



Experimental Statistics - Published: 04 October 2017

There is a limit on the total amount of benefit that people aged 16 to 64 can get¹. This is called the Benefit Cap. The main objective of the policy is to restrict the amount of welfare support a household can receive to broadly the average take-home pay of working households. The £20,000 Benefit Cap threshold was introduced in November 2016.

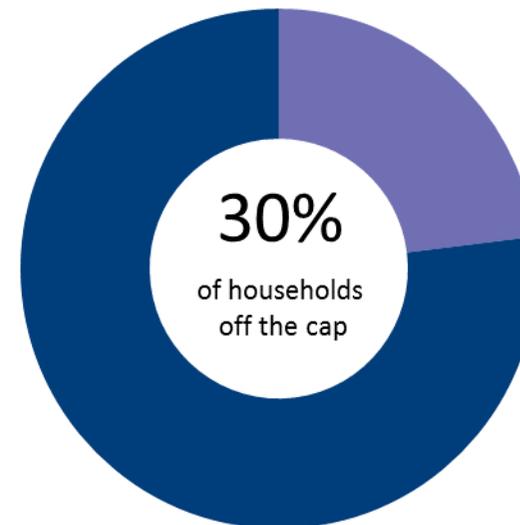
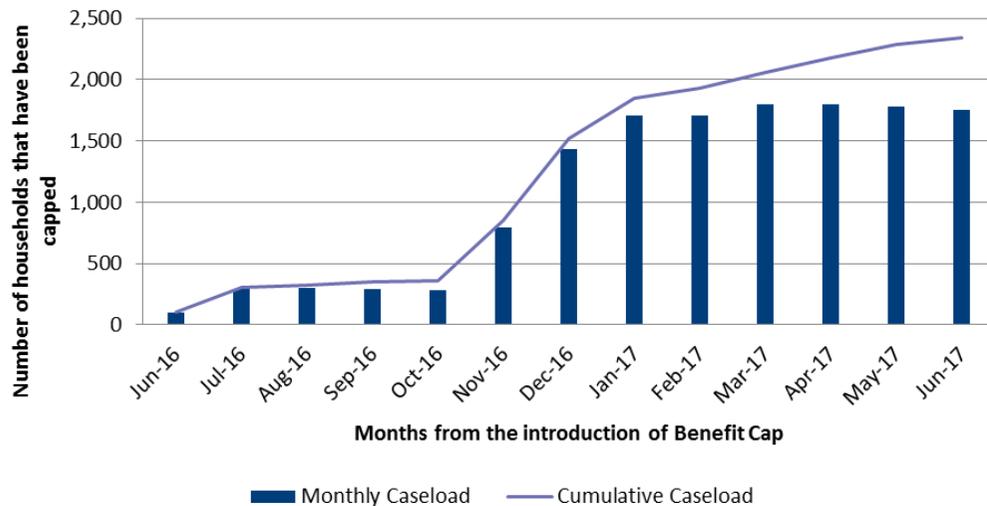
Main Stories

2,340 households have had their benefits capped from June 2016 to June 2017, when the Benefit Cap was introduced.

1,750 households had their Housing Benefit capped at June 2017.

700 households no longer capped at June 2017 (since June 2016)

Average amount capped at June 2017



**£50
Per
Week**

¹There are a number of benefits which exempt households from having their total amount of benefit limited in this way. These exemptions are listed on page 2.

At a glance

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

<http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NIBenefitCapStatistics/>

What you need to know

What is the Benefit Cap?

The Benefit Cap limits a working-age household's benefit income to:

- £384.62 a week for couples (with or without children living with them) and single parents whose children live with them.
- £257.69 a week for single adults without children, or whose children do not live with them.

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);
- Child Benefit;
- Child Tax Credit;
- Housing Benefit;
- Other benefits such as Incapacity Benefit and Bereavement Allowance.

You're not affected by the cap if you or your partner are in work or in receipt of an exempt benefit.

Exemptions from the cap include:

- Carer's Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance or its replacement Personal Independence Payment
- Employment and Support Allowance (support component)
- Working Tax Credit
- Other benefits such as Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments
- Exemptions such as DLA/PIP also apply if received by other members of the household.

For most capped households the Benefit Cap is applied by reducing the amount of Housing Benefit 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 was introduced on 27th September 2017 in Northern Ireland.

How is it measured?

The main source of Benefit Cap data is the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Housing Benefit data. Data on households who have (previously) been capped that are no longer capped is linked to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Communities (DfC) benefits data to determine why households are no longer capped.

