

London Borough of Enfield

Council Tax Support Scheme

Equalities Impact Assessment.

Appendix B to Council Report – 29th January 2014

Predictive: assessing and analysing proposed changes to services, policies and budgets

Enfield Council

Predictive Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) - Equality Analysis

**COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT
SCHEME FOR 2014/15
NOVEMBER 2013**

**Predictive equality impact assessment/equality analysis
template**

Proposed change to service/policy/budget	Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15
Officer completing the assessment	Geoff Waterton
Extension Number	6189
Service	Revenues and Benefits
Department	Finance , Resources and Customer Services (FRCS)
Date impact assessment completed	21/11/13

Section 1 – About the service, policy or budget, and proposed change

Q1. Please provide a brief description of the service/ policy/budget

The Council is obliged to set a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme every year following the abolition of the national Council Tax Benefit system in 2013. In January 2013, Council agreed a new scheme following government guidance, consultation and an Equalities Impact Assessment. The Council needs to agree whether to amend or retain this scheme for 2014/15.

Q2. Please provide a brief description of the proposed change(s) to the service/ policy/budget

In light of the experiences of the first nine months of the scheme, it is proposed to make the following amendments:

- That working age recipients of Council Tax Support who also receive Carers Allowance, the support component of Employment Support Allowance or higher rate Disability Living Allowance (or Personal Independence Payments) are exempted from the 19.5% reduction applied to all other working age claimants.
- That working age foster carers registered with Enfield Council in receipt of Council Tax Support are also exempted from the 19.5% reduction applied to all other working age claimants
- The removal of the one month discount for empty and uninhabitable homes.

Q3. Does equalities monitoring of your service show that the beneficiaries in terms of the recipients of the service, policy or budget, and the proposed change, include people from the following groups?

R	Yes
D	Yes
G	Yes
A	Yes
F	Not relevant to assessment criteria or eligibility for the scheme.
S	Not relevant to assessment criteria or eligibility for the scheme.
T	Not relevant to assessment criteria or eligibility for the scheme.
M	Yes
P	Yes

Q4. If you answered 'no' to any of the groups listed in Q3, please state why?

Not relevant to assessment criteria or eligibility for the scheme.

Q5. How will the proposed change eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, or promote good relations between groups in the community?

The scheme has been designed to be fair to all whilst ensuring those facing the greatest risk are prioritised. The proposed changes reduce negative impacts for carers, disabled working age adults and foster carers who do not have the same opportunities as other working age households to gain employment and increase their income.

Section 2 – Consultation and communication

Q6. Please list any recent consultation activity with disadvantaged groups carried out in relation to this proposal	
R	Yes – consultation sent to equality representative groups, community groups, random sample of claimants and council tax payers, online and through face to face venues.
D	Yes – see above
G	Yes – see above
A	Yes – see above
F	Yes – see above
S	Yes – see above
T	Yes – see above
M	Yes – see above
P	Yes – see above
Q7. Please state how you have publicised the results of these consultation exercises, and what action you have taken in response	
R	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
D	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
G	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
A	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
F	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
S	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
T	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
M	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers
P	Consultation results will be published as an appendix to the decision report – amendments to the scheme proposed in response to comments about disabled people and carers

Section 3 – Assessment of impact

Q8. Please describe any other relevant research undertaken to determine any possible impact of the proposed change

The Council has reviewed the applications for the hardship scheme set up to support those experiencing exceptional financial hardship. The vast majority of the applicants are disabled or carers. In addition, the Council has listened to a number of representative groups and the consultation supports a change to exempt carers and disabled people from the 19.5% reduction in support.

Q9. Please list any other evidence you have that the proposed change may have an adverse impact on different disadvantaged groups in the community

R	None
D	None
G	None
A	None
F	None
S	None
T	None
M	None
P	None

Q10. Could the proposal discriminate, directly or indirectly, and if so, is it justifiable under legislation? Please refer to the guidance notes under the heading, *7. Useful Definitions*

Not applicable

Q11. Could the proposal have an adverse impact on relations between different groups? If so, please describe

No.

Q12. How could this proposal affect access to your service by different groups in the community?

