

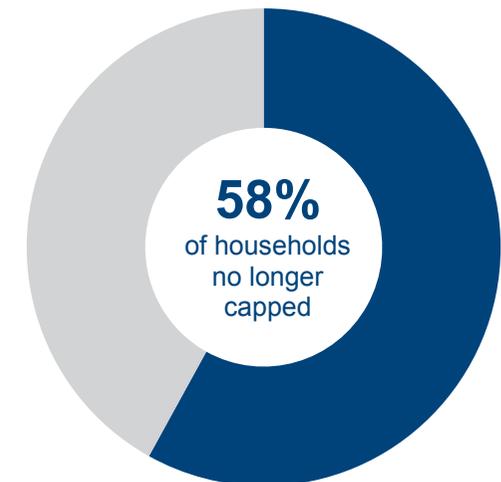
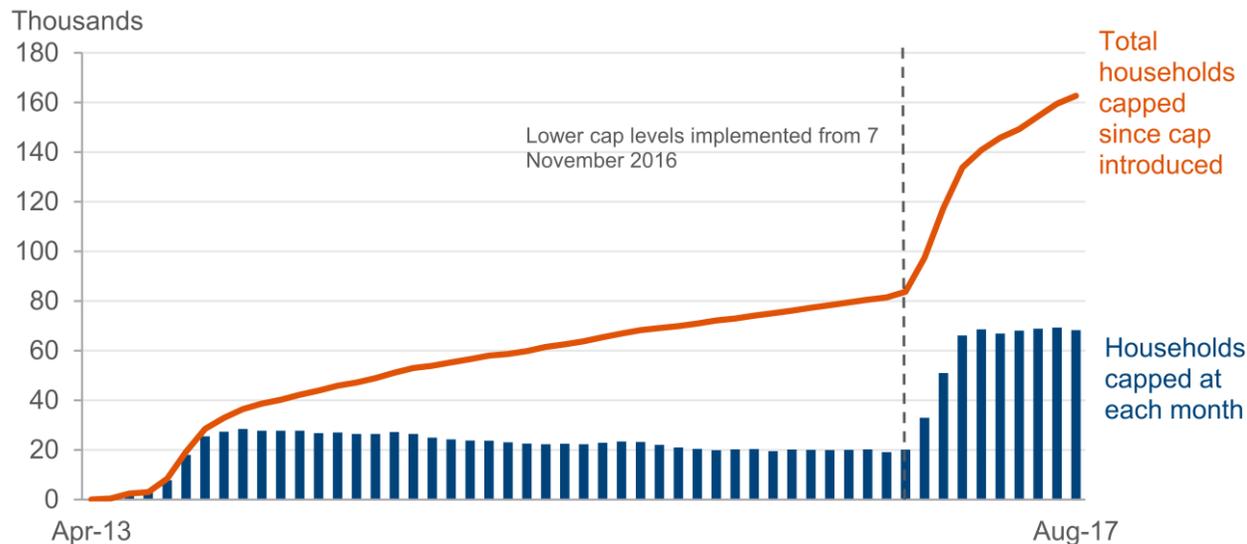
There is a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can get. This is called the benefit cap.

## Main stories

- 160,000 households had their benefits capped between 15 April 2013, when the benefit cap was introduced, and August 2017.
- The number of capped households has increased following the implementation of lower cap levels from 7 November 2016.

**68,000 households capped** at August 2017

**94,000 households no longer capped** at August 2017



\* 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. August 2017 data has typically been extracted between 24 July and 17 August 2017, 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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Published 2 November 2017

Next edition on 1 February 2018

## 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 August 2017.

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 the number of households capped under UC is small in comparison to the number of households that have had their HB capped. [We plan to start publishing a limited set of new experimental statistics on UC capped households](#) alongside the existing HB benefit cap statistics from February 2018, subject to development and quality assurance.