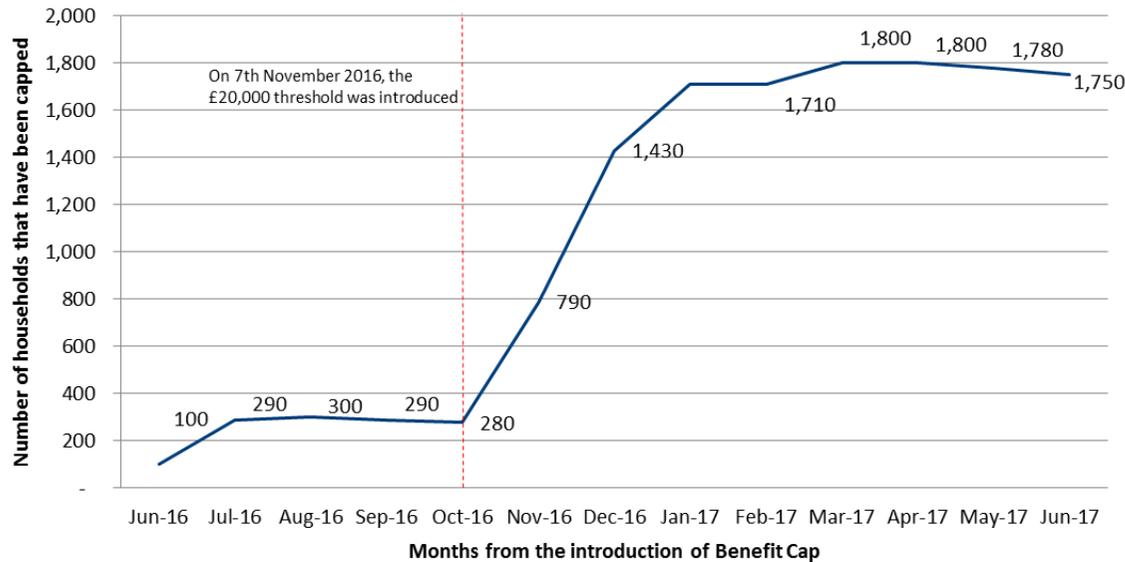
This report contains 3 measures:

- **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.
- **Off-flows** is the difference between the two caseload figures, and shows the number of previously capped households no longer capped at the latest month available.

Number of capped households

The number of capped households each month has risen since the introduction of the £20,000 threshold

Capped households each month - June 2016 to June 2017



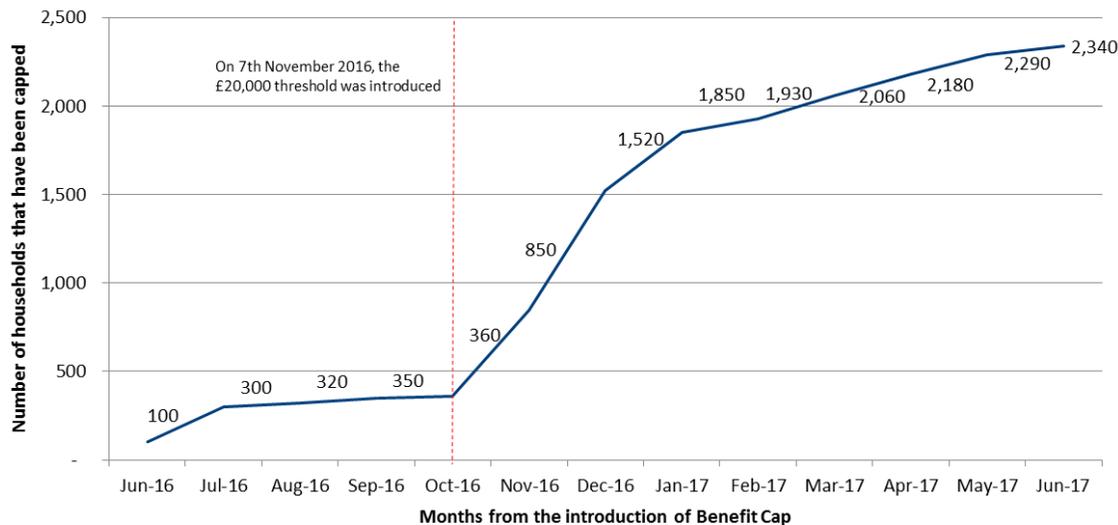
1,750 households had their Housing Benefit capped at June 2017.

The Benefit Cap was introduced in June 2016 in Northern Ireland.

The £20,000 threshold was introduced in November 2016.

New households are still being capped

Cumulative capped households - June 2016 to June 2017



The cumulative caseload of households that have had their Housing Benefit capped since the introduction of the Benefit Cap continued to rise over the last quarter, to 2,340. This shows that households continue to be newly capped.

