

Equality with Human Rights Analysis Toolkit



SECTION A

Name of policy / project / service	Council Tax Support Scheme 2018-19
Background and aims of policy / project / service at outset	<p>In January 2017, the meeting of Full Council approved City of Lincoln Councils Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) for 2017/18. The scheme was changed for all working age customers as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Limit of £10,000; and • Entitlement cap of no less than £2 per week; and • Property banding capped at Band B; and • Backdating restricted to 1 month; and • Temporary absence from home to be introduced in line with Housing Benefit. <p>The following changes were also made to Council Tax technical changes affecting all residents: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second home discount reduced to 0% (previously 10%); and • Empty and unfurnished amended to 50% for 2 months (previously 100% for 1 month). <p>The Council must review and reapprove its Council Tax Support scheme each year as part of its budget setting process, and make any necessary changes for 1 April 2018</p> <p>It is recognised that the combined effects of the wider welfare reform package on the residents of the District requires a robust and detailed Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>The current document contains data derived from the current Council Tax Support caseload.</p> <p>Following publication of the draft scheme, formal consultation will commence on 2 October 2017, utilising a combination of the council's consultation portal, press releases and social media directing the public to the on-line consultation documents. Letters will also be issued to all customers in receipt of Council Tax Support.</p>

	<p>The level of changes to the current scheme are not yet unknown but the individuals / groups impacted by the selection of changes is.</p> <p>Each of these has been considered in relation to how the changes might differently and / or adversely affect people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The Equality Assessment assesses our approach to consultation on the proposed scheme and will be added to during and following the results of this consultation. The consultation will be monitored with information used to develop the draft scheme.</p>
Person(s) responsible for policy or decision, or advising on decision, and also responsible for equality analysis	Claire Moses – Revenues and Benefits Manager (Shared Service)
Key people involved <i>i.e. decision-makers, staff implementing it</i>	Decision Makers – City of Lincoln Members, and Executive Staff implementing any changes

SECTION B

This is to be completed and reviewed as policy / project / service development progresses

	Is the likely effect positive or negative? (please tick all that apply)			Please describe the effect and evidence that supports this?*	Is action possible to mitigate adverse impacts?	Details of action planned including dates, or why action is not possible
	Positive	Negative	None			
Age	Y	Y		Pensioners are a protected group for the purposes of council tax support scheme so will not be financially affected, therefore the	Yes	Action dependant on outcome of consultation.

				<p>reduction in benefit will be borne by the remainder of those in receipt of Council Tax Support (those of working age who are not carers, war widows/ war disablement pensioners and the sick and disabled).</p> <p>There could be a risk people of working age who will bear all the financial impact of the changes, may resent the fact that pensioners are exempt.</p> <p>It is proposed that the following changes to the scheme are consulted on: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable customers are protected – this is a positive change – 95 customers are expected to be affected by this change with an average decrease to their annual Council Tax bill of £247 • Young Persons allowance restricted to 2 dependent children – 60 customers are expected to be affected by this change. • Removal of family premium – 361 customers are expected to be affected by this change with an average increase to their annual Council Tax bill of £590. • Reduce maximum entitlement to 95% - 2657 customers are expected to be affected by this change with an average increase to their annual Council Tax bill of £21 		With effect from 1 April 2018
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce maximum entitlement to 90% - 2657 customers are expected to be affected by this change with an average increase to their annual Council Tax bill of £51 <p>Due to the current economic climate, it is more difficult for younger people to access employment providing further financial difficulties. Council Tax Support will only be available to those young people who are liable to pay Council Tax and this only applies to householders over 18 years of age. If the young person is living in their parent or other householder's home they will not be liable to pay Council Tax so will not be affected by this Support scheme unless they are a non-dependent in the householder's home because the non-dependant deductions are being increased across all age groups and based on the level of income they receive. The personal allowances for under-25's is lower than for those over the age of 25 years. This means that they could get less.</p>		
Disability including carers (see Glossary)	Y			<p>The proposal to protected vulnerable groups will include those with a disability.</p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions state that disabled people remain far less likely to be in employment, therefore the proposals do not impact on this group to the extent that they are regarded as a vulnerable group. The scheme protects disabled persons from the</p>	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018

