



Welfare Reforms Benefits Cap 2016

Communications Plan
Version 2

6 June 2016

Chief Executive's Department

Welfare Reforms Benefit Cap 2016 Communications Plan

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Welfare reforms Benefit Cap 2016

Background

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 will introduce further significant changes to the welfare system aimed at simplifying the existing system and encouraging more people back into work.

The next phase of the Government's Welfare Reforms includes the expansion of the Benefit Cap.

The Benefit Cap will affect approximately 625 people in Cornwall.

The Government's Benefit Cap introduced a national limit on the amount of benefits a single person or family can receive.

From autumn 2016, the cap – outside of Greater London - will be:

- £384.62 per week (£20,000 a year) for a family or couple
- £384.62 per week (£20,000 a year) for a single person with children living with them
- £257.69 per week (£13,400 a year) for a single person

People of working age, between 16 and 64, who receive more than £384.62 as a family, or £257.69 as a single person a week in benefit, will have certain benefits reduced to keep their overall benefit below the new limit set by the Government.

The date the Benefit Cap will be introduced in Cornwall is currently anticipated to be November 2016, but this may change depending on the Government's roll out programme.

The cap applies to the total amount of people in a household, including partners and any children, which get from certain benefits including:

- Bereavement Allowance
- Carer's Allowance (currently applies to those affected by the Benefit Cap but won't from Autumn 2016)
- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance (unless you get the 'support' component)
- Guardian's Allowance (currently applies to those affected by the Benefit Cap but won't from Autumn 2016)
- Housing Benefit
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Maternity Allowance

- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Widowed Parent's Allowance
- Universal Credit (unless you aren't deemed fit for work)

People who are eligible for Working Tax Credit or Pension credit will not be affected by the cap, or if they or their partner work get Universal Credit, and their household income is more than £430 a month after tax and National Insurance.

Some benefits are not taken into account, and are exempt from the new benefit cap, including:

- Working Tax Credit
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance (from Autumn 2016)
- Disability Living Allowance
- Guardian's Allowance (from Autumn 2016)
- Industrial Injuries Benefit
- Personal Independence Payment
- Employment and Support Allowance (support component)
- War Widow's or War Widower's Pension
- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

More information

More information is available on the Government's website:
www.gov.uk/benefit-cap

More information and help is available from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP):

For Universal Credit

Phone: 0345 600 0723
 Text phone: 0345 600 0743
 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

For any other benefits

Phone: 0345 605 7064
 Text phone: 0345 608 8551
 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Information will also be available from Cornwall Council:

- on our website www.cornwall.gov.uk/benefitcap
- by phone: 0300 1234 121 option 5
- by email: benefits@cornwall.gov.uk
- in our one stop shops
- from Cornwall Housing Inclusion Officers

Aims of the communications plan

1. The aim of the plan is to raise awareness of the changes being introduced through the Benefit Cap amongst people affected by the changes and stakeholder groups that work with them or represent them.
2. Prepare residents affected by the changes, and assist or signpost them to help, support, information and guidance.

Key messages

- The Government is introducing a limit to the amount of benefits some people can receive.
- This change is going to have a financial impact on approx. 625 residents of Cornwall.
- Cornwall Council and partners are very keen to help everyone affected by the Benefit Cap to ensure they receive the best possible assistance and guidance.
- Cornwall Council wants to engage with those affected by the changes to the Benefit Cap and any other welfare changes that have impacted on people and households.
- DWP has written, between 24 May and 9 June, to those they have identified as affected by the Benefit Cap.
- The Council cannot contact anyone until after 10 June 2016.
- Cornwall Council has an opportunity to deliver positive engagement with residents following the negative information provided by the DWP. Cornwall Council working with partners, is 'here to help'
- Anyone who will be, or thinks they may be affected by the Benefit Cap, can find out how the changes might affect them by contacting Cornwall Council in a number of ways:
 1. Phone our Benefit Contact Centre: **0300 1234 121** who can help you work out if and how people will be affected by the changes and book an appointment to talk to one of our Benefit's advisors
 2. Attend a drop in session ([details of sessions tbc](#))
 3. Go to their local JobCentre Plus (JCP)
 4. Visit Cornwall Council's website: www.cornwall.gov.uk/benefitcap (available prior to 25/7)
 5. Email our Benefit Contact Centre: **benefits@cornwall.gov.uk**
 6. Cornwall Housing Ltd contact points: Inclusion Officers (CHL IAs)
 7. Via Registered Providers (RPs)

