

Amendment to Motion F

MOTION F 2012/13

(Delete words that have been struck through and add words that have been underlined.)

This Council believes:

- The reduction in housing benefit, removing the spare room subsidy new under-occupation penalty is being introduced this April to tackle under-occupation and encourage people to downsize or 'Bedroom Tax' will disproportionately hit disabled, vulnerable and low income households living in Haringey from this April and is a result of the unprecedented deficit in the public finances created by the previous Labour Government
- ~~It is unfair that many foster carers, families of soldiers and couples using separate rooms because of illness or disability are now facing additional cuts in financial support.~~
- Given the impact on Haringey, this council should be doing more to encourage tenants to downsize, freeing up larger properties for the many families on Haringey's 10,000 long housing waiting list and the 600 families who are overcrowded and living in Haringey Council housing. ~~it was wrong that Lynne Featherstone MP voted against the opposition day debate motion demanding the policy be scrapped.~~

This Council notes:

- ~~The 2,500 council tenants and housing association tenants in Haringey facing additional cuts in their housing benefit of between £17.50 per week and £31.25 per week as a result of the 'Bedroom Tax'~~
- There are 2m households in England on housing waiting lists, 250,000 families living in over-crowded accommodation and 1m bedrooms are standing empty.
- To protect vulnerable groups, the Government has trebled the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget, which will enable councils to provide additional support to residents on a case by case basis.
- The Government have now made changes to the reforms to ensure and foster carers and armed services families are protected and given Council discretionary funding to help families in difficult circumstances.
- ~~The Government's own assessment revealing that 2/3rds of those households affected are home to someone with a disability.~~
- The following people are exempt for the change to housing benefit: disabled tenant or partner who needs a non-resident overnight carer; any claimant over the qualifying age for state pension credit; those in supported 'exempt' accommodation.
- ~~The description of the policy by the National Housing Federation as 'ill-thought', 'unfair', and 'incompetent'~~
- ~~The 'Bedroom Tax' is being implemented the same month as cuts to council tax benefit, tax credits, child benefit and other welfare support, and at the same time as millionaires are each receiving a £40,000 cut in their income tax.~~

~~-Despite the work of councils and housing associations, the numbers of households affected by the 'Bedroom Tax' means it is unlikely that most families will be able to easily 'downsize'.~~

~~-From April, more than 20m working people will be paying £600 a year less than they were under Labour, as the tax threshold rises to £9,440. Someone earning the minimum wage will have seen their Income Tax bill cut in half.~~

This Council resolves to:

~~-To write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan Smith further outlining the impact of the 'Bedroom Tax' on Haringey and asking the Government scrap the policy before it is implemented in April.~~

~~-To write to Haringey's two local MPs asking them to publically raise concerns about the impact of the 'Bedroom Tax' in Haringey and insist the Government rethink its proposals.~~

-Do more to assist and encourage tenants to downsize

-Work with tenants to mitigate the impact of the changes to housing benefit and use the DHP provided by the Government to assist residents who qualify

Proposer – Cllr Richard Wilson

Seconder – Cllr Ed Butcher