As more data is received the total number of households that have been capped since the introduction of the policy will diverge from the monthly caseload capped at a point in time.

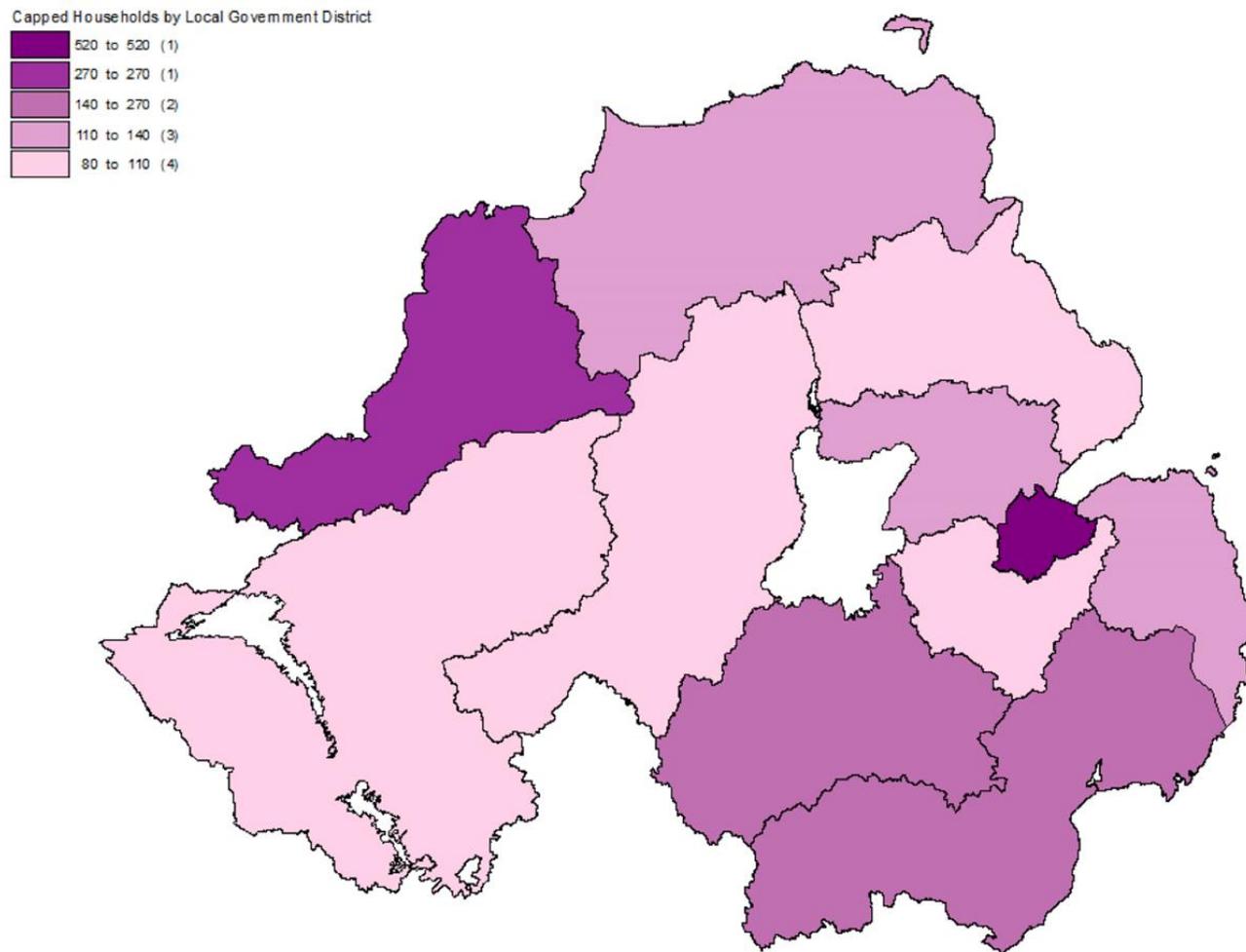
Where capped households are located

Belfast has the most capped households with 30% of the households capped (from June 2016 to June 2017) in this Local Government District (LGD).

