

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of proposal/policy	North Northamptonshire Council Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Budget number (if applicable)	N / A
Programme / Service area responsible	Revenues & Benefits Service	Programme Board meeting date	20.10.20
Name of completing officer	Nick Woods & Lucy Hogston	Date EqIA created	01.10.20
Approved by Programme Manager	Akhtar Pepper	Date of approval	20.10.20

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'Due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

We do this by undertaking equality impact assessments (EqIAs) to help us understand the implications of policies and decisions on people with protected characteristics – EqIAs are our way of evidencing this.

PART A – REMOVE ALL GUIDANCE IN ITALICS ONCE COMPLETED

1) Description of current provision/policy and main beneficiaries/stakeholders

From April 2013 each Local authority has been required to determine a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS).

Currently each district and borough council within North Northamptonshire has a different scheme that gives different levels of council tax support for people with a low income.

There are currently circa 10,500 working age residents who benefit from a reduction in Council Tax.

The scheme applies to working age claimants only, as the Government prescribes the scheme for pensioner claimants who receive up to 100% support.

The existing maximum reduction rates across North Northamptonshire for 2020/21 are

- Corby 91.5%
- Wellingborough 80%
- East Northamptonshire 80%
- Kettering 55%

2) Description of proposal under consideration/development

The aim is to have one scheme supporting those who are eligible for a reduction on their council tax across North Northamptonshire from April 2021. One scheme for the whole of North Northamptonshire will mean that that people in the same situation are treated consistently and fairly wherever they live.

A Task & Finish Group comprising of Members met to consider a new LCTRS scheme and proposed that the scheme should be cost neutral.

The harmonised percentage that would have no net impact upon Council Tax income would be 24.9%, based upon current caseloads. Permission to consult on the scheme recommended by the Task & Finish Group was approved at the Shadow Executive Committee meeting on 24 September 2020.

A public consultation will now take place for 8 weeks starting on 5 October 2020.

3) Data used in this Equality Impact Assessment (general population data where appropriate but each EqIA should contain information on people who use the service under consideration – if this is not applicable to your proposal then you probably do not need to do an EqIA)

Data Source (include link where published) – quantitative or qualitative	What does this data tell us?
LCTRS helps those residents of working age who are on low income pay their Council Tax.	Any changes to the LCTRS scheme will have a direct impact upon those residents of a working age on a low income. Currently there are circa 10,500 residents within the area who benefit from the scheme.

4) Please give details about planned consultation or engagement with communities and other stakeholders that are likely to be affected by the policy/decision/service change. Contact the Consultation, Equalities & Accessibility Team (ceat@northamptonshire.gov.uk) for advice or complete the online form with details of your consultation/engagement activity.

If you are not carrying out any consultation or engagement activity, please provide reasons why you think this is not necessary.

We are carrying out an 8 week consultation period which involves the following

- Online digital survey
- Telephone survey for any residents that are unable to partake digitally
- Writing to all 10,500 residents currently in receipt of LCTRS to let them know about proposed changes to the scheme
- Sent briefing note to all North Northamptonshire Members and town and parish councils to inform them
- Writing to several of our local partners that work actively with our residents to inform them

5) If consultation or engagement has been carried out in the past, please provide details. If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced the work to date?

N/A

Protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010

6) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are unsure, set out what you will do to get enough information to make an assessment.

Sex	Impact and explanation	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Gender Reassignment	Impact	Neutral Explanation:

	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Age	Impact	Positive & Negative Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	There will be an impact on some customers due to the different levels of support available currently in each district and borough council. Some of those affected will be families with children.
Disability	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral, the disability premiums and disregards currently used in the calculation of LCTRS will still remain.
Race & Ethnicity	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Sexual Orientation	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Impact	Neutral

		Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact, not relevant to assessing eligibility.

