

Appendix 3

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

Council Tax Reduction is claimed by low income households in the city. The following groups are over represented in this cohort compared to the general population:

Women

Single parent households

Ethnic Minorities

People with a disability or lifelong illness

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

The 2021/22 Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been informed by a consultation process. This included:

- Reducing the costs of the CTR Scheme for working age claimants by introducing a minimum charge for all residents unless they fall within certain criteria (modelling has been undertaken to assess the impact of any charge introduced);
- Making CTR a discount from the amount of Council Tax due (in the majority of CTR schemes it still mirrors the administration of Council Tax Benefit). Administration savings can be achieved by simplifying how the discount works;
- Uprating the current Income Bands for UC claimants;
- Introduction of a banded income approach for all working age claimants, in the same way as UC claimants are treated. The impact on the CTR claimant is that fewer changes will need to be reported to the Council for minor income changes, resulting in less administration and more certainty for claimants; and
- Minor changes to simplify some of the existing scheme rules, such as non-dependant deductions and capital limits, if the scheme remains largely the same

Within the existing Council Tax regulations, there is provision for discretionary payments to be made to people experiencing hardship. Anyone disadvantaged by the Council Tax Reduction scheme can apply for help from this scheme. Changes will take effect from 1 April 2021 unless otherwise stated

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

We have consulted via our website, electronically with major preceptors and advice agencies, and invited people to respond via email straplines. The Council also targeted all CTR claimants via email and letter.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

Within the existing Council Tax regulations, there is provision for discretionary payments to be made to people experiencing hardship. Anyone disadvantaged by the Council Tax Reduction scheme can apply for help from this scheme.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your Proposals and when the review will take place.

The impact will be monitored via applications for discretionary support. This should highlight any areas of concern.
The Council will also continue to ensure that it promotes the CTR scheme to anyone moving onto Universal Credit, as it will need to be by a separate application.
The Council regularly monitors spend on CTR and will be informed as this rises/decreases
The Council is also using Policy in Practice to model the social and financial impact of the proposed changes. These will be presented to Cabinet in January alongside the CTR report.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Tanya Bandekar

Role: Service Manager, Revenues & Benefits

Date: 3/12/2020