



Benefit Cap

Data to November 2016 *

Quarterly

Great Britain
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Official Statistics

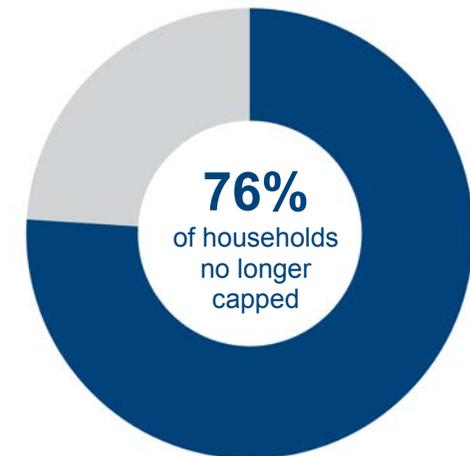
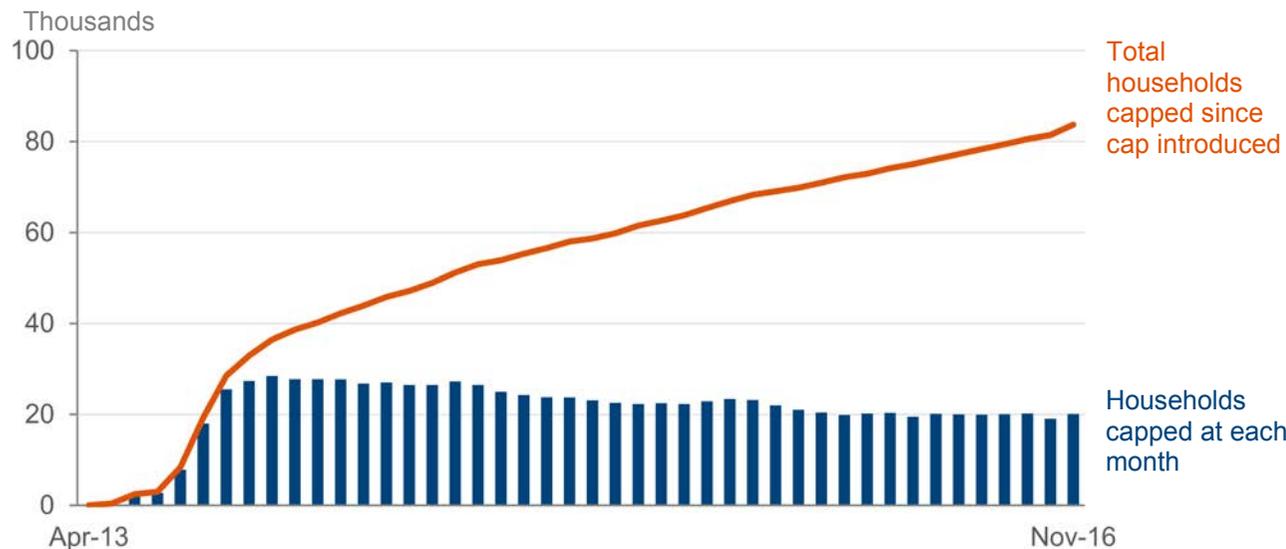
There is a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can get. This is called the benefit cap.

Main stories

- 84,000 households have had their benefits capped between 15 April 2013, when the benefit cap was introduced, and November 2016.
- The full impact of the lower benefit cap levels introduced from 7 November 2016 is not yet reflected in the November 2016 statistics.

20,000 capped households at November 2016

64,000 households no longer capped at November 2016



* Each Local Authority has a schedule to extract and return their data to DWP over a four week rolling period, which does not necessarily correspond to a calendar month. November 2016 data has typically been extracted between 17 October and 10 November 2016, depending on the Local Authority, and therefore only contains data up to that extraction date. This means that the statistics do not show the number of capped cases on a particular date but over a monthly cycle.

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

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What you need to know

What is the benefit cap?

The benefit cap is a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can get.

This report contains official statistics on households that have had their benefits capped from when the cap was introduced, in April 2013, to November 2016.

From 7 November 2016 the [cap levels were lowered, and different cap levels for households inside and outside Greater London were introduced](#).

The cap applies to the combined income from benefits including:

- the main out-of-work benefits (Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, and Employment and Support Allowance except when the Support Component is in payment);
- Housing Benefit;
- Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit;
- other benefits such as Incapacity Benefit and Bereavement Allowance.

For most capped households the benefit cap is applied by reducing the amount of Housing Benefit (HB) they receive, so their total benefits no longer add up to more than the cap level. This report contains official statistics on these households.

