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# **Local authority projects to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform, using homelessness grant funding:**

**Monitoring report, April 2013-September 2013 (Period 4) - Revised**

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**Monitoring report, April 2013-September 2013 (Period 4)**

**Knowledge and Analytical Services  
Welsh Government**

The information contained in this Report is based on the data returns received by the Welsh Government from each local authority during the autumn of 2013.

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## **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 This report presents findings from the fourth monitoring period (April 2013-September 2013) for local authority (LA) projects set up using Welsh Government Homelessness Grant funding to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform.
- 1.2 In October 2010, the UK Government announced a public spending review and introduced their Welfare Reform Bill. The reforms include a significant number of changes to the way housing benefit is calculated and administered. Initial changes were introduced in April 2011 with a rolling programme intended to culminate in April 2013 with the staggered introduction of universal credit. In order to mitigate the anticipated impact of the housing benefit changes upon tenants, the Welsh Government made £1.4 million available for the period April 2011 to March 2013, for local authorities to use in a programme of approved work with landlords and tenants with the intention of sustaining tenancies. The Welsh Government provided an additional £750,000 to continue the work from April 2013 to March 2014.
- 1.3 The Welsh Government encouraged local authorities to look at their local circumstances and strategic priorities when applying for funding, taking into account the conditions of the grant. This resulted in a number of different models being approved. The models are based on tenant casework, working with landlords, raising awareness of the changes and bringing empty homes back into use.
- 1.4 The principal purpose of the grant is for local authorities to prevent homelessness as a result of the changes to the housing benefit regime. The conditions of the grant specified that, in order to prevent homelessness, local authority projects should involve:

- Identification of, and work with, vulnerable people to reduce the risk of tenancy breakdown and enable them to access housing.
- Work with private landlords to sustain and increase access to affordable homes.
- Work across departmental boundaries.
- Work with external partners.
- Adaptation of housing benefit team practices.

1.5 The Minister responsible for Housing and Regeneration is keen to understand the effects of the grant funding in allowing local authorities to bring about innovative solutions to address the risks associated with housing benefit changes, and therefore a monitoring and evaluation framework has been put in place.

The framework has two elements:

- (i) A monitoring system has been put in place whereby a small number of standardised quantitative data items and qualitative information are being collected by Welsh Government from all local authorities. Data has already been collected and published for periods 1, 2 and 3 (October 2011-March 2012, April 2012-September 2012, October 2012-March 2013).

This report focuses on the data provided by local authorities for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013) as well as an overview of progress across all four periods.

The monitoring framework will continue for a fifth period, between October 2013-March 2014.

- (ii) To complement the monitoring a set of evaluation case studies was also commissioned in 2012. The contract to undertake the work was awarded to a partnership of organisations that are part of the Housing Research Network within the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD), and was led by Shelter Cymru. The case studies were as follows:

Partnership between three local authorities, incorporating landlord-focused and casework-focused methods: Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

Casework-focused methods: Swansea and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Landlord-focused methods: Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly.

Focus on bringing empty homes back into use: Carmarthenshire.

- 1.6 The case studies provide a more detailed interim process and impact evaluation of the above sample of projects, and present much more detail about their approaches, operation, management and impacts. The case studies commenced in May 2012, with the final report published in May 2013<sup>1</sup>. While this report provides an overview of the work of all local authorities, the case studies report provides a detailed examination of a sample of seven.
- 1.7 In addition, the Welsh Government has contributed £120,000 to a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) research programme aimed at measuring the social and demographic impact of housing benefit reform. Denbighshire, Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf have been selected as pilot study areas for the programme. The research will

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/local-Local Authority-projects-minimise-impact-housing-benefit-reform-homelessness-grant-funding/?lang=en>

involve some contact with local authority housing benefit officers. Interim findings were published in May 2013<sup>2</sup>.

- 1.8 A steering group has been set up to oversee the monitoring and evaluation work, and includes officers from the Welsh Government Homelessness Policy Team, Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS), and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

## 2 Summary of Key Findings

The Key Points arising from the data provided by local authorities for period 4 were as follows:

- 2.1 From the inception of the projects to the end of period 4, just over 4,440 private sector landlords have been provided with advice and services *for the first time* through the projects. The number of tenants receiving the advice and services provided by the projects *for the first time* (from the inception of the projects to the end of period 4) stand at 7,110.
- 2.2 At the end of period 4, the rate of private sector tenants in receipt of local housing allowance (LHA) per 1,000 people (across 22 local authorities reporting) varied between 15 persons per 1,000<sup>3</sup> (the lowest rate, reported in Monmouthshire) and 47 persons per 1,000 (the highest rate, reported in Denbighshire). These figures have stayed broadly the same across all four periods.
- 2.3 At 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 (period 4), the proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent exceeded the LHA rate ranged between 0% to 90% for the 22 authorities reporting. This range has gradually decreased since

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-the-impact-of-changes-to-the-local-housing-allowance-system-of-housing-benefit-interim-report-rr-838>

<sup>3</sup> Rate per 1,000 population aged over 16, 2011 Census: Usual resident population by broad age group and local authority, Welsh Government:  
<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Census/2011/UsualResidentPopulation-by-BroadAgeGroup-LocalAuthority>

period 2 (0% to 96%, 0% to 91% in period 3), although in period 1 the range was 35% to 80%.

- 2.4 The rate of tenancies where the landlord was in direct receipt of housing benefit payments at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013, ranged between 8% and 62% in the 22 local authorities reporting. This differed slightly to the period 3 (7% and 42%), period 2 (16% to 82%) and period 1 (16% to 40%).
- 2.5 At the end of period 4, three of 22 local authorities had spent more than half of their annual discretionary housing payment allocation, compared to eight of 21 in period 3, less than a quarter of 19 in period 2 (first half of the financial year) and a third of 18 in period 1.
- 2.6 National Statistics<sup>4</sup> in relation to period 4 (using data for April–September 2013), showed that the rate of homeless households<sup>5</sup> where rent arrears on private sector dwellings were identified as the main cause of homelessness were very small, at 3% in all local authorities. This was down from previous periods, with 6% in periods 3 and 2, and 5% in period 1.
- 2.7 When asked about the number of successful DHP applications made by people whose homes have been adapted as well as those who receive disability living allowance (DLA), of 22 responses only Powys was able to provide a specific figure, with all of the seven they had received being successful. While not providing specific figures, Neath Port Talbot and Gwynedd reported that all claimants had been successful, while in Denbighshire and Merthyr the success rates were 70% and 20% respectively.
- 2.8 The majority of local authorities responding state that the main reasons for DHP refusal are income exceeding expenditure, or the inability of the claimant to prove that they cannot afford to pay the shortfall themselves. Although given that the local authorities were unable to identify those

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<sup>4</sup> Homelessness Statistics, Welsh Government 2013:

<http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/reportFolders.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Households which were eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

claimants who had adaptations in their homes, it is assumed that these are general reasons for refusal across all groups.

- 2.9 When asked how they consider disability living allowance (DLA) when considering DHP claims, only one of the 22 local authorities report disregarding DLA altogether (Caerphilly), three disregard the DLA Mobility element (Powys, Pembrokeshire and Flintshire) and Pembrokeshire additionally disregards the difference between the middle and higher rate of the care component. Vale of Glamorgan noted disregarding DLA Mobility when the claimant had a mobility car.
- 2.10 All local authorities who responded reported that they consider all disability-related expenditure as necessary, and the majority also said that claimants were encouraged to identify disability-related costs in their application.
- 2.11 The consensus seems to be that DLA is considered to be income, but this is balanced by the costs related to disability being considered as outgoings. Applications are considered on a case by case basis and any additional expenditure due to disability is taken into account.

### **3 Monitoring System – Data Collection Returns**

- 3.1 Local authorities were issued with monitoring data forms at the beginning of October 2013 which requested details relating to the fourth period (April 2013-September 2013).
- 3.2 A copy of the data collection form for period 4 appears in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 Responses were received from all of the 22 local authorities, although not all local authorities were able to respond to all data items and qualitative questions.

## **4 Findings**

- 4.1 The paragraphs below presents a summary of the data provided by local authorities. Where appropriate, data from other sources has been included. More detailed information about the data and performance information provided by each local authority appears in Appendix 1.

### **Tenants, Housing Benefit Recipients and Rent Levels**

- 4.2 It has been estimated that approximately 21% of private rented sector tenants are in receipt of housing benefit in Wales<sup>6</sup>. All of the 22 local authorities reporting provided figures for the number of private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit at the end of September 2013. By undertaking a calculation using this figure and the Census 2011 data on local authority population, the number of people per 1,000 of the population in receipt of housing benefit has been calculated.
- 4.3 The table below illustrates that the range has remained relatively steady across all four periods. Denbighshire consistently reports the highest rate across all four periods and Monmouthshire reported the lowest for three of the four periods (Monmouthshire did not provide data for period 1, where Gwynedd reported the lowest rate).