### 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.

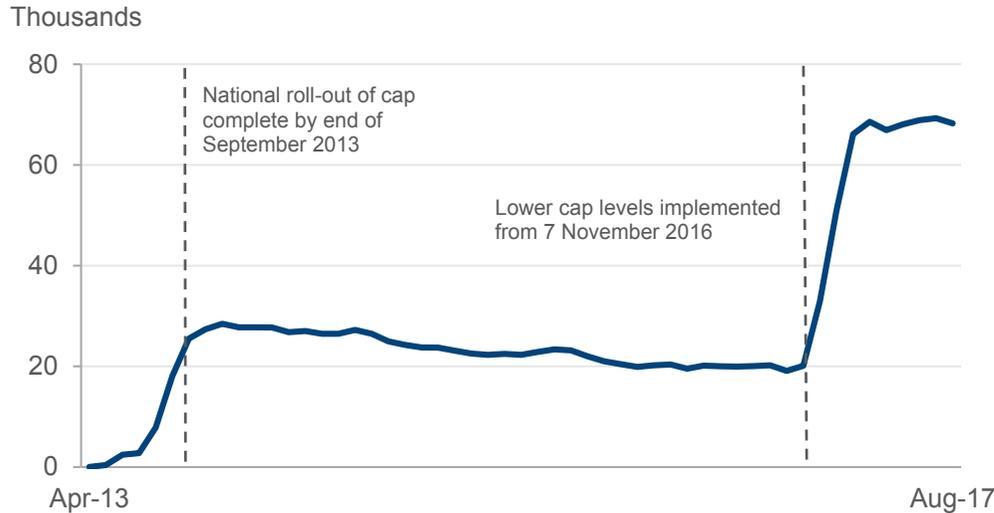
This report contains 4 measures:

- **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.

# How many households are capped

## Lower cap levels have increased the number of capped households

Capped households at each month, 15 April 2013 to August 2017



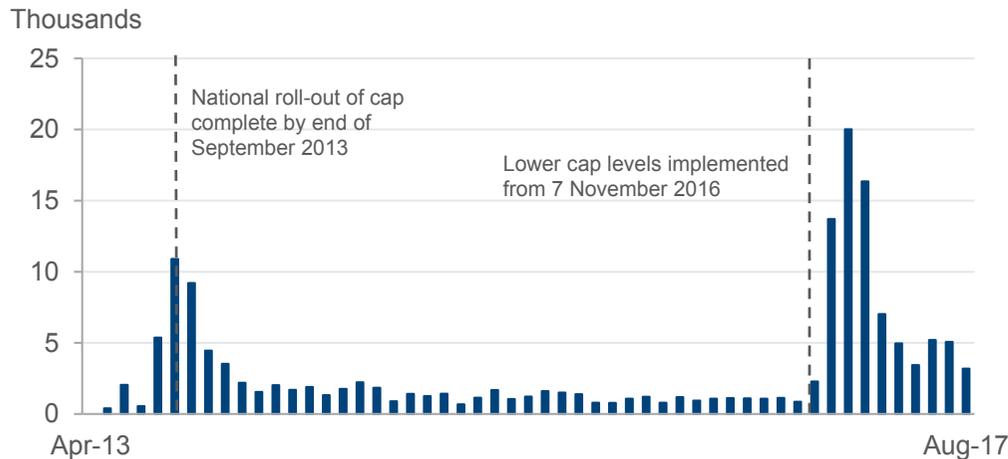
68,000 households had their Housing Benefit capped at August 2017. This is a small increase of less than 1%, or 190 households, on the previous quarter (May 2017). The increase is due to slightly more households having their benefits capped for the first time this quarter compared to the number of households that have moved off the benefit cap.

New, lower cap levels were initially applied to all households that were already capped on 7 November 2016 and subsequently rolled-out to newly affected households from 7 November 2016 to 20 January 2017 by Local Authority (LA). Due to the timings of the extraction and return of data by LAs to DWP, data for March 2017 was the first to include households newly capped due to the lower cap levels for all LAs.

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

## 13,000 households newly capped in the last quarter

Newly capped households at each month, 15 April 2013 to August 2017



13,000 households had their benefits capped for the first time this quarter (June 2017 to August 2017).