The benefit cap can also be applied through [Universal Credit](#) (UC). UC is still being rolled out across the country and for different household groups, meaning that the number of households who may have had their UC capped is estimated to be small. These households are not included in this report.

How is it measured?

The main source of benefit cap data is the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE). This is a monthly electronic scan of claimant level data from Local Authority (LA) computer systems. SHBE includes the weekly amount that the HB of a household has been capped by, which is used to produce this analysis.

Data on households who have (previously) been capped that are no longer capped is linked to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and DWP benefits data to determine why households are no longer capped.

This report contains 4 measures:

- **Point-in-time caseload** counts the number of capped households each month.
- **Cumulative caseload** counts the overall number of households that have been capped from the introduction of the benefit cap to the latest month available.
- **On-flows** are the number of newly capped households each month.
- **Off-flows** are the difference between the two caseload figures, and show the number of previously capped households no longer capped at the latest month available.

Number of capped households

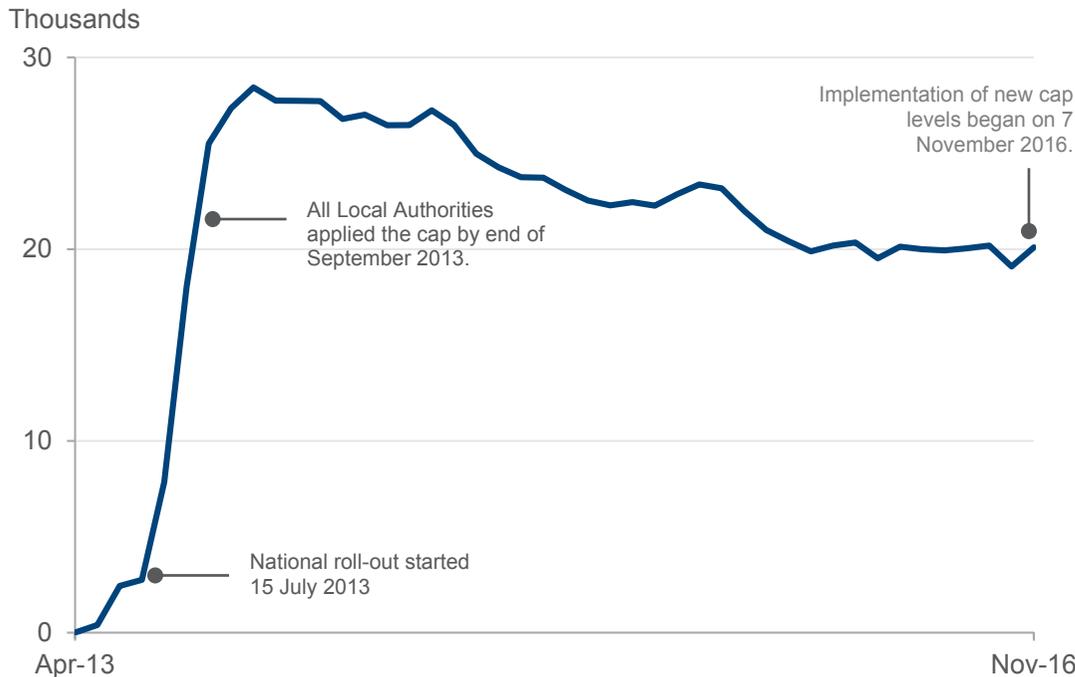
Lower benefit cap levels came into effect from 7 November 2016. They were applied to all households that were already capped on 7 November and rolled-out to newly affected households from 7 November 2016 to 20 January 2017 by Local Authority (LA).

The lower cap levels have increased the number of households in scope for the benefit cap. **The full impact of the lower cap levels is not yet reflected in the November 2016 caseload figures, which have only increased slightly compared to the previous quarter.**

This set of statistics does not yet fully reflect the impact of the lower cap levels for two reasons. Firstly, the phased implementation of the new cap levels to newly capped households. LAs across Great Britain are implementing the cap over a 12-week period so many LAs will only have implemented the new cap levels for newly capped households after November 2016. Secondly, the way in which LAs extract and return their data to DWP. Each LA has a schedule to extract and return their data to DWP over a four week rolling period, which does not necessarily correspond to a calendar month. For example, November 2016 data has typically been extracted between 17 October and 10 November 2016, depending on the LA, and therefore only contains data up to that extraction date. This means that the statistics do not show the number of capped cases on a particular date but over a monthly cycle. Many LAs extracted their data for November 2016 before the changes to cap levels were implemented so these statistics do not yet show an increase in the number of capped households linked to the new cap levels.

