



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 08158
Date 04 August 2015

Welfare Reform

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please disclose answers to the following questions:

1. Voids (this first question is for stock owning local authorities only, but the others are for all councils)

- a. How many empty council homes (voids) did you have on 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?

358 - 1st July 2015 (August figure not yet available)

348 - 1st August 2014

377 - 1st August 2013

- b. What was the average void time taken to re-let a property on 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?

21 Days - 1 April 2015 (most recent figure)

29 Days - 1st August 2014

24 Days - 1st August 2013

2. Bedroom tax

- a. How many social tenants in your local authority were experiencing a reduction to their housing benefit because of the removal of the spare room subsidy on 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?

1 August 2015 - 2968

1 August 2014 - 3243

1 August 2013 - 3106

- b. How many tenants have downsized due to the removal of the spare room subsidy as of 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?

June 2014 – June 2015 – 109

June 2013 – June 2014 – 192

April 2013 – June 2013 – 59

N:B Closest date to August that this data is available is June as data will next be collated at end of Q2 (Sept).

N:B This data relates to households that have downsized that were affected by the spare room subsidy, however it cannot be determined that this was the only/primary reason for the move.

- c. How many tenants have moved out of the local authority area due to the removal of the spare room subsidy as of 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?
[Not possible to say](#)
- d. How many tenants in your local authority have been evicted due to rent arrears compounded by the removal of the spare room subsidy?
[7](#)

[N:B This data relates to Council tenants only. The requestor would need to contact the Registered Providers operating in the Local Authority area for information on their tenants.](#)

3. **Benefit cap**

- a. On 1 August 2015, how many social tenants in your local authority were experiencing a reduction to their housing benefit because of the benefit cap? 1 August 2014? 2015?
[From information held with dates closest to 1 August for the years requested:
15 July 2015 – 77
7 August 2014 – 90
9 August 2013 - 26](#)
- b. How many tenants have downsized due to the benefit cap as of 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?
[Households affected by the benefit cap tend to be larger families and so would not downsize within social housing](#)
- c. How many tenants have moved out of the local authority area due to the benefit cap as of 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?
[Not possible to say](#)
- d. How many tenants in your local authority have been evicted due to rent arrears compounded by the benefit cap?
[0](#)

[N:B This data relates to Council tenants only. The requestor would need to contact the Registered Providers operating in the Local Authority area for information on their tenants.](#)

4. **DHPs**

- a. When you initially wrote your council's policy on discretionary housing payment (DHP), did it contain requirements that potential recipients needed to find employment, or that DHP would be reduced for people spending money on luxury items eg alcohol cigarettes? [No](#)
- b. Since then, have you updated your DHP policy? When? Have you introduced new requirements for some DHP applications – such as a requirement to seek employment – or reduced/turned down DHP awards for those spending on luxuries, eg alcohol, cigarettes? [No](#)
- c. How many applications for DHP have you turned down or reduced because of requirements for some DHP applications – such as a requirement to seek employment – or reduced/turned down DHP awards for those spending on luxuries, eg alcohol, cigarettes? – As of 1 August 2015? 2014? 2013?
[None as requirements not part of DHP policy.](#)

5. Universal credit

- a. How many tenants in your local authority have been evicted due to rent arrears compounded by universal credit?
[Not known - Universal Credit isn't due to be expanded to Wolverhampton Job Centres until February 2016 as part of tranche 4 of the expansion programme.](#)
- b. How many applications have you sent to get the housing element of universal credit paid directly to the landlord (an Alternative Payment Arrangement – APA) at 1 August 2015? How many of these have been successful applications? At 1 August 2015, what was the average time between sending off an APA application and receiving the housing element money in your bank account? [None](#)

6. Homelessness

- a. How many more people do you expect to be made homeless in your local authority because of the reduction in the benefit cap to £23,000/£20,000?
[Awaiting figures from DWP to enable any forecasting to be completed.](#)