Welfare Reform working group

Cornwall Council

Ian Stephens

Mark Ransom

Lisa Lusty

Lee Collins

Beverly Hill – Communications and engagement

Cornwall Housing

Sara Nott

Emma West

Jenny Haley – Communications and engagement

Transformation Cornwall – wider group

Denbigh Cowley (TCA)

Laurie McGowan (Together for Families)

Andrea Gilbert (Inclusion Cornwall)

Job Centre Plus – wider group

Cheryl Ward

Mike Dann

Key audiences

- Cornwall Council and Cornwall Housing service users / tenants / claimants
- Residents impacted or potentially impacted by Benefit Cap
- Landlords - including Cornwall Housing and Registered Providers
- Cornwall Council Members
- Cornwall Council staff
- Cornwall Housing Ltd staff

- Cornwall Council Scrutiny Committees – Communities/Resources and Overview
- Other public sector partners and their employees
- Key partners - including Department of Work and Pensions, Department of Employment and Skills , Job Centre Plus, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP, Inclusion Cornwall, Strategic Partner / Town and Parish Councils; CAB, voluntary and independent sector, welfare rights organisations, debt advice organisations / charities inc People Plus
- MPs
- Press and media

Communication channels

We will need to employ a variety of communication channels, including some or all of the following:

Council internal channels

- Team Talk
- Cabinet Member briefings
- Lead Cabinet Member messages to Members
- Chief Executive messages to staff
- Directorate newsletters
- Intranet
- Cornwall Housing Ltd staff and tenants newsletters and other channels

Council external channels

- Cornwall Council Website www.cornwall.gov.uk/benefitcap and details of how to get help
- Leaflets outlining changes in simple, easily to read format for distribution via Job Centre Plus offices / one stop shops / libraries / children’s centres / other council buildings / town and parish council offices / GP surgeries
- Posters – showing key changes and signposting where to go to for advice to be displayed in Job Centre Plus offices / one stop shops / libraries / children’s centres / other council buildings / town and parish council notice boards / GP surgeries
- Phase II: Depending on how many people respond to the first phase: Paid for advertising on local radio, in local weekly and daily newspapers, on bus shelters
- Public drop in sessions
- Key stakeholder / partner workshops

- Press and media - news releases / interviews / live radio phone ins
- Member briefings
- Public Sector partner briefings for Police and NHS
- Partner and Stakeholder briefings, face to face and email updates
- Contact Centre – briefing, script and list of key contacts
- All external partner organisations including Job Centre Plus, CAB, T&PCs, VCSE, and Churches Together/Transformation Cornwall
- Partner organisations own distribution channels, including: newsletters and social media feeds
- Cornwall Housing Ltd tenant newsletters, Chips and Chatter/Nibble and Natter events and Inclusion Officers
- Cornwall Council family of businesses – CORMAC, CDC, Tempus Leisure, Cornwall Airport Newquay
- Inclusion Cornwall
- Family Information Service (FIS)
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Engage with MPs through briefings, updates and meetings
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector communication channels
- Town and parish councils newsletters and updates
- Police and partner communication and distribution channels
- Health and partner communication and distribution channels
- Social media - Facebook and Twitter
- Cornwall Residential Landlord Association

Referral partners

- Cornwall Housing Ltd
- Registered providers
- Inclusion Cornwall
- Job Centre Plus
- CAB
- Family Information Service

Cornwall Council Leads

- Council Leader, John Pollard
- Chief Executive, Kate Kennally
- Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Geoff Brown
- Cabinet Member for Adults, Cllr Jim McKenna
- Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Joyce Duffing
- Housing and Environment PAC, Cllr Armand Toms
- Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Cllr Andrew Wallis
- Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board, Cllr Jeremy Rowe

Third Party spokespeople

- Job Centre Plus
- MPs
- Representatives of Tenants organisations
- Representatives of Landlords organisations
- CAB / Debt support organisations
- Advocacy organisations

Anticipated key dates

Key dates				
Date	Task	Notes	Responsibility	✓
Autumn 2016	Benefit Cap comes into effect in Cornwall	Current anticipated date: 7 Nov '16	-	
24 May – 9 June	DWP writing to everyone in Cornwall affected by the changes	Link to letter when available	DWP	✓
10 June onwards Letter to be sent w/c 25	Cornwall Council can contact people affected by the changes	Quick message with strap line and contact channels. Need to have all staff and partners	Ian S	

