

Diversity impact assessment

TITLE
Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy
DATE
17 February 2022
LEAD OFFICER.
Patrick Knight, Head of Revenues and Benefits and Ian Johnson, Revenues Manager, Finance, BSD
1 Summary description of the proposed change
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
The policy has been updated to reflect the wording of the current regulations and to bring certain elements of the policy in line with the existing Discretionary Housing Payments policy; mainly the addition of the sections on fraud and publication of the policy (sections 10 and 11).
2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment
Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile
The existing policy requires the Head of Revenues and Benefits to make any decision where an award is to be made and also decide any appeals. While it is unlikely that an appeal would be received from a person that has received an award, it is in theory possible, and this would not be a fair decision-making process. The policy has therefore been updated to make it more flexible, allowing for initial decisions to be made by either the Senior Revenues Officer, or the Revenues Manager in their absence. Similarly, reviews can be carried out by the Revenues Manager, or another senior manager where the Revenues Manager is either absent or was involved in making the initial decision. This will ensure that there is adequate separation of duties and a fair process for the applicant.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?
Is it likely to:
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
(insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	No	No	No
Disability	No	No	No

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Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Gender reassignment	No	No	No
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	No	No
Race	No	No	No
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	No	No
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Other (eg low income groups)	No	Yes	No

4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

Low-income groups/families

The policy provides financial assistance to those struggling to pay their council tax and the changes will give assurance that a fair process is in place when dealing with any reviews. Increased flexibility with regard to decision-making will also prevent any unnecessary delays in processing applications.

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?

There are no likely adverse impacts from the proposed minor changes

The policy will be reviewed annually and developed where needed.

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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
Monitoring of spend and accuracy of applications and awards.	Revenues & Benefits	Ongoing
Promote the policy on Medway.gov.uk and other appropriate platforms.	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.

It is recommended that Cabinet agree to the updated policy. Actions will be taken by Revenue and Benefits to mitigate and monitor any adverse impacts.

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 of authorisation