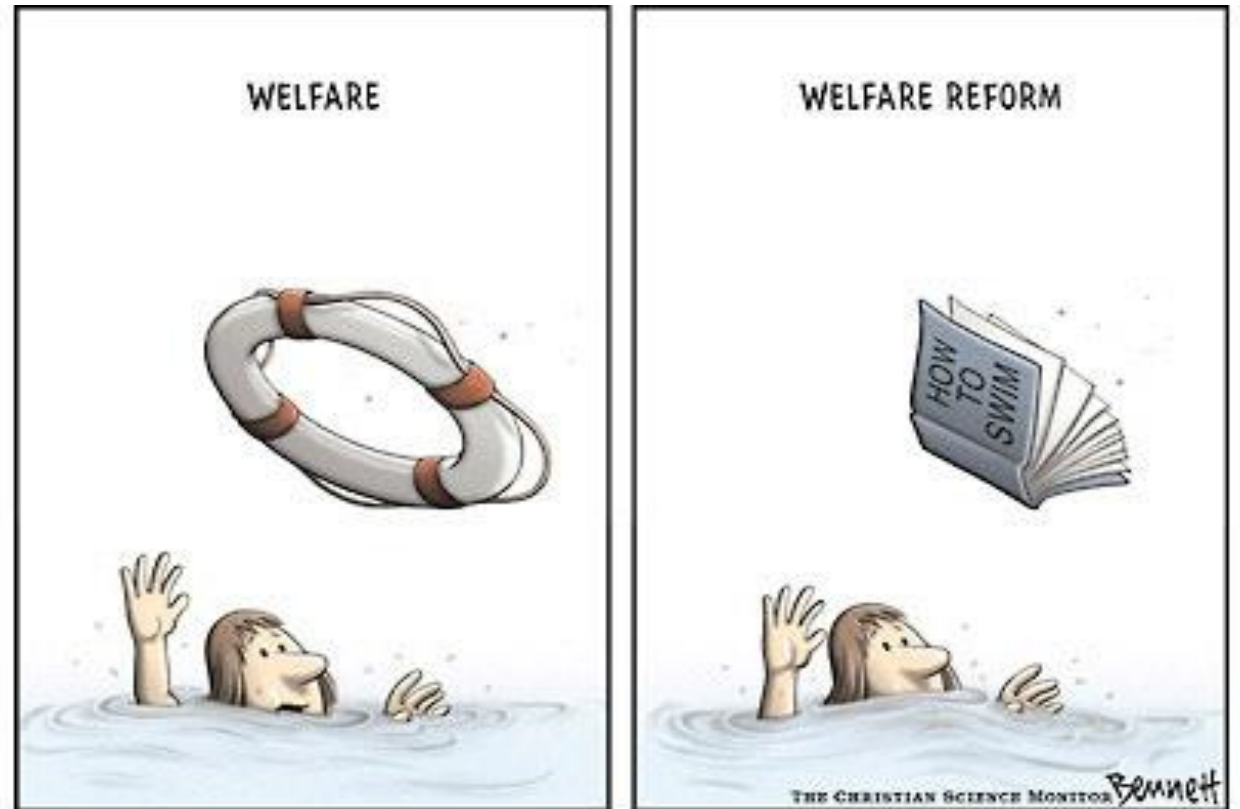


Welfare Reform

Jen Griffiths
Benefits Manager
Flintshire County Council

APSE Wales Housing & Building
Maintenance Advisory Group Meeting
Thursday 23rd November 2017





Welfare Reform

- » **Public Service perspective**
- » **Flintshire's position**
- » **Something positive!!??**

Key public service risks

Rise in homelessness

- Families in PRS most adversely affected
- Temporary accommodation payment problems

Pressures on social care, education, police, health

- Long term cost of ACE's

Rise in rent arrears

- English evidence points to 86% UC tenants in arrears (39% others)

Managing the impacts of increasing poverty and inequalities

Delivering more of the homes we need quickly enough

- Stock mismatch

Public service response

Working together to minimise impacts/ support affected households.

- Helps build household wellbeing and resilience (good for them)
- Helps address the major impacts on our own operating and financial models (good for us)

Particular focus on targeting support to households hardest hit:

- Identifying and helping secure tenancies for households at a high risk of homelessness.

Staying very close to changing circumstances, knowledge about potential exemptions e.g. those with disabled children

Encouraging frontline staff to engage with individual customers; awareness raising and work with them to manage income loss.