R	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
D	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
G	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
A	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
F	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
S	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same

T	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
M	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
P	This proposal will not change access to the service – eligibility to Council Tax Support remains the same
Q13. How could this proposal affect access to information about your service by different groups in the community?	
R	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
D	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
G	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
A	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
F	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
S	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
T	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
M	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.
P	This proposal will not change the access to information about our service by different groups in the community.

Section 4 – Tackling socio-economic inequality

Q14. Will the proposal in any way specifically impact on communities disadvantaged through the following socio-economic factors? Please explain below. If it does not, please state how you intend to remedy this (if applicable to your service), and include it in the action plan

Communities living in deprived wards/areas

The impact of this change will vary across the borough. Recipients of Council Tax Support are more prevalent in the south and east of the borough where the most deprived wards are located. As a result, the addition of this exemption for carers and disabled adults of working age will improve the lives of the most vulnerable in these areas. The changes to the discount for empty and uninhabitable homes will impact on all wards but will affect landlords rather than tenants. By removing the discount, the Council aims to encourage more stable communities and a reduction in multiple turnover of lets. Again the majority of private landlords operate in deprived wards and this change is aimed at enhancing stable communities in these wards.

People not in employment, education or training

A key element of the Government's welfare reforms is to encourage working age households into employment. The exemption for carers and disabled adults recognises that these groups may have more difficulty in gaining employment and increasing their household income.

People with low academic qualifications

People with low academic qualifications may be more likely to earn a lower income and therefore be more likely to be in receipt of means tested benefits. As a result, they will be affected by the scheme's reduction in support for working age claimants.

People living in social housing

The proposed change improves outcomes for disabled adults and carers living in social housing.

Lone parents
Lone parents already receive premiums in the calculation of support entitlement, enabling them to earn more money and still receive support.
People on low incomes
The Council's scheme prioritises those on the lowest incomes for support and includes those working but on low incomes.
People in poor health
The proposed change improves outcomes for disabled adults and carers
Any other socio-economic factor

Section 5 – Impact on staff

Q15. How have you consulted, or otherwise engaged with, all relevant staff about this proposal (including any staff on sickness or maternity leave)?	
Not applicable	
Q.16 If your proposal involves a staff restructuring, how have you discussed this with relevant trade unions?	
Not applicable	
Q17. Does job matching of existing staff against the new proposed staff structure, following any assimilation process, indicate that any particular groups of staff are adversely affected more than others?	
R	Not applicable
D	Not applicable
G	Not applicable
A	Not applicable
F	Not applicable
S	Not applicable
T	Not applicable
M	Not applicable
P	Not applicable
Q.18 Are there any proposed changes to working hours, work locations or duties likely to have a negative impact on particular groups of staff?	
R	Not applicable
D	Not applicable

G	Not applicable
A	Not applicable
F	Not applicable
S	Not applicable
T	Not applicable
M	Not applicable
P	Not applicable

Section 6 - Miscellaneous

Q19. Is your proposal likely to have an impact on services provided by another Council department or service? If so, have you discussed the possible impact with them?

It may act as a disincentive for private landlords to have multiple or lengthy voids, enabling an increased housing market for homeless households. However, it will add cost to the Council's Housing Revenue Account. The changes to allow carers, disabled adults and foster carers an exemption from the 19.5% reduction will improve outcomes for adult and children's social care.

Q20. Do you plan to publicise the results of this assessment? Please describe how you plan to do this

The assessment/analysis will be published on the Council's website, as well as alongside the decision report

Q21. How and when will you monitor and review the effects of this proposal?

January 2015

14. Action plan template for proposed changes to service, policy or budget

Proposed change to, or new, service, policy or budget.....Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15.....

Team:...Revenues and Benefits.....

Department:.....FRCS.....

Service manager:.....Geoff Waterton....

Issue	Action required	Lead officer	Timescale	Costs	Comments
Communicate change to scheme to key groups	Amend communications plan and publicity materials	Geoff Waterton	March 2014	Within existing resources	

Please insert additional rows if needed

APPROVAL BY THE RELEVANT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - NAME...Kate Robertson.....SIGNATURE.....