

People affected by 'Bedroom Tax' may not be asking for help

HALF 'BEDROOM TAX' TENANTS FAILING TO APPLY FOR EXTRA HELP

Nearly half the Council tenants in Edinburgh subject to the UK Government's [under-occupancy charge](#) have not applied for extra help to pay their rent despite facing growing arrears and debt, the Council's Housing leader Councillor Cammy Day revealed today.

Almost 3,000 tenants are under-occupying their home and face paying between £14 and £25 per week as their housing benefit doesn't pay for their extra room.

Only around 1,500 tenants have applied for extra help available from the Council through [Discretionary Housing Payments](#).

The Council was awarded extra funds from the Scottish Government in September this year, bringing the total available for Discretionary Housing Payments to over £3 million.

Recent figures from the Council's housing service showed an estimated £1.25 million of arrears are attributable to people not paying the under-occupancy charge.



Speaking at the East Neighbourhood Office in Craigmillar today, where he met Council tenants who have benefited from the extra help, Cllr Day said:

"It's critical that hard-pressed tenants seek the extra help the Council is offering in the form of Discretionary Housing

Payments, otherwise they face getting deeper into debt.

“Staff from the Council and advice agencies have been holding special surgeries and writing to, visiting and calling tenants over the last few months but ultimately tenants need to apply for the assistance available or they will lose out. I would urge any tenant who hasn't yet applied for extra help to get in touch with their local housing office without delay.”

The [under-occupancy charge](#) was introduced to encourage tenants with a spare room to move to a smaller home. On average there is only ever one single bedroom property available to let for every 80 under-occupying households in the city.