

Equality Impact Analysis

Assessment Proforma

EIA Title: Interim Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy and Temporary Council tax: COVID-19 hardship fund 2020/21

- 1.0 The public sector equality duty (2011) covers the following eight **protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only relating to the elimination of unlawful discrimination (see below, 2.0).

- 1.1 SLDC includes “**rurality**” and “**socio-economic disadvantage**” as additional categories in its equality impact assessments. Although socio-economic status and rurality are not recognised protected characteristics under the Equality Act, people on low incomes or in rural isolation are highly likely to be affected by services that are intended to support vulnerable people.

2.0 **The General Equality Duty.**

SLDC, in the exercise of its functions, should:

- a. **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.**
- b. **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- c. **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**



Step 1

Summarise the subject and expected outcomes of this EIA.

The Council is seeking to introduce a Council tax discretionary hardship relief policy which looks to allow the granting of additional Council Tax support where hardship can be shown and supplements the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme approved in February 2020.

The council have identified vulnerable groups (other than pensioners) who will be protected i.e. their Council Tax liability will not increase. A vulnerable group could be working age claimants with a severe disability for example.

Who are your main stakeholders and list any engagement undertaken (include surveys, feedback forms, complaints, statistics etc.).

The below data is the most up-to-date available at District level. Data is not available to breakdown population statistics for all Protected Characteristics.

Population - In mid-2018 South Lakeland's total resident population was estimated to be 104,500. Over the last five years the population of the district has increased by 900 residents. In 2018 18.5 million visitors came to South Lakeland.

Age

In mid-2018 it was estimated that 13.7% of the population of South Lakeland are aged 0-14 years of age, 58.2 % are 15-64 years of age, and 28 % are aged over 65.

Children and young people

It is projected that numbers of 0-14 year olds in South Lakeland will decrease from 14,200 in 2018 to 12,500 in 2041, a fall of 12.0%.

Working age

In South Lakeland the number of 15-64 year olds are projected to decrease by 8,400 (-14%) between 2018 and 2041. South Lakeland has the lowest proportion of young and working age people in the county and both are in decline. Since mid-2007 the greatest percentage decrease occurred in the 30-44 age groups (-23.9%).

Older people

In South Lakeland numbers of residents aged 65+ are projected to increase by 8,300 persons (+28.4%) to 2041. Since mid-2007 the greatest percentage increase occurred in the 90+ age group (+140%).

Disability

18.8% of the population have a long-term health problem or disability, while 4.6% describe their general health as bad or very bad.

Race

95.6% of South Lakeland residents are White British, 2.8% are White Other, 0.6% are mixed race, 0.8% are Asian, 0.2% are Black, and 0.1% are from other ethnic groups.

Of Cumbria's six districts, South Lakeland has the second highest proportion of residents from BAME groups (4.4%).

Religion and Belief

68% of residents are Christian, 23% have no religion. 0.4% are Buddhist, 0.2% are Muslim, 0.1% are Hindu, 0.1% are Jewish and 0.4% are members of other religions.

Gender

49% of residents are male, 51% are female.

There is a gender pay imbalance in South Lakeland, the median gross weekly earnings of a male in full time employment is £579, whereas for a female in full time employment the figure is £479.

In 2011-12, 6,200 households in South Lakeland were in receipt of CTB: of these 3,500 were pensioner households. There are over 52,000 households in total in South Lakeland.

Consultation commenced on 22nd August 2012 and ended on 31st October 2012. Over 11,000 Council Taxpayers who potentially could be affected by a range of changes were contacted directly including all those on Council Tax Benefit, second home owners and owners of vacant properties.

In addition the council directly contacted those groups on its database who fall under the

government's equality "protected characteristics" designation, including a one to one meeting with AWAZ (a Cumbria wide black and minority ethnic organisation).

Total Number of Respondents – 3,483

Profile of respondents

Age

Under 16	0%
17-25	0.60%
26-35	2.53%
36-50	12.75%
51-65	33.42%
66-80	34.45%
Over 80	14.15%
Not Answered	2.10%

Male - 1793

Female - 1636

Long standing disability or infirmity – **970 (28.85% of the total)**

At the end of December 2019 there were 4,618 claimants of which 2,273 (49%) were of pension age and 2,345 (51%) were working age. The average amount of reduction awarded to pension age claimants is slightly higher at £1,146 per year compared to £1,082 per year for working age claimants.

