

Welfare Advice in Nottingham Overview & Scrutiny Update

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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)

Advice Provision across Nottingham

- Advice provided across the City through;
 - Commissioned services delivered by Advice Nottingham Consortium, led by Nottingham CAB
 - NCC Welfare Rights team
 - Specialist Advice
- Advice services include:
 - Support with areas of Welfare Benefit and Debt Law
 - Housing issues
 - Debt management
 - Employment issues
 - General support

Advice services across the City

- Advice is provided over the telephone; by appointment and at “drop in” sessions across the City
- For non emergency matters, clients are placed on a waiting list that typically is around 4 weeks
- Emergency issues such as deadlines for claims; appeals or housing related matters are seen within 48 hours
- Type of help across the sector includes:
 - Advice & help to complete forms
 - Advocating with Benefit agencies over unfavourable decisions
 - Assisting with appeals for benefits
 - Negotiation of debt repayments
 - Defending possession for rent or mortgage
 - Debt Relief Order applications, bankruptcy advice
 - Applications for charitable help



What is the demand?

Advice services this year have so far:

Offered
3,352 advice sessions

Helped
12,549 citizens

And achieved
£8.8 million in benefit awards

Helped to manage
£4.3 million of debt

Majority of demand is for help with benefits

Type of demand	NCC Experience	Advice Nottingham Experience
Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits	70%	52%.
Debt	30%	24%
Housing	-	9%
Employment	-	8%
Other	-	7%



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What is driving the demand?

- Impact of welfare reform
 - Introduction of the Social Size Criteria (“Bedroom Tax”); Appeal work and applications for Discretionary Housing Payments
 - Change in how appeals are dealt with at the DWP
 - Benefit Sanctions
 - Increase in appeals for Employment Support Allowance



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Building capacity, responding to need

- Building knowledge:
 - Working with faith community to train and develop volunteers
 - Food bank engagement
 - Credit Union partnership
- Increased “triage advice” at all access points dealing with lower complexity work
- Provided dedicated Policy and campaigns role within the advice sector
- Advice Nottingham has secured an additional £1.25m for advice services including; fuel debt advice; financial capability and work with specific client groups
- Optimising Discretionary Housing Payments
- Sustaining Emergency Hardship Support



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Challenges and next steps

- Welfare reform changes continue:
 - Increase in the amount of council tax people will need to pay in 14/15 and beyond
 - Disability Living Allowance changing to Personal Independent Payments
 - Changes to costs for Bailiffs
 - Universal Credit rollout
- Commissioning Advice going forward
 - In final year of three year contract
 - Re-commissioning work is about to commence for 15/16
 - Shaped with stakeholders and learning from the last 12 months of welfare reform
 - Focus on supporting households to achieve financial resilience;
 - Advice and guidance
 - Support and advocacy
 - Help people to access employment and training and support
 - Capacity building through volunteers and partnerships with other organisations



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Questions

Any questions or feedback?