Capped households by Local Government District

Local Government District	No of Households Capped
Belfast	520
Derry City And Strabane	270
Newry, Mourne And Down	150
Armagh City, Banbridge And Craigavon	140
Antrim And Newtownabbey	110
Causeway Coast And Glens	110
Ards And North Down	110
Mid And East Antrim	90
Fermanagh And Omagh	80
Lisburn And Castlereagh	80
Mid Ulster	80
Total	1,750

Map of capped households by Local Government District

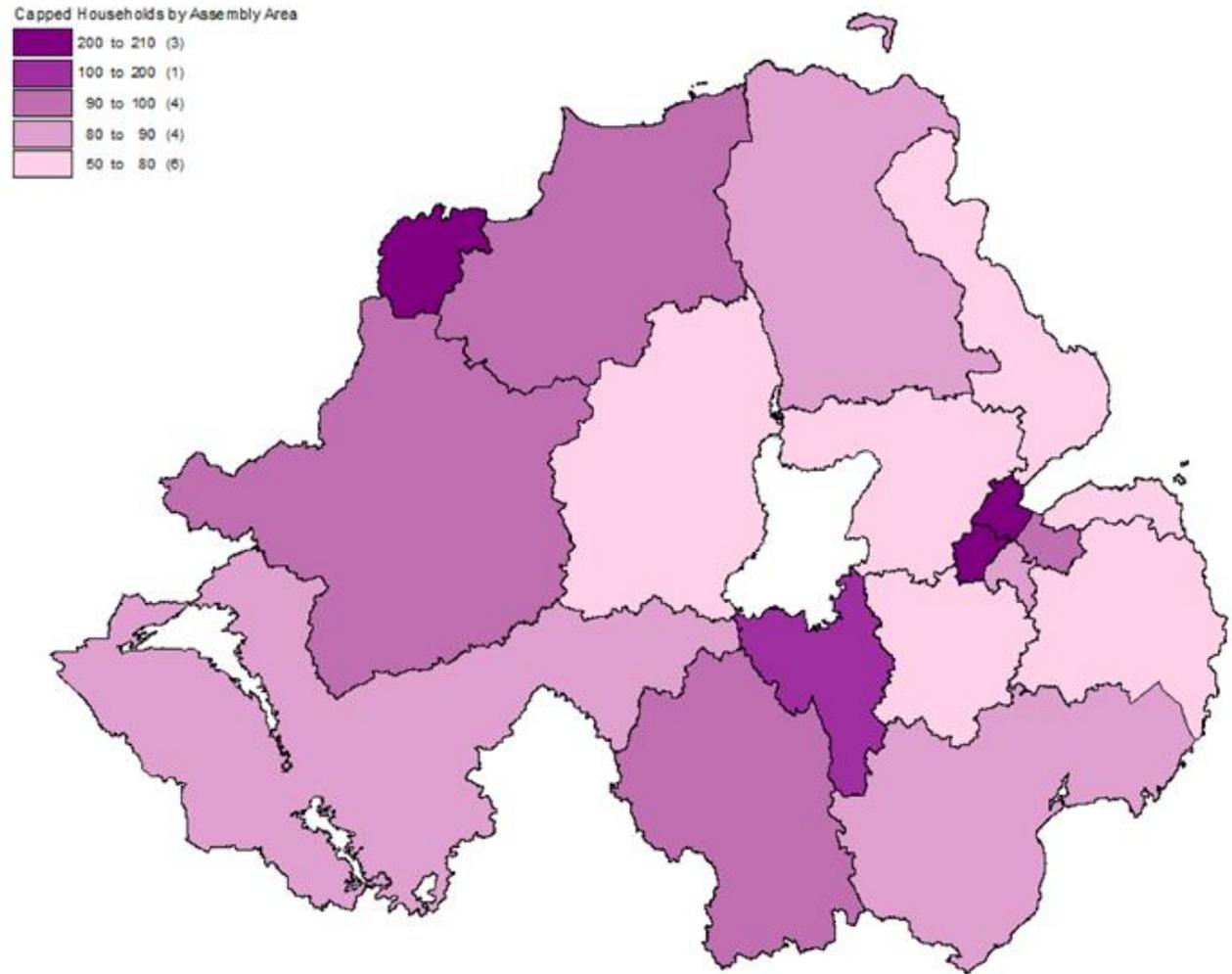


Where capped households are located

Capped households by NI Assembly Area

NI Assembly Area	No of Households Capped
Belfast West	210
Belfast North	200
Foyle	200
Upper Bann	100
Belfast East	90
East Londonderry	90
Newry And Armagh	90
West Tyrone	90
Belfast South	80
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	80
North Antrim	80
South Down	80
Lagan Valley	70
South Antrim	70
Strangford	70
East Antrim	50
Mid Ulster	50
North Down	50
Total	1,750

