

# **Welfare Reform Review**

**April 2019**





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## Introduction

This data report provides an update to the report presented in July 2017.

Welfare Reform roll outs are well underway in Kent and the initial impacts of changes to the benefits system can now be seen.

In Kent the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (commonly known as the bedroom tax) was introduced in April 2013 and the Benefit Cap in July 2013.

From June 2013 Personal Independence Payment or PIP (replacing Disability Living Allowance - DLA) was introduced for new claimants aged 16 to 64 and from October 2013 existing DLA claimants who had changes to report or were reaching the end of an award were reassessed for PIP. From October 2015 the remaining DLA caseload began to be assessed for PIP.

The Universal Credit Live Service roll out in Kent began in April 2015. This was replaced in 2016 with the Universal Credit Full Service using the DWP bespoke digital system. The full service rollout in Kent was completed in autumn 2018. While initially Universal Credit was only available to single claimants without a partner and without child dependents, the roll out of the full service made Universal Credit available to all new claimant types and to those reporting changes to their personal circumstances.

From July 2019 the government intends to begin a pilot scheme transferring claimants of existing benefits onto Universal Credit. This managed migration will start initially with 10,000 existing claimants.

The six weeks waiting period for a first Universal Credit payment has been reduced to five weeks by removing a 7-day eligibility waiting period.

Working age benefits and tax credits continue to be frozen until 2020 while pensioner benefits are protected. The rates of other benefits such as Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance are increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Plans to apply the benefits cap retrospectively to families with more than two children born before 6 April 2017 were reversed in January 2019.

From April 2019 the Citizens Advice Bureau will be providing a strengthened Universal Support service. The service is designed to provide advice and assistance to help claimants manage their Universal Credit claim, with particular emphasis on digital support and budgeting.

Increasingly more statistical information is being made available which reflects the changes which are underway. However many of the data are still classified as experimental statistics and are subject to revision.

This update uses the latest data available from government sources to provide a holistic picture of the impact of welfare reform changes on Kent and Kent districts. National and regional comparisons are included.

## **Summary of findings**

Since the original conception of the welfare reform programme, the health of the economy in general has improved both locally and nationally, although uncertainty about Britain's removal from the EU has resulted in some economic slowdown. Earnings have increased steadily and house prices have recovered. More people are finding employment, although more people are taking on part time work while fewer are working in full time jobs. It is not possible to say whether changes in the population and those claiming benefits can be attributed solely to the changes that the benefits system is undergoing. Economic stability and greater business confidence is a significant factor in the increased numbers of people who are in now in work and the reduction of the number of children in out of work benefit claimant households.

We are however able to look at each of the key changes individually and see how they have affected the population in Kent.

2016 saw a reduction in the benefit cap. This change has had a significant impact on benefit claimant households.

In Kent 317 households had their benefit capped as at October 2016, just prior to the lowering of the cap threshold. Since then the number in Kent has more than trebled to 1,130 households in November 2018. While the number of capped households remains significantly higher than before the threshold change the numbers have fallen over the last year. The vast majority of those capped have child dependents, in particular those families with 3 or more children. However a significantly higher number of smaller families have found their benefit capped following these changes, and for the first time single households with no dependent children have become subject to the cap.

As the number of capped households has increased so has the amount which claimants are being capped, resulting in a greater number of households being capped by a greater amount. While the majority of capped households are capped up to £50 per week there has been a significant increase in those households who are capped by a larger amount. In October 2016, 44 households were capped by £100 or more a week. This increased to 157 in November 2018.

To date 4,191 households have become exempt from the Benefit Cap since its introduction, the majority of which were because of claimants moving into some form of work which enabled them to claim Working Tax Credits.

In Kent as a whole fewer people are now subject to the removal of the spare room subsidy (4,763), down 517 households since November 2017, although three Kent districts (Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells) saw an increase.

The total Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) expenditure in Kent in 2017/18 was just over £3.5 million. There was an overall underspend on its allocation of 3.1%. All districts in Kent spent under their allocation with the exception of Thanet and Swale which overspent by 7.1% and 5.8%. Dover district also saw a slight overspend. 35% of DHP payments in Kent were to provide support to people affected by welfare reform changes.

Universal Credit began to be introduced in Kent in April 2015 and is now available in all areas in the county. Initially Universal Credit was only available to single claimants without a partner and without child dependents however now the coverage has been expanded to include new claimants of all types and existing benefit claimants who report changes to their personal circumstances. From July 2019 a pilot scheme begins transferring claimants of existing benefits onto Universal Credit with the full migration planned to be complete by the end of 2023. As at January 2019 there were 34,455 claimants in Kent, 69.1% of which were out of work claimants.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) was introduced in April 2013 to replace Disability Living Allowance for 16-64 year olds. As at October 2018 there were 42,372 PIP claimants in Kent. The length of time it takes to process a claim in the South East is 15 weeks, just above the national average.

## Benefit changes

### Benefit Cap

The cap on benefits for working age households was introduced to ensure that households in receipt of a working age benefit did not receive more in benefits than the average weekly wage for working households. Households where someone works more than 16 hours a week are exempt as are those where someone claims a disability or health related benefit, carers allowance and armed forces related benefits.

For the majority of households the cap is administered through Housing Benefit, with the household's Housing Benefit entitlement being reduced so that the total amount of benefit a household receives is not higher than the cap.

Initially when introduced in 2013 the cap was set at £26,000 per year however this changed in November 2016 to £20,000 per year for all areas outside London, and £23,000 in Greater London areas. This change was implemented between November 2016 and January 2017.

This report compares the latest data (November 2018) with the month before the changes came into force (October 2016). It also looks at the change over the last year.

The change to the cap threshold has resulted in a significant increase in the number of households in Kent affected by the cap.

**Table 1: Total households affected since the introduction of the benefit cap**

	Total Number of Households (2016)	Households affected by benefit cap since 2013	Total households affected by the benefit cap since 2013 per 1,000 households
<b>Nov-18</b>			
<b>Kent</b>	638,297	3,948	6.2
<b>South East</b>	3,670,546	24,545	6.7
<b>London</b>	3,447,294	59,016	17.1
<b>England</b>	22,884,532	177,061	7.7

*Source: DWP Stat Xplore; ONS Household Projections 2016*

*Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council*

Overall since the introduction of the benefit cap in 2013 3,948 households in Kent have been affected. This equates to 6.2 households affected in every 1,000 which is lower than the national average of 7.7 and the regional

average of 6.7. Those affected in the London area equates to 17.1 households in every 1,000. Those households in the London area who have seen their benefit capped account for a third of all households capped in England.

The number of capped households in Kent is three and a half times higher than the month before the threshold changes, increasing from 317 households affected in October 2016 to 1,130 affected as at November 2018 (an increase of 813 households).

Two years on, the number of capped households remains significantly higher than before the threshold changes, although the numbers have fallen over the last year. Capped households reached their peak in Kent in July 2017 when 1,549 benefits claimants were subject to the benefit cap. Since July 2017 the number of capped households in Kent has gradually fallen.

**Table 2: Change in households affected by the benefit cap since the cap threshold change**

Nov-18	Total Number of Households (2016)	Households affected by benefit cap Nov 2018	Households affected by the benefit cap per 1,000 households Nov 2018	Number change since month before cap threshold change (Oct 2016-Nov 2018)	% change since month before cap threshold change (Oct 2016-Nov 2018)
<b>Kent</b>	638,297	1,130	1.8	+813	+256%
<b>South East</b>	3,670,546	6,442	1.8	+4,420	+219%
<b>London</b>	3,447,294	12,615	3.7	+4,407	+54%
<b>England</b>	22,884,532	47,162	2.1	+29,339	+165%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore; ONS Household Projections 2016

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 3: Change in households affected by the benefit cap over the last year**

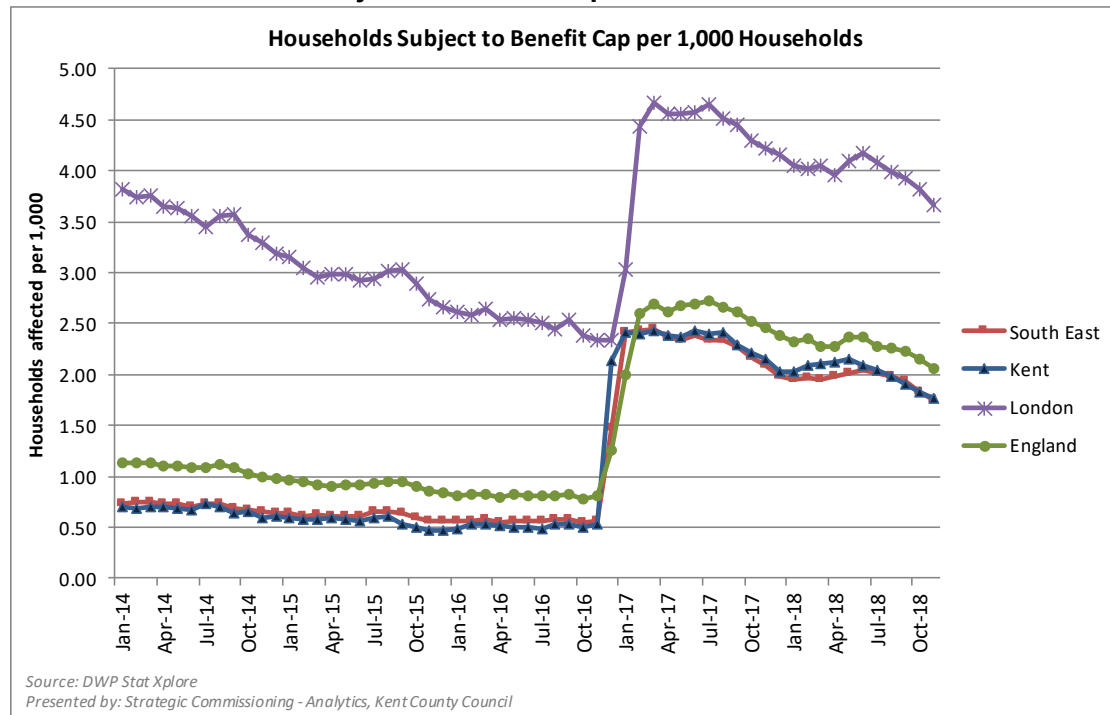
Nov-18	Total Number of Households (2016)	Households affected by benefit cap Nov 2018	Households affected by the benefit cap per 1,000 households Nov 2018	Households affected by benefit cap Nov 2017	Households affected by the benefit cap per 1,000 households Nov 2017	Number change since Nov 2017	% change since Nov 2017
<b>Kent</b>	638,297	1,130	1.8	1,378	2.2	-248	-18.0%
<b>South East</b>	3,670,546	6,442	1.8	7,674	2.1	-1,232	-16.1%
<b>London</b>	3,447,294	12,615	3.7	14,521	4.2	-1,906	-13.1%
<b>England</b>	22,884,532	47,162	2.1	56,170	2.5	-9,008	-16.0%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore; DCLG Household Projections 2016

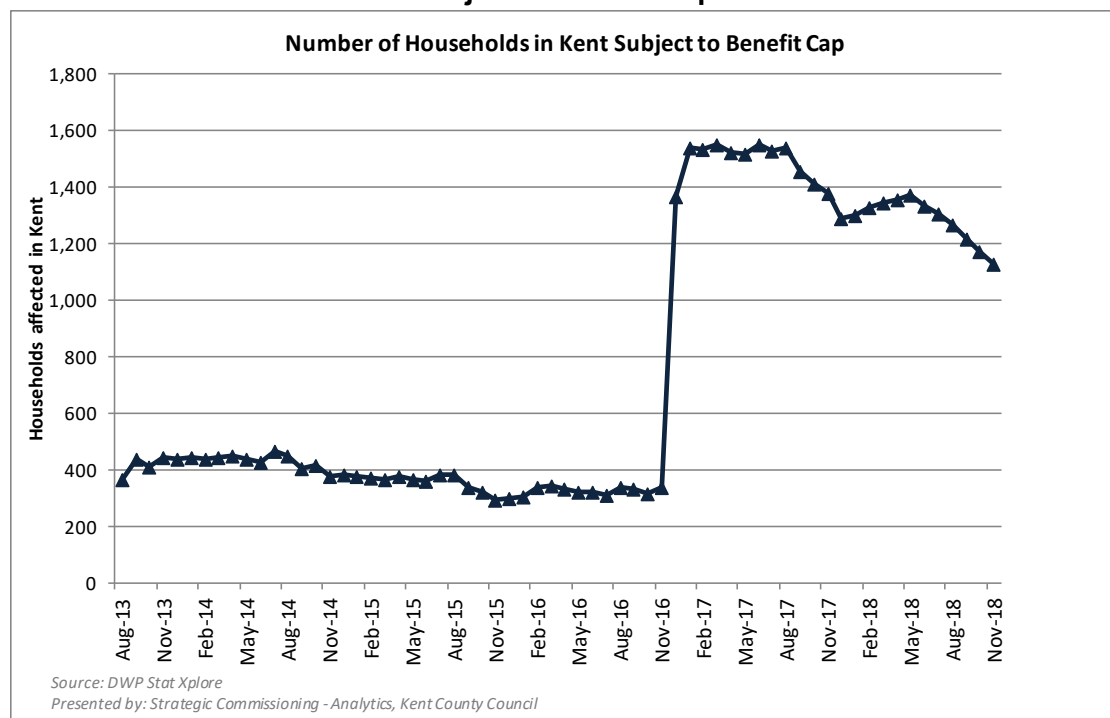
Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council



**Chart 1: Households subject to benefit cap – 2014-2018**



**Chart 2: Households in Kent subject to benefit cap**



When looking at the individual districts within Kent the figures show that Swale has the highest number of capped households in Kent. When compared relatively to the number of households in each district we can see that Swale (2.5 per 1,000 households) also has the highest proportion of capped households in the county.