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<sup>6</sup> Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Caseload Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions 2013.

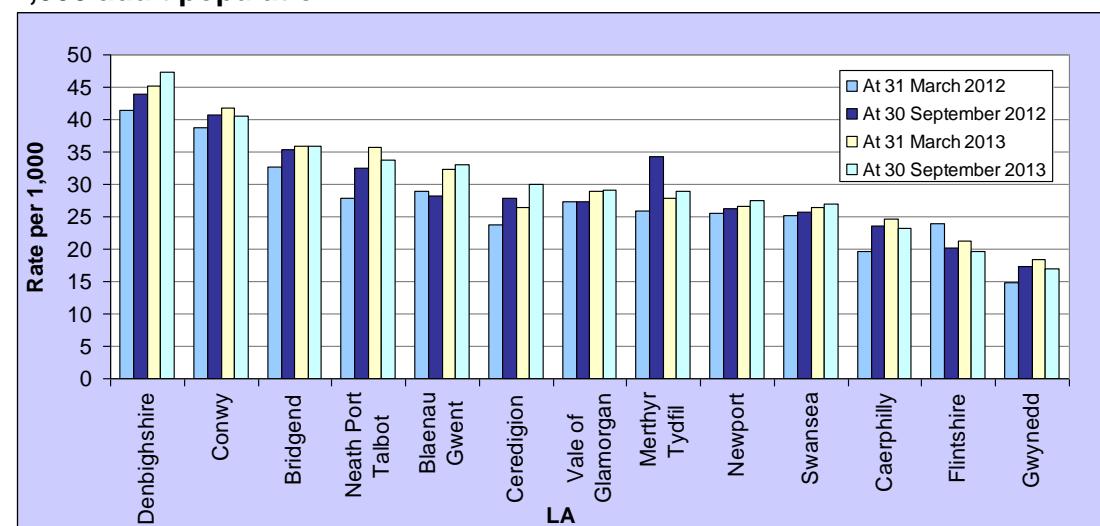
**Table 1: Range in the rates of persons per 1,000 in receipt of housing benefit across periods 1 to 4**

Period	Range (persons per 1,000 in receipt of housing benefit)		Wales Average	Number of LAs reporting
	Lowest	Highest		
Period 1 (October 2011–March 2012)	15	41	27	16
Period 2 (April–September 2012)	14	44	28	18
Period 3 (October 2012–March 2013)	15	45	28	20
Period 4 (April–September 2013)	15	47	28	22

Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods.

- 4.4 Chart 1 compares the rate of private sector tenants per 1,000 who are in receipt of housing benefit across all four periods.

**Chart 1: Rate of private sector tenants in receipt of housing benefit per 1,000 adult population**



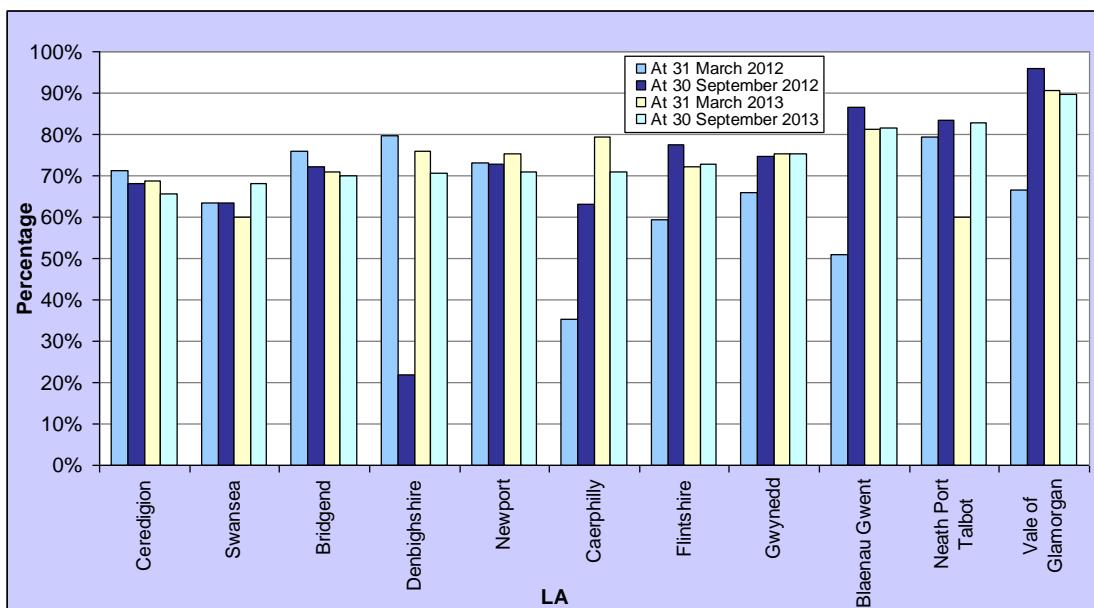
Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods. Local authorities reporting in all periods only.

- 4.5 Across all four periods, the majority of local authorities have seen an increase in the rate of private sector tenants per 1,000 who are in receipt of housing benefit, although this increase has been small (typically two or three persons per 1,000) for most local authorities. However, three local authorities saw a bigger increase. Denbighshire, Neath Port Talbot

and Ceredigion all saw this rate increase by six persons per 1,000 over the four periods.

- 4.6 The variation in the proportion of private sector tenants for whom weekly rent exceeded the local housing allowance (LHA) rate, was substantial across all periods. While Torfaen reported having no private sector tenants in this position across periods 2 to 4, the Vale of Glamorgan consistently reported having around 90% of tenants in this position across the same periods. The vast majority of local authorities reported that more than 60% of private sector tenants faced weekly rents that exceed the LHA rate.
- 4.7 The data received illustrates that most local authorities are seeing increases in the proportion of private sector tenants for whom weekly rent exceeded the LHA rate, with some rises across all four periods being pronounced. The Vale of Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire and Caerphilly saw increases of over 30% between period 1 and period 4, with their period 4 figures standing at 90%, 82% and 71% respectively. However, three local authorities (Ceredigion, Denbighshire, and Bridgend) reported decreases of up to 9% across the four periods.
- 4.8 Chart 2 shows comparisons between periods 1 to 4 for the proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent exceeded the LHA rate at the end of each period, for each LA that returned relevant data for all periods.

**Chart 2: Percentage of tenants with weekly rent exceeding LHA rate**



Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods. Local authorities reporting in all periods only.

4.9 Recent research suggests that private sector rent levels have increased, and markedly so in Wales, where private sector rents are reportedly at an all time high. LSL Properties produce a regular Buy-to Let Index<sup>7</sup> and the most recent, published in October 2013, reports that private sector rents in Wales have never been higher. The average rent in Wales now stands at £573<sup>8</sup>, having increased by 3.1% over the last year (second to only London where rents increased by 4.4%).

4.10 Housing benefit in Wales costs around £1.1 billion and has been increasing, with the increase being attributed to private sector rent costs<sup>9</sup>. This is compounded by the fact that the number of people living in the private rented sector has risen (from 7.4% in 2001 to 14.2% in 2011<sup>10</sup>) and this rise is expected to continue. This would seem to

<sup>7</sup> The Buy-to-Let index is a monthly analysis of approximately 18,000 rental properties and tenancies from around the UK, figures for the whole country are inferred by scaling up from LSL's market share.

<sup>8</sup> LSL Properties Buy to Let Index September 2013

[http://www.lsps.co.uk/documents/buy\\_to\\_let\\_index\\_sep13.pdf](http://www.lsps.co.uk/documents/buy_to_let_index_sep13.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The Impact of changes to housing benefit in Wales. House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee. 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Rate per 1,000 population aged over 16, 2011 Census: Usual resident population by broad age group and local authority, Welsh Government:

contradict the UK Government's assertion that private sector rents would decrease as a result of the 'downward pressure' the housing benefit changes would bring<sup>11</sup>.

### **Managed Payment of Housing Benefit to Landlords**

- 4.11 Local authorities were asked to state the number of tenancies where the landlord was in receipt of housing benefit at the end of each period, known as 'managed payment'. The table below illustrates that the rate of occurrence stayed consistent across the first two periods, but has changed in later periods.