Map of capped households by NI Assembly Area



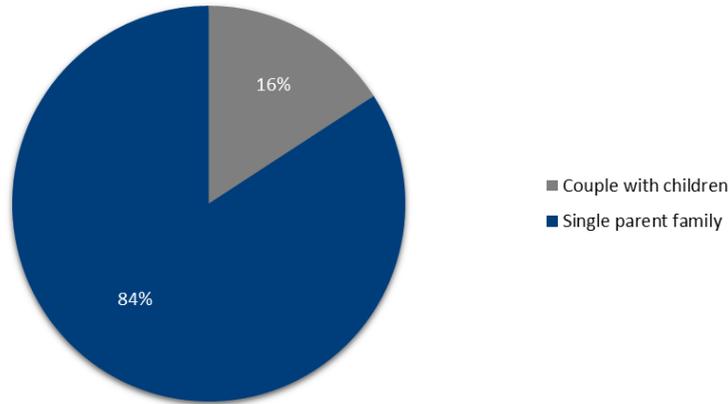
More information

The cumulative caseload is based on the lead claimant.

The Local Government District and NI Assembly Area reflects the initial areas in which the cap was applied to households.

The family make-up of capped households

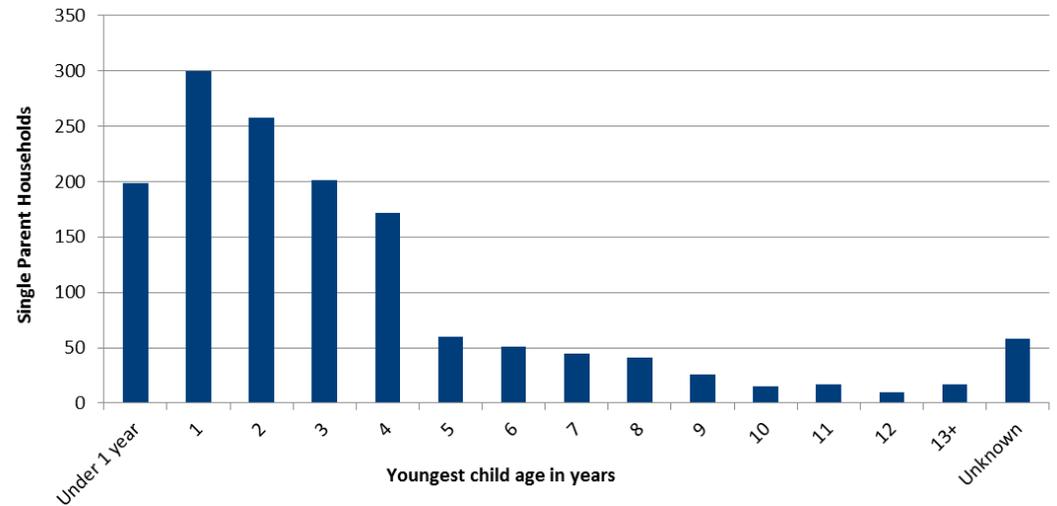
Percentage of capped households by family type, at June 2017



84% (1,470) of capped households are single-parent families

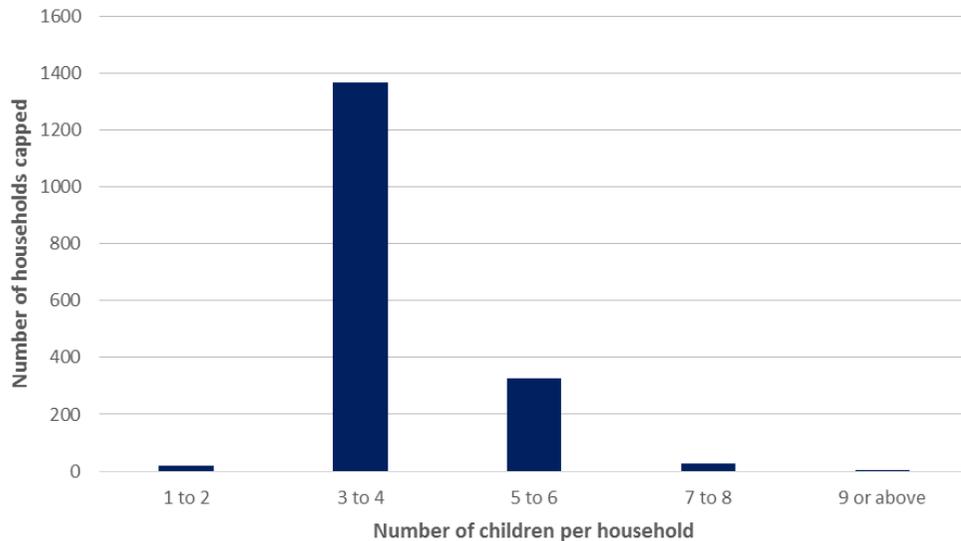
77% (1,130) of single-parent capped households have at least one child under the age of 5, including 14% (200) with a child aged under 1 year at June 2017.