The full impact of the lower cap levels is not yet reflected in the caseload figures

Capped households at each month, 15 April 2013 to November 2016



20,000 households had their Housing Benefit capped at November 2016. This is a small increase of less than 1%, or 60 households, on the previous quarter (August 2016). This is because over the last quarter slightly more households have had their benefits capped for the first time (4,300) than have moved off the benefit cap (4,200).

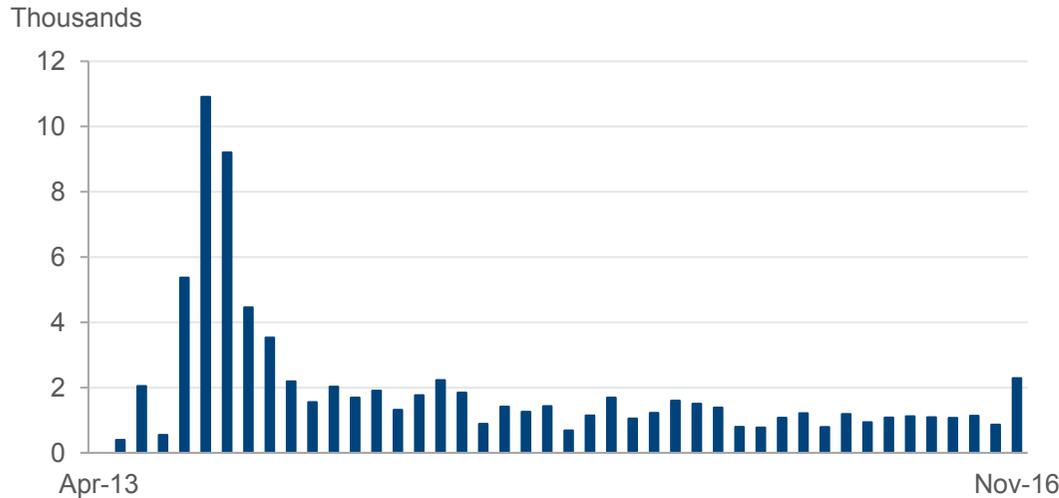
The benefit cap was introduced from 15 April 2013 in Bromley, Croydon, Enfield and Haringey LAs. All other LAs applied the cap from 15 July 2013 to the end of September 2013.

See Excel [Data table 3](#) or [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data.

Newly capped households

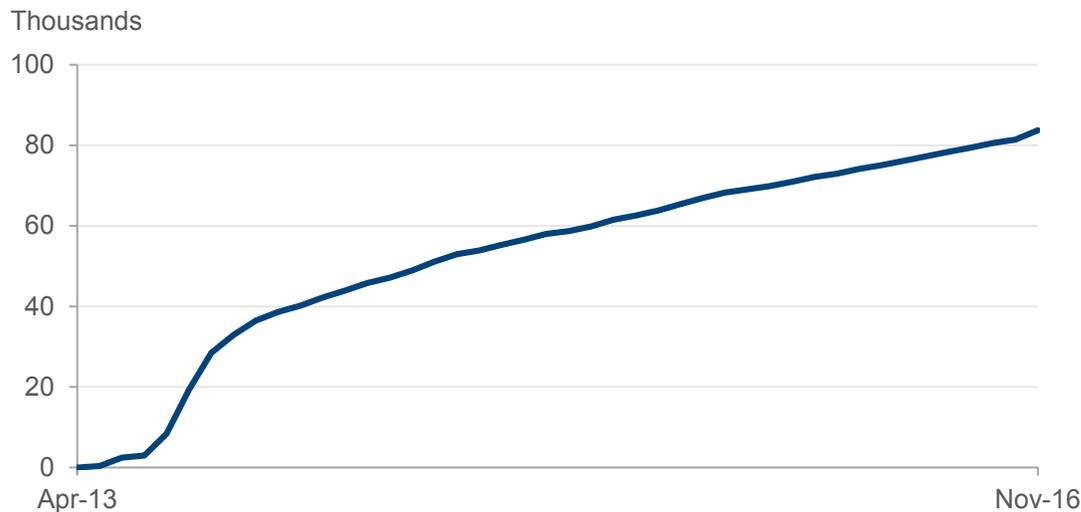
The number of newly capped households is at its highest level since December 2013

Newly capped households at each month, 15 April 2013 to November 2016



2,300 households had their benefits capped for the first time in November 2016. As expected, this is higher than any monthly on-flow since the initial implementation phases of the benefit cap and is due to the start of the roll-out (from 7 November) of lower cap levels to households in-scope for the first time.

Cumulative capped households, 15 April 2013 to November 2016



The cumulative caseload of households that have had their Housing Benefit capped since the introduction of the benefit cap continued to rise over the last quarter, to 84,000.