**Table 2: Range in the rates of tenancies where the landlord is in direct receipt of housing benefit payments across periods 1 to 4**

Period	Rate of tenancies where the landlord is in direct receipt of housing benefit payments		Wales Average	Number of LAs reporting
	Lowest	Highest		
Period 1 (October 2011–March 2012)	16%	47%	33%	12
Period 2 (April–September 2012)	16%	43%	33%	17
Period 3 (October 2012–March 2013)	7%	42%	24%	20
Period 4 (April–September 2013)	8%	62%	25%	22

Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods.

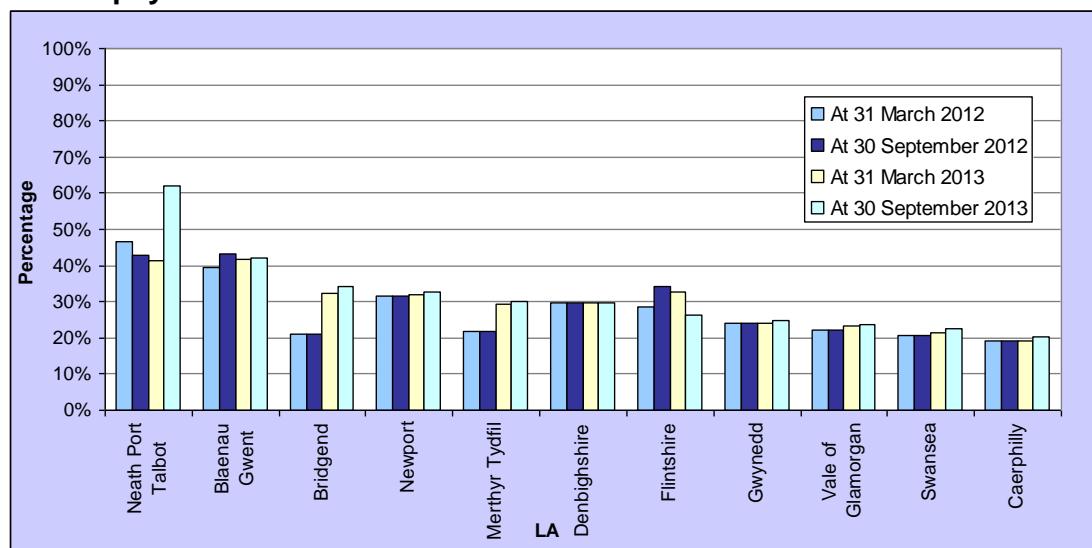
- 4.12 Whereas in period 3 no local authorities reported the rate of tenancies where the landlord is in receipt of housing benefit at more than 50%, in period 4 Neath Port Talbot reported that in 62% of tenancies the landlord directly received housing benefit.

- 4.13 Chart 3 shows comparisons between periods 1 to 4 for the percentage of tenancies where the landlord was in receipt of direct housing benefit payments at the end of each period, for each local authority that returned relevant data for all four periods.

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<sup>11</sup> The Impact of changes to housing benefit in Wales. House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee. 2013.

**Chart 3: Proportion of tenancies with landlord in receipt of direct housing benefit payments**



Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods. Local authorities reporting in all periods only.

4.14 These figures are expected to change as universal credit is introduced (universal credit will be paid directly to the tenant). Tenants can, however, choose to have the housing benefit paid into a rent account through which the landlord can then be paid directly via direct debit. There is concern however that direct payment to tenants could result in tenants who have difficulty in managing their finances falling into debt and rent arrears<sup>12</sup>. It could also discourage private sector landlords from taking on housing benefit claimants. Further research will be required to ascertain how this change affects the processes by which rents are paid.

### Discretionary Housing Payments

4.15 The discretionary housing payment (DHP) provides financial assistance to housing benefit claimants, and although this payment is temporary (paid for between 13 and 26 weeks) it supports claimants while they are making arrangements to manage their finances in the face of welfare

<sup>12</sup> The Impact of Changes to Housing Benefit in Wales. House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee. 2013.

reform changes. In 2012/13, Welsh local authorities were allocated a total of £2.5 million, this rose to £7 million in 2013/14<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 3: Financial allocation of discretionary housing payment (DHP) between April 2011 and February 2014**

Financial Year	Lowest	Highest
2011/12	£14,000	£290,000
2012/13	£32,000	£485,000
2013/14	£121,978	£1.2 million

Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods.

- 4.16 The amount of DHP allocated to local authorities has increased over the last three financial years, with a considerable increase in allocation for this financial year. Cardiff, unsurprisingly, has consistently had the largest DHP allocation, which has more than doubled in this current financial year. Merthyr consistently reported receiving the smallest allocation of DHP, which has almost quadrupled between 2012/13 and 2013/14. However, in 2013/14 Monmouthshire reported the smallest allocation of DHP.
- 4.17 Sixteen of the local authorities that responded saw their allocations *at least* doubled, if not tripled or in the case of Merthyr, Gwynedd and Caerphilly, quadrupled.
- 4.18 The exceptions to this were the Vale of Glamorgan, who saw their allocation almost double. Conwy and Pembrokeshire experienced less significant increases, with their allocations increasing by just under a third and just over a third respectively. This reflects the UK Government's acknowledgement that changes to welfare reform, particularly around housing, could cause issues for many<sup>14</sup>.
- 4.19 Three rural local authorities – Powys, Ceredigion and Gwynedd received a top up of their DHP allocation in July 2013. This ‘top up’ was aimed

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<sup>13</sup> ibid

<sup>14</sup> The Impact of Changes to Housing Benefit in Wales. House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee. 2013.

specifically at the 21 least densely populated areas in Great Britain. Three of which were in Wales. The aim of the funding was “*to avoid a disproportionate impact on those affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy in remote and isolated communities where the geography means that the potential remedies are less readily available; work, alternative accommodation, people looking for lodging etc*”<sup>15</sup>.

- 4.20 This resulted in Powys seeing the biggest increase across 2012/13 to 2013/14 with their allocation in 2013/14 being eight times higher than their 2012/13 allocation. The original and ‘topped up’ amounts are shown below.

**Table 4: Local authorities’ allocation for those receiving a DHP ‘Top Up’**

Local Authority	Original 2013/2014 DHP allocation	DHP Rural ‘Top Up’ allocated in July 2013	Total 2013/14 DHP allocation
Ceredigion	£163,391	£161,542	£324,933
Gwynedd	£241,353	£363,788	£605,141
Powys	£154,975	£357,810	£512,845

Source: DWP Housing Benefit Circular S6/2013.

- 4.21 For this period, all local authorities were asked to indicate whether they had used other funds to top up their DHP allocation. Four of the 22 local authorities that responded indicated that they had done this, or that funds above and beyond the DHP allocation would be available if necessary (Torfaen , Flintshire, Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent).
- 4.22 Period 4 falls in the first half of the 2013/14 financial year, and while it could be anticipated that local authorities would have spent around half of their allocation by this halfway stage, the majority of local authorities had spent between 35% and 50% of their annual allocation. Only four had spent more than 50%, while five had spent less than 35% of their allocation. As local authorities have discretion over how their allocation is

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<sup>15</sup> DWP Housing Benefit Circular S6/2013.

used, the variation in amount spent may reflect variation in local authority strategies regarding the spend of their allocation.

- 4.23 It should also be noted that the three local authorities who received the rural top up reported spending less than 35% of their allocation. This is unsurprising given that their allocation substantially increased (doubling) in July/August 2013 during this data collection period. The top up has served to distort the figures for these local authorities and as such, the proportions below cannot be seen to reflect their strategies for spend of the DHP allocation.