**Table 4: Capped households in Kent districts**

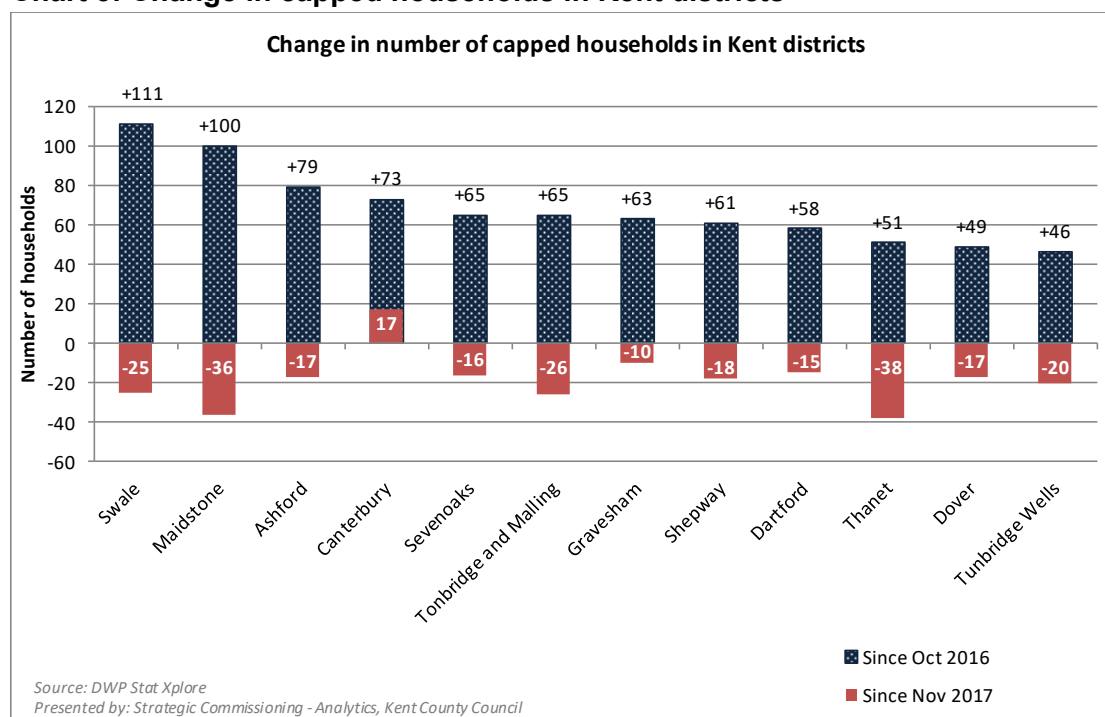
	Nov-18		Oct-16	
	Total Households capped	Households capped per 1,000 households	Total Households capped	Households capped per 1,000 households
<b>Ashford</b>	118	2.3	39	0.8
<b>Canterbury</b>	93	1.4	20	0.3
<b>Dartford</b>	75	1.7	17	0.4
<b>Dover</b>	70	1.4	21	0.4
<b>Gravesham</b>	87	2.1	24	0.6
<b>Maidstone</b>	136	2.0	36	0.5
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	80	1.6	15	0.3
<b>Shepway</b>	95	1.9	34	0.7
<b>Swale</b>	150	2.5	39	0.7
<b>Thanet</b>	97	1.6	46	0.7
<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling</b>	85	1.7	20	0.4
<b>Tunbridge Wells</b>	54	1.1	8	0.2

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

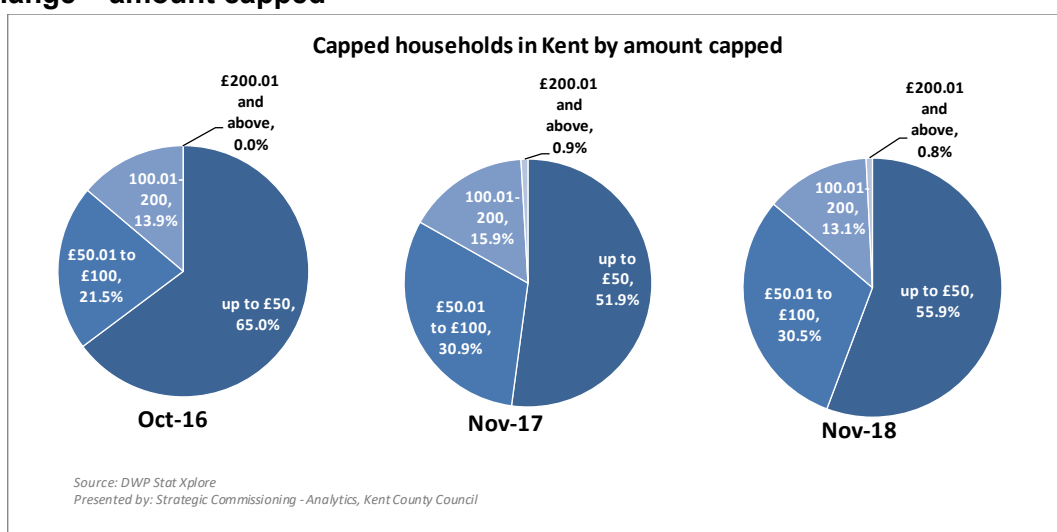
All local authorities in Kent saw large increases in the number of households capped following the cap threshold change, however over the last year all authorities have seen the number of capped households falling. Thanet saw the biggest reduction in capped households over the last year with 38 fewer capped households, a reduction of 28.1%.

**Chart 3: Change in capped households in Kent districts**



Following the changes to the cap threshold Kent saw an increase to the average amount a claimants' benefit was capped. Prior to the threshold change almost two thirds of claimants were capped up to £50 a week and no households were capped by more than £200 per week. Since the threshold changed more households are being capped a higher amount. A lower proportion were capped by up to £50 and a higher proportion capped between £50 and £200. For the first time since the introduction of the cap several households in Kent have been capped by more than £200.

**Chart 4: Households affected by the benefit cap before and after the threshold change – amount capped**



The following table shows the number of households being capped as at November 2018 and the amount they were being capped.

**Table 5: Households affected by the benefit cap – amount capped**

	Households affected	up to £50	£50.01 to £100	£100.01 - £200	£200.01 - £300	£300.01 - £400 and above
Nov-18						
Kent	1,130	632	345	148	9	0
South East	6,442	3,743	1,691	911	81	24
London	12,615	7,327	3,094	1,705	390	97
England	47,162	27,411	13,609	5,399	591	147
Kent	100%	55.9%	30.5%	13.1%	0.8%	0.0%
South East	100%	58.1%	26.2%	14.1%	1.3%	0.4%
London	100%	58.1%	24.5%	13.5%	3.1%	0.8%
England	100%	58.1%	28.9%	11.4%	1.3%	0.3%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

The following tables show the amount households were capped has changed since the threshold change.

**Table 6: Change in number of households affected by the benefit cap since cap threshold change – amount capped**

October 2016 - November 2018						
Number change	Households affected	up to £50	£50.01 to £100	£100.01 - £200	£200.01 - £300	£300.01 - £400 and above
Kent	+813	+426	+277	+104	+9	+0
South East	+4,420	+2,472	+1,215	+665	+58	+24
London	+4,407	+2,633	+1,169	+476	+132	+2
England	+29,339	+16,778	+9,175	+3,064	+277	+32
Percentage change						
Kent	+256%	+207%	+407%	+236%	-	-
South East	+219%	+194%	+255%	+270%	+252%	-
London	+54%	+56%	+61%	+39%	+51%	+2%
England	+165%	+158%	+207%	+131%	+88%	+28%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 7: Change in number of households affected by the benefit cap since last year – amount capped**

November 2017 - November 2018						
Number change	Households affected	up to £50	£50.01 to £100	£100.01 - £200	£200.01 - £300	£300.01 - £400 and above
Kent	-248	-69	-94	-76	+2	+0
South East	-1,232	-482	-421	-300	-19	-1
London	-1,906	-920	-563	-388	-19	-24
England	-9,008	-3,562	-3,504	-1,824	-73	-44
Percentage change						
Kent	-18%	-10%	-21%	-34%	+29%	-
South East	-16%	-11%	-20%	-25%	-19%	-4%
London	-13%	-11%	-15%	-19%	-5%	-20%
England	-16%	-12%	-20%	-25%	-11%	-23%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent the majority of benefit claimant households that are subject to the cap have children. The largest proportion of affected households (82%) are single parent households as at November 2018.

The following table shows the change in family type of those claimants who are subject to the benefit cap.

**Table 8: Capped benefit households by family type**

	Households affected	Single, no child dependant	Single with child dependant(s)	Couple, no child dependant	Couple with child dependant(s)
<b>Nov-18</b>					
<b>Kent</b>	1,130	7	931	0	195
<b>South East</b>	6,442	201	5,223	7	1,002
<b>London</b>	12,615	2,807	7,906	21	1,888
<b>England</b>	47,162	3,331	34,877	41	8,920
<b>Kent</b>	100%	0.6%	82.4%	0.0%	17.3%
<b>South East</b>	100%	3.1%	81.1%	0.1%	15.6%
<b>London</b>	100%	22.3%	62.7%	0.2%	15.0%
<b>England</b>	100%	7.1%	74.0%	0.1%	18.9%

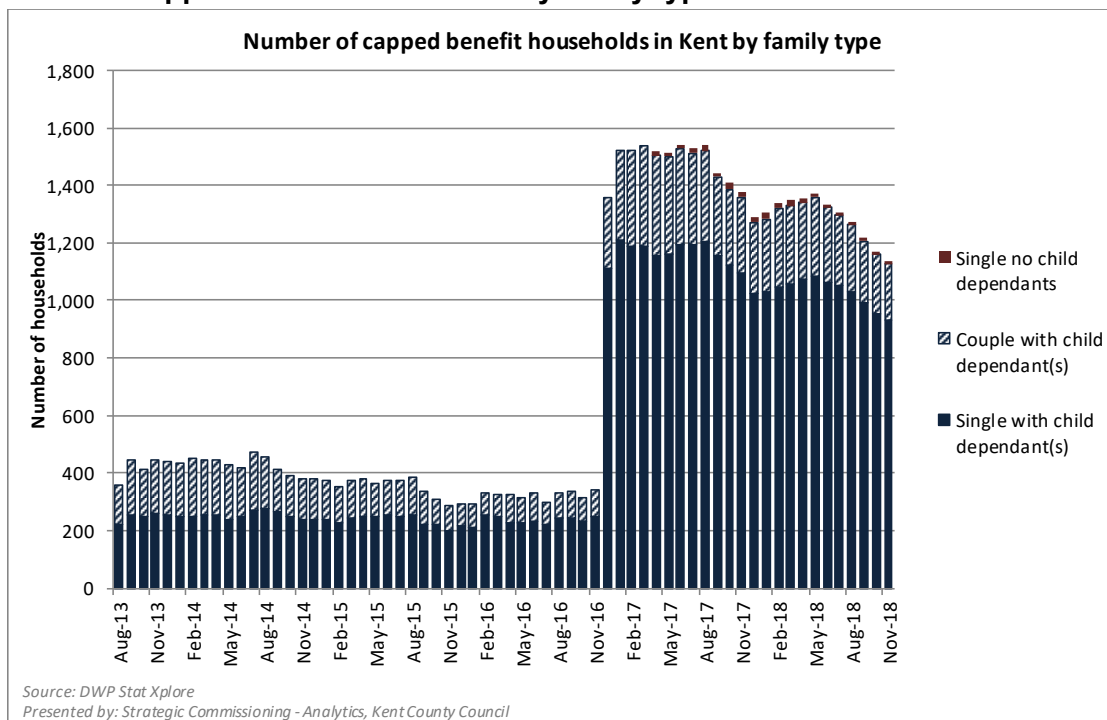
Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

Prior to the threshold change it was only households with dependent children which were capped, however since the change to the threshold a number of single households with no child dependents became subject to the cap.