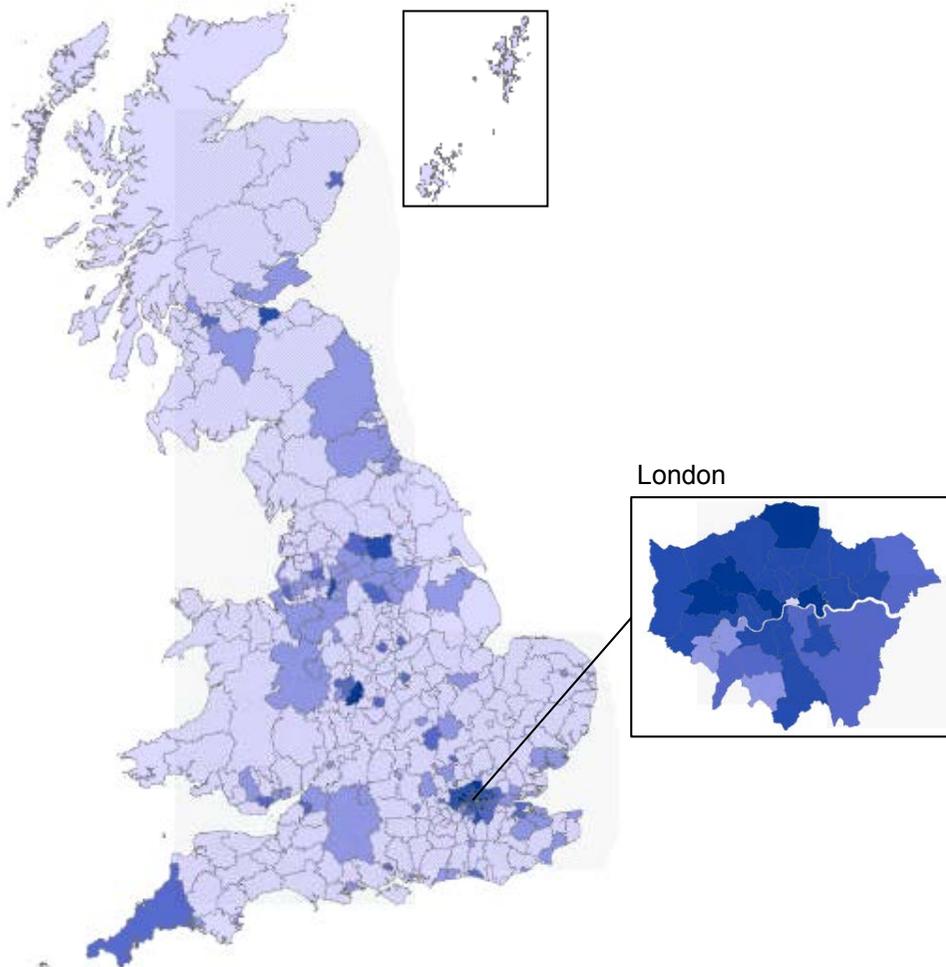
The increase in newly capped households in November 2016 caused the cumulative caseload to grow slightly more than in previous quarters. The cumulative caseload increased by 5.4%, or 4,300 households, from August 2016, compared to increases of around 3,000 households each quarter over the previous year.

See [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data.

Where capped households are

London has the most capped households

Cumulative capped households by Local Authority, 15 April 2013 to November 2016



From the introduction of the benefit cap to November 2016, 44% of capped households have been in London. Only 2 of the top 20 Local Authorities (LAs) with the highest cumulative number of capped households are outside London – Birmingham and Edinburgh. This is likely to be a reflection of higher housing costs in London.

From 7 November 2016 [cap levels were lowered, and different cap levels for households inside and outside Greater London were introduced](#), replacing the single cap level that existed previously. Any effects of these changes on the geographical distribution of capped households is not yet reflected in these statistics due to the phased implementation of the new cap levels to newly capped households and the way in which LAs extract and return their data to DWP (see [Page 3](#) for more details).

This map shows the cumulative number of capped households by LA from 15 April 2013 to November 2016.

The darker areas of the map are LAs with higher numbers of capped households, while the lighter areas are LAs with fewer capped households.

See Excel [Data table 1](#) or [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data.

Where you live

Find more statistics about capped households in your LA on our [interactive map](#), which is updated on a yearly basis and includes data up to May 2016. Key statistics for a LA can be viewed by clicking on the relevant area of the map.