**Table 5: Proportion of discretionary housing payment (DHP) spent by local authorities in period 4**

<b>Over 50%</b>	
Torfaen <sup>16</sup>	102%
Monmouthshire	85%
Swansea	55%
Caerphilly	51%
<b>35–50%</b>	
Vale of Glamorgan	49%
Conwy	49%
Anglesey	49%
Cardiff	46%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	46%
Pembrokeshire	44%
Bridgend	42%
Neath Port Talbot	42%
Blaenau Gwent	41%
Flintshire	40%
Denbighshire	39%
Wrexham	37%
Carmarthenshire	35%
<b>Under 35%</b>	
<i>Gwynedd</i>	26%
<i>Ceredigion</i>	25%
Merthyr	24%
<i>Powys</i>	20%
Newport	18%

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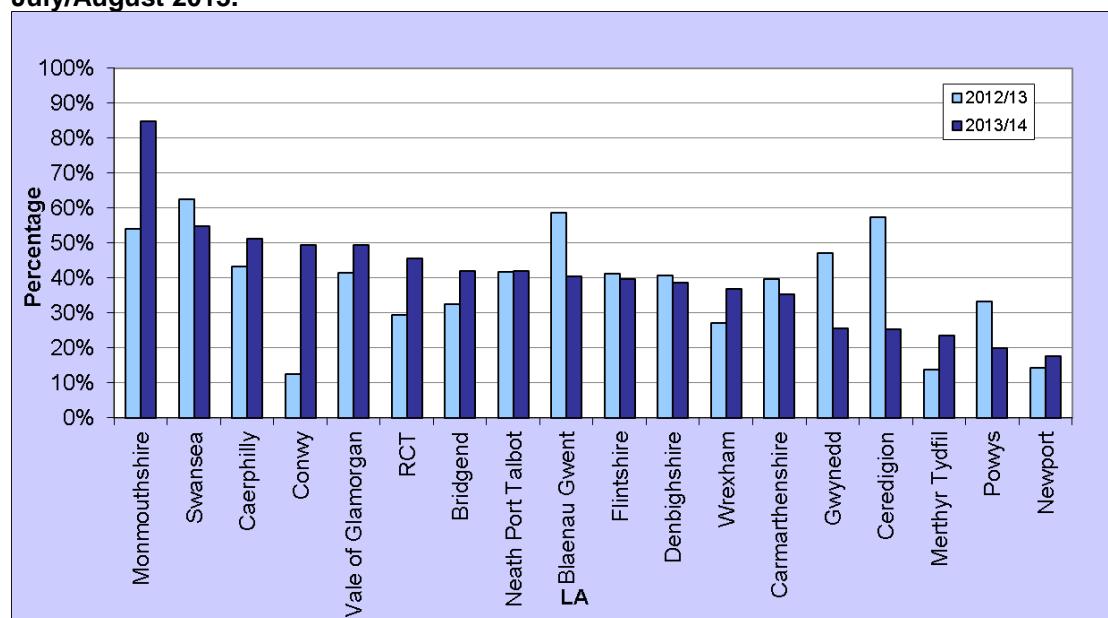
<sup>16</sup> Torfaen topped up DHP funding from other sources, hence the high spend.

Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection for local authorities reporting in period 4 only.

4.24 When comparing the spend of DHP allocation in period 4 (the first half of this financial year) to period 2 (the first half of the previous financial year), no real pattern emerges, as the chart below demonstrates. There is almost an equal split between those who spent more in the first half of the 2013/14 financial year and those who spent less (in comparison to the first half of the 2012/13 financial year).

**Chart 4: Comparison of DHP allocation spend for the first half of the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years**

**N.B Please note that Gwynedd, Powys, Monmouthshire and Ceredigion are included below but their Period 4 figure is distorted by the rural ‘top up’ finding received in July/August 2013.**



Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods. Local authorities reporting in periods 2 and 4.

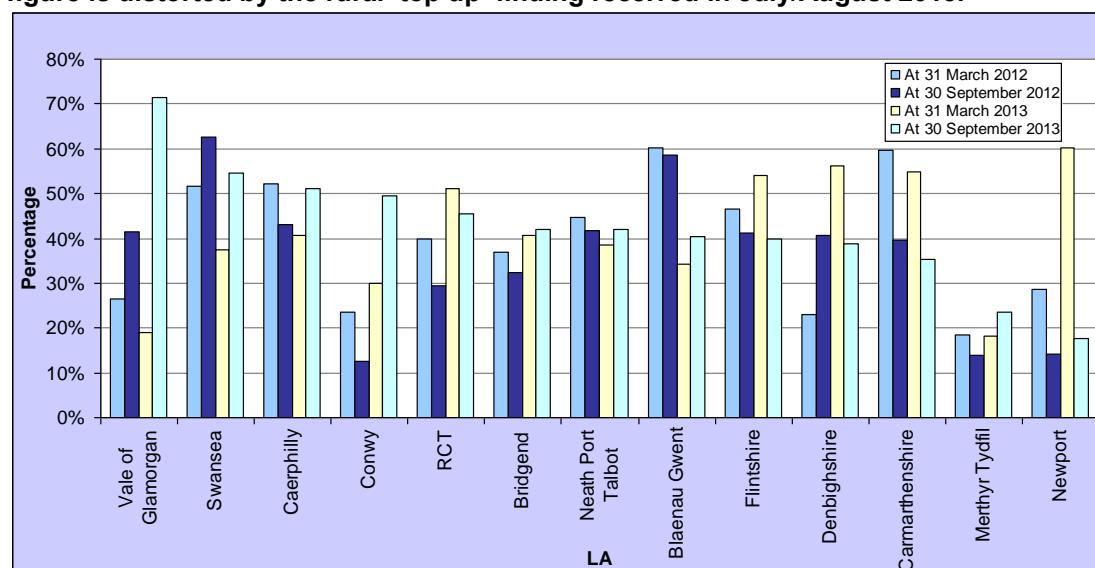
4.25 Conwy and Monmouthshire reported the biggest increases, spending over 35% and 30% more of their allocation in the first half of 2013/14 than in the first half of 2012/13. Ceredigion reported spending around 30% less in the first half of this financial year, while Gwynedd and Blaenau Gwent reported spending around 20% less between the two periods.

4.26 Again, local authorities will have differing strategies for how they use their DHP allocation, and these strategies may also have changed over time and so similar patterns of spend may not emerge. Also, given the considerable increases in allocation for all local authorities in period 4, comparing across periods may be subjective.

4.27 Chart 5 shows comparisons across periods 1 to 4 for the percentage of annual DHP allocation spent at the end of each period, for each local authority that returned relevant data for all periods.

### **Chart 5: Percentage of annual DHP allocation spent at the end of each six month period**

**N.B Please note that Gwynedd and Ceredigion are included below but their Period 4 figure is distorted by the rural ‘top up’ finding received in July/August 2013.**



Source: Welsh Government monitoring data collection across all four periods. Local authorities reporting in all periods only.

### **Homelessness Due to Private Sector Rent Arrears**

4.28 Across all four periods, the proportion of homeless households<sup>17</sup> where rent arrears on private sector dwellings were identified as the main cause of homelessness has been very small, at less than 6% in all LAs until period 3, rising to just under 8% in period 4.

<sup>17</sup> Households which were eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

4.29 Whilst rent arrears may not be the *main* cause of homelessness in many instances, it is useful to understand the extent to which it may be a factor behind households losing their homes. Please see Appendix 1 for more information on private sector rent arrears as a contributory factor in investigations of homelessness. It is important to note that the factors leading to a household becoming homeless may be complex, and even where rent arrears do not appear to be a contributory factor, financial pressures may underlie other more obvious reasons, such as relationship breakdown.

## 5 Qualitative Information Provided by Local Authorities

5.1 In addition to the data items, local authorities were asked to respond to two qualitative questions in this period. Specifically, to provide an insight into the number of successful DHP applications made by those whose homes have been adapted as well as those who receive disability living allowance (DLA).

### **Discretionary Housing Payment Applicants with Adaptations in their Homes**

5.2 There is a concern about the impact of the under-occupancy policy on those living in adapted homes<sup>18</sup>. Specifically, that if as a result of this policy those living in adapted properties are forced to move, this is likely to incur considerable cost in adapting another property and altering the original property for general use. This is of considerable concern in the social rented sector, as housing associations report that they cannot afford to adapt new properties if disabled tenants are forced to move as a result of the under-occupancy policy. Although there are no firm figures for Wales, it is estimated that there are 35,000 claimants living in

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<sup>18</sup> The Impact of Changes to Housing Benefit in Wales. House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee. 2013.

adapted homes in the UK who are potentially affected by the under-occupancy policy<sup>19</sup>.

- 5.3 The discretionary housing payment is seen as a way of alleviating the impact of the under-occupancy policy in the short-term. Although the DHP is not ring-fenced for any particular groups, as part of the period 4 return, local authorities were asked to provide figures on how many claimants had adaptations in their homes and of this number how many were successful in claiming DHP.
- 5.4 The 16 of the 22 local authorities who responded to this question were unable to provide precise figures, reporting that they did not collect this data. Only Powys had figures for the number of applications made by claimants with adaptations in their homes. The local authority had received seven DHP claims from this group and all have been successful. Although no other local authority provided figures on the number of applications made, both Neath Port Talbot and Gwynedd reported that all of those claimants who had adaptations in their homes had been successful in their applications for DHP. In Neath Port Talbot, the award is made regardless of the means test and for the full financial year. Denbighshire reported that 70% of claims made by those whose homes had adaptations were successful in claiming DHP, while in Merthyr the figure was 20%.
- 5.5 Merthyr has also noted that due to the low numbers of applications received by a number of ‘vulnerable’ groups impacted upon by Welfare Reform Act 2012 (the total number of identified households that were found to have existing adaptations), they have now undertaken further scoping and profiling of ‘vulnerable’ groups/households and are contacting them directly in relation to making a DHP application.

