

Equality Impact Assessment

Council Tax Reduction scheme 2017/18

There are 7 changes which mirror changes being made by DWP to Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and several other state benefits as part of the government's welfare reform programme. DCLG are amending the Prescribed Council Tax Support Scheme for Pension Age in the same way.

Some of these changes have already been implemented by DWP and DCLG from April 16 – the remainder will come in from April 17.

Removing the family premium for all new working age applicants

The removal of the family premium will cause an impact to families who have responsibility for children (who claim support from April 2017) as the additional allowance for children will not be awarded in future. Anyone who is already in receipt of the family premium will continue until they have a relevant change in circumstances. The removal of the family premium is impossible to predict as the amount of claims that will be affected is unknown. Those affected by this measure may apply for additional support under the Council's hardship scheme

Reducing backdating to 1 month

Reduce the period for the backdating of claims to 1 month – no accurate modelling data is available as the number of claimants requesting backdates; the periods requested for and the reasons given vary too much year of year.

Reducing period of absence outside of GB to 4 weeks

Withdraw CTS entitlement for people who leave great Britain for 4 weeks or more – again no accurate modelling data is available. It is believed that this will mainly affect two groups:

- a. migrant claimants who return to their homeland to visit relatives for an extended period
- b. claimants who would normally winter abroad

Remove the work related component for new employment and support allowance applicants

This will only affect new claims to employment support allowance and we are unable to assess the impact as we do not know the numbers that will be affected by this change introduced by the Department for Works and Pension.

Limit the number of dependent children to a maximum of 2

This will only affect new claims or new parents and limit the number of dependent children additions for CTR to a maximum of 2. It will not apply to current families with 3 or more children already receiving CTR. The number of claims where families will increase their family size to 3 or more children from 1 April 2017 is impossible to predict

Remove entitlement to the Severe Disability premium where another person is paid Universal Credit to look after them

Remove the Severe Disability Premium where the Carer's Element of Universal Credit is received – this does not affect any current claimants; it is brought in to have the same effect as currently applies to households where Universal Credit is not received.

Use a minimum level of income for those who are self-employed after 1 years trading

The introduction of the Minimum Income Floor for self-employed will affect all working-age self-employed customers who do not currently have earnings at or above the income floor.. Currently 53 claims are based on self-employed impact and this proposal could affect approximately 11 (20%) of our customers who have dependent children.

To protect claims having this protected characteristic we will offer budgeting and money advice support. Also signpost customer to our vulnerability/hardship fund to provide additional financial help and economic development dept. who may be able to sign post to other business support networks

Introduce scheme to help, applicants suffering exceptional hardship

Scheme will be available to all recipients of Council Tax Reduction and will be looked at on their own merit. To date there hasn't been any request from customers therefore it is not possible to predict what the cost will be. The scheme can be adapted to meet individual circumstances

To promote the positive impact or reduce the negative impact

Overall working age people are negatively impacted by the proposed changes to the scheme.

Changes to the working age scheme affect adults of all ages (below the state pension age) equally irrespective of any other equalities factors. The proposed changes are relatively small in financial terms.

Advice and support will be available to claimants from several sources including:

- Citizen's Advice Bureau – available to all residents
- Hambleton District Council
 - support for people in difficulty with Council Tax payments
 - Council Tax Hardship scheme, where the need for additional financial support is demonstrated