

NOTICE OF MOTION

HOUSING SUPPORT NO EVICTIONS

This council notes the Government changes to welfare benefits, including the introduction of the benefit cap and proposed removal of entitlement to housing benefit for 18-21 year olds.

In view of the potential impact of these changes and the number of individuals likely to fall into rent arrears and possible eviction, the Council resolves to:

Request the Housing & New Homes Committee to call for a report outlining how the risk of evictions caused by the housing benefit changes and benefit cap will be minimised. The report will take into consideration the following actions:

- Where it is possible to clearly identify that arrears are solely due to the benefit cap or removal of entitlement, that officers use all means other than evictions and bailiffs to recover rent due;
- That the Council work with partners to ensure all those affected by benefit changes are, wherever possible, prevented from eviction and homelessness; in particular recognition of the fact that a disproportionate number of LGBT young people find themselves at risk of homelessness, and as such may be adversely impacted by the changes.

Supporting Information:

(i) Between October and December 2016, 488 households in Brighton and Hove required homelessness prevention work. Brighton Housing Trust estimates that 435 of its 623 homes will become unaffordable for under 35s once new housing benefit caps come into force. (<http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/14216521>. Timebomb fear over number of people homeless in Brighton and Hove.) New research from Shelter has found that in southern England shortfalls as a result of benefit caps may rise to above £200 a month. (<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/05/housing-benefit-cap-forcing-families-homelessness>)

The Council previously supported a policy in order to protect tenants facing eviction as a result of the bedroom tax: ([http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000709/M00004056/\\$\\$\\$Decisions.doc.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000709/M00004056/$$$Decisions.doc.pdf))

(ii) One-quarter of the UK's homeless young people are LGBT. The Albert Kennedy Trust has reported a 20% increase in the number of young LGBT people seeking help with homelessness. External financial pressure on families such as benefit cuts and the 'bedroom tax' have led to an increase in parents pushing dependent children out of home. (Stonewall) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/homelesshelpline/lgbt-gay-hate-crime-homophobia-homophobic-bullying-homeless-helpline-centrepoint-albert-kennedy-a7480326.html>

