area Committee

12 February 2014

Welfare Reform in Numbers – City wide

4,120

Approximate number of Council and Housing Association homes under occupied by 1 and 2 bedrooms in Nottingham

46 %

NCH tenants have paid full rent resulting from under occupancy

1 %

NCH tenants have paid no rent resulting from under occupancy

25,600

working age people in Nottingham receive council tax support

892

Notices Seeking Possession have been issued for **under occupation arrears** cases

1,011

DHP claims have received a payment since **1 April 2013**

£557k

= total value of **DHPs** allocated to **year end**

173

Households in **Nottingham** are subject to the **Benefit Cap** (Nov 2013)

927

Emergency Hardship Scheme awards made since 1 April 2013

(2013/14 DHP allocation = £696k)

Welfare issues city wide

Predicted to take c £18.3m out of the Nottingham economy through reductions in available household income.

Bedroom Tax

- 1,647 NCH households paid in full
- Enforcement action started for arrears cases:
 - 1901 accounts have partially paid – arrears of £255k
 - 57 accounts have not paid anything – arrears of 28K

Council Tax


- January Full Council approved CTSS for 2014/15 (Everyone of working age will pay at least 20% towards their annual Council Tax bill)
- Council Tax Support - Future reductions in government funding increase the gap

Benefits Cap

- 173 households affected

Welfare Reform in Numbers West Area

Approximate number of Council and RSL homes under occupied by 1 and 2 bedrooms in **West Area**

February 2013 = **1,500**  January 2014 = **1,347**

% of households receiving council tax support who have made payments towards their bill

27 % paid full Council Tax

55 % paid partial Council Tax

18 % paid no Council Tax

% of under occupied NCH households who have made payments towards their rent

44 % paid full rent

55 % paid partial rent

1 % paid no rent

19 %

NCH tenants have **downsized** to avoid under occupancy charge

7,650

working age people in West Area receive council tax support = Approx **30%** of all CTS claims in Nottingham

30 %

People receiving CTS have been sent a **court summons**

45 Households in **West Area** are subject to the **Benefit Cap**

Welfare Reform Impact by Ward

- Aspley

3, 015 accounts on Council Tax Support with a 2013/14 tax to pay

635 have not paid Council Tax; 1,669 have partially paid Council Tax

733 households affected by 'bedroom tax'

713 Council tenants; 20 RSL tenants

27 households affected by the Benefits Cap

10 Council tenants; 15 private rented and 2 RSL

- Bilborough

2,527 accounts on Council Tax Support with a 2013/14 tax to pay

409 have not paid Council Tax; 1,382 have partially paid Council Tax

493 households affected by 'bedroom tax'

425 Council tenants; 68 RSL tenants

18 households affected by the Benefits Cap

10 Council tenants; 8 private rented and 0 RSL

- Leen Valley

901 accounts on Council Tax Support with a 2013/14 tax to pay

149 have not paid Council Tax; 491 have partially paid Council Tax

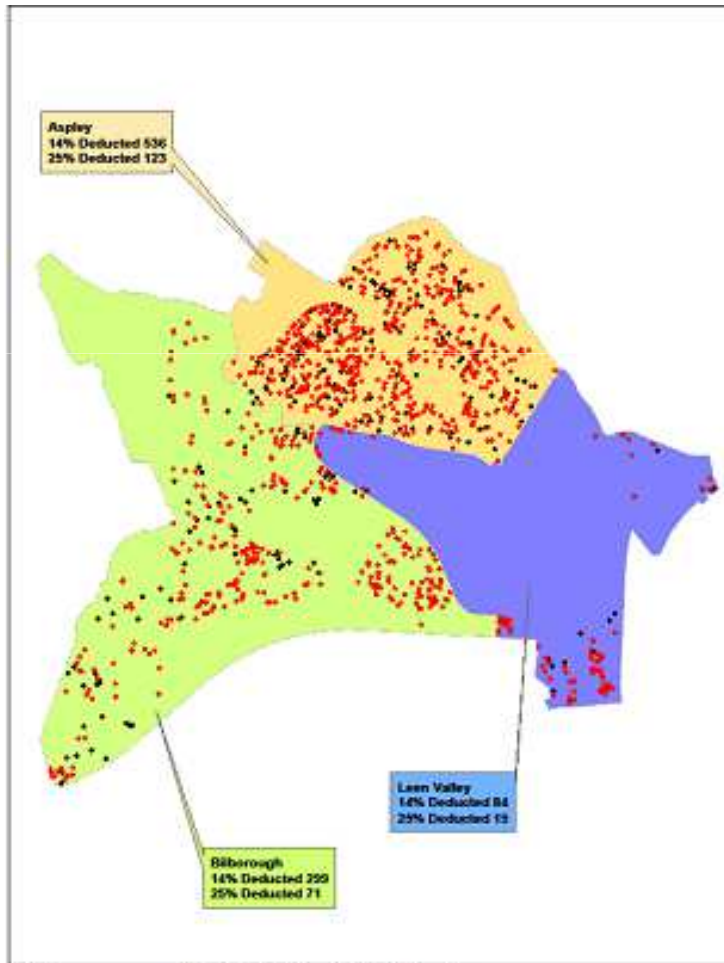
121 households affected by 'bedroom tax'

