

Appendix 2

TITLE Name / description of the issue being assessed	Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) 2021/22
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DATE Date the DIA is completed	10 December 2020
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LEAD OFFICER Name, title and dept of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.	Patrick Knight, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Finance, BSD
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<p>1 Summary description of the proposed change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? • How does it compare with the current situation?
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There are no proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2021/2022 apart from annual uprating. This scheme aims to help people on low incomes with payment of their council tax by allowing a reduction in the amount they pay. This reduction varies (up to a maximum of 65%) and is based on the make-up of the household, the household income/savings and the Council Tax charge. Customers on certain benefits for a period of 26 weeks or more can continue to receive the reduction for up to 4 weeks on return to work.

<p>2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc. • Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile
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Not applicable as no change to scheme

<p>3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?</p> <p>Is it likely to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups? • Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups? • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't? <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)</i></p>
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Whilst there are no proposed changes there remains the potential for adverse impact

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	✓		
Disability	✓		
Gender reassignment			

Diversity impact assessment

Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race	✓		
Religion/belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Other			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low income groups • Families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ 		

4 Summary of the likely impacts

- Who will be affected?
- How will they be affected?

Whilst there are no changes to the scheme there remains the potential for adverse impact on the following protected characteristics:

Age: Pensioners are protected as the Government has set out national rules about how Council tax Reduction should be calculated which means the changes proposed will not apply. However, young people may be adversely affected as they are more likely to be on lower incomes.

Disabled: The scheme is designed to help those in need whilst encouraging people into employment. However, some households may contain only those unable to work (disabled, carers etc) who therefore do not have the option of increasing their income to meet the additional council tax payments required under the amended CTRS.

Low income groups: By its very nature the CTRS is designed to protect low income groups, therefore any reduction in that protection will adversely affect them.

Race: Profiling of current CTRS recipients shows us that the majority of working age CTRS recipients are within three wards – River, Strood South and Chatham Central and they are more likely to be from diverse backgrounds with a lower than average number from an English background.

Families: The CTRs scheme is less generous for families who have more than two children in line with Government welfare reforms.

Profiling of current CTRS recipients shows us that a higher than average number are single and in rented accommodation.

All Groups: The de-minimus limit reduces the number of minimal changes in benefits awarded and payments to be made simplifying the scheme for both claimants and administrators.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Are there alternative providers?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

Any effects of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme can be mitigated by the Council's Council Tax Discretionary Relief scheme designed to assist those facing hardship as a result of the amendments. Claimants across all groups will have an equal opportunity to apply for this relief and can receive additional help of up to 100% of their bill. An award is based on an examination of their income and expenditure without any other criteria differentiating between claimants.

Examples of other housing support that the Council provides to those on low income or seeking work include housing benefit and discretionary housing payments which are contributions towards rent.

6 Action plan

- Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Review overarching impact of further welfare reforms	Revenues & Benefits	Ongoing
Monitor recovery action to identify any disproportionate increase arising from the change in discount level. The number of CTRS cases being issued recovery notices will be compared to previous years and the number of CTDR applicants and successful claimants will also be compared to previous years. Any detrimental effects can then be reconsidered for the 2022/23 scheme prior to which the CTDR scheme will be a mitigating factor.	Revenues & Benefits	Ongoing

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

Proceed with the action plan and seek Cabinet approval for the 2021/2022 scheme on the basis that the scheme is not changing apart from annual uprating.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Date

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

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