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<sup>19</sup> ibid

- 5.6 Where figures could not be reported, this was typically because information on whether a home has an adaptation is not recorded. Blaenau Gwent had sought to gather this information via their three Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), but this was not yet available for the whole local authority. Out of the two RSLs who had provided data, there were ‘very few’ claims made from people living in adapted properties and none of these had been successful in securing DHP.
- 5.7 Monmouthshire and Torfaen indicated that their application form identifies whether the property is adapted and that this group is prioritised, and that analysis is currently underway.
- 5.8 The majority of local authorities say that the main reasons for DHP refusal are income exceeding expenditure, or the inability of the claimant to prove that they cannot afford to pay the shortfall themselves. Although given that the local authorities were unable to identify those claimants who had adaptations in their homes, it must be assumed that these are general reasons for refusal across all groups.

### **Disability Living Allowance and Discretionary Housing Payment**

- 5.9 Local authorities were asked how they consider disability living allowance (DLA) when considering DHP claims. All but one of the 22 local authorities who responded considered DLA as income. Only one local authority of the 22 reporting disregard DLA altogether (Caerphilly), three disregard the DLA Mobility element (Powys, Pembrokeshire and Flintshire) and Pembrokeshire additionally disregards the difference between the middle and higher rate of the care component. Vale of Glamorgan noted disregarding DLA Mobility when the claimant had a motability car. However, if the claimant didn’t have a motability car the DLA Mobility was taken into account but higher travel expenses were allowed.

5.10 All local authorities who responded, reported that they take all expenditure information related to disability into account as necessary expenditure, and the majority also pointed out that claimants were encouraged to identify any disability-related costs in their application.

5.11 The consensus seems to be that DLA is considered to be income, but this is balanced by the costs related to disability being considered as outgoings. Applications are considered on a case by case basis and any additional expenditure due to disability is taken into account.

## **Qualitative Information Provided by Local Authorities**

### **Summary of Progress for Each Local Authority in Wales at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

*This section is drawn from the project progress summaries provided by each local authority, and appears here in their own words.*

*The figures relating to homelessness are taken from National Statistics provided for each local authority and are expressed as 'less than five'. The actual figure could be any number up to four. Actual figures are suppressed from National Statistics due to the risk of identification of individuals or disclosure of facts about them.*

*The households referred to homeless within the following sections are those household which following assessment, were found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during the period, where the main reason for the loss of the last settled home was due to rent arrears on a private sector dwelling.*

- *Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements is based on 20 of 22 local authorities.*

- *Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate is based on 21 of 22 local authorities.*
- *The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments, rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1000 population average, and the percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year) are based on all 22 local authorities.*

## **Anglesey**

### *Project summary*

The authority has continued to negotiate with landlords to reduce the rent to LHA ratio to reduce or prevent homelessness, as well as encouraging landlord accreditation through Landlord Accreditation Wales. Work has been conducted with private landlords and Environmental Health to improve the quality of private sector accommodation. The Landlord Forum Sub-Group has also been maintained, while continuing to develop a Private Landlord Incentive Scheme. The project has also organised Landlord Fair, promoted partnership working, raised awareness of legislative changes and the impact on private landlords. One hundred per cent contact made with those affected by benefit cap, and Anglesey continues to advise.

### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Private Landlord Liaison Officer (PLLO) has close working relationship with Housing Benefit Section with regular liaison on a case by case basis as necessary. Formal meetings held on an ad-hoc basis to discuss matters of concern/share information (as opposed to the quarterly meetings proposed in the original bid document). Performance is monitored formally as part of the annual progress report. PLLO collates data relating to:

1. Contact made with landlords and outcomes.
2. Contact made with tenants and outcomes.

3. DHP cases/referrals and follows up with contact whilst monitoring outcomes.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	28 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	72%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	17%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	49%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	21%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Anglesey showed that less than five households within the authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. In periods 2 and 3, there were no households found in this position, which rose to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in two investigations of homelessness during periods 1 and 4 (no data was provided in periods 2 and 3).

## **Blaenau Gwent**

### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Blaenau Gwent is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

A Tenant Sustainability Officer (TSO) was employed in July 2011 to help residents sustain tenancies and mitigate the impact of welfare reform, initially in relation to the single room rent changes and then for those affected by the welfare reform changes from April 2013. The focus for this year's approach has centred on those affected by under-occupation. Face-to-face contact is being made and a welfare referral support plan completed. The support plan aims to cover numerous issues such as water rates, whether they are in arrears, whether they can be considered for one the assist schemes, and referrals are being made for review of their fuel usage. Digital referrals are being made to the digital officers for those people who need help with accessing a computer so that they can use price comparison websites. Citizens Advice Bureau surgeries are being held for those people in debt. The aim is to improve their finances.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Performance is monitored in relation to discretionary housing payments. The local authority is receiving more DHP claims this year (as opposed to previous years) due to under-occupation change in regulations. It is anticipated that the time taken to assess these may have increased. In September 2013, these were taking an average of 13 days to assess (still an improvement on the number of days it took prior to the introduction of the S180 funding).

The local authority is also keeping quantifiable stats in relation to the face-to-face contact i.e. how many people have had their Welsh Water bills reduced? How many SWALEC referrals have resulted in fuel bills being reduced? How many people have benefited from budgeting/debt advice from CAB? How many people are now digitally proficient? How many bank accounts have been opened? These measures will illustrate the work being done and also the extra money generated for the individuals and the economy which help individuals maintaining their tenancies. All of which would not have been as productive without the S180 funding.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	<b>Wales</b>
		<b>Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	33 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	82%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	42%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	41%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	28%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data from the homelessness statistics return for Blaenau Gwent during the first three periods has shown that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, this rose to six in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in four investigations in period 1, 28 in period 2, 52 in period 3 and seven in period 4.

## **Bridgend**

### *Project summary*

This local authority appointed a specialist debt advisor in January 2012 whose role was within both housing options and housing benefit teams, and intended to provide information events for professionals as well as financial advice, budgeting information for the targeted client group. These include those subject to under-occupation reduction and the overall benefit cap. Those identified as likely to be in hardship are targeted by the financial inclusion officer.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

No information was provided for period 4.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

#### **At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Bridgend</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	36 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	70%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	34%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	42%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	21%	20%

### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Bridgend showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that

private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in no investigations in period 1, four in period 2, five in period 3, and six in period 4.

## **Caerphilly**

### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Caerphilly is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies' report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

This local authority's approach was to appoint a Private Rented Sector (PRS) Access and Advice Co-ordinator in August 2011, to make contact with landlords to raise awareness of housing benefit changes through welfare reform, signpost affected tenants to sources of help and information and to provide an interface for the local authority. Caerphilly has sought to ensure the DHP award has been effectively utilised, and demonstrated the need for a corporate approach to developing a multi-service input to prevent homelessness.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Caerphilly has changed the way housing advice is offered, to provide a triage system: potentially homeless clients are offered an interview in one of four locations around the county borough and first stage information is gathered. An initial assessment is made as to the client's housing need and to what extent the client can be assisted. From these Pathway appointments, Caerphilly facilitates financial assistance to access PRS accommodation through their Homeless Prevention fund and transitional funds. Mortgage rescue clients, those thought to be imminently homeless or actually homeless

are provided with an appointment with a specialist officer at the time of the Pathway Interview.

Access into affordable accommodation has resulted in a major spend from Caerphilly's prevention fund pot in the first six months of the year (i.e. the local authority have exhausted the £25,000 budget in the first six months).

Caerphilly is promoting the use of the PRS through helping and supporting landlords: the local authority hosts a quarterly landlord forum and uses the caerphillyhousing.co.uk website to advertise PRS properties. The local authority distribute PRS rental lists on request and promote the use of the credit union rent accounts through as many avenues as possible.

By the end of period 4, 37 tenants had been assisted into affordable accommodation. These were clients who attended Caerphilly's Housing Pathways appointments. As well as this, 15 credit union rent accounts were opened. The number of newly identified PRS landlords provided with advice and assistance in this period was 112. Twenty-five landlords were also newly accredited during this time.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Caerphilly</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	23 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	71%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	20%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	51%	447%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	Data not supplied	20%

### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Caerphilly showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, with less than five households in this position in periods 2 and 3, falling to no households in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in 45 investigations in period 1, 13 in period 2, one in period 3 and none in period 4.

