

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment for Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/187

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, 16.08.16 (updated 14.11.16 to reflect that consultation has now been carried out. Results are shown in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report 12 December 2016)

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 2017/18

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

To consider whether to review the Council Tax Support Scheme and make changes to the way working age claimant's entitlements is calculated. This will help inform Cabinet as to whether changes to the Scheme should be proposed to Council on 19 January 2017. The following options are being considered:

Scheme 1 - Continue to allow working age claimants to claim up to the maximum level of Council Tax Support which is 90% of their Council Tax liability

Scheme 2 – Reduce the Maximum Council Tax Support that working age claimants can claim from 90% to 87.5% of their Council Tax liability

Scheme 3 - Reduce the Maximum Council Tax Support that working age claimants can claim from 90% to 85% of their Council Tax liability

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>Scheme 2 and 3</u></p> <p>The changes proposed under Scheme 2 (reduce the maximum Council Tax Support available to working age claimants to 87.5%) and Scheme 3((reduce the maximum Council Tax Support available to working age claimants to 85%)</p> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|---|
| | | <p>will impact negatively on working age claimants only as working age claimants will be able to claim less entitlement. Working age claimants will be expected to contribute more to their Council Tax liability.</p> <p><u>Option 1</u> Scheme 1 is the current scheme and therefore there are no changes to the scheme.</p> |
| Age | Yes | <p>Schemes 2 and 3 are more favourable towards pensionable age claimants as is the current Scheme under Scheme 1.</p> <p>Changes under Scheme 2 and 3 are negative towards working age claimants (see above). Scheme 2 and 3 are positive for pensionable age claimants.</p> |
| 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 around consulting residents on the potential schemes was carried out from 13 September 2016 to 31 October 2016 following Cabinet instruction on 12th September 2016. The findings from the consultation were published in the 12 December 2016 Cabinet Report on Council Tax Support Appendix 1,*
- *SLT, LMB and \Cabinet member and Mayor.*

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

No .

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 and Resources | In place |
| Engagement Strategy to consult on changes considered by Cabinet | Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter | Mid September through to November |
| Communication Strategy will be developed to share the decision made by Council on the Scheme to be put in place from April 2017 | Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter | From 20 January 2017 |

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

Government funding reductions to North Tyneside Council continue to be significant and this will impact on the amount of funding available for 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?

On 12 September 2016 Cabinet instructed that a consultation exercise be carried out on the options being considered. This was carried out between 13 September to 31 October 2016.

Outcomes from the consultation were included in the report to Cabinet on 12 December 2016.

Cabinet will then propose a Scheme to Council which they will consider on 19 January 2017.

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 the claimant's characteristics will be investigated.

13. When will this EIA be reviewed?

This EIA will be reviewed as part of the annual review of Council Tax Support in August 2017. This will review the impact of any changes made to the Scheme in 2017/18 and prepare for any future changes to the Scheme for 2018/19.