

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Customer Services



STAGE I: WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED AND BY WHOM?

What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives?

Each year we review how much reduction in Council Tax is given to people of working age on a low income and publish this in a Council Tax Reduction scheme, also known as Council Tax Support (CTS).

- All Devon authorities have been working together on proposals for CTS Schemes across the county. In April 2019, it was agreed that we would consult on ten changes, effective from 1 April 2020.

The 10 proposed changes are as follows:

- To introduce an income banded scheme to replace the current 'means tested' approach
- To introduce a standard weekly non-dependant deduction to replace the current tiered system
- To support work incentives by ignoring the first £25 of earnings where there is a dependent child in the household
- To encourage future planning by ignoring the total amount of any contribution made to a personal pension
- To ignore an additional £50 of household income where there is a disabled person who receives a qualifying disability benefit in the household
- To ignore any income from Carer's Allowance
- To ignore up to 100% of any housing costs included in Universal Credit payments
- To ignore any income from Bereavement Support payments
- To remove the requirement to show continuous good cause before backdating an award of Council Tax Support by up to 6 months
- To make all changes in circumstances which would change the amount of Council Tax Support on a daily basis rather than the current weekly basis

The proposed changes should make it easier for customers to understand the scheme, as there will be similar criteria in Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. These changes aim to encourage work and reduce the level of welfare benefits available to some. Moving to an income banded scheme will reduce the number of adjustments to Council Tax Support awards that result from monthly changes to Universal Credit payments. Additionally, using the same criteria in the Council Tax Support scheme should make it simpler, more efficient and less costly to run the scheme.

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Department and service	Customer Services
Date of assessment	06 January 2020

STAGE 2: EVIDENCE AND IMPACT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (eg data and feedback)	Any adverse impact See guidance on how to make judgement	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible
Age	<p>The average age in Plymouth (39.0 yrs) is about the same as the rest of England (39.3 yrs), but less than the South West (41.6yrs).</p> <p>Of the 16 SW authorities we have the third lowest percentage of older people (75), the sixth highest percentage of working age people and the fifth highest percentage of children and young people (under 18).</p> <p>Under 18s account for 19.8% of our population within this 17.5 % are under 16.</p> <p>As of March 2013, there are estimated to be 479 (6.9 %) young people aged between 16 and 18 who are NEET.</p> <p>The proportion of the working age population (16-64) is higher (66.1%) than regionally (62.8%) and nationally (64.7%).</p> <p>Using existing scheme data as at December 2019, the total CTS caseload is 19,866 (Elderly – 7,995, Working Age – 11,877). This increases to 22,716 if it includes both the claimant and their partner.</p> <p>The age range including all claimants and partners is as follow:</p>	<p>Customers of pension age are not impacted by the proposed changes to the working age Council Tax Support scheme. Changes to the pension age scheme are the responsibility of central government.</p>	<p>Exceptional Hardship fund available</p>	<p>Scheme implementation April 2020</p>

Age Range	Numbers	%
18-25	744	3.27%
25-35	2990	13.16%
35-45	3457	15.21%
45-55	3613	15.90%
55-65	3449	15.18%
65-75	4106	18.07%
>75	4357	19.18%
Totals	22716	

The largest proportion is pensionable age – this group is not affected by the proposed changes to the working age scheme. Note that pensionable age may be affected by changes to the pension age scheme that are made by central government.

The number of children in working age households with CTS is as follows:

Working age Households with CTS	
1 child	1807
2 children	1408
3 children	857
4 children	301
5 children	100
6 children	30