### **Cardiff**

#### *Project summary*

A Financial Support Advisor has been appointed by Cardiff Council, via the Vale of Glamorgan CAB, with input from the Vale and Cardiff Regional Collaborative Committee Income Maximisation and Budgeting Group. Their remit is to develop appropriate tools and training to assist support workers and Council advisors in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, to deliver low level debt and budgeting advice for their clients. The aim is to better equip frontline staff to tackle financial issues at an early stage to help prevent the escalation of debt and the possible loss of tenancies. The advisor is currently planning training sessions, which are due to run from November 2012 to February 2013.

#### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The financial support officer has been in post since the end of August 2013 and is currently planning and preparing for the delivery of the training courses. Therefore, there is nothing to report in this reporting period in relation to the agreed performance indicators.

#### *Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

**Cardiff**

**Wales  
Average**

Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	32 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	68%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	21%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	46%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	16%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Cardiff showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. In periods 2 and 3, the return for Cardiff showed that five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, which rose to nine in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in four cases in period 1, five in period 2, eight in period 3 and 18 investigations in period 4.

### **Carmarthenshire**

#### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Carmarthenshire is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

Providing interest free loans and minor financial incentives to owners of empty homes and landlords to encourage them to provide long-term and affordable rented accommodation. All properties provided with the assistance are

managed by our social letting agency and all rents are set at or below local housing allowance levels.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Three empty properties have been brought back into use via financial assistance – one, three-bed house let at the three-bed LHA rate, another at the two-bed LHA rate and one, two-bed house let at the two-bed LHA rate. Carmarthenshire currently has three other properties undergoing renovation and expect to submit these to social letting agencies by the end of January 2014.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	27 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	82%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	15%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	35%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	22%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for periods 1, 2 and 3 from the homelessness statistics return for Carmarthenshire showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which increased to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in two investigations in period 1, 105 in period 2, 98 in period 3 and 93 in period 4.

## **Ceredigion**

### *Project summary*

The project has been raising awareness across all local authority departments and amongst tenants and the voluntary sector. Events all over the county and in rural locations have been attended and presentations given, for example an invitation was received to attend Hafals' national conference to give a presentation. The project has been working in partnership with the homelessness/housing options section to ensure maximisation of tenants' benefit/income. The project also encompasses RSL staff training (and various departments throughout the local authority, particularly those who have a day-to-day involvement with the general public). The project continues to target affected tenants using data from the housing benefit sections, as well as making contact with PRS landlords/agents in the county.

### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

By the end of September 2013, there had been no homelessness applications received as a result of rental arrears from Welfare Reform. The number of preventions due to welfare reform advice and information was 153. The amount of PRS accommodation available for rent at LHA levels stood at 34.5%. There has also been increased participation in landlord forums.

### *Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Ceredigion</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	30 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	66%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	18%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	25%	44%

Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	18%	20%
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#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Ceredigion showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in 17 investigations in period 1, one in period 2, six in period three and one investigation in period 4.

### **Conwy**

#### *Project summary*

The project has been suspended following the loss of the officer seconded to the role. Recruitment has been delayed pending the approval of new departmental structure and job evaluation, and now there is uncertainty over funding future. No claim has been made for this year.

#### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The six monthly landlord forums and work of Conwy's Private Sector project have continued. Sharing for homeless single people to end homelessness is now an option offered. The building of relationships with landlords is feeding directly into plans for a letting agency to improve access to the private sector for those who find it difficult to get private tenancies. Landlords are being advised about due process and the help available for their tenants to sustain tenancies.

#### *Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

##### **At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Conwy</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	40 per 1,000	28 per 1,000

Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	71%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	23%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	49%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	14%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Conwy showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. In periods 2,3 and 4 there were less than five households within the local authority that were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in no investigations of homelessness in period 1, two in period 2, five in period 3 and 66 investigations during period 4.

## **Denbighshire**

#### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Denbighshire is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

The focus in this period was on the development and implementation of a triage form for identifying needs and providing support including referring to an appropriate specialist service. This is fully in use by the Council's Income Management Officers. Budgeting/Welfare Reform Workshops have also been

piloted during this period. Tenants in rent arrears and homelessness tenants were invited to attend and given one-to-one advice.

*Performance reported by the local authority for Period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

From April 2013 to July 2013, 51 Denbighshire tenants and residents were given advice, and support on debt issues and information regarding welfare reform. Fifty-three professionals from internal and external service groups attended informal training and presentations. All professionals who attended the informal sessions reported that they had a better awareness of welfare reform and felt more confident in triaging clients for the correct support needs. Regular meetings are held with Flintshire and Wrexham as part of the joint bid as well as the sharing of information and ideas. Denbighshire are looking into the provision of IT access for their tenants and how this can support people as things become "digital by default", including all future benefit claims.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Denbighshire</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	47 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	71%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	30%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	39%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	17%	20%

*Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Denbighshire showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector

tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in 23 investigations of homelessness in period 1, three in period 2, none in period 3, and no investigations in period 4.

## **Flintshire**

### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Flintshire is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

The focus for this period has been on the development and implementation of a triage pack for identifying needs and referring to appropriate services. The pack has been rolled out across Flintshire Council services. The local authority has also been seeking to empower communities and to prepare front-line practitioners to assist residents during this period of significant change. Flintshire has been co-ordinating the work of the Welfare Reform Response team, this new team has been developed by the S180 project worker, with the team offering proactive targeted holistic support to families affected by welfare reform. Flintshire continues to offer support and guidance to private landlords with low level tenancy management issues.

### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Of those who attended the welfare reform overview training, 96% reported that they now feel confident to offer initial advice and assistance to people affected by the changes. Of those who attended the 'empowering Flintshire train the trainer welfare reform day', 100% said that they now feel confident to empower their own teams or service users with welfare reform knowledge learnt.

All households supported have avoided being made homeless and being put into temporary accommodation. Planned moves through homelessness prevention have been achieved for those who cannot remain in their current property due to affordability.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	20 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	73%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	26%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	40%	447%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	19%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for periods 1, 2 and 3 from the homelessness statistics return for Flintshire showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which rose to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in no investigations of homelessness in period 1, two in period 2, four in period 3 and nine investigations in period 4.

## **Gwynedd**

### *Project summary*

The project's aims are to continue to identify and support those affected by welfare reform, to further develop links with private landlords, partner agencies, council departments (including positive input into the Private Rented Sector Improvement Plan), to promote affordable housing solutions in

both the private and social sector, and to work closely with the Housing Benefit (HB) team to promote fast tracking and effective use of the DHP fund. In response to the new social rented sector (SRS) size criteria regulations in place from April 2013, the project has consolidated the close working links already established with local SRS frontline staff to address those HB claims affected.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The Benefits Action Sub Group continues to monitor the project. Performance Indicators formulated as specified by WG are linked to maintained statistical records. The project has worked directly with 46 clients (both private and social tenancies) to date, following referral. Thirty-nine of these cases have involved direct contact with the landlord concerned. All have involved close working with the HB section. A significant (unrecorded) number of general queries have also been addressed. It is envisaged that further links and service contacts will need to be established with DWP/JCP/PS to continue to provide the service as housing costs provision moves away from local authorities. This aspect may lead to some adaptation of the plan, depending on the success/speed of universal credit roll-out information.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Gwynedd</b>	<b>Wales</b>
		<b>Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	17 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	75%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	25%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	26%	44%

Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	24%	20%
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#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Gwynedd showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which decreased to zero in periods 2, 3 and 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in one investigation of homelessness in period 1, five in period 2, and two investigations in periods 3 and 4.

### **Merthyr Tydfil**

#### *Project summary*

Since the project's inception, the aims have been to develop operational practice and co-ordinate between relevant departments and third sector parties to provide a response to welfare reform and other housing/homelessness issues. These practices have provided Merthyr with the ability to identify and alleviate housing issues and prevent homelessness through advice, assistance and support at an earlier stage than some households would approach the authority. The project has proved to be integral and invaluable to housing solutions and benefits advice, improved tenancy sustainability and prevented homelessness.

#### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The project previously scoped groups that would be vulnerable to welfare reform. This scoping is to be continued and vulnerable households contacted directly. Evidence shows that households where DHP applications could be expected are not being received although advice is being sought. The amount of DHP applications are lower than expected. Extensive work was undertaken with relevant departments, RSLs and support providers in relation to services offered by the authority. The project will now target those that may

be vulnerable and who have not yet approached the services for advice or assistance.

There have been no individuals 'presenting' as homeless due to being affected by changes in Housing Benefit, while 118 tenancies have been sustained at current accommodation address. In 22 cases homelessness was prevented by finding alternative accommodation in the private rental sector.

Sixty-six individuals have been referred to Supporting People Team / MAASH support or other specialised support services, e.g. debt, money and financial inclusion etc. Merthyr has worked with eight landlords to develop affordable accommodation for single persons within the local authority area.