**Chart 5: Capped benefit households by family type**



**Table 9: Change in capped benefit households by family type since threshold change**

October 2016 - November 2018					
	Households affected	Single, no child dependant	Single with child dependant(s)	Couple, no child dependant	Couple with child dependant(s)
<b>Number change</b>					
<b>Kent</b>	+813	+7	+698	+0	+115
<b>South East</b>	+4,420	+179	+3,677	+7	+547
<b>London</b>	+4,407	+1,849	+2,244	+8	+315
<b>England</b>	+29,339	+2,288	+22,850	+22	+4,182
<b>Percentage change</b>					
<b>Kent</b>	+256%	-	+300%	-	+144%
<b>South East</b>	+219%	+814%	+238%	-	+120%
<b>London</b>	+54%	+193%	+40%	+62%	+20%
<b>England</b>	+165%	+219%	+190%	+116%	+88%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 10: Change in capped benefit households by family type since last year**

November 2017 - November 2018					
	Households affected	Single, no child dependant	Single with child dependant(s)	Couple, no child dependant	Couple with child dependant(s)
<b>Number change</b>					
<b>Kent</b>	-248	-14	-167	+0	-67
<b>South East</b>	-1,232	-24	-955	-1	-261
<b>London</b>	-1,906	-283	-1,243	-2	-370
<b>England</b>	-9,008	-540	-5,987	-12	-2,469
<b>Percentage change</b>					
<b>Kent</b>	-18%	-67%	-15%	-	-26%
<b>South East</b>	-16%	-11%	-15%	-13%	-21%
<b>London</b>	-13%	-9%	-14%	-9%	-16%
<b>England</b>	-16%	-14%	-15%	-23%	-22%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

The majority of households affected in Kent as at November 2018 (83%) are larger family households (those with at least 3 children).

Households with three to four dependant children make up almost three quarters of those affected by the cap.

**Table 11: Households affected by the benefit cap – number of child dependants**

	Households affected	No child dependant	1-2 child dependants	3-4 child dependants	5 or more child dependants
<b>Nov-18</b>					
<b>Kent</b>	1,130	8	178	821	129
<b>South East</b>	6,442	210	1,747	4,030	448
<b>London</b>	12,615	2,825	4,362	4,731	697
<b>England</b>	47,162	3,370	8,933	30,149	4,719
<b>Kent</b>	100%	0.7%	15.8%	72.7%	11.4%
<b>South East</b>	100%	3.3%	27.1%	62.6%	7.0%
<b>London</b>	100%	22.4%	34.6%	37.5%	5.5%
<b>England</b>	100%	7.1%	18.9%	63.9%	10.0%

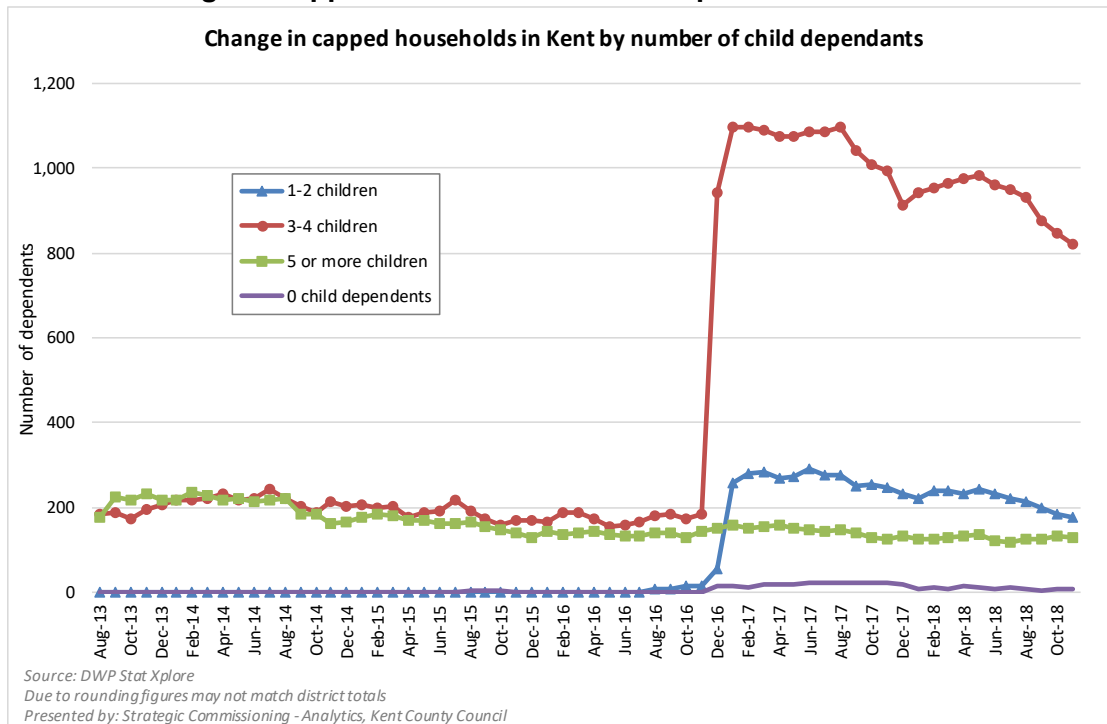
Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

Households of all sizes were impacted following the change to the benefit cap threshold, but those most affected were households with three to four children. There was also a significant increase in households with one to two children affected and for the first time households with no child dependants were affected.

**Chart 6: Change in capped households – child dependants**



Over the last year the number of impacted households has decreased however, with the exception of very large families, the number impacted still exceeds the number seen before the threshold changes.

**Table 12: Change in capped benefit households by dependants since threshold change**

October 2016 - November 2018					
Number change	Households affected	No child dependant	1-2 child dependants	3-4 child dependants	5 or more child dependants
Kent	+813	+8	+164	+649	+0
South East	+4,420	+188	+1,656	+2,704	-134
London	+4,407	+1,855	+2,146	+600	-199
England	+29,339	+2,312	+6,514	+21,623	-1,091
Percentage change					
Kent	+256%	-	+1,171%	+377%	-
South East	+219%	+855%	+1,820%	+204%	-23%
London	+54%	+191%	+97%	+15%	-22%
England	+165%	+219%	+269%	+254%	-19%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Table 13: Change in capped benefit households by dependants since last year**

November 2017 - November 2018					
Number change	Households affected	No child dependant	1-2 child dependants	3-4 child dependants	5 or more child dependants
Kent	-248	-13	-69	-174	+5
South East	-1,232	-19	-467	-685	-61
London	-1,906	-291	-826	-688	-99
England	-9,008	-544	-2,275	-5,488	-673
Percentage change					
Kent	-18%	-62%	-28%	-17%	+4%
South East	-16%	-8%	-21%	-15%	-12%
London	-13%	-9%	-16%	-13%	-12%
England	-16%	-14%	-20%	-15%	-12%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

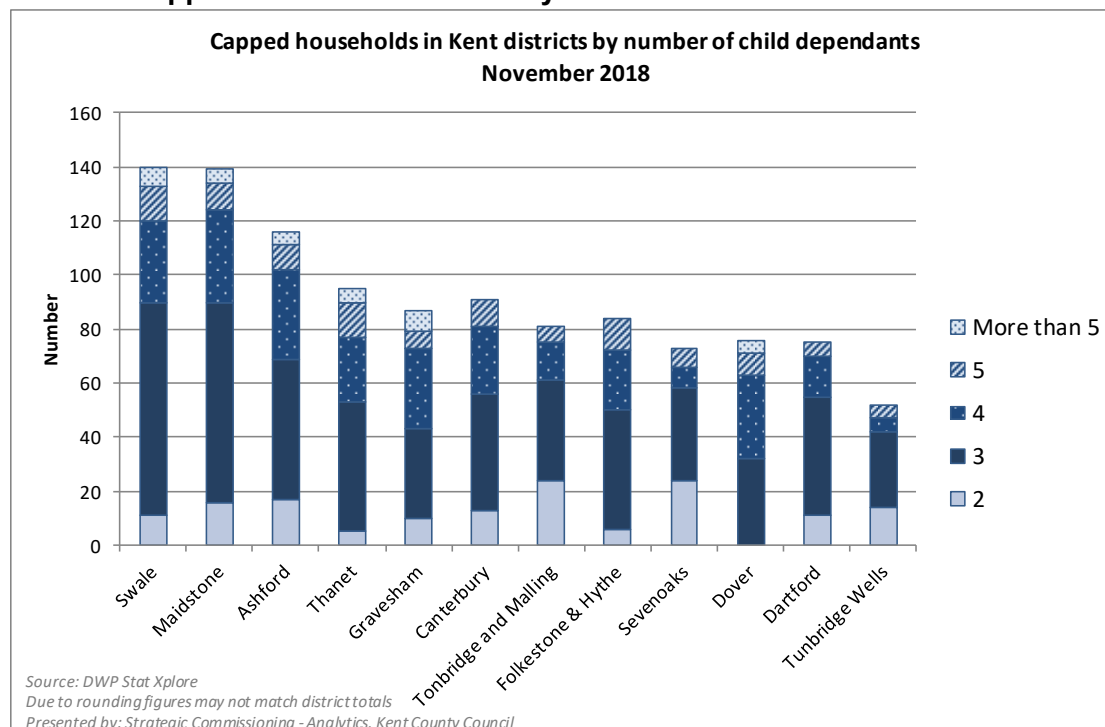
Note: Due to DWP rounding methodology percentages may not sum.

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

Some of the largest households affected by the benefit cap live in Swale and Thanet. More than a quarter of the affected households in Kent with 5 or more children live within these two districts.



**Chart 7: Capped benefit households by number of children**



### Benefit Cap off-flows

Households may flow on and off the benefit cap numerous times as their circumstances change. Also, household circumstances may change whilst a household remains off the cap. Therefore, for reporting purposes, the benefit cap off-flow data reflects the total number of households who have become exempt at the latest point in time.

The total number of off-flows to date in Kent is 4,191.

**Table 14: Housing cap off-flows to date**

Nov-18	Total off-flows to date
<b>Kent</b>	4,191
<b>South East</b>	24,529
<b>London</b>	59,016
<b>England</b>	177,053

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

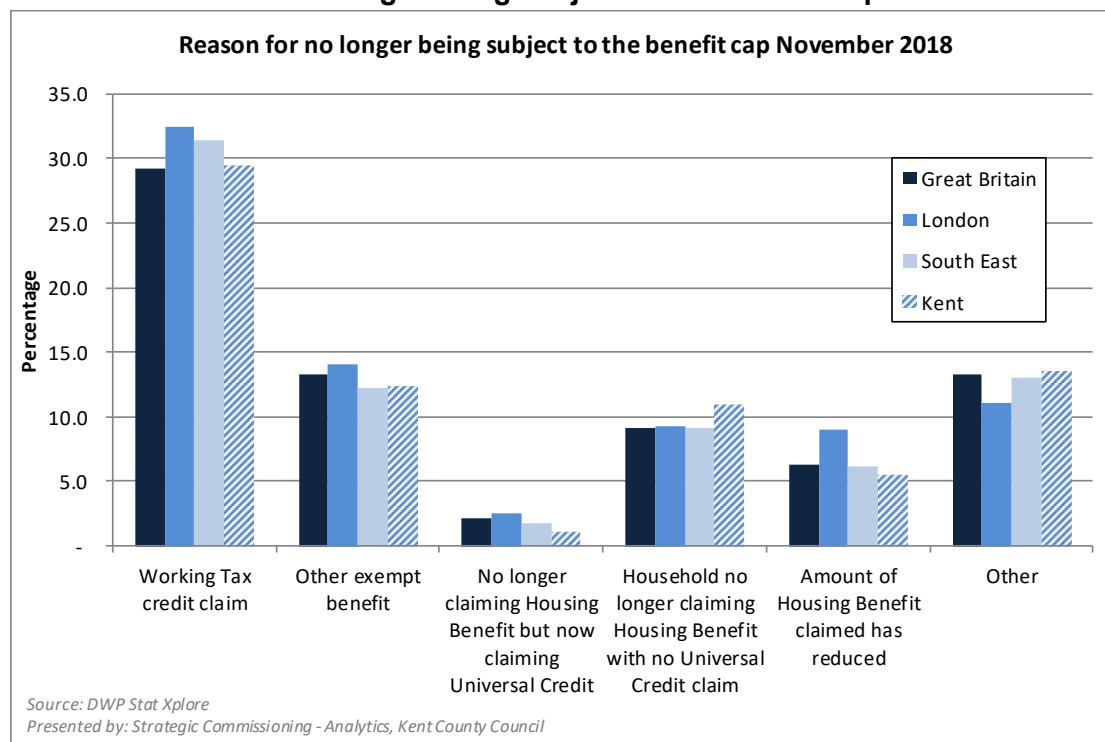
Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

There are a variety of reasons why a claimant would no longer be subject to the benefit cap. A claimant could become exempt for any combination of these reasons, so to avoid double counting DWP take a hierarchical approach with only the top most reason for becoming exempt is recorded. The categories at the lower end of the hierarchy named “other” (such as changing local authority) are deemed not enough to show a reason for no longer being capped but they do show a household’s change of circumstance and may be indicative of a reason to no longer be capped.