				<p>proposed changes except for the general uprating of all allowances and premiums.</p> <p>To qualify as 'disabled' the person must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualify for a disability, enhanced disability or severe disability premium for the claimant or partner, or • Qualify for disability or enhanced disability premium for a dependent, or • Qualify for a disability earnings disregard, or • Receive a disability related council tax reduction. • Be in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related or Support Group component 		
Gender re-assignment			Y	There is no evidence at this stage of an impact	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018
Pregnancy and maternity			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018
Race			Y	<p>Persons from abroad are excluded from provision by statute but race or ethnicity itself does not have any effect on the application of the scheme.</p> <p>Scheme rules do not take into account race or ethnicity.</p> <p>Council Tax Support is proposed to be reduced for all working age customers.</p>	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018

Appendix 2 – Policy Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2017 – Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19 Equality Impact Assessment

Religion or belief			Y	There is no evidence at this stage of an impact	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018
Sex			Y	There is no evidence at this stage of an impact	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018
Sexual orientation			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018
Marriage/civil partnership			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018
Human Rights (see page 8)			Y	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy.	NA	With effect from 1 April 2018

- Evidence could include information from consultations; voluntary group feedback; satisfaction and usage data (i.e. complaints, surveys, and service data); and reviews of previous strategies

Did any information gaps exist?	Y/N/NA	If so what were they and what will you do to fill these?


SECTION C

Decision Point - Outcome of Assessment so far:

Based on the information in section B, what is the decision of the responsible officer (please select one option below):

- | | Tick here |
|---|-----------|
| ✓ No equality or human right Impact (your analysis shows there is no impact) - sign assessment below | [] |
| ✓ No major change required (your analysis shows no potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment)- sign assessment below | [] |
| ✓ Adverse Impact but continue (record objective justification for continuing despite the impact)-complete sections below | [x] |
| ✓ Adjust the policy (Change the proposal to mitigate potential effect) -progress below only AFTER changes made | [] |
| ✓ Put Policy on hold (seek advice from the Policy Unit as adverse effects can't be justified or mitigated) -STOP progress | [] |

Appendix 2 – Policy Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2017 – Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/19 Equality Impact Assessment

<p>Conclusion of Equality Analysis (describe objective justification for continuing)</p>	<p>Council Tax has to be paid by all those liable to pay it but some people will have limited means to do this because of their low income or they have higher living costs due to illnesses, disabilities or family or personal circumstances.</p> <p>Council Tax is required to raise money to fund Council Services but a certain amount of money is directed to those who cannot afford to pay the Council Tax to reduce the financial burden on those households because they need it or because society considers that financial support is beneficial to help certain categories of people in certain situations.</p> <p>The aim of the proposed changes is to save some scheme expenditure in light of further reductions to local government finance.</p>		
<p>When and how will you review and measure the impact after implementation?*</p>	<p>The policy and CTS is the responsibility of City of Lincoln Council. It is approved by the Executive Board and then full Council. It will be administered by the Council's Shared Revenues and Benefits Service.</p> <p>The Council will analyse its current caseload and produce figures showing the main groups of working age claimants getting Council Tax Support now and likely to be affected by changes to the current scheme. Extracts of the data will allow monitoring of the main types of people affected by the policy can take place as required</p>		
<p>Checked and approved by responsible officer(s) (Sign and Print Name)</p>	<p>Claire Moses </p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>7/8/2017</p>
<p>Checked and approved by Assistant Director (Sign and Print Name)</p>	<p>Martin Walmsley</p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>7/8/2017</p>