

CUT THE BENEFIT C*AP!



Haringey, Enfield, Bromley and Croydon have been chosen by the government to be used as a testing ground for their Overall Benefit Cap. People living with three or more dependent children will be most likely to be affected, facing cuts in housing benefit of up to £400 a week. But it will affect many others too. What can you do if you are affected, and what can we all do to resist this attack on our community?

The cap is part of the government's welfare reforms, along with Universal Credit, which has now been delayed until Autumn. The government claims that the benefit cap is fairer to taxpayers. They have set it at a level that is meant to reflect the average earnings of a family in work. But their sums fail to take into account that many of these same working families claim other benefits on top of their earnings. Usually, it's because of higher housing benefit, which just goes straight to landlords anyway.

The benefit cap also makes no allowances for the size of a family or where in the country you live. It will hit larger families in urban areas, particularly London, the hardest. If landlords don't lower their rents significantly, and if there are no changes to the cap, then it could mean thousands of families being forced to move out of Haringey to live in Bradford, Birmingham or Stoke.

If we want to stop this mass eviction from London, we can try to disrupt this trial in Haringey and force the government to change its plans. At the same time, we need to find a way to make landlords lower their rents.

BENEFIT CAP BASICS

- £500 per week for couples or people with dependent children -
- £350 per week for single people with no dependent children -
- It includes JSA, Income Support, ESA, HB, Child Benefit -
- It does not include: DLA, Pension Credit -

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE AFFECTED?

When you find out what your assessment is, you can request a detailed benefit calculation from the DWP. You may then be able to appeal the assessment. If a lot of people do this, the system could grind to a halt.

If you stand to lose some of your housing benefit or are threatened with eviction because of non-payment of rent, don't panic or suffer in isolation. Get in touch with HSG or Haringey Housing Action Group (details further down), for advice and support, and to meet other people in a similar situation.

In addition, you should:

- Apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from the council to cover the shortfall.
- Check if you can claim Working Tax Credit - WTC claimants are exempt from the benefits cap. You may also be able to claim WTC if you are self-employed.
- If you are a private tenant, why not ask your landlord to reduce your rent.
- If you're in temporary accommodation, the council have said that they will not evict anyone who doesn't pay their rent because of the benefit cap.

Whatever your situation, if you want to stop the cap, then get in touch and get organised!

If you are not affected by the benefit cap, pass this leaflet onto people that are, and support anybody that is – we will all know somebody affected.

FOR SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Haringey Housing Action Group
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www.haringeyhousingaction.org.uk

Haringey Solidarity Group
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