

P-04-675 Cover the Cost of the Bedroom Tax

This petition was submitted by Jamie Insole, having collected 193 signatures.

Text of the Petition

Following the recommendation of the National Assembly's own Public Accounts Committee, Cardiff & South Wales Against the Bedroom Tax, Shelter Cymru, Welsh Tenants, TPAS Cymru & the Church in Wales calls upon the Welsh Government to allocate the necessary funds to cover the cost of the bedroom tax in Wales as has been achieved in Scotland.

Cardiff & South Wales Against the Bedroom Tax (C&SWABT) is a tenant led, grassroots campaign committed to fighting the 'bedroom tax'.

Our experience indicates that the financial burden of the bedroom tax continues to fall predominantly upon the sick, disabled and the most financially vulnerable members of our community. Currently, approximately 33,000 households face the impossible choice of finding extra-money they do not have or 'downsizing' to smaller homes that do not exist.

Over the course of 2013 and 2014, social tenants in Wales were made subject to 5136 suspended possession orders. Dramatic cuts in discretionary housing payment, combined with the perfect storm of further welfare reform can only see more people facing insurmountable debt and eviction threats.

We are fully aware of the budgetary challenges posed by central government underfunding. However, in our view the cost of not intervening will be measured both in terms of thousands of evictions and the irreversible toxification of the Welsh social housing sector.

Welsh Government spends a lower percentage of its expenditure on housing than either Scotland or Northern Ireland. It is essential that the housing budget is expanded so that the DHP top-up does not come at the expense of other vital housing services. In Scotland, no tenant pays the Bedroom Tax. We call upon Welsh Government to show the same leadership, act upon the Committee's recommendation and take tens of thousands of Welsh tenants out of poverty and misery.

Additional information

On July 24th, the Welsh Assembly's own Public Accounts Committee recommended "a cost/benefit analysis of mitigating the full impact of the removal of the spare room subsidy through discretionary housing payments, as the Scottish Government chose to do."

Following publication, a coalition of sector agencies and high-profile individuals, including, the Archbishop of Wales and Tenant Participation called upon Welsh Government to find the funds to take tenants out of this charge.

Cardiff & South Wales Against the Bedroom Tax has already worked with its partners, Welsh local authorities and sector Leaders to embed best practise and lift hundreds from the bedroom tax; either through exemptions in law or tribunal appeals.

The campaign has also succeeded in staving off over 30 evictions.

However, against a background of escalating central funding cuts and their impact upon support services, it is our settled view that the current impasse is not sustainable.

Best estimates indicate that the total cost to Welsh Government would not exceed £17 million.

It is now time to act!

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Swansea West
- South Wales West