

A COST ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF AN INTENTIONAL TRESPASS LAW IN REGARDS TO SQUATTING

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Clare Smith

This report is based on a sample of data gathered in Bristol in June 2011. The researcher interviewed 50 people from the squatting community in Bristol to determine an estimated cost of their lifestyle to local public services, and then compared this information to a hypothetical situation whereby their housing arrangements would become jeopardized by a new law criminalizing the act of squatting.

The report gives attention to:

- The interfacing of participants with the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP), estimating the previous, current and projected costs in relation to Housing Benefit claims.
- The previous, current and projected levels of contact with the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and the costs associated therewith.
- Participants' tax contributions and claims to other benefits.
- The incalculable costs relating to employment prospects, dependents, mental health, homelessness rates and culture.

Key Findings in a Sample of 50 People Squatting in Bristol

86% of participants cited financial reasons for squatting

From this cohort alone, squatting has saved the Housing Department at least
£4392.00 a month in housing benefit

All of those participants who said they would attempt to rent if the law changed said they would
apply for housing benefit-
costing the local Housing Department between £5856 and £8928/month

78% of interviewees said that they would participate in some sort of resistance if faced with
police enforcement of a new law-
69% of these do not have a criminal record

There is no difference between the proportion of interviewees
who have a criminal record and the proportion of people who have a criminal record across the
population of the UK

Most people that participated in this research were not claiming benefits (62%)
and 26% of participants pay taxes

For the police to attempt to enforce a new law upon the sample of squatters researched herein the
cost might be estimated at £41,652 at any one time

Only 12% said that the introduction of a law relating to intentional trespass would deter them
from squatting