	<table border="1" data-bbox="439 129 907 400"> <tr> <td>7 children</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 children</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 children</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Claims</td> <td>4520</td> </tr> </table> <p>The total number of households with 3 children or more is 1,305.</p> <p>Consultation feedback: 40% of respondents had children in their household. 47% of those agreed with the proposal to move to an income banded scheme.</p>	7 children	12	8 children	3	9 children	2	Total Claims	4520			
7 children	12											
8 children	3											
9 children	2											
Total Claims	4520											
<p>Disability</p>	<p>A total of 31,164 people (from 28.5 per cent of households) declared themselves as having a long-term health problem or disability (national figure 25.7 per cent of households), compared with the total number of people with disabilities in UK (11,600,000).</p> <p>10 per cent of our population have their day-to-day activities limited a lot by a long-term health problem or disability.</p> <p>1,224 adults registered with a GP in Plymouth have some form of learning disability (2010/11).</p> <p>Plymouth schools report that of every 1,000 children 17.5 have a learning difficulty.</p> <p>There are 27166 adults with a disability in work.</p> <p>There are 23,407 carers aged between 18 and 64 in Plymouth known to our services.</p> <p>There are 17,937 state pension age people with disability.</p> <p>There are 3,142 children with disability.</p>	<p>Proposal 5 – ignoring an additional £50 of household income where there is a disabled person who receives a disability related income in the household.</p> <p>Proposal 6 – ignoring any income from Carer’s Allowance</p> <p>Provisional modelling indicates that there are 1415 working age CTS claims where the applicant is not receiving a passporting benefit and the calculation of the CTS award includes a disability related premium. There are no changes to disability related benefit that are ignored as part of the CTS award calculation.</p>	<p>Hardship fund available</p>									

Our Translate Plymouth services recorded that BSL is amongst our most requested languages.

The current scheme data as at December 2019 identifies 6,676 working age CTS claims where there is a disability recorded:

Age Range	Disabled	
18-25	158	2.4%
25-35	838	12.6%
35-45	1176	17.6%
45-55	1573	23.6%
55-65	1598	23.9%
65-75	751	11.2%
>75	582	8.7%
Totals	6676	

29.4% of caseload has a disability this is only slightly higher than the total Plymouth population figure.

Consultation feedback:
 6 of the total of 48 respondents described themselves as disabled. Of those, 2 disagreed with the proposal to move to an income banded scheme. 1 disagreed with the proposal to disregard an additional amount of household income where there is a disabled person in the household. 0 disagreed with the proposal to disregard income from Carer's Allowance.

<p>Faith/religion or belief</p>	<p>84,326 (32.9%) per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion.</p> <p>Those with a Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh religion combined totalled less than 1 per cent.</p> <p>Christianity: 148,917 people (58.1 per cent), decreased from 73.6 per cent since 2001.</p> <p>Islam: 2,078 people (0.8 per cent), doubled from 0.4 per cent since 2001.</p> <p>Buddhism: 881 people (0.3 per cent), increased from 0.2 per cent since 2001.</p> <p>Hinduism: 567 people (0.2 per cent) described their religion as Hindu, increased from 0.1 per cent since 2001.</p> <p>Judaism: 168 people (0.1 per cent), decreased from 181 people since 2001.</p> <p>Sikhism: 89 people (less than 0.1 per cent), increased from 56 people since 2001.</p> <p>0.5 per cent of the population had a current religion that was not Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism or Sikh, such as Paganism or Spiritualism.</p> <p>This information is not available for our scheme as it is not collected.</p>	<p>Eligibility and calculations are not made based on faith/religion or belief.</p> <p>National Government impact assessment of changes highlights that lone parents, women and ethnic minority households are more likely to be impacted</p> <p>http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006E.pdf</p>	<p>Hardship fund available</p>	
<p>Gender - including marriage, pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Overall 50.6 per cent of our population are women and 49.4 per cent are men: this reflects the national figure of 50.8 per cent women and 49.2 per cent men.</p> <p>There were 3280 births in 2011. Birthrate trends have been on the increase since 2001, but since 2010 the number of births has stabilised. Areas with highest numbers of births include Stonehouse (142), Whiteleigh (137) and Devonport (137).</p>	<p>National Government impact assessment of changes highlights that lone parents, women and ethnic minority households are more likely to be impacted</p> <p>http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006E.pdf</p>	<p>Hardship fund available</p>	

