Cap in hand?
Enfield Council’s experience of implementing the Benefit cap

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Focusing on

• How we prepared
• Applying the cap
• Who we capped
• Impact on local authorities
• Learning points
How we prepared

• Cross council analysis of likely impact
• Set up joint taskforce with JCP and CAB
• Forensic analysis of DWP scans
• Targeted vulnerable and those most affected
• Offered joined up and honest 121 advice and support
• Direct referrals into employment support, training, money advice, childcare provision
How we prepared

- Revised DHP policy
- Mapped customer journeys
- Communications plan
- Amended EDMS to log interventions/outcomes
- Tested IT systems
Applying the cap

- Phased over 4 weeks
- Significant differences between scans and reality
- Surge in changes afterwards due to data lag
- Still technical issues being resolved
- Queries relayed to Belfast via email
- Significant manual administration
- Quality of notification letters
- DHP awards
Who we capped

- January 2013 scan – 2000 families
- 15 May 2013 actuals – 1173 families
- End of June actual – 1254 families
- 3796 children affected
- 77% are single parents
- Av. 3 children but 120 have 5 or more children
Who we capped

- 73% private tenants, 20% TA, 4% RSLs, 3% council tenants
- 379 losing more than £100 a week in HB, many losing over £350 a week and left with 50 pence HB
- Total annual HB loss - £5.5m
- Affected carers, travellers, specific ethnic communities, single people living with adult sons/daughters
Impact on local authorities

- For some families, no housing will be affordable in London
- Rent shortfalls will shift to local authorities as families are evicted and move into TA
- Changes in RSL behaviour
- Changes in private landlord behaviour
- Risks of legal challenge – must have good evidence and a strong DHP policy
- Migration to cheaper areas
Key learning points

• One model doesn’t fit all
• Joined up communication, assessment, prioritisation and interventions – but takes time and new skill set
• Real value in informal sharing of information within council & JCP
• Agree your DHP policy early but don’t award on basis of scans
• JCP and DWP have the money for employment support – make sure you access it
Learning points

• Scans are indicators only – significant error rate but can start modelling costs to the Council
• Ensure your accountants and legal team know the risks
• Whilst cap notifications are automated, changes and DHPs aren’t – significant manual administration
• Management information demands
• Behaviour of RSLs
Thank you for listening
Any questions?