The following chart shows the main reason for becoming exempt in hierarchical order.

The majority of claimants have become exempt from the benefit cap because they have moved off out of work benefits and into some form of work, thus enabling them to claim Working Tax credits.

**Chart 8: Reason for no longer being subject to the Benefit Cap**



### Housing Benefit Flows

Housing Benefit flows data are experimental statistics from the Department of Work and Pensions. It is a new official statistic undergoing evaluation and therefore it is recommended that caution is exercised when drawing conclusions from the published data as it is likely to be further developed.

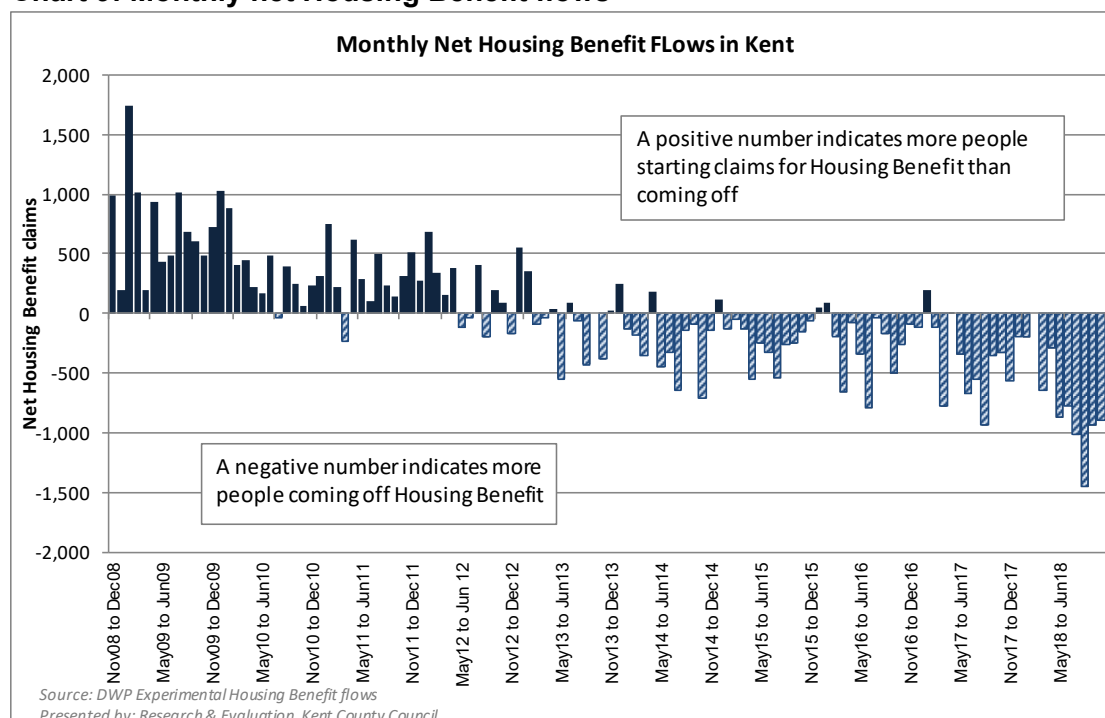
The data shows a net reduction in Housing Benefit claimants throughout the year to November 2018. On the whole over the last four and a half years more people were coming off Housing Benefit than starting new claims.

**Table 15: Net Housing Benefit claimant flows**

	Nov17 to Dec17	Dec17 to Jan18	Jan18 to Feb18	Feb18 to Mar18	Mar18 to Apr18	Apr18 to May18	May18 to Jun18	Jun18 to Jul18	Jul18 to Aug18	Aug18 to Sep18	Sep18 to Oct18	Oct18 to Nov18
Kent	-560	-190	-200	0	-640	-290	-870	-770	-1,020	-1,450	-940	-900
South East	-3570	-700	-1,530	-2,580	-4,120	-1,580	-4,710	-4,180	-4,160	-6,010	-4,980	-4,570
London	-4160	-160	-1,840	-4,100	-4,330	-1,820	-5,270	-3,870	-1,140	-8,550	-6,890	-6,650
GB	-46,640	-5,350	-18,680	-33,030	-43,340	-20,310	-47,930	-37,030	-31,220	-62,870	-51,270	-51,760

Source: DWP Housing Benefit Flows Experimental Statistics  
Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Chart 9: Monthly net Housing Benefit flows**



### Removal of spare room subsidy

The removal of the spare room subsidy (also known as bedroom tax) means that Housing Benefit claimants living in social rented properties have their Housing Benefit reduced if they have more bedrooms than they need.

To avoid having their benefit reduced claimants in social housing need to move into a property with fewer bedrooms. They can apply to their social housing provider to be added to their waiting list to enable them to move to a property with fewer bedrooms when one becomes available.

The number of people in Kent that have been affected by the spare room subsidy has fallen since it was introduced in 2013, however there remain 4,763 Housing Benefit claimants affected.

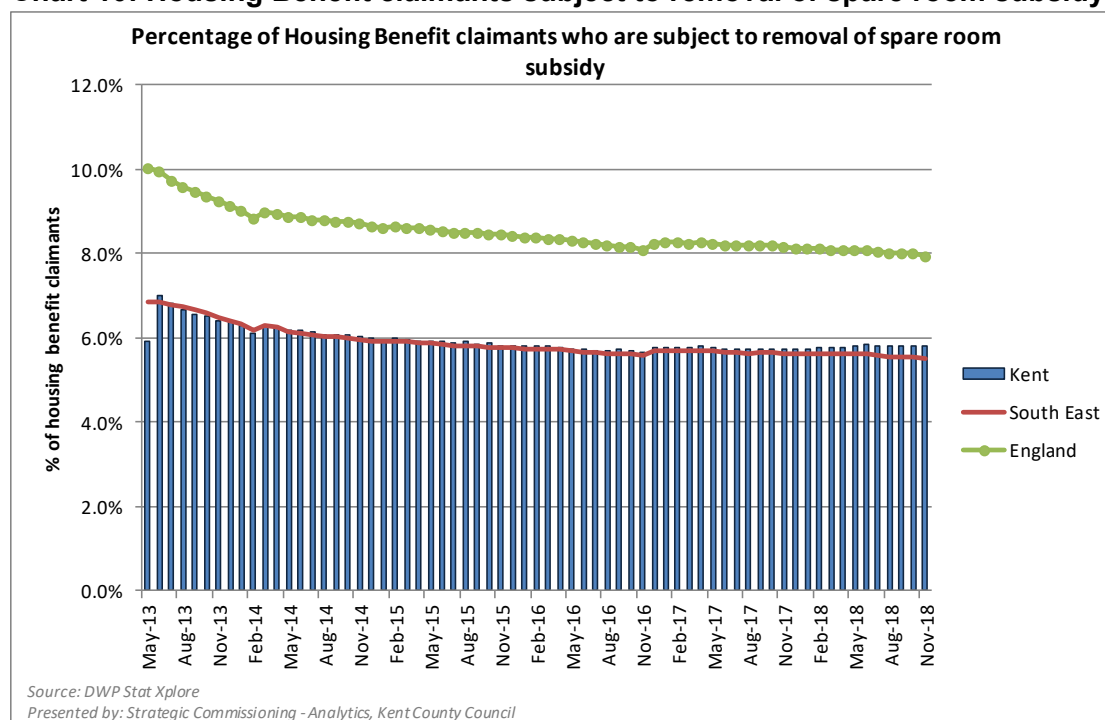
**Table 16: Housing Benefit claimants subject to removal of spare room subsidy**

November 2018	Housing Benefit Claimants	Claimants subject to removal of spare room subsidy		Change in claimants subject to removal of spare room subsidy since May 2013		Change in claimants subject to removal of spare room subsidy since Nov 2017	
	Number	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Kent</b>	82,139	4,763	5.8%	-1,471	-23.6%	-517	-9.8%
<b>South East</b>	432,380	23,842	5.5%	-14,008	-37.0%	-3,082	-11.4%
<b>London</b>	687,356	35,490	5.2%	-24,313	-40.7%	-2,891	-7.5%
<b>England</b>	3,341,472	265,474	7.9%	-168,991	-38.9%	-34,859	-11.6%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Chart 10: Housing Benefit claimants subject to removal of spare room subsidy**



The majority of those affected (77.9%) are subject to a reduction of up to £20 per week. 1,050 claimants in Kent have their benefit reduced by £20 or more.

**Table 17: Proportion of claimants subject to removal of spare room subsidy by weekly reduction amount**

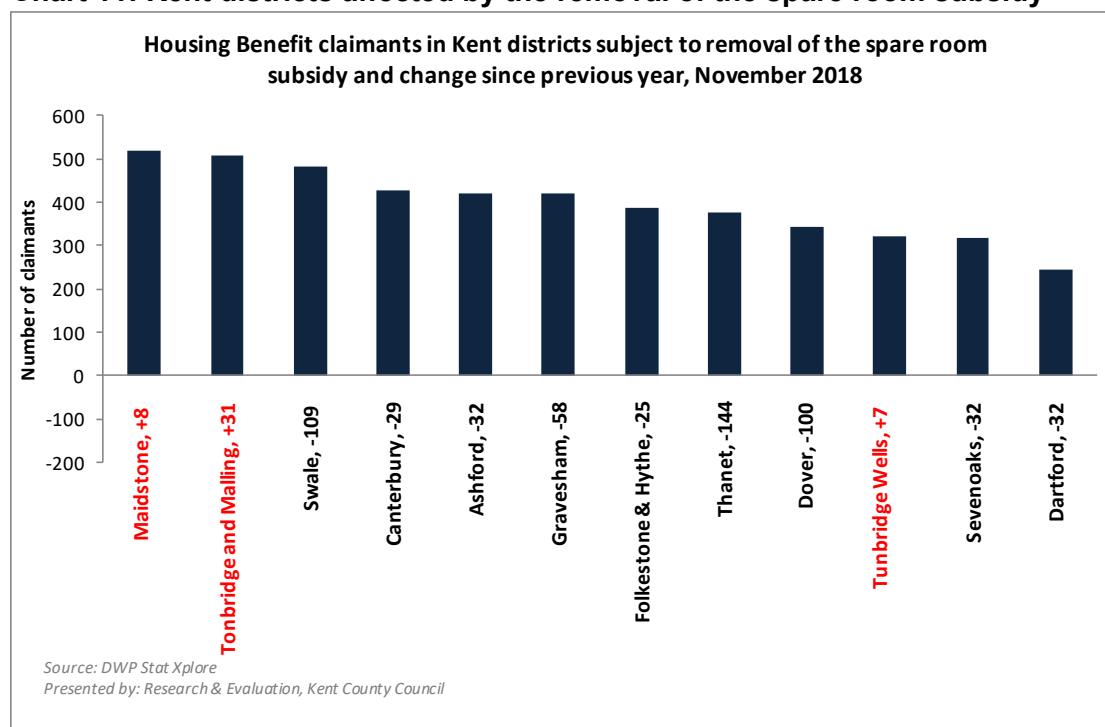
	Number subject to removal of spare room subsidy	Up to £4.99	£5 to £9.99	£10 to £14.99	£15 to £19.99	£20 to £24.99	£25 and above
<b>November 2018</b>							
<b>Kent</b>	4,763	-	0.9%	44.8%	32.2%	9.3%	12.8%
<b>South East</b>	23,842	0.1%	0.8%	33.3%	41.5%	8.7%	15.6%
<b>London</b>	35,490	-	0.5%	10.0%	50.2%	17.1%	22.2%
<b>England</b>	265,474	0.0%	4.2%	56.2%	19.2%	12.6%	7.7%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore  
Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

Maidstone district has the highest number of households subject to the removal of the spare room subsidy (520). Three districts saw an increase over the last year in the number of households affected. Tonbridge and Malling saw the biggest increase (+31 households). Thanet saw the biggest reduction in number of households affected with 144 fewer households subject to the removal of the spare room subsidy in November 2018 than the previous year.

Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling have the highest number of claimant households affected and account for more than 20% of all affected households in Kent.

**Chart 11: Kent districts affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy**



### Discretionary Housing Payments

Starting in year 2013 to 2014, local authorities were requested to provide details to DWP of their use of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds. This information gives an indication of how DHP funding is supporting people affected by the welfare reforms and the type of choices that people are making in response to the reforms.

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is a discretionary scheme that allows local authorities to make awards to people experiencing financial difficulties with housing costs and qualifying for Housing Benefit (HB). As a result of the passage of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the government contribution towards DHPs significantly increased to help local authorities support people affected by some of the key welfare reforms, namely:

- introduction of the benefit cap;
- removal of the spare room subsidy (RSRS) in the social rented sector;
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms.

