

Brighton & Hove Council Tax Low Income Discount: Equalities Impact Assessment

The Law

The Equality Act 2010 says that we (and all statutory services) must work to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between groups. The law says we must do this across a range of 'protected characteristics': age, disability, ethnicity (or race), gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

What this means in practice is that we consider the needs of all individuals in our day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to our employees.

The legal duties support us in good decision-making and our commitment to equality. We focus on understanding how different people will or might be affected by our activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. This means that our services and practices will be fairer, easy access and make a real difference. They will also be more effective and efficient.

Why we are changing?

The Government has decided that there will no longer be a national Council Tax Benefits system from 1 April 2013. Instead the council needs to introduce its own local Council Tax Support system. The planning process for this new system commenced with a report to Cabinet on 14th April 2012. The council needs to consider a wide range of policy and financial issues in the design of the new system.

Equalities Impact Assessment

It is recognised that the combined affects of the wider welfare reform package on the residents of the city requires a robust and detailed Equalities Impact Assessment.

The current document contains data derived from both the current Council Tax Benefit caseload and citywide data. Initial consultation has taken place through the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum to identify issues for all groups to complement data collected on claimants.

Following publication of the draft scheme, formal consultation will commence in July 2012, utilising a combination of the council's consultation portal, CVSF facilitated engagement events and press releases directing the public to the on-line consultation documents. At this point consultees may find it easier to comment on specific equalities issues arising from more detailed proposals rather than principals.

Consideration has been given to the needs of different stakeholders in the process. Each of these has been considered in relation to how the changes might differently and /or adversely affect people with protected characteristics.

Mitigating action will be identified as part of the on-going process and an assessment made on how significant the potential impact is.

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Title of EIA	Council Tax Support Project	Ref No.	
Delivery / Resource / Finance Unit or Intelligent Commissioning name			
Aim of policy or scope of service	<p>The Government has decided that there will no longer be a national Council Tax Benefits system from 1 April 2013. Instead the council will need to introduce its own local Council Tax Support system. The Government's assumption following the last Comprehensive Spending Review is that there will be a 10% reduction in expenditure through these changes from 1 April 2013 and that it will be for local authorities to determine how to manage that funding reduction. Brighton & Hove City Council will receive approximately £2.5m less money from Government as a result of this change.</p> <p>Currently Council Tax Benefits is a national system for low income households. You may get Council Tax Benefit if you pay Council Tax and your income and capital (savings and investments) are below a certain level. You may apply whether you rent or own your home, or live rent-free. You could qualify if you are out of work, or in work and earning a wage. Individuals apply for Council Tax Benefits through a single application process for Housing & Council Tax Benefits. If you are eligible for council tax benefits you will receive a reduction in your council tax bill and the council receives grant to pay for this.</p> <p>The government has stated that council tax support for older people will not be reduced as a result of the introduction of this reform. This is because the government wants to ensure that low income pensioners, who would struggle to pay council tax without additional support, and whom the government does not expect to work to increase their income, will continue to receive support for their council tax. Pensioner protection will be achieved by keeping in place national rules.</p> <p>The council needs to give consideration to vulnerable groups in the design of a new system. The government's consultation response appears to be less prescriptive about how this should be done than perhaps originally envisaged. Rather the government draws councils' attention to existing responsibilities including the Child Poverty Act 2010, the Disabled Person Act 1986 and the Housing Act 1996 as well as the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.</p>		

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2. Record of data/engagement; impacts identified; and potential actions to meet the Duties.

	Data ¹ that you have	Community engagement exercises or mechanisms ²	Impacts identified from analysis (actual and potential) ³	Potential actions to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations (You will prioritise these below)
<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately). • How to promote equality of opportunity. This means the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by equality groups – Take steps to meet the needs of equality groups – Encourage equality groups to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low – Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary • How to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tackle prejudice – Promote understanding 				
<p>Community Cohesion (what must happen in all communities to enable</p>	<p>CTB is a household benefit where by one adult makes a claim on behalf of a given household.</p> <p>There are 27,809 households claiming CTB. 7,278 (26%) households contain at least one dependent child.</p>			

¹ 'Data' may be monitoring, customer feedback, equalities monitoring, survey responses...