Cross-cutting considerations

7) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are unsure, set out what you will do to get enough information to make an assessment.		
Human Rights – relevant articles and local authority context:	Impact	Neutral Explanation:
<p><i>Article 2 – Right to life</i></p> <p><i>Article 3 – Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment</i></p> <p><i>Article 4 – Prohibition of slavery and forced labour</i></p> <p><i>Article 5 – Right to liberty and security</i></p> <p><i>Article 6 – Right to a fair trial</i></p> <p><i>Article 8 – Right to private and family life</i></p> <p><i>Article 9 – Freedom of thought, belief and religion</i></p> <p><i>Article 10 – Freedom of expression</i></p> <p><i>Article 11 – Freedom of assembly and association</i></p> <p><i>Article 14 – Protection from discrimination</i></p>	<p>Mitigations/actions</p>	<p>Neutral impact.</p>

<p>Article 1 of the First Protocol: Protection of property</p> <p>Article 2 of the First Protocol: Right to education</p>		
<p>Rural isolation</p>	Impact	<p>Neutral Explanation:</p>
	Mitigations/actions	Neutral impact.
<p>Socio-economic exclusion</p>	Impact	<p>Positive & Negative Explanation:</p>
	Mitigations/actions	<p>There will be a negative impact for some residents who are on low income where their current authority run a more generous scheme than is proposed.</p> <p>Some residents who are on a low income will be positively affected.</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing considerations</p>	Impact	<p>Positive & Negative Explanation:</p>
	Mitigations/actions	<p>There will be a negative impact for some residents who are on low income where their current authority run a more generous scheme than is proposed.</p> <p>Some residents who are on a low income will be positively affected.</p>

* reference to Authorities includes: Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council, Borough Council of Wellingborough, North Northamptonshire Council

PART B – if you are undertaking any further work before the decision on this policy or service change is made, please complete Part B and then make a final assessment based on this additional information

****TO BE COMPLETED FOLLOWING CONSULTATION****

REMOVE ALL GUIDANCE IN ITALICS ONCE COMPLETED

1) Consultation, follow up data and information gathered from actions identified above	
	What does this information tell us?
<i>Describe any consultation or engagement that you have carried out since you completed Part A and number of responses/event attendees/contacts</i>	<i>What did people tell you? Did they support the proposal? Did they make any alternative suggestions? Did support differ depending on who was responding?</i>
<i>Describe any further work you have undertaken since completing Part A – have you had further discussions with providers? Has the budget changed? Are alternative proposals being considered? Have you been able to fill in any gaps in information that you had identified?</i>	<i>What does this tell you?</i>

Protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010 – see Part A for explanations and guidance

2) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are still unsure, please explain what you plan to do in future to address this.		
Sex <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Gender Reassignment <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Age <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	

Disability <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Race & Ethnicity <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Sexual Orientation <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Religion or Belief (or No Belief) <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Pregnancy & Maternity <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	

Cross-cutting considerations – see Part A for explanations and guidance

3) Based on the above information, what is the likely impact on the following groups? Please explain why you have made this assessment. If you are still unsure, please explain what you plan to do in future to address this.		
Human Rights (Please see articles in the toolkit for more information) <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Rural isolation <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions	
Socio-economic exclusion	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate)

<i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Mitigations/actions	Explanation:
Health and wellbeing considerations <i>Refer back to Part A for detail</i>	Impact	Positive / neutral / negative / unsure (delete as appropriate) Explanation:
	Mitigations/actions Note: Depending on the scale of the impact identified, there may be a recommendation for a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed	

4) Final impact analysis (taking the findings from Part B into account) – including review date if required

Based on all the information contained in this assessment, and based on what you are proposing to do/recommend, what do you assess the impact to be – in particular, highlight where there may be negative impacts, and what can be done to mitigate them. These need to be made clear so that decision-makers are fully informed before making their decision. This equality impact assessment will be the authorities evidence of meeting its duties under the Equality Act and would be referred to in the event of a legal challenge.*

* reference to Authorities includes: Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council, Borough Council of Wellingborough, North Northamptonshire Council