The increase in the statistics represent that referral procedures are now fully implemented and operational. Additionally, an increased awareness of the service provision by support providers has led to increased referrals. It is anticipated that until March 2014 and with further targeting of households, these statistics will continue to increase.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Merthyr</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	29 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	88%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	30%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	24%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	29%	20%

*Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Merthyr showed that no households within the local authority were found to be

homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in no investigations in period 1, two in period 2, and in no investigations in periods 3 and 4.

## **Monmouthshire**

### *Project summary*

Monmouthshire and Torfaen established a joint action plan to raise awareness amongst the authorities' customers of welfare benefit reform, and to advise them about housing options, through working with key partners and other stakeholders. The plan did not involve appointing a new worker.

The project for 2013/14 has been split into individual elements. These are: engaging with PRS landlords and grow the sector across Torfaen and Monmouthshire, as well as supporting the credit union to be active across both authorities and to work with Torfaen Training to support young people into work. The final element is to further support the costs of the joint private landlord forum for Torfaen and Monmouthshire, including creating incentive packages for landlords

### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The PRS access officer has been appointed. Twenty-two young people have been supported and successfully gained accredited certificates such as CSCS, health and safety and food hygiene, thereby supporting them to become work ready. Two landlord forums have been held with over 60 private landlords attending each forum. The credit union continues to promote and allocate rent accounts to tenants in the PRS and now have an established location in Monmouthshire.

### *Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

**Monmouthshire**

**Wales  
Average**

Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	15 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	0%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	14%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	85%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	18%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Monmouthshire showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in two investigations in period 1, one in period 2, none in period 3 and in one investigation in period 4.

### **Neath Port Talbot**

#### *Project summary*

The project prioritises applications from homes with substantial adaptations, disabled couples who are unable to share a bedroom and foster carers with more than one under-occupied room. Neath Port Talbot aims to protect people who are unable to move due to the lack of suitable alternative housing and those trying to move, up until they are able to do so. The postholder is effectively working alongside the housing options officers to assist in the prevention of homelessness within the private sector. During this period, the postholder has worked closely with the HB Section and local housing providers to assist in administering DHP claims.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The work of the project is reviewed on a quarterly basis by a multi agency group attended by HB staff, Welfare Rights, Housing Options Service, the in-house Social Lettings Agency and the Supporting People Team. As a result of the project's intervention, 543 households have been assisted to maintain their tenancies.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Neath Port Talbot</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	34 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	83%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	62%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	42%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	22%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Neath Port Talbot showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, in periods 2 and 3 there were no households in this position, which increased to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in one investigation in period 1, no investigations in period 2, two in period 3 and three in period 4.

#### **Newport**

### *Project summary*

The project was to appoint a dedicated Welfare Benefits Advisor. The position would build on existing partnerships and links in order to address the needs of residents affected by welfare reform changes, in both the private rented and social rented sectors. The role will ensure the most effective use of DHP and prevention funding with the primary aim being to sustain accommodation. The role will work in partnership. Due to the fact the post has not been appointed during this reporting period and will not commence until 18th November 2013 the aforementioned elements will be applicable from this date.

### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The project would primarily look to identify:

1. the number of households prevented from being made homeless;
2. the number of households moved to alternative affordable housing who were at risk of being made homeless;
3. the number of households moved to suitable alternative housing who were affected by the welfare reform changes; and
4. the number of households who have had their benefits increased as a result of advice provided.

Due to the fact that a suitable appointment of the aforementioned post has not occurred during the first half of the financial year, the project has not been able to demonstrate any quantifiable measures as indicated. The commencement of the post will be 18<sup>th</sup> November 2013 following a successful appointment.

### *Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

#### **At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Newport</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	28 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	71%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	33%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary	18%	44%

Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	23% 20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Newport showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which increased to 15 households for periods 2 and 3, before dropping to five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in 14 investigations in period 1, 17 in period 2, 16 in period 3 and 24 investigations of homelessness during period 4.

### **Pembrokeshire**

#### *Project summary*

The project seeks to raise awareness of the changes in welfare benefits in Wales and provide advice to tenants to help them sustain their tenancies. The planned approach was to create a post that would provide direct support and advice to tenants affected by welfare benefit changes. However, a variety of issues have meant that Pembrokeshire have not been able to recruit to this post within a time period to make this viable within the grant. They are therefore looking to use the funding in a similar way to previous years, providing financial support to those attempting to access the private rented sector.

#### *Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013- to 30th September 2013*

There was no update on performance available for period 4 as there has been nobody in post for this time.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	Pembrokeshire	Wales Average
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	30 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	74%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	20%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	44%	447%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	18%	20%

*Homelessness statistics*

Data for the first three periods from the homelessness statistics return for Pembrokeshire showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which increased to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in six investigations in period 1, seven in period 2, none in period 3 and three investigations of homelessness during period 4.

## **Powys**

*Project summary*

This project was set up to second an experienced benefits officer to act as liaison officer for tenants and landlords, and to supplement the Discretionary Housing Payments fund over and above the expected Welsh Government contribution.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

No information was provided for period 4.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Powys</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	18 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	74%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	8%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	20%	447%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	16%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Powys showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. No monitoring data return was provided by this local authority to show whether private sector rent arrears were a contributory factor in any investigations of homelessness during all four periods.

## **Rhondda Cynon Taf**

### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Rhondda Cynon Taf is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

The funding is used to employ a Tenancy Sustainability Officer who works closely with the housing benefit department and Housing Solution Officers to offer advice, assistance and support to clients affected by welfare reform and who are experiencing financial difficulties and require assistance via the discretionary housing payment fund. The officer will work with the individual to offer support whilst their application is being considered and ensure the appropriate documentation is provided to ensure an effective outcome.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Within this quarter, the authority has assisted nine households which were carried over from last quarter, six bedroom cap and seven bedroom tax cases. Thirty households were helped to make a DHP application and 30 households which were in financial hardship, were provided with advice, assistance and housing options. In respect of performance measures, the authority assisted 30 households to remain in their home as a consequence of interventions and prevented homelessness for 30 households, with four enabled to access the PRS.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	35 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	0%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	28%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	46%	447%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	Not provided	20%

### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Rhondda Cynon Taf showed that less than five within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in six investigations in period 1, one in period 2, six in period 3 and seven investigations of homelessness during period 4.

### **Swansea**

#### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Swansea is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

The focus in this period has been to address the latest changes that came into effect during the period, i.e. under-occupation and benefit cap. All PRS tenants who could be potentially affected by the benefit cap were identified and contact was made in writing or by phone. Those who responded were given advice on how to gain exemption, assistance with sourcing cheaper properties, and advice/signposting for debt and budgeting. Contact was made with rent officers from RSL/local authority areas to liaise on under occupancy policy tenants looking to downsize in the PRS. Alternative methods were explored to reach out to PRS tenants whose DHP was coming to an end and to confirm service ongoing.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Contact levels were low in the first quarter, with only nine PRS cases started. This was partly due to a hiatus caused by uncertainty about the project

continuing at the end of the previous financial year. However in the second quarter, there were 33 new case starts. This in part reflected the fact that the benefit cap roll-out only hit Swansea in July/August. Consequently, there had been a lag on identification and subsequent take-up of assistance.

Initial bedroom tax take-up campaigns meant that a significant number of DHP requests were made (and approved), without long-term options being fully considered by the tenants. As these initial 13 week awards came to an end, we have seen an increase in contacts. At this stage, prevention and alternative solutions are mainly short-term holding actions and many cases are still open. However, 18 tenants have not had to leave their home and nine have found alternative more affordable accommodation.

There is still a resistance to transfer to PRS from RSL/LA properties, so landlord recruitment has been slow and may well remain so until there is a change in the mindset of those impacted by bedroom tax. However, a further six landlords have reduced rents to LHA levels following involvement of the project. The project worker has organised a second landlord forum to keep the lines of communication open with potential and existing landlords. Social tenants have also been given an opportunity to seek advice and assistance at a weekly drop-in at a new advice initiative at the civic centre. Benefit cap tenants of social landlords have not yet been signposted to the project, working instead initially with the rents team. However as initial transition DHP comes to an end, those who have yet to achieve long-term solutions, are expected to be more actively encouraged to engage. Similarly, the project is now being asked to be involved more with “bedroom tax” tenants facing eviction.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-*

*September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Wales</b>
<b>Swansea</b>	<b>Average</b>

Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	27 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	68%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	23%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	55%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	18%	20%

#### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Swansea showed that eight households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which increased to 14 in periods 2 and 3, before decreasing to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in 29 investigations in period 1, 15 in period 2, 10 in period 3 and four investigations in period 4.

