

# **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND HOUSING ELEMENT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Update



## **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (CTS)**

As Councillors will be aware, we continue to look at potential revisions to our CTS scheme following the consultation and decision in January 2017 for the 2017/18 scheme.

We are not proposing to make any significant changes to the 2018/19 scheme, primarily due to the transition to Full (Digital) Service Universal Credit in Plymouth this October/November.

We need to consider the impact of this change to the welfare system in order to ensure that our Plymouth CTS scheme meets the needs of the city. We feel that there is a significant risk of making an ill-informed decision on a new CTS scheme if fail to take into account the valuable information that we will have for the last 6 months of this financial year.

In addition, we continue to work closely with our Devon colleagues to pool our skills and resources to consider a number of practical options for CTS that we can tweak according to local needs. The aim is still to find a scheme that reduces cost by reducing the amount of processing and assessment that the team carries out.

We will of course keep panel members updated as we will need to schedule in sessions early in 2018 to consider the new scheme proposals for 2019/20 pre and post public consultation.

## **HOUSING ELEMENT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

We continue to work with our partners to gather information about the proportion of young people aged 18 – 21yrs in Full (Digital) UC areas who are exempt from the removal of the housing cost element in order to estimate the impact on these UC claimants in Plymouth.

When we transition to Full (Digital) UC from October/November, only new claimants and those subject to specific changes of circumstance will move from housing benefit (HB) entitlement to UC.

In our current HB caseload, we estimate that just under 2% are in this age group, which equates to approximately 400 young people. Some of these will stay on HB and move out of the age bracket before a change of circumstance moves them to UC, many will be exempt from the removal of the UC housing cost element and some will move into work.

At this stage it is not possible to make any accurate predictions of how many will be affected and when. As soon as this information is available, we will update the Panel.