The various types of shortfalls that a DHP can cover include (but are not limited to):

- reductions in HB where the benefit cap has been applied;
- reductions in HB due to the RSRS in the social rented sector;
- reductions in HB as a result of LHA restrictions;
- rent officer restrictions such as local reference rent or shared room rate;
- non-dependant deductions in HB, or housing cost contributions in UC;

- rent shortfalls to prevent a household becoming homeless whilst the
- housing authority explores alternative options;
- reductions due to income tapers.

Although DHP funding is in theory allocated for each reform, local authorities have discretion about how they actually use the funding. In addition to the central government contribution, English and Welsh local authorities are able to top up DHP funding up to a maximum of two and a half times this figure using their own funds (for instance, a local authority receiving £100,000 as DHP central government funding could top up this amount with up to £150,000 of their own funds).

In total in 2017/18, central government allocated £166.5 million of DHP funding to be distributed amongst English and Welsh local authorities.

The total DHP expenditure in Kent in 2017/18 was just over £3.5 million. There was an overall underspend on its allocation of 3.1%.

Seven districts in Kent reported an underspend in its allocation. Three local authorities reported an overspend. Thanet (+30,169, +7.1%) and Swale (+25,855, +5.7%) reported the largest overspend in 2017/18 when compared to their original allocation.

**Table 18: Discretionary Housing Payments Allocation & Expenditure**

	<b>DHP Financial Expenditure 2017/18 (£)</b>	<b>Original allocation (£)</b>	<b>Amount over/under spent (£)</b>
Ashford	297,764	297,764	0
Canterbury	254,997	301,079	-46,082
Dartford	207,085	209,792	-2,707
Dover	272,353	272,104	249
Gravesham	294,899	294,995	-96
Maidstone	298,779	325,633	-26,854
Sevenoaks	177,847	198,116	-20,269
Folkestone & Hythe	281,502	320,758	-39,256
Swale	480,652	454,797	25,855
Thanet	454,853	424,684	30,169
Tonbridge and Malling	284,178	284,178	0
Tunbridge Wells	200,184	235,459	-35,275
<b>Kent</b>	<b>3,505,093</b>	<b>3,619,359</b>	<b>-114,266</b>

Source: DWP Discretionary Housing Payments

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

Data about the reason for awarding a DHP is available at district level. County figures have been achieved by summing the reported district figures.

Looking at the ways local authorities help people who face problems directly as a result of welfare reform, the figures show that in Kent the largest expenditure was providing support to people affected by the benefit cap (16.9%). This is reflected in the majority of areas in Kent which submitted information with the exception of Gravesham district which saw a greater allocation towards help with problems arising from Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms.

LHA is used by authorities to calculate the amount of Housing Benefit that can be awarded to a claimant who is privately renting.

Changes have been made to Housing Benefit and the way it is calculated. These changes include a change to the way benefit is calculated in each area, limiting benefit to working age tenants based on property size and capping benefit to out of work tenants of working age.

**Table 19: Discretionary Housing Payments District Expenditure**

<b>2017/18</b>	<b>Benefit cap (£)</b>	<b>Removal of the spare room subsidy (£)</b>	<b>LHA reforms (£)</b>	<b>Combination of reforms (£)</b>	<b>Other (non welfare reform) (£)</b>
Ashford	8.7%	15.0%	12.1%	0.3%	63.9%
Canterbury	19.9%	17.4%	4.0%	1.7%	57.1%
Dartford	15.1%	8.5%	2.1%	0.0%	74.3%
Dover	16.4%	13.3%	2.2%	1.9%	66.2%
Gravesham	15.3%	19.2%	32.6%	0.0%	32.9%
Maidstone	12.4%	7.2%	0.5%	0.1%	79.9%
Sevenoaks	17.3%	19.6%	0.6%	0.0%	62.6%
Folkestone & Hythe	17.6%	4.9%	2.5%	0.0%	75.0%
Swale	27.5%	5.9%	0.3%	4.4%	61.8%
Thanet	15.2%	10.4%	2.1%	0.0%	72.3%
Tonbridge and Malling	19.2%	17.1%	5.0%	3.5%	55.3%
Tunbridge Wells	9.2%	8.2%	1.2%	0.0%	81.5%
<b>Kent</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>64.4%</b>

Source: DWP Discretionary Housing Payments

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

## **Universal Credit Claimants**

When Universal Credit was first introduced it was called the Universal Credit live service. The IT system used was developed by private contractors. In 2016 DWP made the decision to build their own digital system known as the full service. This was run alongside the existing system. Areas using the original system are known as 'live service areas'.

Live service areas continued to roll-out until April 2016 in order to test and learn processes and policy. From May 2016, live service areas were gradually changed into Universal Credit full service areas and all existing live service claimants in those areas were transferred to the full service system. No brand new claims to the live service have been possible since 1 January 2018. It is expected that all live service claimants will have been moved into the full service by Spring 2019.

The roll out for the full digital service across the country was completed at the end of 2018.

Initially Universal Credit was only available to single claimants without a partner and without child dependents however now the coverage has been expanded to include new claimants of all types and existing benefit claimants who report changes to their personal circumstances.

From July 2019 the government intends to begin a pilot scheme transferring claimants of existing benefits (those that Universal Credit was designed to replace) onto Universal Credit. This managed migration will start initially with 10,000 existing claimants. They won't start moving people over to Universal Credit in great numbers until the pilot scheme has been completed and assessed, however they plan to have completed the full migration process by the end of 2023.

From May 2019, couples where one partner is aged above Pension Credit age and the other is aged under Pension Credit age, will no longer be able to make a new claim for Pension Credit. Instead they will have to claim Universal Credit. Mixed aged couples on Pension Credit can continue to remain on Pension Credit as long as they continue to satisfy the other qualifying conditions for Pension Credit.

Citizens Advice has provided a support service for those people beginning a claim for Universal Credit since its introduction. In October 2018 it was announced that from April 2019 the Citizens Advice service would be providing a strengthened Universal Support service. The service is designed to provide advice and assistance to help claimants manage their Universal Credit claim, with particular emphasis on digital support and budgeting.



Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears, but new claimants had been required to wait six weeks for a first payment. This has been reduced to five weeks by removing a 7-day eligibility waiting period. Advances are available during the waiting period. These advances are treated as loans which the claimant is required to pay back.

In 2017 the full service began to be rolled out across Kent. This staggered roll out was completed in Kent in Autumn 2018. Universal Credit is now available to new claimants and existing benefit claimants who report changes to their personal circumstances.

From May 2015 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) began to release figures showing the number of people claiming Universal Credit. These figures are new and are considered as experimental, therefore may be subject to revision.

In Kent as at January 2019 there were 34,455 claimants of Universal Credit. This has increased by 163.5% (21,381 claimants) over the last year as it has been rolled out across the county.

69.1% of Universal Credit claimants in Kent were out of work, the remaining claimants being in work but with low incomes.

**Table 20: Change in Universal Credit claimants**

	<b>Universal Credit claimants Jan 2018</b>	<b>Universal Credit claimants Jan 2019</b>	<b>Number change since January 2018</b>	<b>% change since January 2018</b>
<b>Kent</b>	13,074	34,455	21,381	163.5%
<b>South East</b>	56,846	156,153	99,307	174.7%
<b>London</b>	112,994	231,187	118,193	104.6%
<b>England</b>	619,343	1,403,147	783,804	126.6%

*Source: DWP Stat Xplore*

*Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council*

**Table 21: Universal Credit claimants**

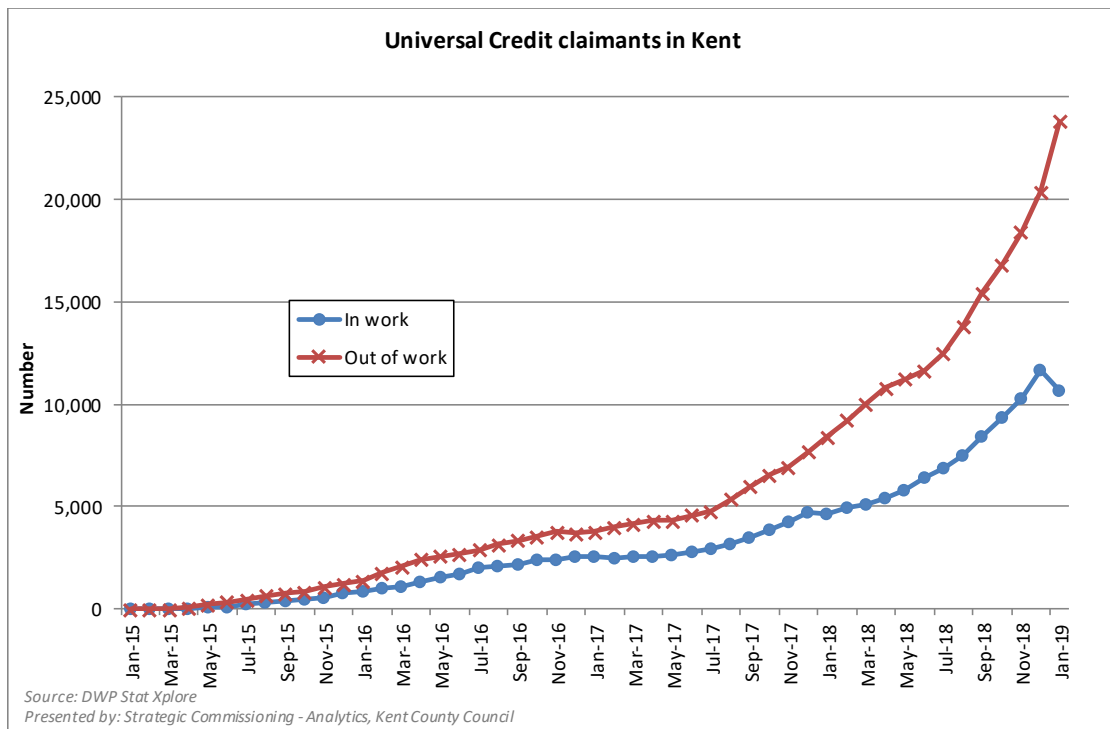
	Total Number of Universal Credit Claimants	Universal Credit Claimants in Employment	Universal Credit Claimants Not in Employment
<b>Jan-19</b>			
<b>Kent</b>	34,455	10,657	23,796
<b>South East</b>	156,153	54,813	101,343
<b>London</b>	231,187	76,037	155,153
<b>England</b>	1,403,147	479,719	923,426

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

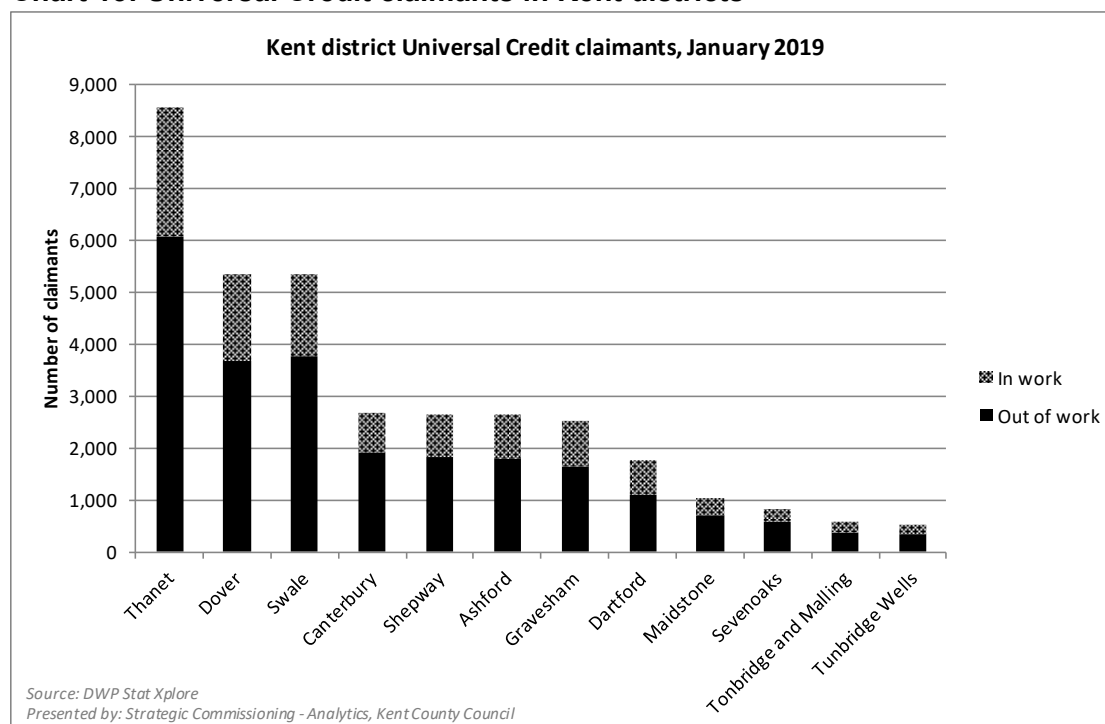
The number of Universal Credit claimants in Kent has increased sharply since the full service started to be rolled out across the county in 2017. A slight fall in the number of in-work claimants can be seen between December 2018 and January 2019. This would largely be due to the end of temporary seasonal work over the Christmas period.

