

The General Synod has today approved a motion moved by Ian Fletcher, from the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales, noting a rise in the number and seriousness of reported concerns about the impact of the Spare Room Subsidy, also known as the "Bedroom Tax" on the vulnerable and others.

In his speech, Mr Fletcher said the motion "doesn't go as far as to call for the abolition of the bedroom tax" but highlighted concerns and looked to a review of the effects of this particular aspect of welfare reform.

"We are well aware of the need for Government to balance its books and we do not pretend that there is no need for welfare reform. We are not opposed to change and indeed we are supportive of it," he said.

"We are however opposed to change that disregards the needs of the poor and the vulnerable.

"We are extremely concerned about bedroom tax."

The motion was approved by 249 in favour, none against and three recorded abstentions.

The motion reads:

'That this Synod, noting the rise in the number and seriousness of reported concerns about the impact of the Spare Room Subsidy (the 'Bedroom Tax') on the vulnerable and others, calls on the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

(a) To evaluate the findings of research into the effect of removing the Spare Room Subsidy across the country

(b) To promote with Her Majesty's Government and partners from the social and housing sector ways of ensuring access to suitable local housing for all, especially for those who are vulnerable without increasing levels of debt

Notes:

Ian Fletcher's speech is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2117879/general%20synod%20dsm%20-%20spare%20room%20subsidy.pdf>

Background notes on the motion are available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2101257/gs%201965a%20-%20spare%20room%20subsidy%20dsm%20from%20leeds.pdf>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2101270/gs%201965b%20-%20spare%20room%20subsidy%20a%20note%20from%20mpa.pdf>