

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment for Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19

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?

Andrew Scott, Client Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service

3. What proposal is this EIA assessing?

The review of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19

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

To carry out the annual review the Council Tax Support Scheme, and for Cabinet to propose a Scheme that Council approves as the Scheme for 2018/19.

On 11 December 2017 Cabinet were presented with the outcomes of the consultation for three Council Tax Support Schemes shown below. Cabinet considered the report including the outcomes and recommendation and are proposing that Scheme 1 below be proposed to Council on 18 January 2018.

Scheme 1 – Reduce the Maximum Council Tax Support that working age claimants can claim from 87.5% to 85% of their Council Tax liability

Scheme 2 - Reduce the Maximum Council Tax Support that working age claimants can claim from 87.5% to 82.5% of their Council Tax liability

Scheme 3 - Reduce the Maximum Council Tax Support that working age claimants can claim from 87.5% to 80% 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 claimants. |
| 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 1, 2 and 3</u></p> <p>The changes proposed under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme 1 (reduce the maximum Council Tax Support available to working age claimants to 85%) |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme 2 (reduce the maximum Council Tax Support available to working age claimants to 82.5%), and • Scheme 3 (reduce the maximum Council Tax Support available to working age claimants to 80%), <p>will all impact negatively on working age claimants only as working age claimants will be able to claim less entitlement. Scheme 1 will have the least impact on Working age claimants.</p> <p>Working age claimants will be expected to contribute more to their Council Tax liability than pensionable age CTS claimants.</p> |
| Age | Yes | Schemes 1, 2 and 3 are more favourable and therefore more positive towards pensionable age claimants as is the current scheme as each scheme allows up to 100% CTS for pensionable age CTS claimants. |
| Disability | Yes | Positive elements of the Scheme mean that income from some benefits that are paid to disabled people are ignored 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 to consult residents and partners on the scheme options took place from 11 September 2017 to 31 October 2017.*
- *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 being considered by Cabinet This has now been completed and outcomes provided in Cabinet Report 11 December 2017. | Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter | Mid September through to November |
| Communication Strategy will be developed on the change to the level of support that is proposed by Cabinet and if accepted by Council. Any change agreed by Council will be affected from April 2018. | Andrew Scott/ Tracy Hunter | From 19 January 2018 |
| The Authority works closely with CAB and referrals are made where claimants are impacted by reductions in support and who may benefit from help with managing budgets, debt advice and income maximisation, this is in place and will continue. | Andrew Scott/Tracy Hunter | In place |

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 high demand for expensive services impact on the overall amount of funding available for the CTS Scheme.

Prescribed regulations ensure that pensioners must have entitlement based on 100% and this has an impact on the amount of funding remaining for working age claimants.

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

Cabinet heard a report on 11 September 2017 which recommended all options above to be consulted on. The consultation exercise has been carried out and outcomes from the consultation reported to Cabinet on 11 December 2017.

Cabinet considered the outcomes of the consultation and the funding available to it, and against a background of significant budgetary pressures it is proposing a revision to the CTS Scheme to Council that it feels appropriate; this will be heard on 18 January 2018.

Of the three Schemes consulted on Scheme 1 which is being proposed to Council provides the least impact to working age claimants.

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. The caseload is reducing (as is other LA's) but 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.