² These may be ongoing links that you have with community and voluntary groups, service-user groups, staff forums; or one-off engagement sessions you have run.

³ If data or engagement are missing and you can not define impacts then your action will be to take steps to collect the missing information.

different groups of people to get on well together.)	49,360 people live in household in receipt of CTB, 19% of the city's population. This comprises of 36,915 adults, 12,445 dependent children of which 11,830 are aged under 18. This is 17% of the city's adult population and 25% of children aged under 18.																											
Age (people of all ages)	<p>Age data is only available for the CTB claimant and their partner (32,825, 89% of all adult household members).</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="394 496 1072 820"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Fig 3: CTB claimant age profile</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>Number</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>16 to 18</td> <td>11</td> <td>?</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18 to 24</td> <td>1,519</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 to 34</td> <td>4,733</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 to 49</td> <td>9,378</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 to 64</td> <td>7,644</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 and over</td> <td>9,540</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Fig 3: CTB claimant age profile			Age	Number	Percentage	16 to 18	11	?	18 to 24	1,519	5%	25 to 34	4,733	14%	35 to 49	9,378	29%	50 to 64	7,644	23%	65 and over	9,540	29%	NOTE: consultation is planned through the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum to identify issues for <u>all</u> groups to complement data collected on claimants		
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Disability (a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out	<p>Disability data is only available for the CTB claimant and their partner (32,826, 89% of all adult household members). In this instance a person is defined as disabled if they are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Severe DLA and or Attendance Allowance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fifth of people (6,647, 20%) are disabled with 4,409 (13%) severely disabled. • Among the 7,278 household with at least one dependent child, 577 households (8%) have at least one dependent child who is disabled. • Research suggests that the cumulative impacts of this change and other national benefits changes will have a disproportionately larger 																											

normal day-to-day activities ¹)	impact on disabled people (and carers, see below) than others.			
Gender reassignment (a transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does <u>not</u> need to be under medical supervision to be protected)	No information is collected on the gender reassignment status of CTB claimants. Local Count Me In Too research and national data show that Trans people experience higher levels of disadvantage and social/financial exclusion.			
Pregnancy and maternity (protection is during pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which the woman is entitled)	Among all household in receipt of CTB, for 72 households at least one person is also in receipt of statutory maternity pay			

¹ The definition includes: sensory impairments, impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects, progressive, organ specific, developmental, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and mental illnesses, produced by injury to the body or brain. Persons with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection are all now deemed to be disabled persons from the point of diagnosis.

<p>Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, including refugees and migrants; and Gypsies and Travellers)</p>	<p>Estimated resident population by broad ethnic group mid-2009 (experimental statistics)</p>				
	<p>Figures in thousands</p>				
	<p>Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS)</p>				
		<p>Brighton and Hove</p>		<p>South East</p>	<p>England</p>
		<p>number</p>	<p>percentage</p>	<p>percentage</p>	<p>percentage</p>
	<p>All persons</p>	<p>256.4</p>			
	<p>All White</p>	<p>227.1</p>	<p>89%</p>	<p>91%</p>	<p>87%</p>
	<p>White: British</p>	<p>208.1</p>	<p>81%</p>	<p>86%</p>	<p>83%</p>
	<p>White: Irish</p>	<p>3.3</p>	<p>1%</p>	<p>1%</p>	<p>1%</p>
	<p>White: Other White</p>	<p>15.7</p>	<p>6%</p>	<p>4%</p>	<p>4%</p>
	<p>All BME</p>	<p>29.3</p>	<p>11%</p>	<p>9%</p>	<p>13%</p>
	<p>Mixed</p>	<p>5.9</p>	<p>2%</p>	<p>2%</p>	<p>2%</p>
	<p>Asian or Asian British</p>	<p>12.5</p>	<p>5%</p>	<p>4%</p>	<p>6%</p>
<p>Black or Black British</p>	<p>5.8</p>	<p>2%</p>	<p>2%</p>	<p>3%</p>	
<p>Other</p>	<p>5.1</p>	<p>2%</p>	<p>1%</p>	<p>2%</p>	
	<p>We know that employment patterns and earning levels are different for different ethnic groups. We don't know the ethnicity of people locally claiming CTB, but we would expect that members of some ethnic groups will be disproportionately represented as claimants.</p>				
<p>Religion or belief (religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief</p>	<p>Over a quarter of our residents said they had no religion in response to the 2001 census. 59% of our residents (146,466) were Christian, 1.5% were Muslim (3,635), 1.4% were Jewish (3,558), 0.7% were Buddhist (1,747), 0.5% were Hindu (1,300) and 0.1% were Sikh (237).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have no data on the religion or belief of CTB claimants locally and the census data for 2011 will not be available in time for this 				