This is 2,000 households less than last quarter (March 2017 to May 2017), when 15,000 households had their benefits capped for the first time.

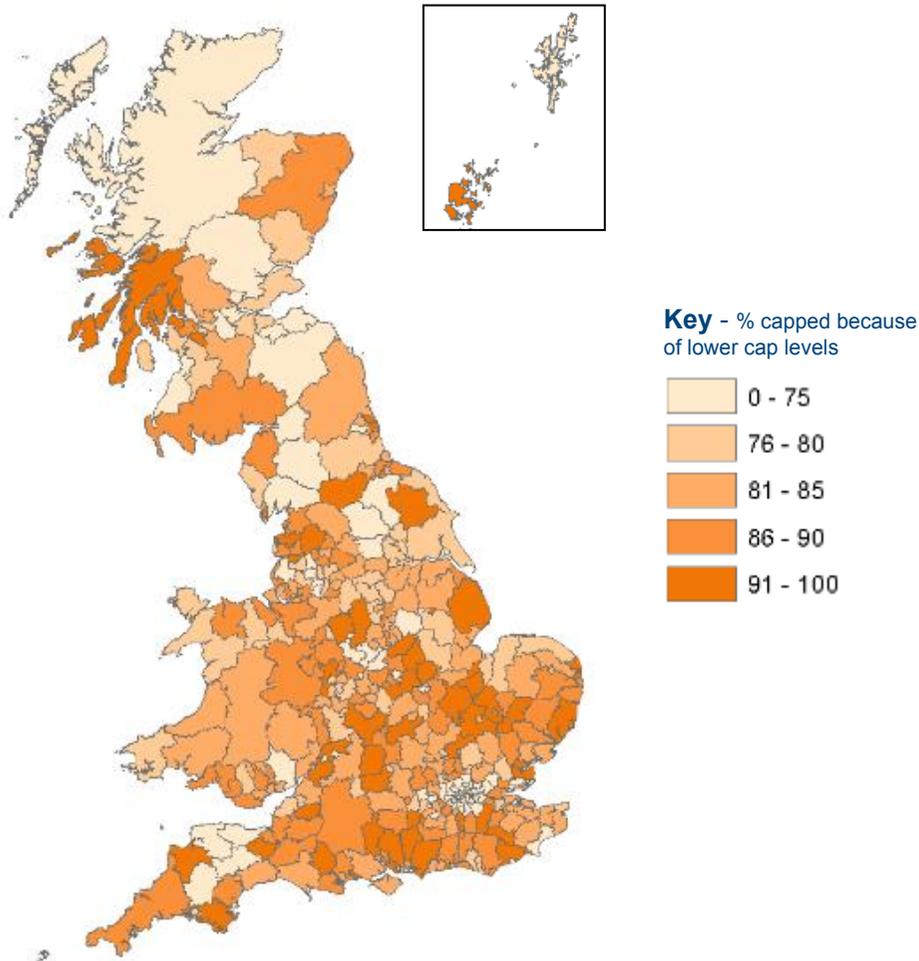
The number of households capped for the first time between June and August 2017 is still higher than before the new cap levels were rolled-out.

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

# The impact of the lower cap levels

## 53,000 capped households are capped because of the introduction of lower cap levels

Percentage of capped households capped because of introduction of lower cap levels by Local Authority (LA), at August 2017