## **Torfaen**

#### *Project summary*

Torfaen and Monmouthshire established a joint action plan to raise awareness amongst the authorities' customers of welfare benefit reform, and to advise them about housing options through working with key partners and other stakeholders. The plan did not involve appointing a new worker.

The project for 2013/14 has been split into individual elements. These are: engaging with PRS landlords and grow the sector across Torfaen and Monmouthshire, as well as supporting the credit union to be active across both authorities and to work with Torfaen Training to support young people into work. The final element is to further support the costs of the joint private

landlord forum for Torfaen and Monmouthshire, including creating incentive packages for landlords.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

The project officer has been appointed. Twenty-two young people have been supported and successfully gained accredited certificates such as CSCS, health and safety and food hygiene. Two landlord forums have been held with over 60 private landlords attending each forum. The credit union has continued to rent accounts and now have an established location.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Torfaen</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	21 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	0%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	16%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	102%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	21%	20%

*Homelessness statistics*

Data for periods 1, 2 and 3 from the homelessness statistics return for Torfaen showed that no households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy, which increased to less than five in period 4. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in no investigations between periods 1 and 3, then three investigations of homelessness during period 4.

## **Vale of Glamorgan**

### *Project summary*

The post is currently vacant. Delays in recruitment were incurred because of delays in the job evaluation process, and so the post is now being advertised for a second time.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

See above.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

<b>At the end of period 4:</b>	<b>Vale of Glamorgan</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	29 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	90%	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	24%	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	49%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	22%	20%

### *Homelessness statistics*

Data for all four periods from the homelessness statistics return for Vale of Glamorgan showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless, where the main reason was rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in two investigations in period 1, ten in period 2, four in period 3 and no information was provided for period 4.

## **Wrexham**

### *Project summary*

The project to mitigate the impact of housing benefit reform in Wrexham is one of seven projects which were made the subject of a detailed case study, also published on the Welsh Government website. Please follow this link to Welsh Government housing research for the case studies report.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/research/housing/?lang=en>

The main focus is to provide advice, training and support to Wrexham's housing department, third sector and tenants affected by all aspects of welfare reform. During this period the Liaison Officer has continued to develop working relationships with the third sector, these relationships are now established working relationships and the Project Officer is regularly invited to attend working groups and team meetings to give a valuable input on welfare reform. Partnership working has developed with the DWP, and the Project Officer has co-ordinated appointments for all tenants affected by the Benefit Cap and offering continued support and monitoring with the DWP's Reach for Work Team.

*Performance reported by the local authority for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

Wrexham has seen a significant increase in the number of DHP applications being received, over 400% in the same period last year, with the majority being refused due to income/expenditure information being inaccurate. The Project Officer has recently started (16th September 2013) to try and target and help support applications to increase *accepted* applications, through local surgeries based in the local Estate Offices. (More quantifiable measures from this will be known in the next reporting period.)

The number of known landlords has increased from 913 in April 2013, to 942 in September 2013. Tenants registered to the Homeswapper database, increased from 838 to 866, after a promotional drive to increase tenants proactively looking for alternative accommodation. The number of Wrexham

local authority tenants affected by under-occupancy policy has decreased from 1,487 in April 2013 to 1,235 in September 2013, this could be due to the Liaison Officer providing ongoing support to staff dealing with tenants.

*Information from the monitoring data return for period 4 (April 2013-September 2013)*

**At the end of period 4:**

	<b>Wrexham</b>	<b>Wales Average</b>
Rate of private sector tenants who are HB recipients, per 1,000 population	22 per 1,000	28 per 1,000
Proportion of tenants whose rent exceeds LHA rate	Not provided	64%
The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments	Not provided	25%
The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Percentage of total allocation for the year)	37%	44%
Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding the household's requirements	16%	20%

**Homelessness statistics**

Data for period 1 from the homelessness statistics return for Wrexham showed that less than five households within the local authority were found to be homeless due to rent arrears on a private sector tenancy. In periods 2, 3 and 4 no households were in this position. The monitoring data return from this local authority showed that private sector rent arrears were identified as a contributory factor in six investigations in period 2, five in period 3 and six investigations of homelessness during period 4 (no information was provided in period 1).

# Appendix 1: Copy of data collection return form

Homelessness Grant Programme: Collection of Data and Monitoring Information			Email Alicia Friend						
			Reporting period 4 - 1st April - 30th September 2013						
<p>This form collects data and monitoring information for the evaluation of the S180 Homelessness Grant.</p> <p>This sheet is the main data collection form. There is also a technical guidance sheet explaining how the form should be used. The technical guidance can be accessed using the hyperlink on the right.</p> <p>The box on the right shows the proportion of data entry cells that contain data. Please do not submit your form unless this cell shows a figure of 100%.</p>									
<p><b>Local Authority</b> _____  <small>(Please enter the name of your authority)</small></p> <p><b>Please provide contact details for your authority below. This will help us to direct any queries to the correct contact.</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name _____</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telephone number _____</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E-Mail address _____</td> <td>X</td> </tr> </table> <p><small>(Form completed by Main contact for data queries)</small></p>			Name _____	X	Telephone number _____	X	E-Mail address _____	X	<a href="#">Go to Technical Guidance</a> 0%
Name _____	X								
Telephone number _____	X								
E-Mail address _____	X								
 <p>Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government</p> <p><i>Guidance on interpretation of questions is available as a separate Q&amp;A document. Please contact Alicia Friend if you don't think you have the latest version. If an answer is unknown or not applicable please leave the response box blank and add a suitable comment.</i></p>									
<b>Quantitative Measures</b>		<b>Comments</b>							
1.1	Number of all homeless households for which decisions were taken (not including households which were not homeless, or which were ineligible) where the investigation revealed that rent arrears were part of the reason for homelessness (private sector tenancies).	X							
1.2	<p>(i) Total tenants at the last day of the reporting period.</p> <p>(ii) Where weekly rent exceeded LHA. At the end of the reporting period.</p> <p>Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent exceeded LHA.</p> <p>(iii) Number of tenancies where the landlord was in receipt of direct housing benefit payments at 30/09/2013.</p> <p>The rate of tenancies where the landlord received direct payment of housing benefit payments at 30/09/2013.</p>	X							
		X	Must be less than 1.2 (i).						
		X	Must be less than 1.2 (i)						
1.3	<p>The total amount of Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Discretionary Housing Payment allocated to this Local Authority for the financial year 2013-14.</p> <p>Have you topped up your allocation from other funding sources? (If yes, please state sources in comments area).</p> <p>The amount of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period (i.e. April 2013 - September 2013).</p> <p>The percentage of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment allocation that was spent during the reporting period. (Equals the amount spent during the period as a percentage of half the allocation for the financial year.)</p>	X							
		X							
		X	Must be less than 1.3 (i)						
1.4	Number of private sector landlords provided with services and advice through this project during this reporting period, for the first time. (Landlords receiving personalised mail or contact only. Do not include generic publicity or events).	X							
1.5	<p>The number of private sector tenants provided with services and advice through this project during this reporting period, for the first time. (Tenants receiving personalised mail or contact only. Do not include generic publicity or events).</p> <p>Number of tenants in social rented dwellings who are in receipt of housing benefit.</p> <p>(i) Total tenants at the last day of the reporting period.</p> <p>(ii) Tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than their housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding</p> <p>Proportion of tenants for whom weekly rent is higher than housing benefit, due to the number of bedrooms exceeding</p>	X							
		X							
		X							
<b>Qualitative measures</b>									
2.1	Of the number of claimants who were found to have existing adaptations in their home, what percentage were successful in claiming DHP? Of those who were unsuccessful, what were the most common reasons for refusal? (650 character limit applies)								
2.2	How does your local authority treat disability related benefits when considering DHP claims? If these benefits are considered as income, what efforts does your local authority take to identify and therefore disregard disability related benefits which may be committed to other liabilities for which the money was intended, (e.g. Motability schemes, provision of care, increased laundry costs, higher heating bills, accessible taxi fares costs, equipment, essential dietary requirements costs, special clothing (because of wear and tear), internet costs, therapies etc?) (650 character limit applies)								
<b>Further details</b>									
3.1	Please use the box below to briefly summarise the approach of your project and its principal elements during this period. (650 character limit applies)								
3.2	Please use the box below to provide further performance information about your project. Please use the evaluation approach you identified in Part II (iii) in your bid and identify any changes. Quantifiable measures must be included. Figures and other evidence must be related to this reporting period only. (1950 character limit applies)								

## **Glossary of abbreviations**

CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
HB	Housing Benefit
JCP	JobCentre Plus
KAS	Knowledge and Analytical Services
LA	Local Authority
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
PRS	Private Rented Sector
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SRS	Social Rented Sector
WISERD	Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association