	<p>Of those aged 16 and over, 90,765 people (42.9 per cent) are married. 5,190 (2.5 per cent) are separated and still legally married or legally in a same-sex civil partnership.</p> <p>In Plymouth in 2014 average hourly earnings for women (£10.00) were 93 per cent of average hourly male earnings (£11.82).</p> <p>In Plymouth in 2005, women working full time earned only 81 per cent of average hourly full-time male earnings. By 2010 this gap had closed and women were earning 90 per cent. In 2014 the gap had slightly widened.</p> <p>Across the South West region in 2014 women working full-time only earn 86 per cent of average full-time hourly male earnings, and for the UK as a whole the figure is 90 per</p> <p>Women employed by Plymouth City Council currently earn 96% of the average full time hourly wages of their male colleagues.</p> <p>The current scheme data (as at December 2019) identifies the number of male/female claimants:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="421 1045 911 1158"> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>9307</td> <td>41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>13396</td> <td>59%</td> </tr> </table>	Male	9307	41%	Female	13396	59%			
Male	9307	41%								
Female	13396	59%								
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>It is estimated that there may be 10,000 transgender people in the UK.</p> <p>There were 26 referrals from Plymouth made to the Newton Abbott clinic, in 2013/14.</p>	<p>Eligibility and calculations are not made based on gender preference.</p>	<p>Hardship fund available</p>							

	<p>The average age for presentation for reassignment of male-to-females is 40-49.</p> <p>For female-to-male the age group is 20-29.</p> <p>Twenty three transgender people belong to Pride in Plymouth.</p> <p>This information is not available for our scheme as it is not collected.</p>			
Race	<p>92.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identify themselves as White British.</p> <p>7.1 per cent identify themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) with White Other (2.7 per cent), Chinese (0.5 per cent) and Other Asian (0.5 per cent) the most common ethnic groups.</p> <p>Our recorded BME population rose from 3 per cent in 2001 to 6.7 per cent in 2011, and therefore has more than doubled since the 2001 census.</p> <p>Recent census data suggests we have at least 43 main languages spoken in the city, showing Polish, Chinese and Kurdish as the top three. Based on full year data for 2012-13, our Translate Plymouth services recorded that the most requested languages are Polish, British Sign Language (BSL) and Chinese Mandarin.</p> <p>Nearly 100 different languages are spoken in schools by children of different backgrounds. Polish and Arabic are the most common, spoken by 385 and 143 children respectively.</p> <p>Four neighbourhoods have a population of school age children where 20 per cent or more are from a BME background. They are City Centre (38.0 per cent), Greenbank and University (32.3 per cent), Stonehouse (29.9 per cent) and East End (23.4 per cent). There are 1867 school children (over 5 years old) that speak English as an additional other language.</p>	<p>Eligibility and calculations are not made based on race.</p> <p>National Government impact assessment of changes highlights that lone parents, women and ethnic minority households are more likely to be impacted</p> <p>http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006E.pdf</p>	Hardship fund available	

	<p>The Ride has 13 recently refurbished permanent site pitches. We have three small private sites with a total of 4 pitches. In 2010, which was our peak year, we dealt with 44 unauthorised encampments in the city with over 200 children living on them.</p> <p>The 2001 Census records that there were 4328 people from the A8 and A2 Accession Countries resident in the City. Of these 2332 recorded their country of birth as Poland, with 57 per cent arriving between March 2006 and 2008.</p> <p>This information is not available for our scheme as it is not collected.</p>			
<p>Sexual orientation - including civil partnership</p>	<p>There is no precise local data on numbers of Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) people in Plymouth, but nationally the government have estimated this to be between 5 - 7 per cent and Stonewall agree with this estimation given in 2005. This would mean that for Plymouth the figure is approximately 12,500 to 17,500 people aged over 16 in Plymouth are LGB.</p> <p>This information is not available for our scheme as it is not collected.</p>	<p>Eligibility and calculations are not made based on sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Hardship fund available</p>	

STAGE 3: ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING? IF SO, PLEASE RECORD ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Local priorities	Implications	Timescale and who is responsible
<p>Reduce the gap in average hourly pay between men and women by 2020.</p>		
<p>Increase the number of hate crime incidents reported and maintain good satisfaction rates in dealing with racist, disablist, homophobic, transphobic and faith, religion and belief incidents by 2020.</p>		

Good relations between different communities (community cohesion)		
Human rights Please refer to guidance		

STAGE 4: PUBLICATION

Responsible Officer: Emma Rose

Date 06 January 2020

Strategic Development Manager, Customer Services