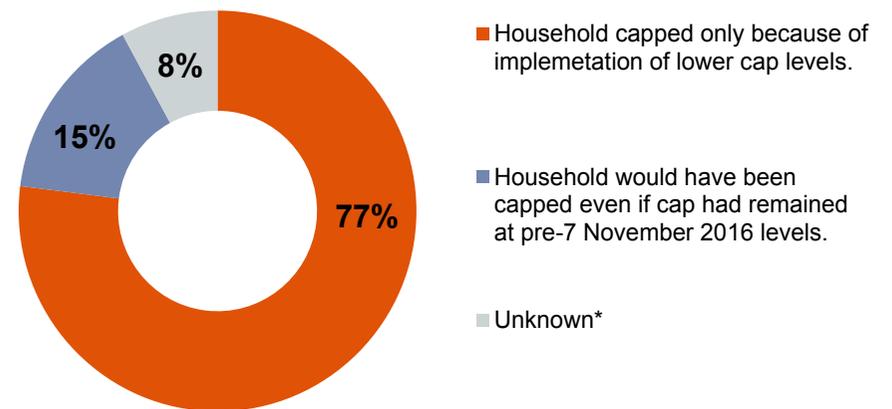


This map shows the percentage of capped households capped only because of the introduction of lower cap levels by LA, as at August 2017. These households would not have been capped if the cap levels had remained at the pre-7 November 2016 levels.

The darker the LA on the map the higher the percentage of capped households capped only because of the new lower cap levels.

Across Great Britain 77% (53,000) of households capped at August 2017 were capped only because of the introduction of the lower cap levels. 15% (10,000) of capped households would have been capped anyway, regardless of the lowering of the cap levels.

### Percentage of capped households capped because of introduction of lower cap levels, at August 2017



See [Data table 7](#) for full data by LA and details of the methodology used for this analysis.

### More information

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

\* The amount a household has been capped by at August 2017 is used to determine if a household would have been capped if the cap levels had remained at the pre-7 November 2016 levels or is only capped because of the introduction of the lower cap levels. For some households it is not possible to reliably determine if the household would have been capped under the previous higher levels; these households are shown as 'Unknown'. See [Data Table 7](#) for a full explanation of the methodology used for this analysis.