For further information on supported browsers, please visit the following website:
<http://doc.arcgis.com/en/arcgis-online/reference/browsers.htm>

More information

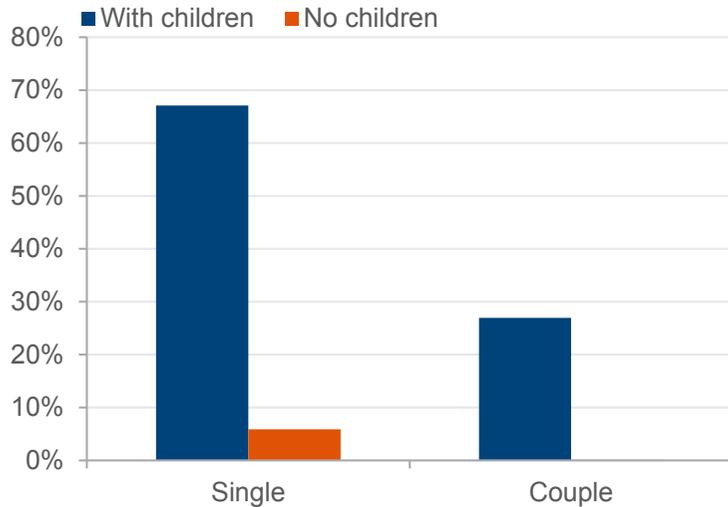
The cumulative caseload is based on the lead claimant. The addition or loss of a partner within a household (or a household moving to a different LA and still subject to the cap) would not be counted as an additional benefit cap case where the lead claimant remains the same and there is no break in claim.

The geographical region or LA reflects the initial LA in which the cap was applied to that household.

The family make-up of capped households

Two-thirds of capped households are single-parent families

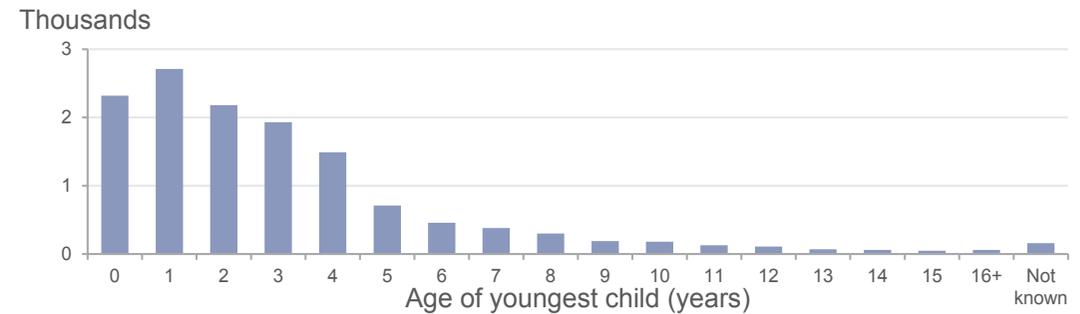
Percentage of capped households by family type, at November 2016



67% (13,000) of capped households are single-parent families.

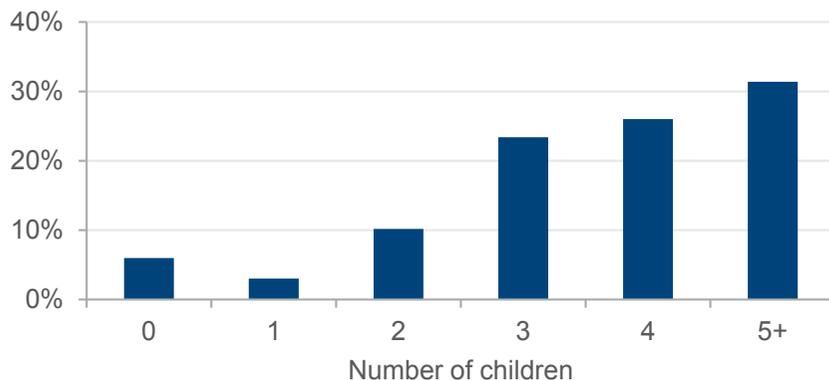
79% (11,000) of single-parent capped households have at least one child aged under 5 years, including 17% (2,300) with a child aged under 1 year at November 2016.

Single-parent capped households by age of youngest child, at November 2016



94% of capped households include children

Percentage of capped households by number of children, at November 2016



63% (13,000) of capped households had between 1 and 4 children and 31% (6,300) had 5 or more children.

