

# Five things you need to know today



## **Bedroom Tax arrears in Edinburgh – Edinburgh Sunrise – Whistleblowers – Brian Taylor’s Big Debate – Red Note Ensemble**

Nearly one in three council housing tenants affected by the UK government’s welfare reform have fallen behind on their rent since its introduction earlier this year, according to new figures released today by False Economy.

Figures provided by 114 local authorities across Britain in response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests by False Economy show that since the ‘bedroom tax’ was introduced this April, over 50,000 council housing tenants – 31 per cent of all tenants affected by the tax in these areas – have been pushed into arrears.

In Edinburgh of the 3,566 tenants affected by the welfare reform, 1,592 are said to be in arrears since 1 April 2013.

The data measures the impact of the changes over the first four months of its operation. But with emergency funding from councils rapidly drying up, the situation is likely to get far worse over the coming months, warns False Economy.

The bedroom tax, introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012, penalises council housing and housing association tenants if they have a ‘spare’ bedroom by reducing their housing benefit by 14 per cent or 25 per cent, depending on the number of spare bedrooms.

Those affected have included disabled people who currently use ‘spare’ rooms for their carers to sleep in or to store their equipment. Other affected tenants have offered to move but are

unable to be re-housed as smaller properties are not available for them to move into.

[False Economy](#) has voiced concerns that as only one in ten local authorities who responded to the FOI request have any form of 'no eviction' policy, many thousands of families risk losing their homes as a result of the bedroom tax. Edinburgh Council adopted a no eviction council before the legislative changes were made.

The figures show that:

- 76 per cent of affected council housing tenants in Barrow have fallen into arrears since the bedroom tax started.
- Clackmannanshire, Tamworth and South Kesteven are the next worst affected areas. Over half of all affected council housing tenants have fallen behind on their rent since the bedroom tax was introduced.
- Across the sample of local authorities that responded to FOI requests over 50,000 council tenants have fallen into arrears since the tax was introduced. The total number of affected council tenants across Britain is likely to be far higher.
- Evidence is also emerging of problems in housing associations, with social housing providers in Knowsley reporting a doubling in the number of arrears cases among bedroom tax households.

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Some of the tweets of the sky at sunrise this morning have to be seen to be believed – particularly now that it is pouring rain! So cheer yourself up with these wonderful photos.

*Beautiful sunrise over Arthur's Seat this morning. [#sunrise](#) [#edinburgh](#) [#sky](#) [#earlybird](#) @ Arthur's Seat <http://t.co/oqBYxEozZJ>*

– Andrew J Peel (@andrewjpeel) [September 19, 2013](#)

Nice sunrise ☐ [pic.twitter.com/05AGj4GBIJ](http://pic.twitter.com/05AGj4GBIJ)

– Peter Matthews (@urbaneprofessor) [September 19, 2013](#)

Fiery coloured morning [#sunrise](#) over Authur's Seat [#edinburgh](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/aT0XZT9n1F](http://pic.twitter.com/aT0XZT9n1F)

– Susanna McGregor (@suzysj) [September 19, 2013](#)



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The council's Finance Committee meets today to approve the draft budget proposed by the Capital Coalition last week.

All the papers for the meeting are already online [here](#). There is a request to be heard prior to the meeting from the organisation Kids Not Suits. This organisation first of all campaigned on class sizes at Primary 1 stage, but has now widened its remit to the whistle blowing reform which it felt

was needed at the council. Pete Gregson of the organisation submitted the petition which led to this policy being reviewed.

The council proposes to introduce a pilot scheme to address the problems which it has had with the matter. The report on the table today states:-“It is critical that Council employees have a mechanism to report their concerns to ensure that wrongdoing and malpractice, as well as any issue that could give rise to significant risks to the Council, are flagged and addressed appropriately.

In response to concerns about proper oversight and the whistleblowing process it is proposed to pilot a Whistleblowing Hotline which will allow Council employees to raise their concerns with an external third party in the knowledge that all concerns will be logged and reported regularly to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee (the ‘GRBV Committee’) who will scrutinise and call management to account for the proper handling of all concerns raised.”

You can read what Kids not Suits think about the proposal on their [website](#).

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The Assembly Rooms Edinburgh is hosting Brian Taylor’s Big Debate – a live broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland – on Friday 25 October at 12 noon.

This is an hour-long live discussion hosted by Brian Taylor and covering topical issues along the lines of its television counterpart, Question Time. The event, to be held in the Assembly Rooms Music Hall, will feature a panel of politicians and prominent figures from the worlds of business, academia, arts and the media, and all are welcome to attend.

If you would like to take the opportunity to put a question on a burning issue to the panel, or just come along and be part

of the audience, entry is completely free.

Details of the panel and the topics to be discussed are usually announced nearer the time, but tickets need to be booked in advance. You can secure your place at this lively and informative event by completing the [application form on the BBC website](#).

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Red Note Ensemble have just announced a run of concerts across Scotland for the rest of this year. Here is what they will be offering in Edinburgh:-

### **Monday 30 September 8pm: Noisy Nights at Traverse**

Noisy Nights is fun, free and your chance to listen to (and compose for) the musicians of Red Note. Noisy Nights is a place to meet music-lovers, curious minds, musicians, composers and artists in an informal space and hear some of the best examples of brand new music. All sorts of music are welcomed here – as are all sorts of listeners. And, with the established 10 Minute Composer's Challenge, the audience also get the chance to write their own pieces to be played by the ensemble after the interval. Students from King's Park Secondary School will have their compositions performed from the UNESCO Family Day. If you're a composer, visit [http://www.rednoteensemble.com/Calls\\_for\\_Scores.html](http://www.rednoteensemble.com/Calls_for_Scores.html) to find out the instrumental line-up each time, and how to submit your scores.

**Ticket Price** Free

**Location** Traverse Theatre, 10 Cambridge Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2ED

**Box Office** 0131 228 1404

### **Tuesday 12 – Wednesday 13 Nov: (Enough Already) Lachez Tout performances, Summerhall, Edinburgh**

LOD|muziektheater / Red Note Ensemble / François Sarhan

Enough Already (Lachez Tout) is a music-theatre performance

created by French composer-artist François Sarhan for actor, musicians, live sound effect artists, stop-frame animation and film. It is a funny secular parable in which meanings and relations between people, objects and events become increasingly absurd.

**Ticket Price** £12/£8

**Venue** Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, Edinburgh, EH9 1PL

**Box Office Enquiries** 0845 874 3001

### **Monday 9 December 8pm: Noisy Nights at Traverse**

Noisy Nights is fun, free and your chance to listen to (and compose for) the musicians of Red Note. Noisy Nights is a place to meet music-lovers, curious minds, musicians, composers and artists in an informal space and hear some of the best examples of brand new music while having a beer. All sorts of music are welcomed here – as are all sorts of listeners. And, with the established 10 Minute Composer's Challenge, the audience also get the chance to write their own pieces to be played by the ensemble after the interval.

If you're a composer, visit [http://www.rednoteensemble.com/Calls\\_for\\_Scores.html](http://www.rednoteensemble.com/Calls_for_Scores.html) to find out the instrumental line-up each time, and how to submit your scores.

**Ticket Price** Free

**Location** Traverse Theatre, 10 Cambridge Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2ED

**Box Office** 0131 228 1404

Harmony Ridge  
d e s i g n s

