

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area: Customer Focus; Revenues & Benefits

Head of Service: Sarah Higgins

Lead Officer: Julie Dark

Date of Assessment: 11/01/2022

Person responsible for completing the assessment: Julie Dark

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Name of policy/function/project/service area to be assessed: CTR Scheme (CTR) 2022/23

Brief description of proposal to be assessed:

The Government announced as part of its spending review in 2010 that it would abolish Council Tax Benefit and replace it with localised support for Council Tax by 2013-14. This change did not affect Pension Age claimants whose scheme is prescribed by Central Government in line with the 2012/13 Council Tax Benefit scheme. Each year we have to review our scheme. Changes have been made over recent years to bring schemes in line with the changes being made by Central Government in Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

The current CTR banded scheme for working age claimants was introduced in April 2020. We are not proposing to make any changes to this scheme from 1 April 2022. Income Bands will be adjusted to take into account the annual upratings of applicable amounts.

The Government has been clear that, in developing local CTR schemes, vulnerable groups should be protected. Other than statutory protection for low income pensioners the Government has not prescribed other groups that local Councils should support. Each Council must tailor their schemes to take account of the various statutes that currently protect vulnerable people.

The Vulnerability statement sets out the council's approach to defining and assisting those deemed as vulnerable, under the local CTR Scheme. In doing so it seeks to:

- Protect those who receive state pension credit age
- Help those who are trying to help themselves
- Encourage and support people in and into employment

The Exceptional Hardship Payment fund (EHP) covers the shortfall between Council Tax liability and payments of CTR.

It is cash limited fund, which has been set up from the revenue funds of North Devon Council. Every customer who is applies to CTR and who has a shortfall is entitled to make a claim for help from the fund. Entitlement to CTR is not a condition of making a claim to the Exceptional Hardship fund.

Who will this affect?

Working age households in the Council's area who currently receive or will apply for CTR.

Pension age households will not be affected as Central Government prescribe the scheme

Proposed implementation date of project/proposal: 1 April 2022

Brief description of the anticipated outcomes of the proposal:

Provision	Current Arrangement	Proposed Arrangement	Comment
No changes to be made to the CTR scheme this year	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Impact:

Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts (i.e. potential for discrimination, disadvantage or disproportionate treatment) and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic. (NOTE: please refer to the Equality Strategy for the characteristics) Where an impact is unknown, state so, and identify what steps will be taken to address any gaps in data:

Age

Positive The council needs to take into account the Child Poverty Act. There will be an allowance for certain incomes not to be included in the financial assessment of CTR e.g. Child Benefit etc. The decision to protect pensioners is a national one and will be reflected in legislation. Central Government is therefore responsible for conducting their own EIA on this aspect. This is available at: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8464/2063707.pdf

Negative All working age people must pay at least 20% of their Council Tax liability, although the impact is not specific to this characteristic. Teenagers and children may be disadvantaged indirectly if their parents receive less support.

Disability

Positive Our CTR scheme will continue to disregard income received specifically relating to disability in the financial assessment as defined in our CTR scheme document.

Negative None

Gender Reassignment

Neutral No information is collected on the gender reassignment status of CTR claimants and gender has no impact on the claiming or calculation of CTR.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Neutral Marriage and civil partnership status of CTR claimants will have no impact on claiming or the calculation of CTR.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Neutral No information is collected on the pregnancy and maternity status of CTR claimants and this characteristic will have no impact on claiming or the calculation of CTR.

Race

Neutral No information is collected on the race of CTR claimants and this characteristic will have no impact on claiming or the calculation of CTR.

Religion or Beliefs

Neutral No information is collected on the religion or beliefs of CTR claimants and this characteristic will have no impact on claiming or the calculation of CTR.

Sex/Gender

Neutral All Working Age people will be eligible to apply for support, and this characteristic will have no impact on claiming or the calculation of CTR..

Sexual Orientation

Neutral No information is collected on the sexual orientation of CTR claimants and this characteristic will have no impact on claiming or the calculation of CTR.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Consideration of Alternatives:

Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative effect identified above (attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Consultation:

Brief description of any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposal. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Funding Considerations:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date approved by Head of Service: 12/01/2022

Reporting and Publication:

Equality Impact Assessments will be published on North Devon Council's website.

The completion of an Equality Impact Assessment is an ongoing process. Impacts will be continually reviewed during projects and the decision making process and the Assessment will be updated accordingly and published.

A further assessment will also be undertaken between 6 to 12 months following the implementation of the policy, project, decision or service change has been implemented.

Please also confirm the date on which you will be re-considering the project/report and submitting a further EIA if applicable.

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Monitoring Arrangements:

Briefly describe the monitoring arrangements/systems that will be put in place to monitor the effects of this proposal.

The scheme will be reviewed annually using a new software module purchased for this purpose. Throughout the year, regular monitoring of how our customers are affected will take place and EHP applications will be offered where such affects are negative.

Date approved by Head of Service: 12/01/2022

Corporate and Community Services Use Only: Date of publication to NDC
Website: 17/01/2022