**Chart 12: Universal Credit claimants – time series**



Thanet district has the highest number of Universal Credit claimants in Kent, 70.8% of which are out of work claimants. Districts in the west of the county have the lowest numbers of claimants.

**Chart 13: Universal Credit claimants in Kent districts**



When Universal Credit first became available in Kent the majority of claimants were aged 18 to 24, for both in work and out of work claimants, unsurprising as the benefit was currently only available in Kent to single claimants without dependents.

Following the rollout of the full service more claimants are within the older age groups, in particular those aged 25 to 34 which account for 29.2% of all claimants.

More than half of all in work claimants of Universal Credit are aged between 25 and 44.

**Table 22: Kent Universal Credit claimants by age**

Jan-19	Total UC claimants	Out of work UC claimants	In work UC claimants
18-24	22.7%	24.2%	19.3%
25-34	29.2%	26.7%	34.7%
35-44	18.7%	17.9%	20.6%
45-54	16.8%	17.1%	16.1%
55+	12.6%	14.1%	9.3%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

## Child Benefit

Child benefit is a tax-free payment that is aimed at helping parents cope with the cost of bringing up children.

From January 2013 the eligibility rules for claiming Child Benefit changed. The benefit is no longer universal and contains some element of means testing.

Families with at least one parent earning more than £50,000 a year can no longer claim the total amount of child benefit. If one of the parents earns more than £60,000, they may choose to stop claiming Child Benefit altogether.

Alternatively, it can continue to be claimed however it must be disclosed in a self-assessment tax form. It is then recovered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs by taxing the parent's earnings.

**Table 23: Child Benefit claimants – August 2018**

<b>Aug-18</b>	<b>Number of families in receipt of Child Benefit</b>	<b>Number of children in families in receipt of Child Benefit</b>
<b>Kent</b>	167,045	289,145
<b>South East</b>	930,375	1,598,185
<b>London</b>	970,900	1,707,250
<b>England</b>	6,166,095	10,764,480

*Source: HMRC*

*Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council*

As at August 2018 167,045 families in Kent were in receipt of Child Benefit, with 289,145 children benefitting.

7.3% of families in Kent opted out of Child Benefit when the financial eligibility rules came into force in 2013. This increased to 10.1% in 2018. This is below the average for the region (13.9%) but is higher than the national average (7.9%).

The number of families opting out has increased steadily.

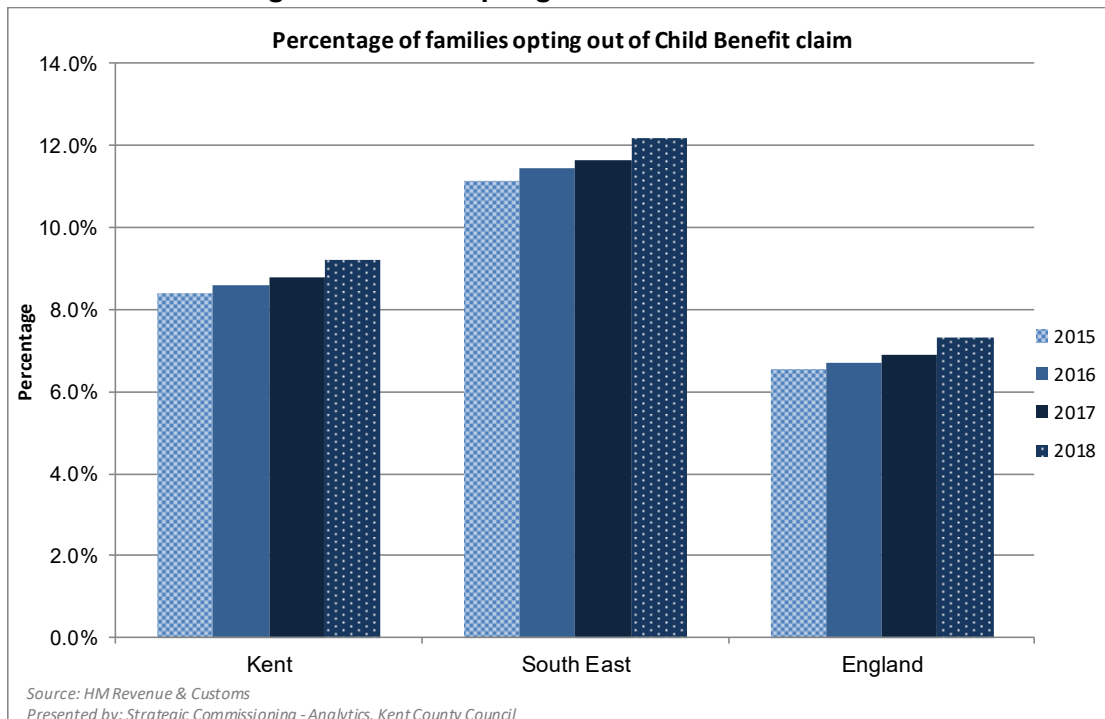
**Table 24: Families opting out of Child Benefit**

	Number of families opting out of Child Benefit				%			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Kent</b>	15,460	15,775	16,120	16,930	9.2%	9.4%	9.6%	10.1%
<b>South East</b>	119,380	122,065	123,740	129,050	12.6%	12.9%	13.2%	13.9%
<b>London</b>	92,330	96,005	100,425	106,070	9.4%	9.8%	10.2%	10.9%
<b>England</b>	435,755	447,880	459,790	486,035	7.0%	7.2%	7.4%	7.9%

Source: HMRC

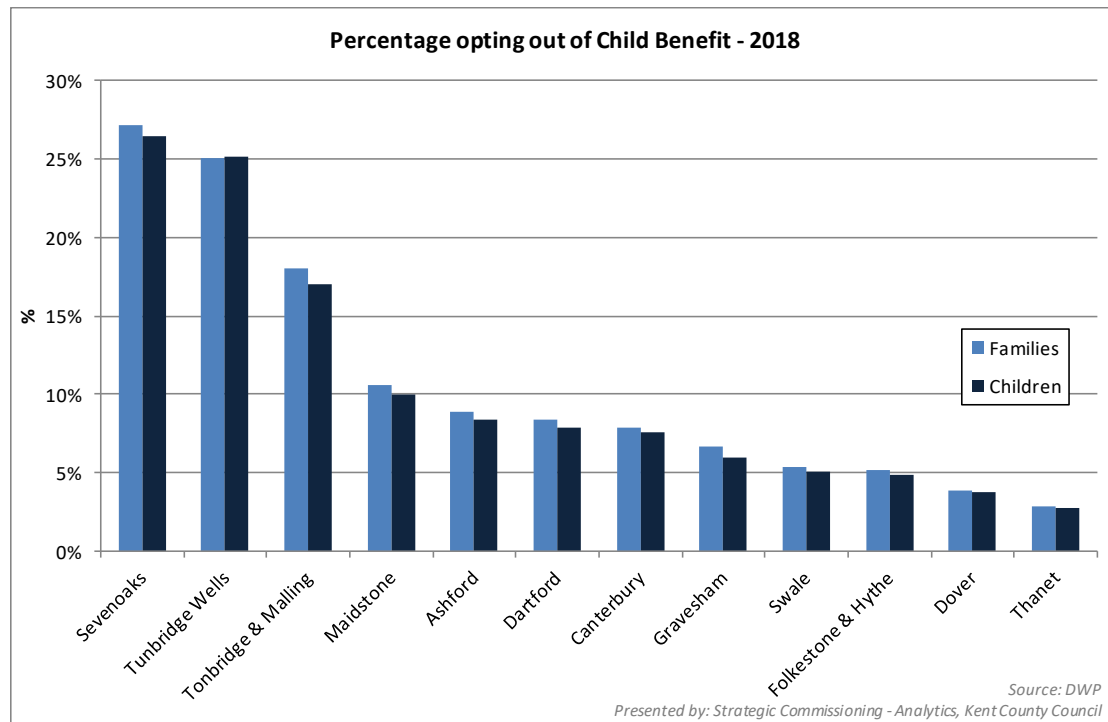
Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

**Chart 14: Percentage of families opting out of Child Benefit claim**



The proportion of families opting out of Child Benefit varies across the county. In Sevenoaks more than one in four families have earnings above the Child Benefit income threshold. Authorities in the west of the county have some of the highest average earnings in the county. In the east of the county where earnings are lower fewer than 5% of families opt out of a Child Benefit claim.

**Chart 15: Percentage of children and families opting out of Child Benefit claim in Kent districts**



**PIP & health related benefits**

Personal Independent Payment (PIP) was introduced in April 2013. It is paid to eligible people aged 16 to 64. It is a new benefit which is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age people. From June 2013 this incorporated all new disability related claims in the country from anyone aged 16-64. Gradually existing 16-64 year old claimants of DLA will be asked to claim PIP until all existing DLA claimants will have been invited to claim PIP and reassessed accordingly. Claimants under the age of 16, both new and existing, will continue to be able to claim DLA.

Claims for PIP are sent to assessment providers who decide whether or not an applicant needs a face to face interview. Most applicants will be invited for interview with a healthcare worker however written evidence alone may be acceptable under special circumstances for example for those who are terminally ill.

By October 2018 82,814 people in Kent had registered for PIP, 79,018 claims had gone through the clearance process, where a decision whether or not to award PIP had been made, and 42,732 people had been awarded PIP.

**Table 25: Total PIP registrations, clearances & awards**

Up to Oct 2018	PIP Registrations	PIP Clearances	PIP Awards
<b>Kent</b>	82,814	79,018	42,732
<b>South East</b>	396,965	374,367	207,088
<b>London</b>	422,782	393,455	207,117
<b>England</b>	3,322,380	3,153,126	1,744,333

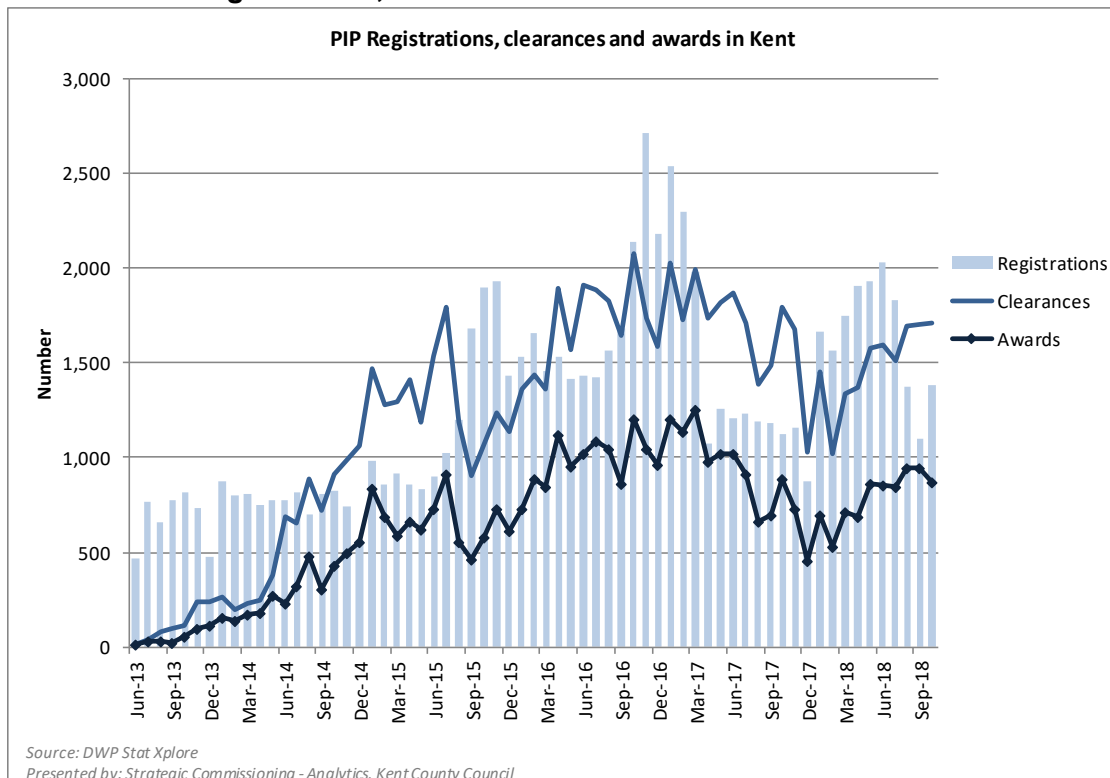
Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

The number of registrations for PIP has increased as reassessment of DLA claimants has been rolled out.

The number of registrations has fluctuated in Kent. They reached a peak in November 2016 (2,708 registrations). Through much of 2017 monthly registrations fell by a half and started to increase again in early 2018.

**Chart 16: PIP registrations, clearances and awards**



Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

The average length of time an application for PIP takes is longer in the South East than is seen nationally. As at October 2018 the average time taken to process a claim in the South East, from the original registration of an application to a final decision being made was fifteen weeks, one week longer than the national average.