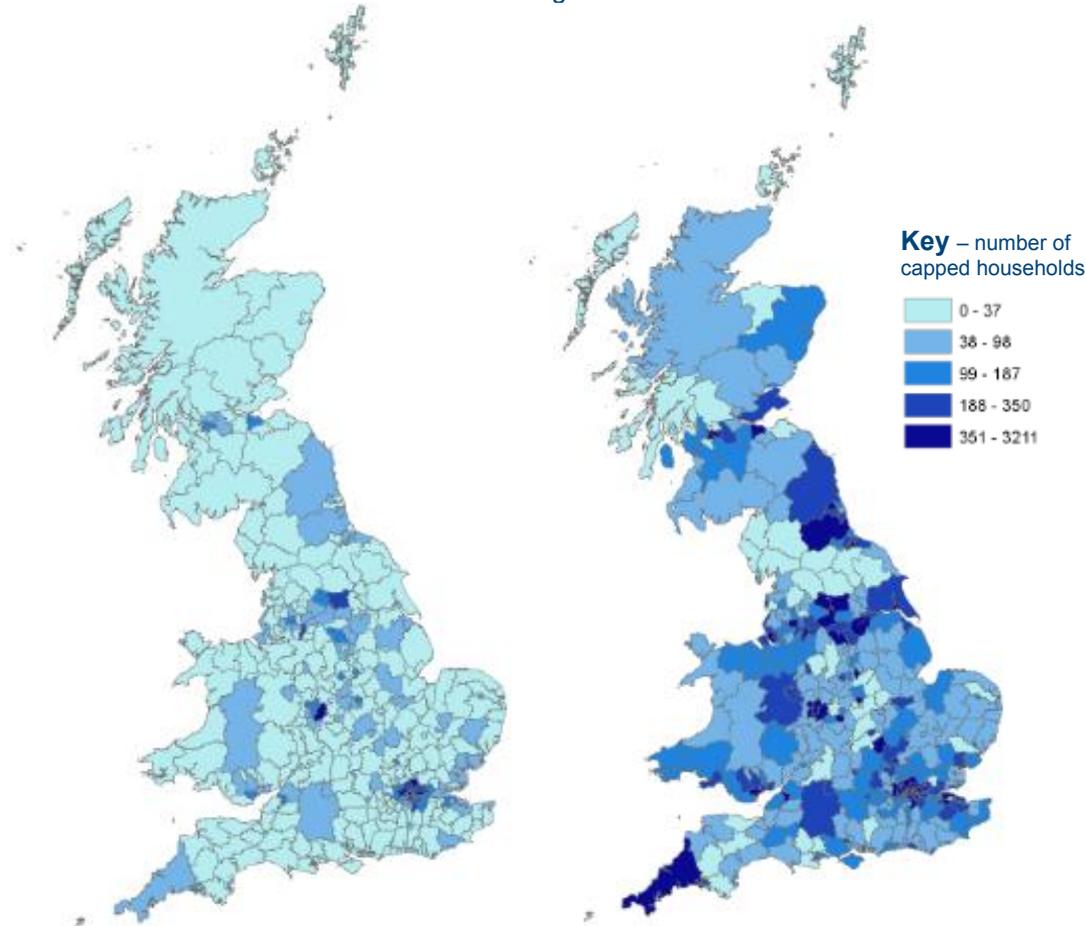
# Where capped households are

## The new cap levels have changed the distribution of capped households

### Capped households by Local Authority (LA), at November 2016 and August 2017

November 2016

August 2017



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.

These maps show the number of capped households by LA before the new caps levels were implemented (at November 2016) and at August 2017. The darker areas of the map are LAs with higher numbers of capped households, while the lighter areas are LAs with fewer capped households.

The shading of both maps is based on the same scale. This shows that the number of capped households has increased in the majority of LAs between November 2016 and August 2017 as the new cap levels were rolled out to all LAs.

It also shows that in November 2016 LAs with the highest number of capped households were concentrated in Greater London. In August 2017 the distribution of capped households is far more evenly spread across the country. At November 2016, 40% of capped households were in London, compared to 23% at August 2017. This is a reflection of the new cap levels for Greater London being higher than in the rest of Great Britain.

See [Data table 3](#) 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 2017. Key statistics for a LA can be viewed by clicking 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>

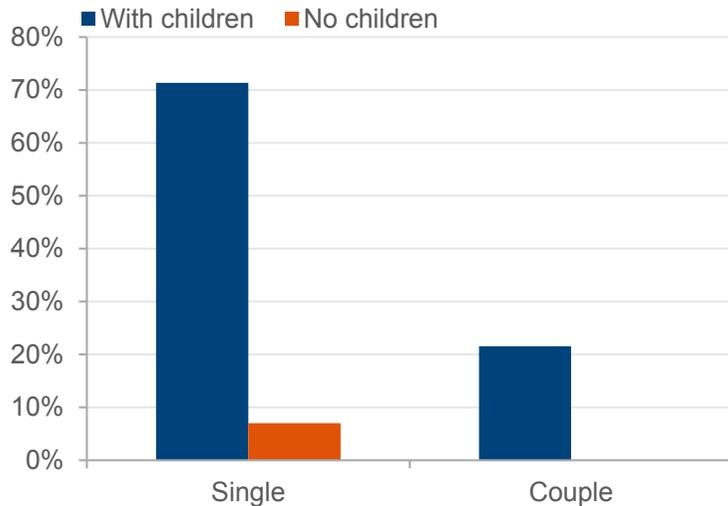
## More information

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

# The family make-up of capped households

## 7 in 10 capped households are single-parent families

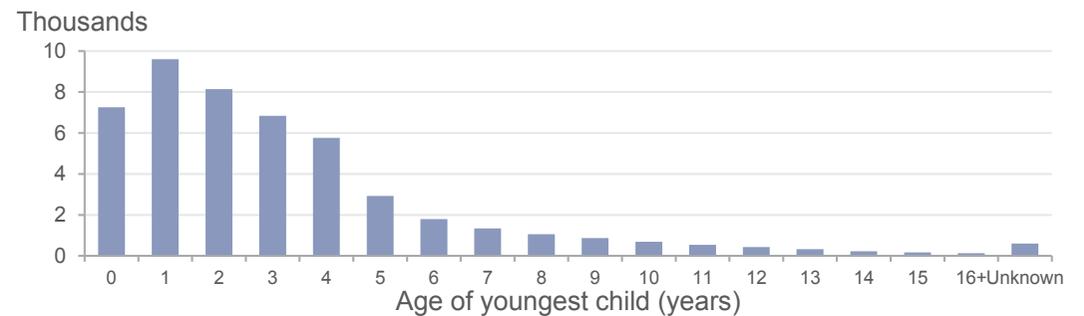
Percentage of capped households by family type, at August 2017



71% (49,000) of capped households are single-parent families.

