



# LEEDS SAYS 'NO' TO THE BEDROOM TAX

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**Have you received a letter from the Leeds Benefits Service warning you about changes to Housing Benefit coming in April 2013? Does the letter suggest your benefits could be 'cut' because you are an "under occupier"?**

You are not alone. Nearly 9000 households across Leeds will initially be affected.

## **What is happening to housing benefit?**

If you live in **social housing**, are of **working age**, and are deemed to have **more 'bedrooms' than you need**, then from April 2013 you stand to lose between 14% and 25% of your weekly housing benefit entitlement – an average loss of around £11 per week for Leeds.

## **Why is this happening?**

The government says the taxpayer should not pay for unused 'spare bedrooms' and this policy will force tenants to 'downsize' to a smaller property, thus freeing up social housing for larger families.

## **This is completely bogus.**

1. The real problem is the shortage of council housing.
2. Leeds City Council does not usually put families with young children in high rise tower blocks and has been encouraging single people to live in two-bed flats who are now blamed for 'under occupying'.
3. Many households affected do not even have a 'spare bedroom' but the government has changed the way it calculates your bedroom needs.
4. Tenants who are under-occupying but not on housing benefit will not be affected showing this is not about freeing up scarce social housing.

## **What is the Labour Council in Leeds doing about this?**

The Council clearly hasn't got a clue what to do. It says it doesn't like the policy and has admitted that it cannot possibly re-house everyone affected in smaller properties **BECAUSE THEY DO NOT EXIST** because...

- Leeds has lost over 30,000 council homes since 1979
- There are already around 25,000 households on the housing waiting list and there is no spare social housing in Leeds.

- **4946 single tenants** will be seeking to either “downsize” or struggle to make up the loss of benefit from next April – but there are currently just 43 single occupancy properties available in Leeds on the council supported website.

## **What are the options?**

The Council is saying you can

- Make up the shortfall from other income – GET INTO DEBT?
- Try to find work or more hours at work – WHAT WORK? WHERE?
- Take in a lodger – AND LOSE YOUR BENEFITS?

## **WE SAY NONE OF THESE SOLUTIONS ARE FAIR OR REALISTIC – WE NEED TO FIGHT THEM**

### **Join our Campaign**

We are a group of affected tenants and concerned citizens who refuse to stand by while people are evicted, families are broken up, and communities torn apart. We want to build a mass campaign to fight these cuts and support tenants affected. This could affect anyone living in social housing in the future – if you lose your job and suddenly have to claim housing benefit, you could be immediately hit with the bedroom tax.

### **Don't panic – stay put**

It is going to be very difficult for the Council or a Housing Association to evict tenants who fall into arrears as a result of housing benefit cuts. You are likely to be judged to be unintentionally homeless and the Council will then have to re-house you. It is much cheaper to keep you in your home. So don't panic, don't move, just keep paying what you can afford.

## **OUR 3 DEMANDS**

1. The Council should oppose the bedroom tax and join the campaign to have it abolished
  2. Social landlords – including Leeds City Council – should refuse to evict any tenants who fall into arrears as a result of these cuts
  3. The Council should work with tenants' organisations, trade unions and our campaign to find ways to build new council homes
- If you are worried about what's going to happen to you and other people in your area get in touch!
  - If you want to be involved or have help organising meetings in your area - then we can help
  - Tell us how this is affecting you.

Phone number 07504017322 e-mail address [handsoffourhomes@gmail.com](mailto:handsoffourhomes@gmail.com)

**DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION  
TOGETHER WE CAN WIN**

**Join us on the TUC march for a “Future That Works”, London, October 20<sup>th</sup>**

**(Cheap Transport Available)**