July		trained and resourced adequately, plus website ready to deal with contact.		
June - July	Create web page with friendly url www.cornwall.gov.uk/benefit cap	Key info: How to get help To be completed by w/c 25 July	Lisa Lusty Web team	
22 June	Agree branding slogan for the campaign		Beverly Hill Ian Stephens	✓
22 June	Design branding for the campaign		Beverly Hill Ian Stephens with Design team	
July	Public promotional campaign	Key info: Benefit Cap is coming. We can help!	Beverly Hill with Design/AV team	
	Design and print poster and leaflet	To be completed by w/c 25 July	Design Team	
	Heads up article in Cornwall Housing tenants newsletter		Jenny Haley	
	CHL Letter to tenants, with 3 or more children of working age, possibly affected	Link to letter when available	Jenny Haley	
	www.cornwall.gov.uk/benefit cap page live			
	Media module on Cornwall Council website homepage			
14 July	Article for Cornwall Housing tenants newsletter and other Housing Association newsletters	Mentioned in CHL's summer newsletter	Jenny Haley	
w/c 18 July	Briefing and script for Contact Centres and one stop shops		Ian Stephens Mark Ransom	

	Briefing for Members		Ian Stephens	
	Briefing for key Council services		Ian Stephens	
	Articles in Team Talk, CEX and Directors' messages, Members newsletter, T&PC Bulletin, VCSE Bulletin		Beverly Hill	
	Briefing for key partners and stakeholders		Ian Stephens	
	Workshop for partners and key stakeholder organisations		All	
w/c 25 July	Draft news release with quotes from Geoff Brown, Jane Barlow, a Housing Ass rep and Inclusion Cornwall		Beverly Hill Ian Stephens	
	Write to people in Cornwall affected by the Benefit Cap	Letter will be in poster style addressed as: Hello...	Ian Stephens	
	Article in town and parish council newsletter	Sent last day of month 29/07	Ian Stephens	
TBA	CC Benefits team holding drop in session(s) with work coaches in JCPlus Centres x3		All	
TBA	Drop in session(s) for people affected by the Benefit Cap run by Learning Partnership, CHL	Must let Contact Centres and one stop shops know when	Ian Stephens Mark Ransom	
Sep - Oct	Final communication to impacted residents via different channels e.g. letter, newsletters	Date to be agreed once CC know the implementation date of BC		
	Follow up txt and other communication channels			
Phase II of promotional campaign – if required final push ahead of 7 November				

Sep - Oct	Script, design and produce animated video		Design/AV Team	
	Commission and script radio advert		Design/AV Team	
	Commission newspaper adverts with advertorial		Design/AV Team	

Appendix one

Details of the changes being introduced via the Benefits Cap

Deliverable	Benefit Cap
Purpose	As part of the welfare reforms the Government is introducing a national cap on the amount of benefits a single person, couple or family can receive.
Key Elements	<p>Benefit will be reduced for people of working age. The cap is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £384.62 per week for a family • £384.62 per week for couples with or without children • £257.69 per week for a single person <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cap will not apply: • To people who get pension credit or working tax credit • To people who work a certain number of hours (tbc) per week • If a member of the household is claiming Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance, Guardians Allowance, Attendance Allowance or the support element of Employment Support Allowance, Industrial Injuries Benefits (and equivalent payments as part of a war disablement pension or the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme), War Widow's or War Widower's Pension and Personal Independence Payment (From April 2013) <p>Benefits that will count towards the benefit cap include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Allowance • Child Benefit • Employment and Support Allowance (except where it is paid with the support Component) • Housing Benefit • Income Support • Maternity Allowance • Widowed Parent's Allowance • Widow's Pension • Child Tax Credit • Incapacity Benefit • Jobseeker's Allowance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe Disablement Allowance • Widowed Mother's Allowance • Widow's Pension
Resources/Budgets	<p>Phase I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing for Contact Centres, One Stop Shops, members, employees and partners. • Letter to people affected by the Benefit Cap • Web page: www.cornwall.gov.uk/benefitcap with details of how to get help • Poster • Design and print of benefit cap leaflet • Workshop for partners and key stakeholder organisations • Public drop in sessions <p>Phase II, if required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid for advertising campaign to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio - Bus shelters - Weekly / Daily local newspapers - Animation film
Due Date	Anticipated date: July 2016
Member Link	Cabinet Member Geoff Brown
Review Responsibility	Welfare Reforms Working Group
Sign-Off	Ian Stephens

Prepared by:

Beverly Hill

Communications Manager

Chief Executive's Department

6 June 2016

Updated 29 June	To include new key dates and actions
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If you would like this information
in another format or language please contact:

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