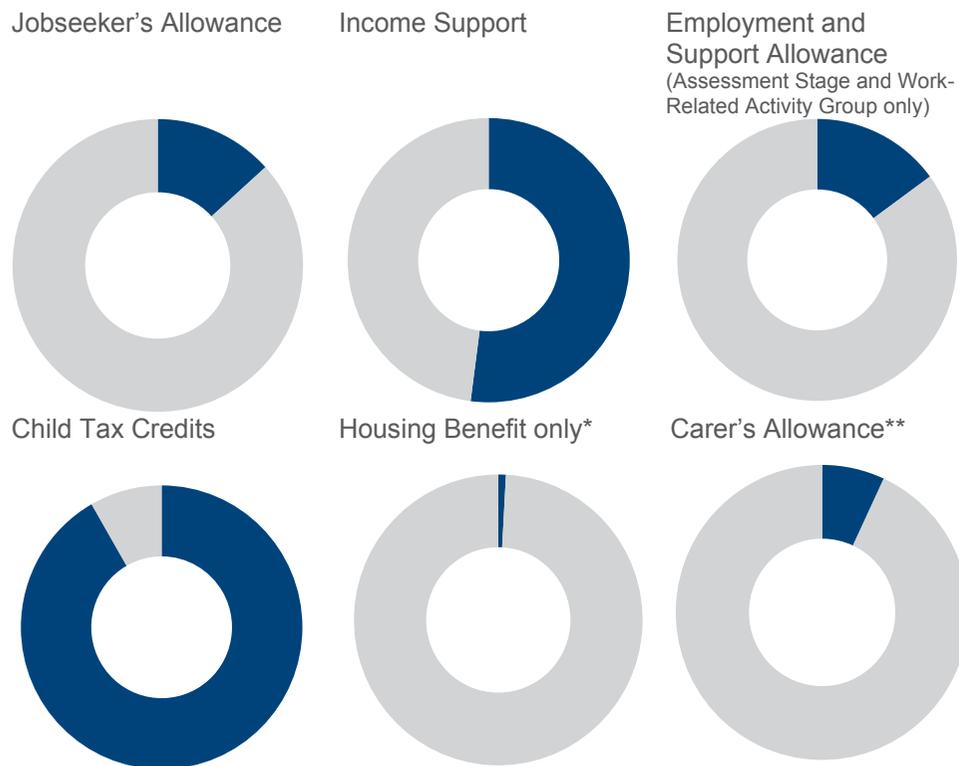
Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits are both in-scope for the benefit cap, so families with more children, in receipt of higher amounts of these benefits are more likely to exceed the cap limit and be capped.

See Excel [Data table 2](#) or [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data on the family make-up of capped households. See Excel [Data table 5](#) for full data on the age of youngest child, with data on the cumulative caseload by family type and age of youngest child too.

Benefits claimed by capped households

Capped households claim a range of benefits

Capped households by benefit take-up, at November 2016



Dark blue sections represent the proportion of capped households in receipt of each benefit.

More information

Capped households can be in receipt of multiple benefits. The benefit cap applies to a household's combined income from a range of working age benefits. This means that a household can be included in multiple categories shown here and therefore percentages do not sum to 100%. More information on benefits that are in-scope for the benefit cap and those that are exempt can be found in the [Background Information and Methodology](#) document.

Analysis is based on benefit claims by the lead claimant in a household, and where applicable, their partner.

At November 2016:

- 13% of capped households were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.
- 52% were claiming Income Support.
- 15% were claiming Employment and Support Allowance (Assessment Stage and Work-Related Activity Group only).
- 92% were claiming Child Tax Credits.
- * 1% were claiming Housing Benefit only from the following benefits in-scope for the cap: Housing Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Bereavement Allowance, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit.
- ** 7% were claiming Carer's Allowance. Households in receipt of Carer's Allowance or Guardian's Allowance became exempt from the benefit cap on 7 November 2016. The exemption was applied to all households that were already capped on 7 November 2016 but it is not yet fully reflected in these statistics due to the way in which LAs extract and return their data to DWP (see [Page 3](#) for more details).

See Excel [Data table 6](#) for full data.

The financial impact of being capped

The lower benefit cap levels introduced from 7 November 2016 mean that households could now have their Housing Benefit capped by a larger amount each week, to meet these new levels.

The full impact of the lower cap levels on the weekly amounts that households are capped by is not yet reflected in the November 2016 figures due to the phased implementation of the new cap levels to newly capped households and the way in which LAs extract and return their data to DWP (see [Page 3](#) for more details), although there has been a slight upward shift in weekly cap amounts compared to the previous quarter.