Financial Impact on Local People

111 households affected by benefit cap

- **£640k per annum loss**

1,000 households affected by spare room subsidy (3/4 are Council tenants)

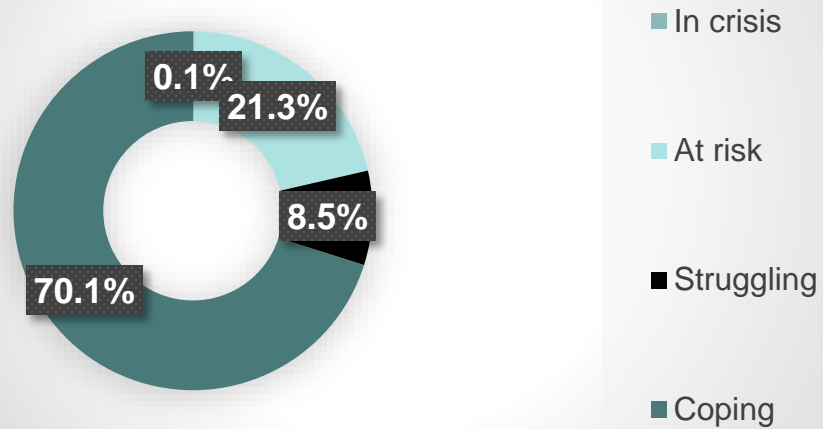
- **£ 1.12m per annum loss**

1,305 Universal Credit claimants so far

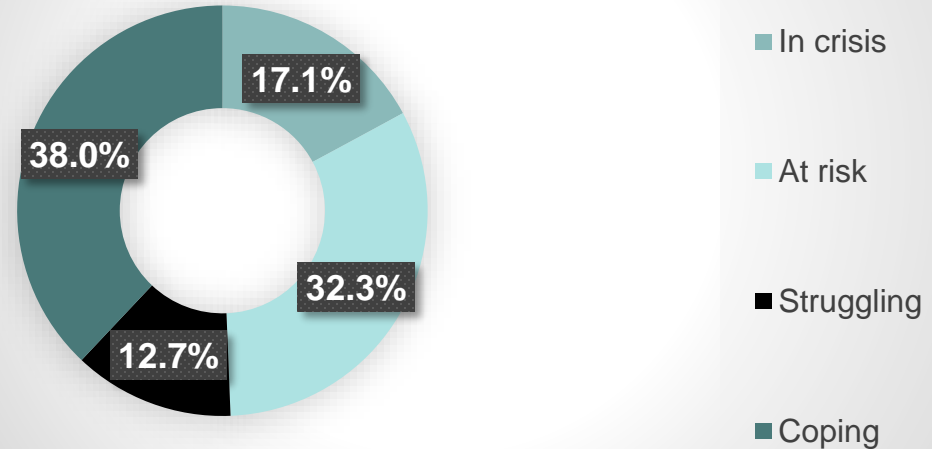
- **(Income loss by 2020 - £3.3m per annum)**

Projected Welfare Reform Impacts

FCC residents by level of financial resilience 2017



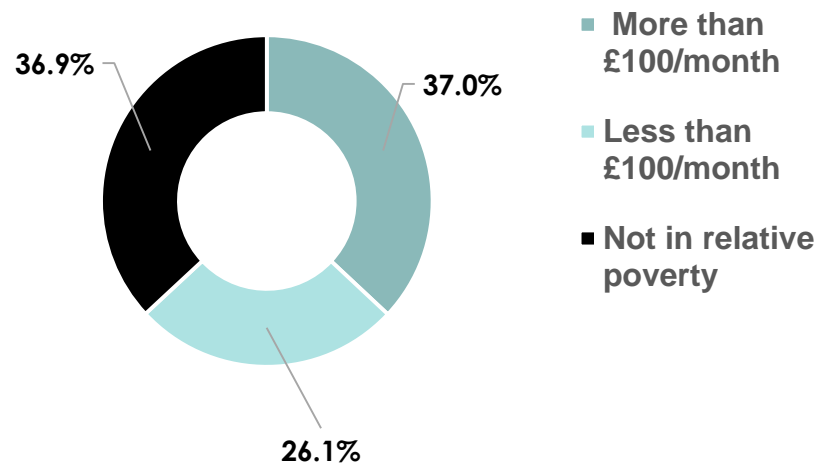
FCC residents by level of financial resilience by 2020



Data Analysis

» What does this tell us?

FCC residents by relative poverty status



» What can we do about this?

- » Target employment and financial support
- » Ensure take up of available support i.e. free childcare / support services
- » Identify exemptions – 18-21 year olds
- » Analysis of what works and what doesn't – feedback

Local actions to respond

A multiagency early help hub

- Challenge staff roles and responses

Strong strategic housing role - building the right homes

Managing expectations – (flexible design for future use)

Evictions from social stock to be avoided if possible

Support Work

- Personal Budgeting Support
- Assisted Digital Support
- Discretionary Housing Payments

Some Good News

- » **Now**
- » **Lobbying still going on to pause UC Rollout**
- » **Freephone Numbers**

- » **From 2020**
- » **LHA Restriction – Scrapped for Social Housing Tenants**
- » **LHA Restriction – Scrapped for Supported Accommodation**
- » **Ring Fenced funding for Emergency Accommodation**

Thank you – any questions?