**Chart 26: PIP waiting times in GB regions**

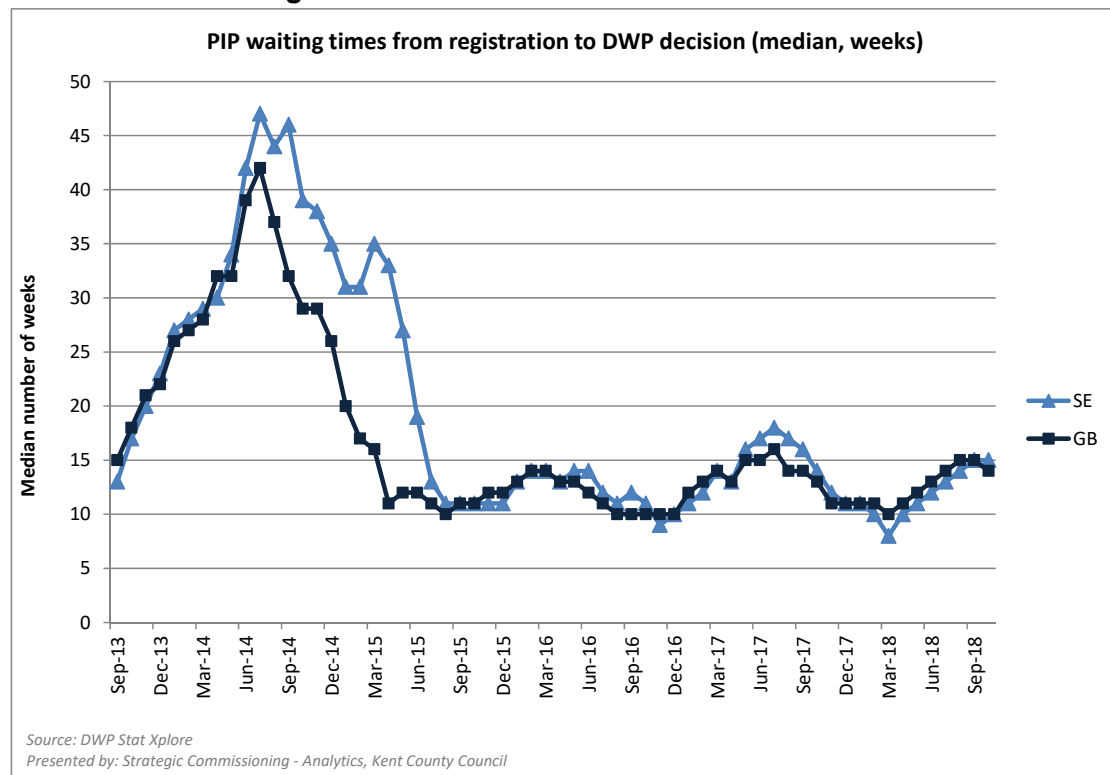
	Number of weeks from date of registration to decision made
<b>Oct-18</b>	
<b>GB</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>East of England</b>	16
<b>London</b>	16
<b>East Midlands</b>	15
<b>North West</b>	15
<b>South East</b>	15
<b>Yorkshire and The Humber</b>	15
<b>South West</b>	14
<b>Scotland</b>	13
<b>Wales</b>	13
<b>West Midlands</b>	13
<b>North East</b>	11

Source: DWP

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

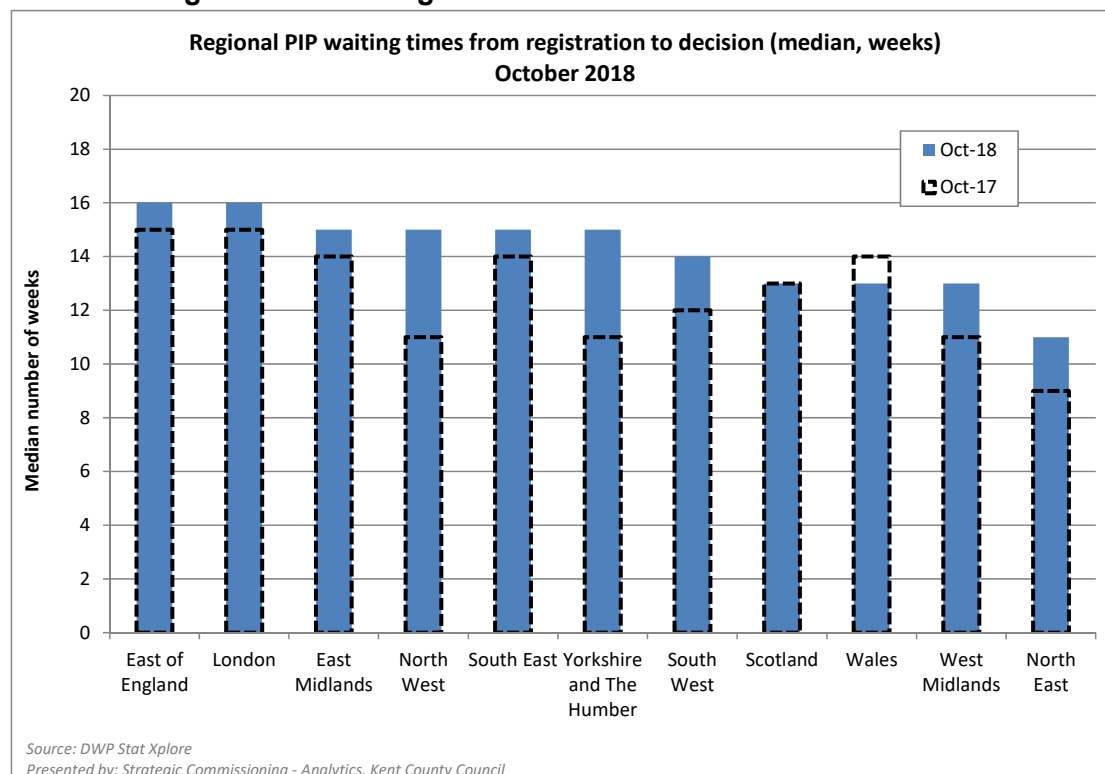
Although initially waiting times were high they have come down significantly.

**Chart 17: PIP waiting times**





**Chart 18: Regional PIP waiting times**



When PIP was first introduced waiting times in the South East for a PIP claim to be processed were the highest in the country however they have fallen steadily since mid 2014 and have remained near the national average.

Currently 4.3% of the 16-64 year old population in Kent have been assessed as being eligible and are now claiming PIP (40,210 claimants).

**Table 27: Personal Independence Payments – October 2018**

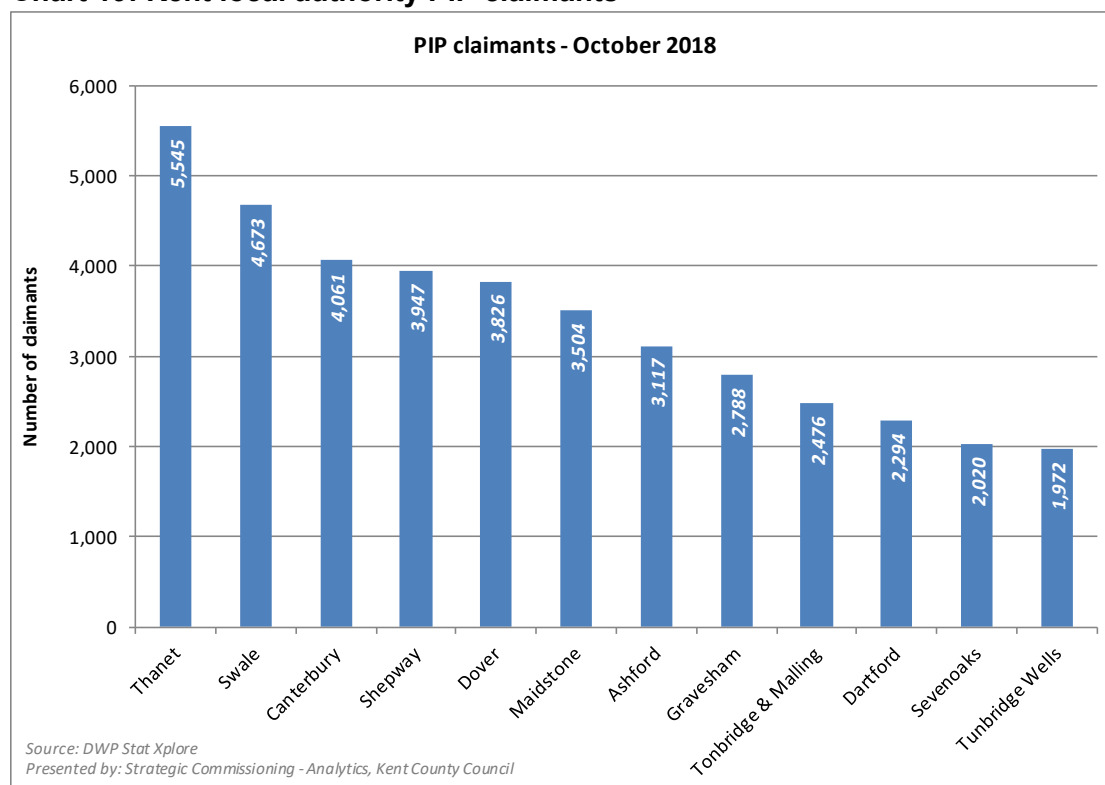
Oct-18	Total PIP Caseload	% of 16-64 population
<b>Kent</b>	40,210	4.3%
<b>South East</b>	192,532	3.4%
<b>London</b>	199,854	3.3%
<b>England</b>	1,631,883	4.7%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

Thanet district has the highest number of claimants in the county (5,545) equivalent to 6.8% of the population aged 16-64; Tunbridge Wells has the fewest with 1,972 claimants (2.7% of those aged 16-64 in the area) receiving PIP as at October 2018.

**Chart 19: Kent local authority PIP claimants**



### **Benefits Sanctions**

Benefit claimants must comply with the rules which apply to the individual benefit that they are claiming. If they do not comply with these rules and do not have a good reason for not doing so then their benefit may be suspended, stopped or their claim ended altogether. This is called a sanction.

Depending on the benefit a sanction may last for between 7 days and 3 years for UC claimants depending on the level of sanction and the number of times the claimant has broken the rules previously, 4 weeks and 156 weeks (JSA) or for an indeterminate time (ESA) depending on which rules or how many rules the claimant has failed to comply with.

### **JSA Sanctions**

Jobseekers Allowance claimants are expected to take specific agreed steps to look for employment. If they fail to do this a sanction (suspensions of benefit) will be applied.

From October 2012 new JSA sanction rules were introduced:

- 3 categories of sanction – ‘higher’, ‘intermediate’ and ‘lower’ – depending on the nature of the offence
- different levels of sanction for first, second and third offences
- changes to the date a sanction starts

Previously, a sanction started from the beginning of the benefit week after it was decided to impose the sanction. However, to ensure that claimants see the consequences of their actions or inactions sooner, the new rules enable sanctions to be imposed at a time closer to the offence.

The level and length of a sanction for a JSA claimant depends upon:

- the reason for claiming JSA – if dismissed for misconduct or left former job without good reason
- what the claimant has done to find work
- whether an earlier sanction has been received within the last year.

A lower or intermediate sanction (4 to 13 weeks) may be applied if the claimant fails to turn up for meetings with their work coach, take actions they are told to do or take part in interviews, fail to attend recommended training courses, fail to take part in employment schemes or lose their place on an employment scheme due to misconduct or if they aren't available for and actively seeking work.

A higher level sanction (13-156 weeks) may be applied if the claimant was dismissed from their last job for misconduct, left their last job for no good reason, don't apply for suitable jobs or don't take a job that has been offered.

The following data shows the number of claimants who received a sanction each month; it does not show the cumulative total number of claimants who have their benefit sanctioned at any one time.

In October 2018 there were 41 sanction referrals to JSA claimants in Kent and 25 adverse sanctions applied.

