



Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

25 September 2014

Report of: Director of Policy, Performance and Communications

Subject: Welfare Reform – September 2014 Update

Author of Report: Nicola Rees, Policy and Improvement Officer
0114 27 34529
nicola.rees@sheffield.gov.uk

Summary:

At the meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee in July 2013, members requested that an update on welfare reform issues be provided to Committee Members bi-monthly. This update report for September 2014 presents the most recent data relating to Under-occupancy (Bedroom Tax), Council Tax Support, Benefit Cap and hardship schemes/discretionary payments. There have been no significant policy developments nationally or locally since the Committee received the last welfare reform report in July 2014, therefore this report does not include a written update.

Type of item:

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	X

The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee is asked to note the contents of the update report.

Category of Report: OPEN

Welfare Reform in Numbers – September 2014

3909

Sheffield council tenants are affected by under-occupancy rules ('bedroom tax')



49 less than two months ago

21%

have paid in full the shortfall in their benefit resulting from under-occupancy

without receiving a DHP* payment



down from 23% two months ago

5%

have paid nothing towards the shortfall in their benefit resulting from under-occupancy



up from 4% two months ago

32,000

working age tax payers in Sheffield receive council tax support



All of whom must now pay at least 23% of their Council Tax

10,159

summonses have been issued to Council Tax Support customers since April 2014 for non payment of Council Tax



£2.8m

= value of summonsed debt for Council Tax Support customers during 2014/2015



Average amount of debt = £278**

670

Local Assistance Scheme grants have been awarded since 1st April 2014

£287,000

= value of Council Tax Hardship Scheme awards made since 1st April 2014

277

Local Assistance Scheme loans have been awarded since 1st April 2014

£585,000

= value of Discretionary Housing Payment awards made since 1st April 2014



171 households in Sheffield are subject to the Benefit Cap

=

846 children



All figures are to 31 August 2014

* DHP = Discretionary housing payment

** At this stage the full annual outstanding debt is summonsed, not the unpaid debt to that date