

Appendix C

Equality Impact Assessment



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25
Lead officer	Jane Walker
Person completing the EIA	Jane Walker
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input type="checkbox"/>
Version & Date	

1. Background

The replacement of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme with effect from 1 April 2024 with a modern simplified banding / grid scheme.

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3. Engagement and consultation

A full public consultation has been undertaken. The results of the consultation are included in Appendix B.

Major Preceptors have also been consulted. Their responses are included within Appendix A

4. What we know about the Watford population

UP TO DATE INFORMATION ON WATFORD'S POPULATION AND PROFILE

Speak to Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications for advice on this area and for relevant up to date information.

5. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through

The new scheme will apply to working age applicants only. Pension age applicants are **not** affected as they are covered by the Prescribed Scheme. The revised scheme is not designed to reduce the overall level of support but to allow more targeted support to low income households.

The scheme continues to protect those applicants with 'protected' characteristics by:

- disregarding disability benefits;
- disregarding war pensions and war disablement pensions;

- disregarding carers allowance;
- providing additional disregards where any member of the household is disabled; and
- removing the requirement for non-dependant deductions.

A. Positive impacts

The positive impacts of the scheme are:

- that it maintains the high level of support currently available;
- that applicants are not subject to constant change especially those on Universal Credit;
- that those applicants with protected characteristics continue to receive additional protection.

B. Negative impacts

The negative impacts of the scheme are that some applicants *may* receive less support. This is mitigated by the Council introducing an Exceptional Hardship Scheme. All applicants can apply for additional support where they are experiencing exceptional financial hardship.

6. Overall conclusion

Make sure you highlight both positive and negative impacts but draw out how these will be addressed and an overall view of whether the change / new policy has a positive or negative impact. Completing the following tables will help you complete this section.

Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<p>The positive impacts of the scheme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that is maintains the high level of support currently available; • that applicants are no subject to constant change especially those on Universal Credit; • that those applicants with protected characteristics continue to receive additional protection. 	<p>The scheme continues to protect those applicants with 'protected' characteristics by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disregarding disability benefits; • disregarding war pensions and war disablement pensions; • disregarding carers allowance; • providing additional disregards where any member of the household is disabled; and • removing the requirement for non-dependant deductions 	

Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<p>The negative impacts of the scheme are that some applicants <i>may</i> receive less support.</p>		<p>This is mitigated by the Council introducing an Exceptional Hardship Scheme. All applicants can apply for additional support where they are experiencing exceptional financial hardship.</p>

This EIA has been approved by:

..... **Date**

DRAFT