means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief.)	project. However, as for ethnicity, some religious groups experience different levels of disadvantage																					
Sex (both men and women are covered under the Act)	Gender data is only available for the CTB claimant and their partner (32,805, 89% of all adult household members) Among CTB claimants and their partners, 58% are female and 42% male. This compares to a city profile of residents aged over 16 of males (49%) and females (51%).																					
Sexual orientation (the Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people)	Brighton & Hove's State of the City report estimated that at least 14% (35,000) of Brighton & Hove's adult residents are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. We have no data on the sexual orientation of CTB claimants locally. Count Me In Too research and national data demonstrate that many LGB people experience higher levels of disadvantage and financial exclusion than other groups.																					
Marriage and civil partnership (only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)	<table border="1" data-bbox="394 1062 1426 1476"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3" data-bbox="394 1062 1426 1102">Fig 7: Household composition</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="394 1109 1039 1214"></th> <th data-bbox="1048 1109 1218 1214">Number</th> <th data-bbox="1227 1109 1426 1214">Percentage of all households</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="394 1220 1039 1254">Single person households</td> <td data-bbox="1048 1220 1218 1254">15,971</td> <td data-bbox="1227 1220 1426 1254">57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="394 1260 1039 1329">Two or more adults with at least one dependent child</td> <td data-bbox="1048 1260 1218 1329">2,437</td> <td data-bbox="1227 1260 1426 1329">9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="394 1335 1039 1404">Single parent with at least one dependent child</td> <td data-bbox="1048 1335 1218 1404">4,845</td> <td data-bbox="1227 1335 1426 1404">17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="394 1410 1039 1476">Two or more adults with no dependent children</td> <td data-bbox="1048 1410 1218 1476">4,559</td> <td data-bbox="1227 1410 1426 1476">16%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Fig 7: Household composition				Number	Percentage of all households	Single person households	15,971	57%	Two or more adults with at least one dependent child	2,437	9%	Single parent with at least one dependent child	4,845	17%	Two or more adults with no dependent children	4,559	16%			
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	<p>More than a half (57%) of all households in receipt of CTB are single person households, of which 6,104 (22%) are single pensioner households.</p>			
<p>Other relevant groups eg: Carers, people experiencing domestic violence, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children etc</p>	<p>Among all household in receipt of CTB, for 1,071 households (4%) at least one person is also in receipt of Carers Allowance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research suggests that the cumulative impacts of this change and other national benefits changes will have a disproportionately larger impact on disabled people (and disabled people, see above) than others. <p>Issues such as caring responsibilities, substance misuse, domestic violence, being ex-armed forces, or an ex-offender can also have a significant impact on income and other aspects of financial exclusion. However, we have no data locally on these issues for CTB claimants</p>			

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3. Prioritised Actions:

NB: you should also highlight here if there is potential for cumulative impact across the service or for a specific group.

Action	Timeframe	Lead officer	Evidence of progress	Success measure

Signing of EIA:-

Lead Equality Impact Assessment Officer:

Date:

Head of Service Delivery Unit

Date:

Lead Commissioner (if required):

Date:

Communities and Equality Team

Date:

NB: Actions must now be transferred to service or business plans

You must also complete and submit a summary of the EIA in the Publication Template (see below)

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4. Attach data and/or engagement lists as appendices.

Title (of data or engagement)	Date	Main findings	Gaps in data	Contact

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