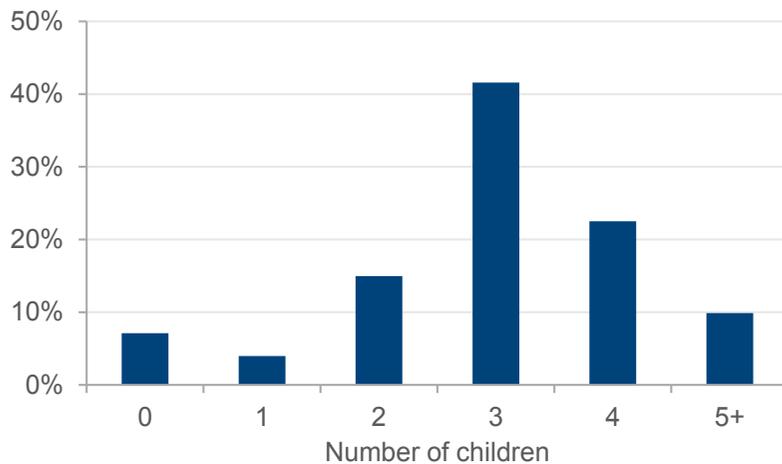
77% (38,000) of single-parent capped households have at least one child aged under 5 years, including 35% (17,000) with a child aged under 2 years at August 2017.

Single-parent capped households by age of youngest child, at August 2017



## Most capped households include children

Percentage of capped households by number of children, at August 2017



At August 2017 93% (63,000) of capped households have children; 83% (57,000) had between 1 and 4 children and 10% (6,700) had 5 or more children.

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

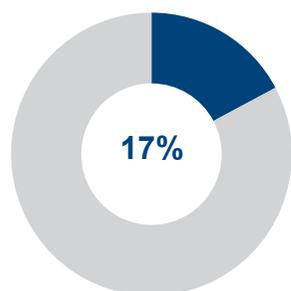
See [Data table 2](#) or [Stat-Xplore](#) for full data on the family make-up of capped households. See [Data table 5](#) for full data on the age of youngest child by family type at August 2017. [Data table 8](#) includes data on the cumulative caseload by family type and age of youngest child.

# Benefits claimed by capped households

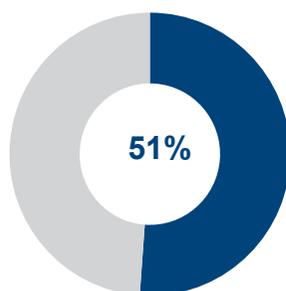
## Capped households claim a range of benefits

### Capped households by benefit take-up, at August 2017

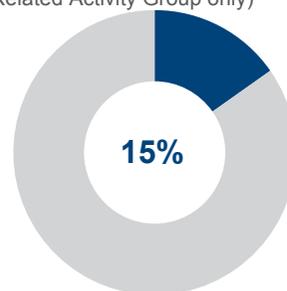
Jobseeker's Allowance



Income Support



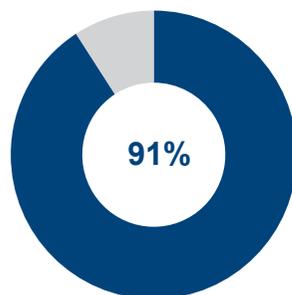
Employment and Support Allowance  
(Assessment Stage and Work-Related Activity Group only)



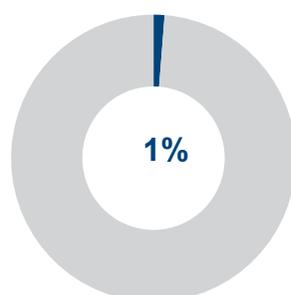
At August 2017:

- 17% (12,000) of capped households were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.
- 51% (35,000) were claiming Income Support.
- 15% (10,000) were claiming Employment and Support Allowance (Assessment Stage and Work-Related Activity Group only).
- 92% (62,000) were claiming Child Tax Credits.
- \* 1% (850) 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.