**Table 28: JSA sanction decisions**

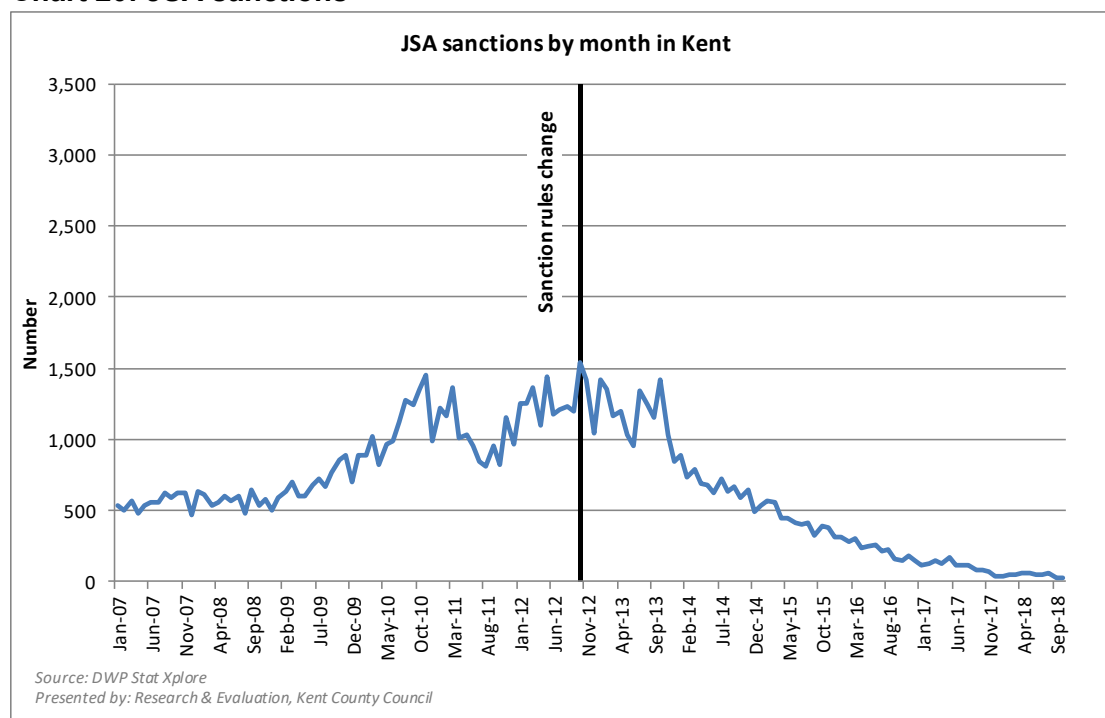
<b>October 2018</b>	<b>JSA sanction referral</b>	<b>Adverse sanction applied</b>
<b>Kent</b>	41	25
<b>South East</b>	173	102
<b>London</b>	210	132
<b>England</b>	1,675	1,037

*Source: DWP Stat Xplore*

*Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council*

The number of JSA adverse sanctions applied each month has fluctuated. They reached a peak in October 2012 when 1,543 claimants had sanctions applied. Since February 2014 the number of JSA sanctions applied has fallen. The fall in decisions is in part due to the fall in Jobseeker's Allowance claimants as more people move to Universal Credit

**Chart 20: JSA sanctions**



There were a variety of reasons for a JSA claimant to be receiving a sanction. The majority (26.8%, 11 claimants) were sanctioned because they failed to attend or participate in an adviser interview and they did not have a good reason for not doing so.

**Table 29: JSA sanction decisions by reason for sanction**

Reason for JSA Sanction - October 2018	Number of adverse sanction decisions	% of all sanction referrals
Failure to attend or failure to participate in an Adviser interview without good reason	11	26.8%
Work Programme - Failure to participate in a scheme for assisting person to obtain employment without good reason	10	24.4%
Left employment voluntarily without good reason	10	24.4%
Not actively seeking employment	5	12.2%
Losing employment through misconduct	5	12.2%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

% may not sum to 100 due to rounding

## **ESA Sanctions**

ESA claimants have to undergo a work capability assessment to determine to what extent an illness or disability affects their ability to work. If a claimant is assessed as being able to take part in work-related activity (to prepare them for returning to work) they are placed in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) and expected to take part in regular interviews with an adviser to help with things like job goals and improving skills. If a claimant fails to attend interviews or do work-related activity then their benefit can be sanctioned (suspended).

From 3 December 2012 revisions to the sanctions for ESA claimants who are in the Work Related Activity Group were introduced.

Prior to December 2012 ESA claimants in the Work Related Activity Group who failed to meet requirements were subject to an open ended sanction which was lifted when they re-complied. The sanction amount was 50% of the work related activity component of the benefit rising to 100% after 4 weeks.

From December 2012 the sanctions were changed so that claimants in the WRAG who did not comply with the conditions for receiving benefit would receive an open ended sanction, followed by a fixed period sanction when they re-comply. The amount sanctioned would increase to 100% of the benefit amount for a single claimant and a hardship regime (where income related ESA claimants are able to apply for hardship payments for the duration of the sanction) was introduced.

The following data shows the number of claimants who received a sanction each month; it does not show the cumulative total number of claimants who have their benefit sanctioned at any one time.

The DWP suppresses numbers below 5, therefore "0" denotes a nil or negligible number of claimants or award amount based on a nil or negligible number of claimants.

In October 2018 6 Kent ESA claimants were reviewed but fewer than 5 claimants were adversely sanctioned.

### **Table 30: ESA sanctions**

	ESA sanction referral	Adverse sanction applied
<b>October 2018</b>		
<b>Kent</b>	6	0
<b>South East</b>	27	10
<b>London</b>	41	12
<b>England</b>	283	91

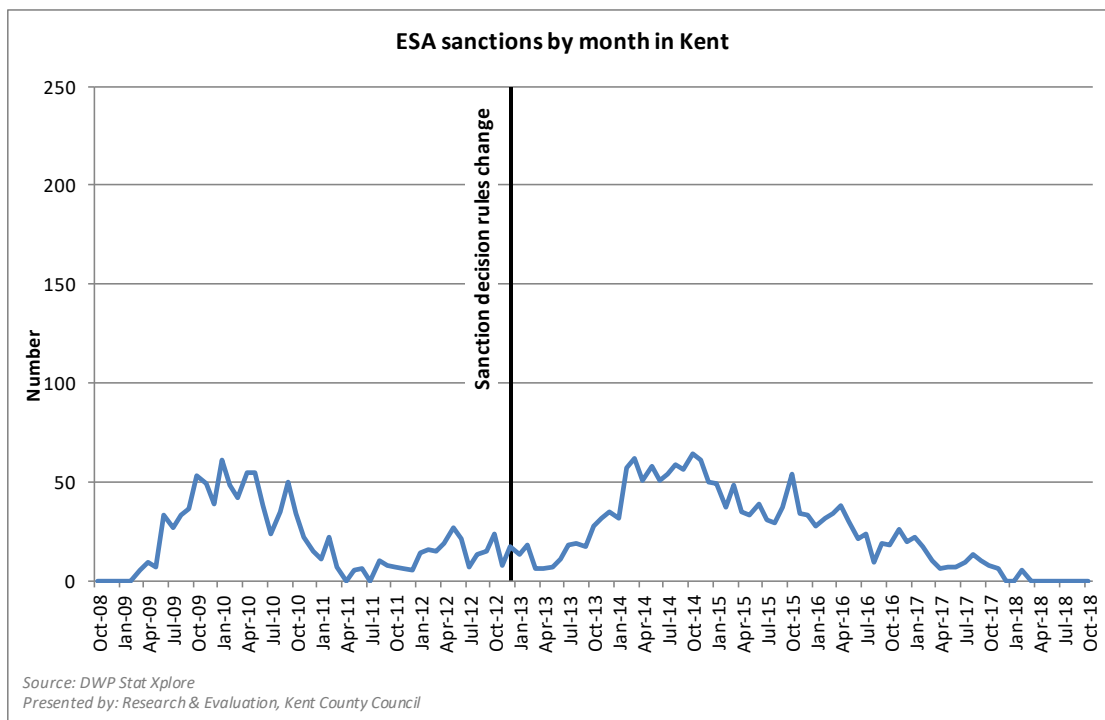
Source: DWP Stat Xplore

0 denotes a nil or negligible number of claimants

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

The number of ESA claimants having a sanction made against them each month increased between mid 2013 and mid 2014. Overall, since 2014 the number of claimants who have been sanctioned has decreased. Since late 2017 the number of claimants who have been sanctioned fell to below 5 (denoted by DWP as nil or negligible). The reduction is in part due to the fall in the number of claimants as more people move to Universal Credit

**Chart 21: ESA sanctions**



All of the ESA claimants who were sanctioned in October 2018 were sanctioned because they had failed to attend a mandatory interview.

**Table 31: ESA sanctions by reason for sanction**

Reason for ESA Sanction - October 2018	Number of sanctions	% of all sanction referrals
Failed to attend mandatory interview	6	100.0%
Failure to participate in work related activity	0	0.0%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

% may not sum to 100 due to rounding

### Universal Credit Sanctions

In order to receive Universal Credit a claimant needs to sign a claimant commitment to say they understand what is expected of them. A claimant could be sanctioned if they fail to do one of the activities in their claimant commitment.

The rules for the level of Universal Credit sanctions are based on the rules for JSA and ESA sanctions. Anyone who receives Universal Credit can be sanctioned and the level of the sanction depends upon the conditionality group that they are placed in. The group determines what is expected of a claimant during their claim.

The conditionality groups include: **no work-related requirements group** (claimant does not have to do any activities to prepare for or look for work); **work-focused interview group** (attending interviews at the jobcentre to get support with preparing for work); **work preparation group** (activities for preparing to work such as training, work experience and writing CVs); **all work-related requirements group** (looking and applying for work).

Data looking at UC sanctions was released for the first time in May 2017. These figures are new and are considered as experimental, therefore may be subject to revision.

All figures for sanction decisions made are in relation to Universal Credit live service claimants (the service used when Universal Credit was first introduced), and do not include sanction decisions relating to Universal Credit full service claimants (the DWP bespoke digital system which replaces the original Live system).

During October 2018 72 live service claimants in Kent were referred for a sanction. Of those more than half received an adverse sanction, meaning their benefit was reduced for a time.

**Table 32: UC sanctions**

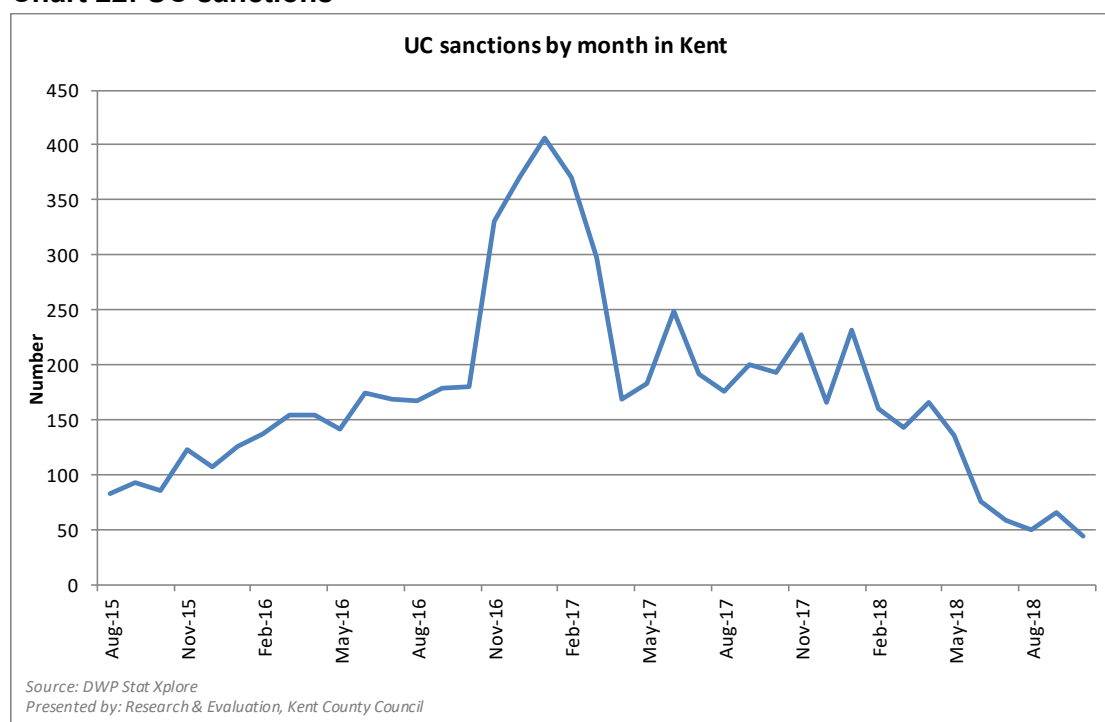
	UC sanction referral	Adverse sanction applied
<b>October 2018</b>		
<b>Kent</b>	72	44
<b>South East</b>	368	229
<b>London</b>	677	450
<b>England</b>	4,763	3,016

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

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The following chart shows the number of adverse sanctions received by Kent claimants of Universal Credit Live service. The number of claimants sanctioned has fallen. The reduction is in part due to the fall in the number of live service claimants as more people move to Universal Credit full service.

**Chart 22: UC sanctions**



There are a range of reasons why a claimant may be sanctioned. Most commonly in Kent failure to comply with an interview requirement resulted in an adverse sanction being applied, accounting for 81.9% of sanctions applied in Kent as in October 2018.

**Table 33: UC sanctions by reason for sanction**




<b>Reason for UC Sanction - October 2018</b>	<b>Number of sanctions</b>	<b>% of all sanction referrals</b>
Fail to comply with an interview requirement	59	81.9%
Fail to participate in an employment programme	5	6.9%
Reason For Leaving Previous Employment	5	6.9%
Availability for Work	7	9.7%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Strategic Commissioning - Analytics, Kent County Council

% may not sum to 100 due to rounding

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