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



100% of capped households include children.

Number of capped households by numbers of children, at June 2017



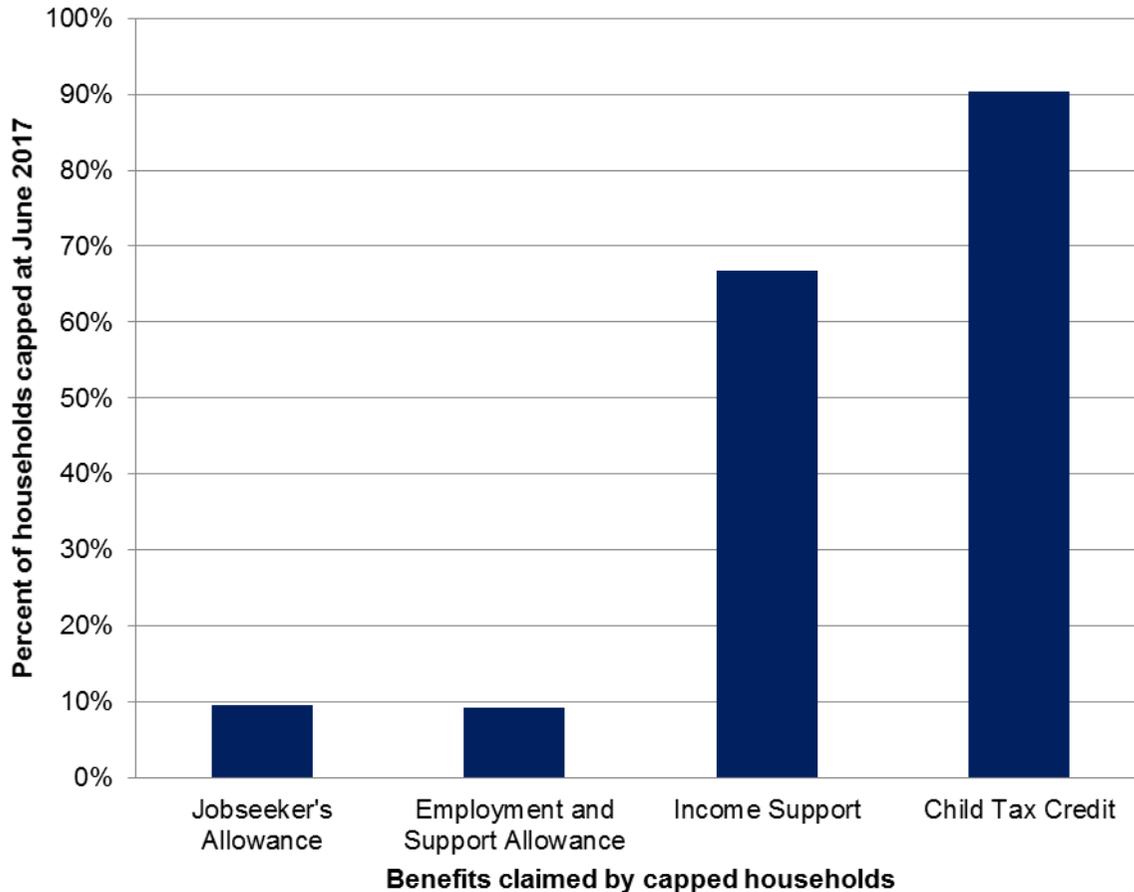
At June 2017, 21% (360) of capped households had 5 or more children and 79% (1,390) had between 1 and 4 children.

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

Benefits claimed by capped households

Capped households claim a range of benefits

Capped households by benefit take-up June 2017



At June 2017:

- 10% of households were on Jobseekers Allowance
- 9% were claiming Employment and Support Allowance (Assessment Stage and Work-Related Activity Group only)
- 67% were claiming Income Support
- 90% of households claimed Child Tax Credit. Child Tax Credit payments for multiple children are a major part of the benefit cap calculation
- 100% of households were in receipt of Housing Benefit, as the cap is implemented through Housing Benefit
- 100% were in receipt of Child Benefit as all households had children

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%.