Child Tax Credits



Housing Benefit only\*



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

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.

Households in receipt of Carer's Allowance or Guardian's Allowance became exempt from the benefit cap on 7 November 2016.

Bereavement Support Payment (which replaced Bereavement Allowance for new claims from 6 April 2017) is not in-scope for the benefit cap.

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

# The financial impact of being capped

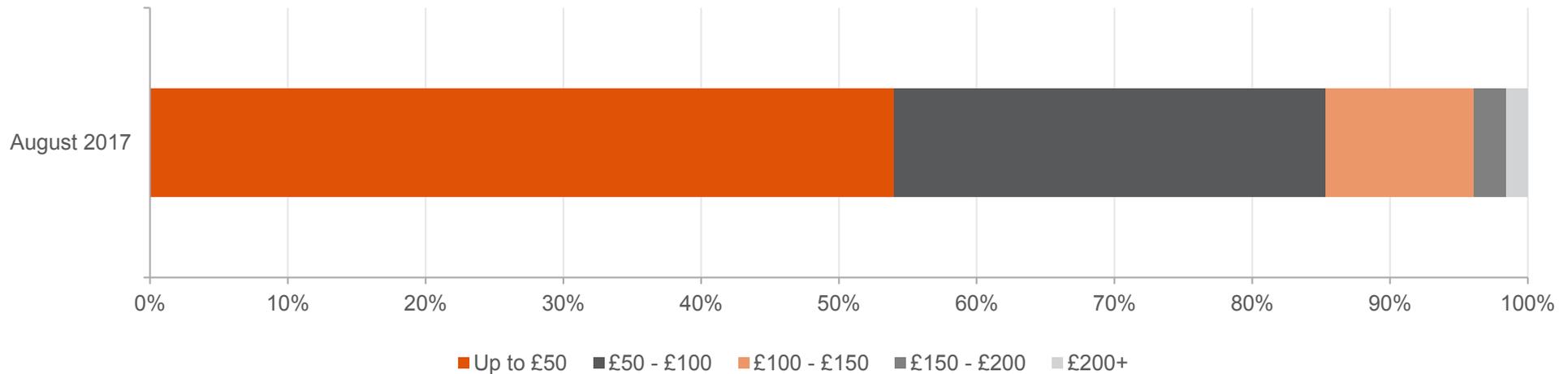
At August 2017 54% (37,000) of households had their Housing Benefit capped by £50 or less a week, with a further 31% (21,000) of households capped by £50 to £100 per week.

2% (1,100) of capped households were capped by more than £200 a week at August 2017, including 0.3% (230) capped by more than £300 a week.