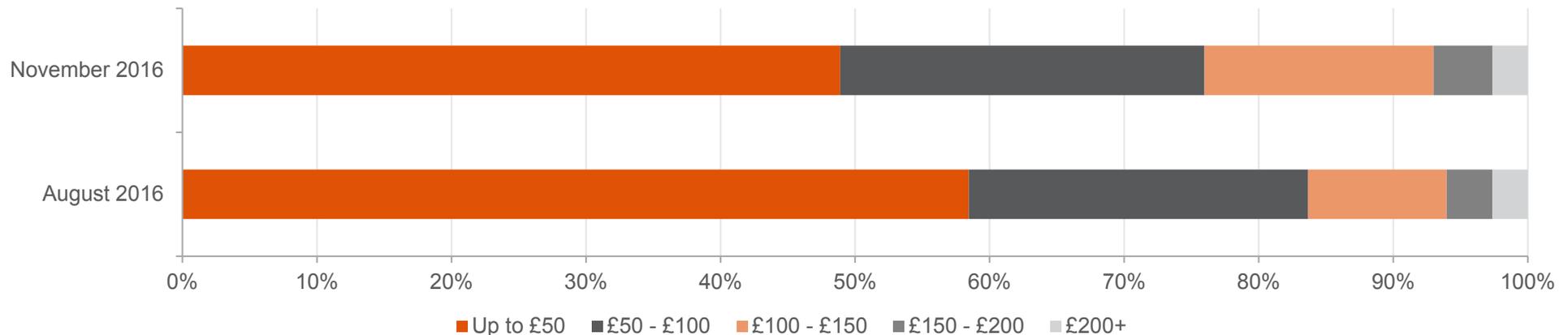
49% (9,800) of capped households were capped by £50 or less a week at November 2016. This is a decrease of 1,900 households on the previous quarter (August 2016). The proportion of capped households capped by more than £50 has increased, most noticeably in the group capped by between £100 and £150 a week; 17% (3,400) of capped households were capped by £100 - £150 at November 2016 compared to 10% (2,100) of capped households last quarter.

3% (530) of capped households were capped by more than £200 a week, including 0.6% (120) capped by more than £300 a week.

See Excel [Data table 2](#) or [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data.

49% of capped households capped by £50 or less a week at November 2016 - down from 58% of households at August 2016

Capped households by weekly amount capped, at August and November 2016



More information

From 7 November 2016 [cap levels were lowered, and different cap levels for households inside and outside Greater London were introduced](#), replacing the single cap level that existed previously.

Moving off the cap

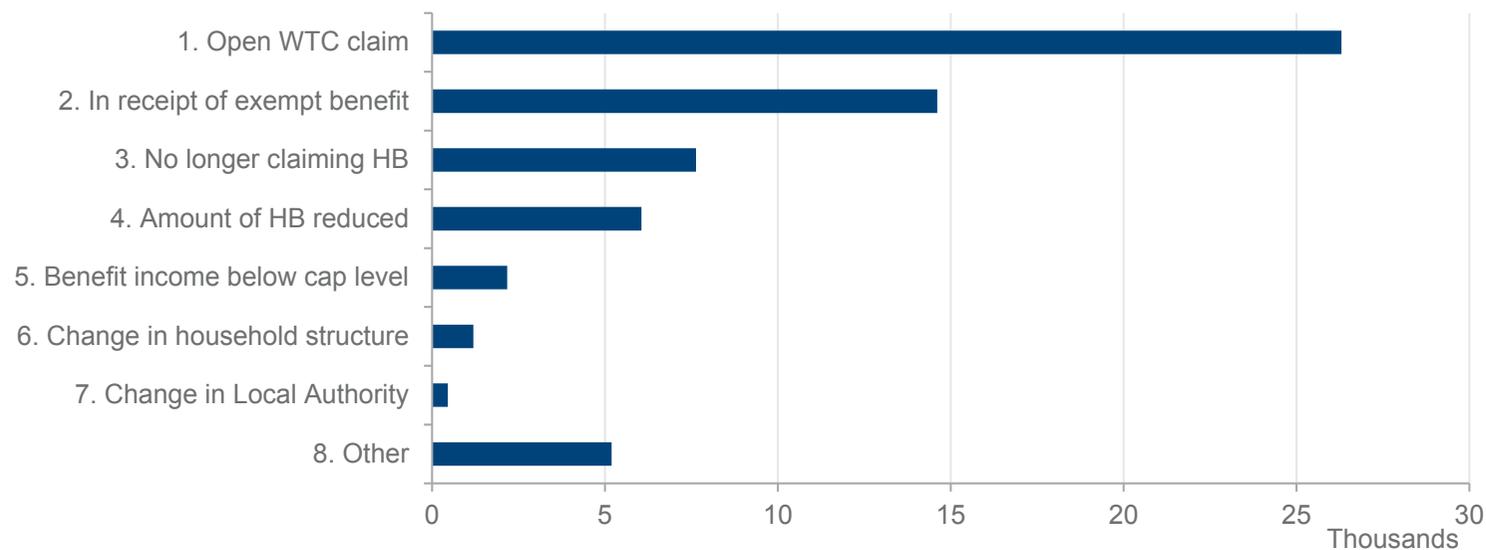
76% (64,000) of households that have (previously) been capped are no longer capped at November 2016. Of these, 26,000 are exempt with an open Working Tax Credit (WTC) claim, indicating that they have moved into work. This is 41% of those no longer capped.

