

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment for Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The separate EIA guidance notes outline what should be included for each section. Please read them before you begin. If you have any queries, contact your Corporate Equality Group rep, or the Engagement Team on 643 2828.

1. Author, service area, date

Tracy Hunter, Finance

2. Who else has been involved in writing this EIA?

Anne Foreman, Policy Research and Data Analyst

3. What proposal is this EIA assessing?

The review of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17

4. What is the purpose of your proposal and what is it expected to achieve?

To review the Council Tax Support Scheme to consider the impacts of the Welfare and Work Bill, and to ensure that the cost of the scheme does not increase but still remains a fair scheme. Prior to discussion by Cabinet the following options are being considered.

Scheme 1 - Continue to operate the current Council Tax Support scheme with the maximum level of Council Tax available for support of 93% for working age claimants.

Scheme 2 - Continue to provide the maximum level of Council Tax available for support of 93% for working age claimants, and replicate the outlined Housing Benefit changes within the scheme.

Scheme 3 - Continue to provide the current Council Tax Support scheme for working age claimants but reduce the maximum level of Council Tax available for support from 93% to 90%.

Scheme 4 - Reduce the maximum level of Council Tax Support available for working age claimants from 93% to 90%, and replicate the outlined Housing Benefit changes within the scheme.

5. Is there any relevance to the aims of the public sector equality duty? Write your answers in the table

Aim	Yes, No, or N/A	Details if 'yes'
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment	N/A	
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Yes	By considering the different characteristics and needs of people in the scheme, in order to ensure that the scheme is fair to all residents.
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	N/A	

6. Analysis by characteristic Write your answers in the table

Protected characteristic	Potential positive or negative impact?	Explanation and evidence
All protected characteristics	Yes	<p><u>Option 2</u> Changes within option 2 will impact negatively on working age claimants as some claimants will receive less entitlement. (Additionally some of the changes effect families as where certain circumstances are met the family premium will not be awarded or a third dependent child allowance will not be awarded as part of the personal allowance. The personal allowance is used to calculate entitlement, therefore if a reduced personal allowance is awarded the amount of CTS in some cases will be reduced.)</p>

		Option 3 Option 3 includes all of option 2 issues above, additionally it will impact negatively on all working age claimants as they will receive less entitlement due to a % reduction in the amount of support available to claimants. Working age claimants will be expected to contribute more to their Council Tax.
Age	Yes	Positive for pensionable age claimants Negative for working age a claimants (see above)
Disability	Yes	Potential negative impacts around consulting and communicating the change to claimants.
Gender	No	
Gender reassignment	No	
Marriage and civil partnership status	No	
Pregnancy and maternity	No	
Race	Yes	Potential negative impact around consulting and communicating the change to claimants.
Religion or belief	No	
Sexual orientation	No	

7. Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this proposal? If so, what?

- *Engagement Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet on 14th September 2015.*
- *SLT, LMB and \Cabinet member and Mayor.*

8. Is there any information you don't have that you need to find?

*Further detail will be provided when the Welfare Reform and Work Bill is agreed.
Consultation feedback will need to be considered when outcomes are known.*

9. What actions are already in place, or will be taken, to remove or reduce potential negative impacts? (add more lines to the table if you need to) Write your answers in the table

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
The current Discretionary Support Scheme can be used to support people in exceptional circumstances	Andrew Scott/ Cabinet Member for Finance	In place
Engagement Strategy	Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter/ Jeanette Hedley	Mid September through to November
Communication Strategy to be developed once a decision is made is made on the scheme to be put in place from April 2016	Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter Jeanette Hedley	From 22 January 2016

10. Are there any potential negative impacts that cannot be removed or reduced? If so, why is this?

*Government grants are reduced and this will impact on the amount of funding available this scheme
Prescribed regulations ensure that pensioners must have entitlement based on 100% and this impacts on the amount of funding remaining for a working age scheme.*

11. Based on your conclusions from this assessment, what are your next steps?

Cabinet on 14 September will recommend an option to be consulted on. The consultation exercise will be carried out on the preferred option and outcomes from the consultation will then be reported to Cabinet who will propose their recommendation to Council.

12. How will the impact of this proposal be monitored after it is introduced?

The number of claimants claiming is monitored and compared against the previous year's trends. Should any significant change be identified this and claimant's characteristics will be investigated.

13. When will this EIA be reviewed?

The EIA is carried out at the annual review unless no changes are proposed as part of the next review.