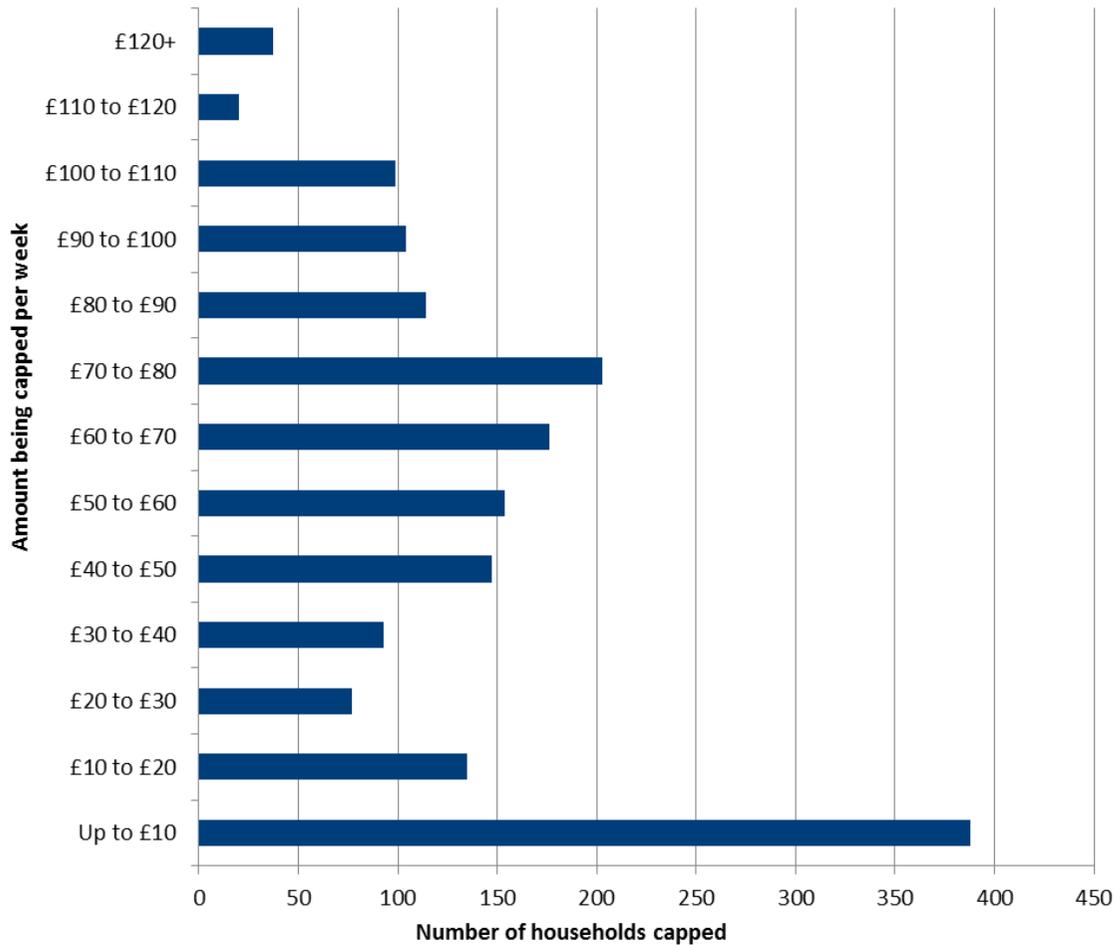
Analysis is based on benefit claims by the lead claimant in a household, and where applicable, their partner.

The financial impact of being capped

48% (840) of capped households were capped by £50 or less a week at the £20,000 threshold.

9% (160) of capped households were capped by more than £100 a week at the £20,000 threshold.

Capped households by weekly amount capped, at June 2017



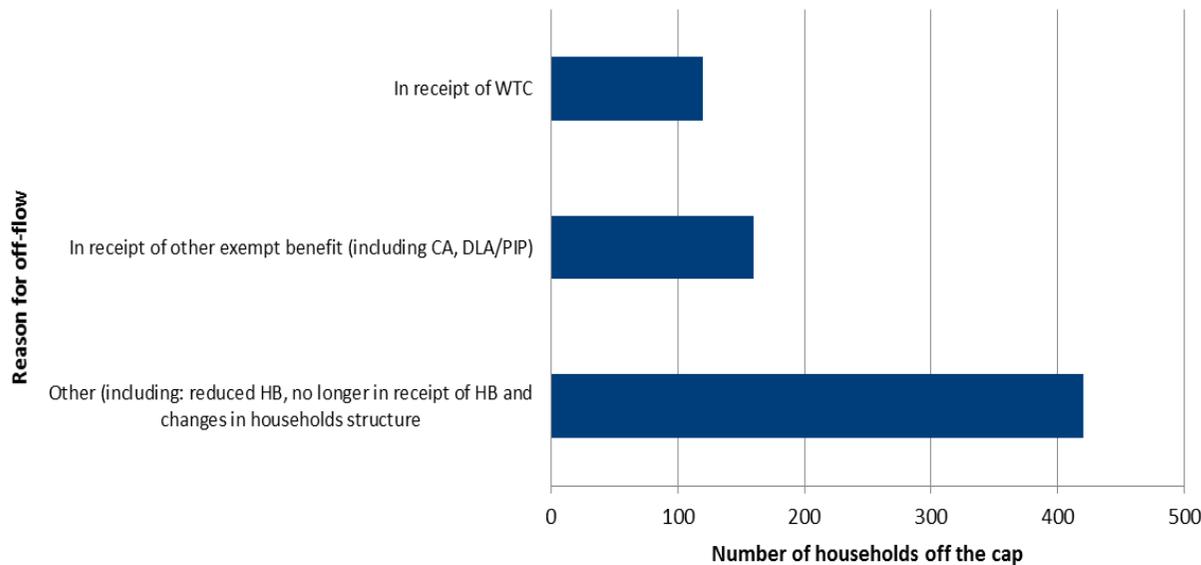
The average impact of the Benefit Cap in Northern Ireland is a reduction in Housing Benefit Award of...