For single parent households with a child aged under 5 years, 66% who have (previously) been capped are no longer capped at November 2016. Of these, 44% are exempt with an open WTC claim.

See Excel [Data table 4](#) or [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data.

41% of households that were capped are in work

Off-flows from the cap by household outcome, at November 2016



More Information

The reason a household is no longer capped may change after a household has moved off the cap. The outcome shows this reason as at November 2016.

Due to the implementation of the new cap levels and the way in which we calculate if a household's benefit income is below the cap level, a number of households which we would expect to be included in the "Benefit income below cap level" group are showing in the "Other" category this quarter. This issue should be resolved in future publications once the roll-out of the new cap levels is complete and we hold data from all Local Authorities reflecting this.

There may be several reasons why a household is no longer capped. These reasons are ranked (from 1 to 8, as in the chart above) and only the top-most reason that is applicable to each household is counted. More information on how the ranking was developed and is applied is in the [Background Information and Methodology](#) document.

About these statistics

Data sources

The main source of benefit cap data is the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE). SHBE is a monthly electronic scan of claimant level data direct from Local Authority computer systems. SHBE includes a field that contains the weekly amount that the Housing Benefit of a household has been capped by. This marker is central to the production of this analysis.

Data on those households who have (previously) been capped that are no longer capped is linked to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and DWP benefits data to determine why households are no longer capped.

The age of the youngest child dependant in a household is calculated by merging data held on HMRC child benefit systems to housing benefit data on capped households.

Data coverage and reporting month

Local Authorities extract and return their data to DWP over a four week rolling period based on an extraction schedule for each Local Authority. For example, the latest "November 2016" data shown here has typically been extracted between 17 October and 10 November 2016. Each Local Authority may extract their data up to a week before the date it is scheduled to be returned to DWP. Consequently, the statistics do not directly relate to a particular date but rather show the position of capped cases over a monthly cycle.

Definition of a household

For the purposes of the benefit cap policy and hence this analysis, a household is defined as "one or two adults (living together as a couple) plus any dependant children they are living with." This may also be termed a 'benefit unit'. This differs from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) who define a household as one person alone; or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area. A household by the ONS definition may contain multiple benefit units.

There are a small number of cases where an individual / household has more than one Housing Benefit claim, for these cases, only the most recent claim is reported on.

Changes to the benefit cap from 7 November 2016

The cap amounts and the benefits that are affected by the cap changed from 7 November 2016.

The Summer Budget 2015 announced changes to the level of the benefit cap to £20,000 a year (£13,400 for single adults with no children) nationally or £23,000 a year (£15,410 for single adults with no children) in Greater London (the 32 London boroughs and the City of London).

Claimants entitled to Carer's Allowance or Guardian's Allowance also became exempt from the benefit cap when these wider changes were introduced. This was announced in Parliament during the passage of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

The changes in cap levels were rolled-out across Local Authorities from 7 November 2016 to 20 January 2017. Due to this phased implementation of the new levels, and the way in which monthly data on capped households is returned to DWP over a four week rolling period, the main impact of these changes will not be seen in the Benefit Cap Official Statistics until May 2017, when data to February 2017 will first be published (see [Page 3](#) for more details).

Universal Credit

Statistics in this report only include households that have had their Housing Benefit capped. The benefit cap can also be applied through Universal Credit (UC). UC is still being rolled out across the country and for different household groups, meaning that the number of households who may have had their UC capped is estimated to be small. We are exploring the feasibility of publishing new experimental statistics on the number of households capped under both UC Live Service and UC Full Service roll-out. Presently, the data sources are not sufficiently robust to support publication of statistics but further work is underway to develop and quality-assure statistics on UC capped households.

Where to find out more

This document and Excel summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-november-2016>

Use Stat-Xplore to create your own tables and further breakdowns of these statistics: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

View our interactive map: <http://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=9cfbe6a929db475587f8829cbc4bf1e5>

Older releases can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/benefit-cap-statistics>

Background Information for the statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-cap-statistics-background-information-and-methodology>

Statistics on Housing Benefit caseload can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/housing-benefit-caseload-statistics>

More information on the benefit cap can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap/overview>