Step 2

Equality Action Plan

<p>In providing this service, what are the impacts for the following people?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age (young and old) 2. Black and Minority Ethnic 3. Disabled 4. Faith/Belief 5. Sexual Orientation 6. Gender 7. Gender reassignment 8. Pregnancy and maternity 9. Marriage and Civil Partnership 10. Socio-economic disadvantage (including rural deprivation, 'rurality') <p>(See glossary below for definitions)</p>	<p>Positive impacts</p>	<p>Negative impacts</p>	<p>Mitigating actions (to avoid negative impact):</p>	<p>Lead Officer & When</p>	<p>Complete Y/N</p>
<p>1: Age</p>	<p>Available to people of all ages</p>	<p>.</p>			
<p>3. Disabled In this instance a person is defined as disabled if they are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or a Personal Independence Payment</p>	<p>Disability benefit income is disregarded in full when calculating CTRS. Higher CTRS allowances are awarded when calculating support for those receiving disability benefits.</p>		<p>The Council tax banding system reduces the banding of qualifying properties Persons defined as "Severely Mentally Impaired" are exempt from payment of Council Tax so the reduction scheme is not applicable. If they are the only resident at a property then the whole property is exempt. This discretionary scheme can respond to any residual hardship arising from disability</p>		

<p>In providing this service, what are the impacts for the following people?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age (young and old) 2. Black and Minority Ethnic 3. Disabled 4. Faith/Belief 5. Sexual Orientation 6. Gender 7. Gender reassignment 8. Pregnancy and maternity 9. Marriage and Civil Partnership 10. Socio-economic disadvantage (including rural deprivation, 'rurality') <p>(See glossary below for definitions)</p>	<p>Positive impacts</p>	<p>Negative impacts</p>	<p>Mitigating actions (to avoid negative impact):</p>	<p>Lead Officer & When</p>	<p>Complete Y/N</p>
<p>8. Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>Higher CTS allowances are awarded in the calculation of support for carers. The scheme builds in additional premiums for existing claims where there are children and has not implemented changes to reduce this to only 2 children</p>		<p>This discretionary scheme can respond to any residual hardship arising from pregnancy and maternity</p>		
<p>Black and Minority Ethnic , Faith/Belief ,Sexual Orientation, Gender, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Socio-economic disadvantage (including rural deprivation, 'rurality')</p>	<p>The scheme does not treat people of these characteristics any differently.</p>				

Step 3

Examples of good equality practice you have put in place (For example, all venues used are accessible for people with mobility, hearing and sight impairments)

The Council is under no legal obligation to offer a Council Tax hardship scheme. Therefore in theory it could reduce the amount of support offered from 100% to any figure it chose including having a full charge irrespective of income. This discretionary hardship scheme supports the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which can reduce the amount of Council tax payable to zero.

The council has a list of equality contacts who can be contacted for consultation or to ask advice. The list is on the intranet under Equality and Diversity. If you need any support when completing this Equality Impact Analysis, please contact the Partnerships and Funding Officer.

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Glossary

Age: This refers to a person having a particular age (for example, 32 year-olds) or being within an age group (for example, 18-30 year-olds).

Civil partnership: Legal recognition of a same-sex couple's relationship. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters.

Disability: A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Includes: Physical/sensory disability, mental health or learning disability.

Gender reassignment: A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Maternity: The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

Race: It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. Includes, Asian, Black and White minority ethnic groups inc. Eastern Europeans, Irish people and Gypsy Travellers.

Religion or belief: "Religion" means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. "Belief" includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). The category includes Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and non religious beliefs such as Humanism.

Sexual orientation: This is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Socio-economic disadvantage: This includes people on low incomes, as well as issues around rural and urban deprivation, such as access to services and transport. Rurality should be specifically considered as South Lakeland is defined as 'Rural-80' – this means we have at least 80 percent of our population in rural settlements and larger market towns.