£50 Per Week

Moving off the cap

30% (700) of households that have (previously) been capped are no longer capped at June 2017

Off-flows from the cap by household outcome, at June 2017



More Information

The reason a household is no longer capped may change after a household has moved off the cap. The graph here shows this reason as at June 2017.

There may be a number of reasons why a household is no longer capped but only a single reason is shown.

If a claimant moves into work and receives Working Tax Credit (WTC) they become exempt from the cap. This is one of the main reasons in Great Britain for cases flowing off the cap. However in Northern Ireland the majority of claimants are receiving mitigation payments under the Fresh Start Agreement which make up for the reduction in Housing Benefit due to the application of the Benefit Cap, so the same financial incentive to enter work does not exist.

The Executive committed to delivering welfare mitigation payments, which will run until 31 March 2020, for eligible claimants as detailed in the Fresh Start Agreement. All eligible claimants who are continuously affected by the Benefit Cap will receive a mitigation payment until 31 March 2020.

Households may also become exempt if they made a successful claim for an exempting benefit such as Carer's Allowance (CA), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

It is difficult to track every other reason for claimants moving off the cap with the administrative data available. Many cases simply flow off the data and it is not possible to tell what changed in the household circumstances to cause this, as they are no longer on the administrative data.

However, some potential reasons could include: cases moving to different accommodation leading to a change in Housing Benefit award size, a child leaving or joining a household causing benefits to be re-calculated, a partner leaving or joining a household causing benefits to be re-calculated and any other change of circumstance that leads to the benefit income of the household reducing below the cap threshold.

About these statistics

This summary contains experimental statistics on the number of households capped since the introduction of the Benefit Cap. It examines key features of these households in terms of amount capped, number of children and family type broken down by local government district and assembly area. The benefits claimed by capped households and the destination of off-flows from the Benefit Cap have also been examined.

The main source of Benefit Cap data published here is the NIHE Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE). This is merged with DfC benefit scans and HMRC Child Tax Credit benefit scans, to give data on the types of benefits claimed by capped households, and with HMRC Child Benefit data, to give information on the age of the youngest child dependant in a capped household. SHBE is merged with HMRC Working Tax Credit data and DfC benefit scans to provide information on the outcomes of households that have off-flowed from the Benefit Cap.

Data Quality Statement

These statistics are in an experimental stage and as such are subject to retrospective revision in any future releases.

The methodology for gathering these statistics is still in development and is also in the process of being quality assured. The methodology may change, leading to a revision of the figures contained within.

Definitions

Point-in-Time Caseload: The number of households capped at each month from the introduction of the Benefit Cap (on 31 May 2016) to June 2017.

Off-Flows by Outcome: The number of households who have (previously) been capped but are no longer subject to the cap at June 2017, with the reason why they have moved off the Benefit Cap.

Benefit Cap Introduction

The Benefit Cap was introduced in Northern Ireland on 31st May 2016 at the £26,000 per annum threshold. On 7th November 2016, the threshold was lowered to £20,000 per annum.

Further Information

For more information on Benefit Cap statistics, including detailed tables, please visit <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/benefit-cap-statistics>

Alternatively, contact DfC Analytical Services Unit at uc.asu@communities-ni.gov.uk

We would appreciate if you completed a short questionnaire to give us your views on the publication.

An online version of this questionnaire is available at the following link:

<http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NIBenefitCapStatistics/>

For more information on Benefit Cap in general, please visit: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/the-benefit-cap>