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

## 54% of capped households are capped by £50 or less a week at August 2017

Capped households by weekly amount capped, August 2017



## 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.

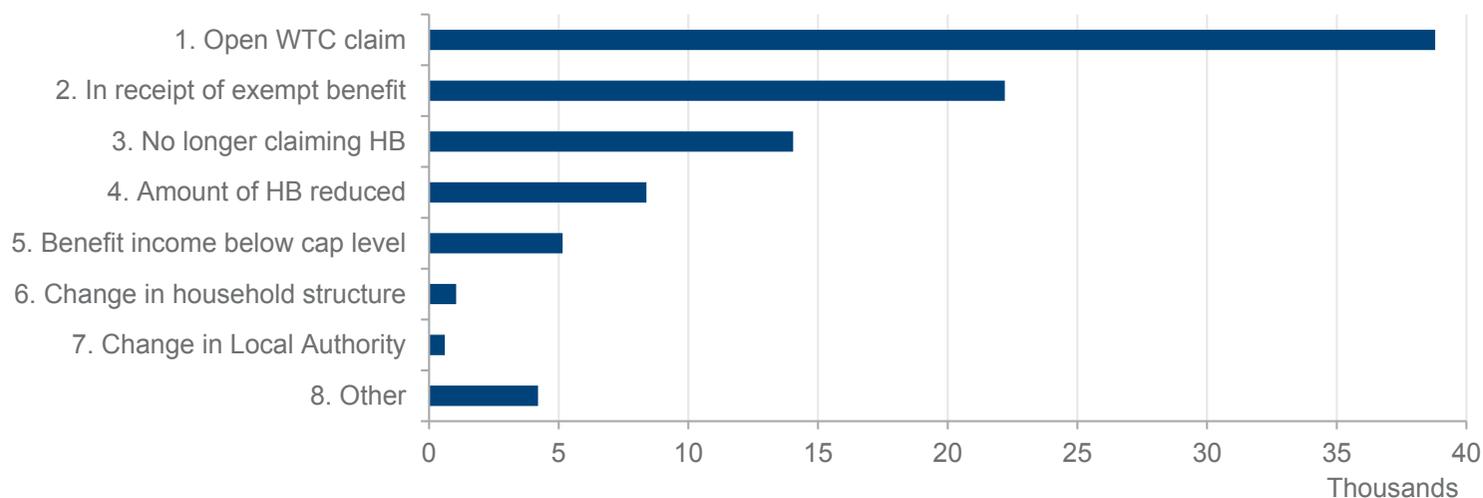
## Moving off the cap

58% (94,000) of households that have (previously) been capped are no longer capped at August 2017. This is an increase of 13,000 households on the previous quarter (May 2017). Of the 94,000 households no longer capped at August 2017, 39,000 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.

See [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 August 2017



For single parent households with a child aged under 5 years, 47% (33,000) who have (previously) been capped are no longer capped at August 2017. Of these, 46% (15,000) are exempt with an open WTC claim.

For single parent households with a child aged under 2 years, 46% (14,000) who have (previously) been capped are no longer capped at August 2017. Of these, 43% (6,000) are exempt with an open WTC claim.

See [Data table 8](#) for a full breakdown of the number of households with children who have (previously) been capped but are no longer capped and the number that have moved into work by age of youngest child. Further details can be found [here](#).

### 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 August 2017.

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 (LAs) extract and return their data to DWP over a four week rolling period based on an extraction schedule for each LA. For example, the latest "August 2017" data shown here has typically been extracted between 24 July and 17 August 2017. Each LA 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 dependent 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 (LAs) from 7 November 2016 to 20 January 2017. From March 2017 data for all LAs reflects the lower cap levels.

## Benefit Cap Judicial Review May 2017

DWP produced statistics on the number of households with children who have (previously) been capped but are no longer capped and the number of these that have moved into work, with a full breakdown by age of youngest child, to inform the Judicial Review in relation to the benefit cap which was heard in the High Court in May 2017. These statistics, at November 2016 and February 2017, were included in the tables published in the May 2017 statistical release (see [Data tables 8 and 9](#)). Updated figures, at August 2017, are included in the tables published as part of this statistical release, in [Data table 8](#).

The claimants in the Judicial Review challenged the application of the benefit cap to two particular groups – lone parents of children under two and their dependent children aged under 2, on the grounds that it unlawfully discriminates against them. In the judgement, which was handed down on 22 June 2017, the Judge ruled against the Government but this ruling is being appealed. The Court of Appeal hearing was heard on 24 and 25 October 2017.

## Universal Credit

Statistics in this report only include households that have had their Housing Benefit (HB) 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 the number of households capped under UC is small in comparison to the number of households that have had their HB capped. However, we plan to start publishing a limited set of new experimental statistics on Universal Credit capped households alongside the existing HB benefit cap statistics in the regular statistics release from February 2018, subject to development and quality assurance. The February 2018 release will cover households that have had their UC capped to November 2017. Thereafter we plan to release statistics on a quarterly basis in line with the current benefit cap statistics publication cycle.

## Where to find out more

This document and summary tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-august-2017>

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

View national and regional figures in our interactive visualisation: <https://bcapdash.herokuapp.com/>

View figures for Local Authorities in 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>

## Contact us

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