104 Council tenants; 17 RSL tenants

0 households affected by the Benefits Cap

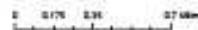
Under occupancy maps

Under occupancy by % of Housing Benefit deducted:
West Area

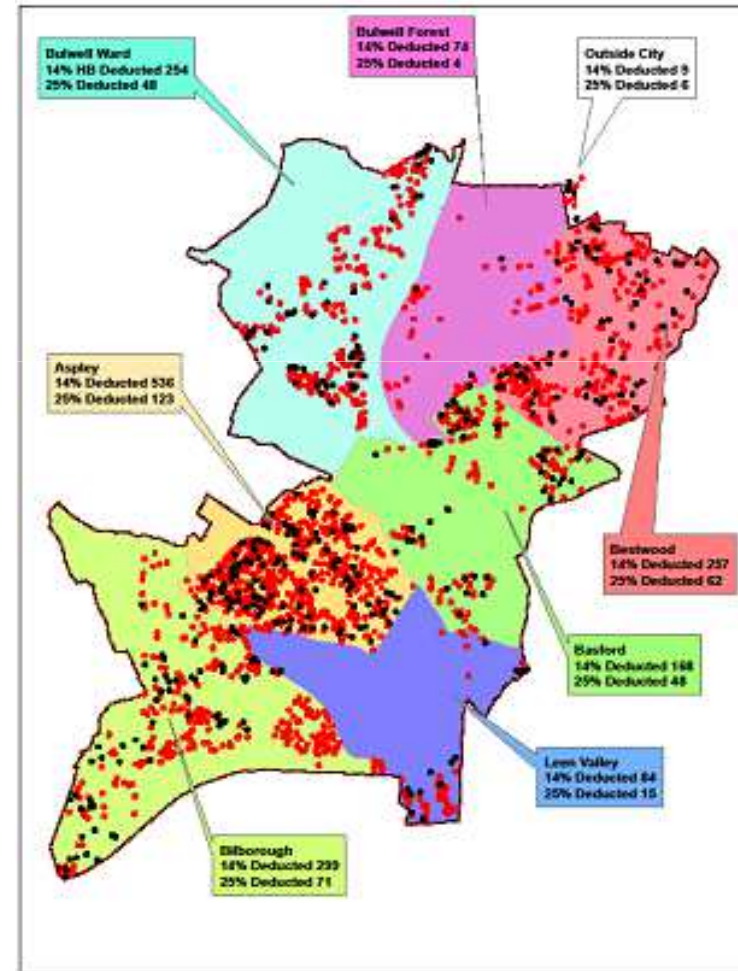


Underoccupancy by % of HB Deducted: West Area

- 14pcWest_Area
- 25pcWest_Area

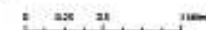


Under occupancy by % of Housing Benefit deducted:
North region



Underoccupancy by % of HB Deducted: North Region

- North 14% Deducted
- North 25% Deducted



Welfare issues West Area

Issues dealt with in West Area:

- Help with appeals against work capability assessments
- Completing PIP claim forms – experiencing delays in DWP decision making
- 20-25% citizens need help with debt problem including Council Tax, utility bills and non-priority credit
- Reduced benefit levels
- Low incomes
- More families under stress/struggling to manage financially
- Increasing numbers of referrals to food banks

Support available in West Area:

- 9 weekly outreach advice sessions = capacity to see 22 NEW clients each week
- Sessions spread across the 3 wards delivered in community and partner venues for maximum accessibility
- Promoted through website, Arrow, 'problem-noticers', leaflets and posters and welfare rights officers attendance at events.

What have we done?

- Focus on DHP to support households affected by the changes – projected to spend the full DHP allocation of £696k
- Changes to Emergency Hardship Support Scheme – it will:
 - respond more flexibly to hardship and
 - place less emphasis on the need to demonstrate emergency and/or crisis.
- Eviction Prevention Protocol in place
- Sanctions Protocol trial – working with Jobcentre Plus to review ‘inappropriate’ sanctions decisions.
- **197** Direct Debits set up for bedroom tax cases
- **11** Credit Union Rent Payment Accounts set up
- **317** Referrals to NCH financial inclusion team for bedroom tax cases
- Continue to fund advice sector and provided additional resources:
Dedicated Policy and Campaigns officer
- Established a Welfare Reform Impact Task & Finish Group (Carole Mills)
- Welfare Advice Sessions across the city
- Lobbying on Council Tax Support and Bedroom Tax



Questions

Any questions or feedback?