

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 9 January 2014

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Title: Welfare Reform Update – Information only

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Item for information
only

Summary

1. This report is to update members on figures for the first three quarters of 2013/14 showing the number of tenants affected by the spare room subsidy and how this is impacting on the level of rent arrears.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes this report.

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Number of tenants affected by spare room subsidy	158	153	152
Number of above tenants in arrears	97	117	91
Average value of arrears	£387.93	£320.49	£373.13
Number of council tenants on discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	29	15	19
Number of tenants subject to benefit cap	0	1	3
Number of downsizing grants paid	10	10	14
Number of suspension orders	10	17	7
Number of evictions	1	0	1

7. The above table shows the number of tenants affected by the spare room subsidy and benefit cap for this financial year. It also includes the numbers suspension orders that the council has applied for and the number of evictions.
8. Work with tenants continues as detailed in the previous report to members. The rise in the numbers of tenants in arrears seen in quarter 2 has been reversed due to the revised arrears policy and additional work carried out to support tenants and help them manage their rent accounts.
9. The housing department is regularly reviewing its policies on how tenants subject to spare room subsidy are being managed. It is currently felt that the work on encouraging tenants to move and closely supporting those who are choosing to remain to manage their rent accounts is working well and protecting tenants from any threat of eviction.

Risk Analysis

10.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Increase in rent arrears	2. Some risk - the longer tenants have a shortfall between their rent and their housing benefit the more likely it is that they will not continue to make up that	2. HRA spending would need to be adjusted if there was any continuing decrease in revenues	Monitoring closely the level of rent arrears and proactively working with tenants to help them manage their rent accounts. Revised arrears policy to ensure action is taken sooner if a tenant starts to fall into arrears

	shortfall		
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.