

Equality Impact Assessment

1.0 Background

Sandwell's LCTRS policy has been in place since 1st April 2015 and members will consider changes to the policy for 2019/20.

A four-week consultation on the proposed changes to the scheme took place during October and November 2018. This consisted of a web page inviting comments and feedback on the scheme as well as e-mailing 700 stakeholders, writing to 6,000 residents and promoting participation in the consultation via Facebook and Twitter.

A total of 26 responses were received from the consultation exercise and feedback was obtained in respect of the 6 options people were asked to consider.

As this is a limited response in comparison to the number of citizens contacted it can be concluded that overall residents and stakeholders are happy with Sandwell's LCTRS.

Analysis of the LCTRS caseload has now taken place to ensure that the amended scheme will have no adverse impact on any minority groups. This will further inform our decision to make changes to the policy for 2019/20.

Caseload Breakdown

Caseload	As at October 2018	
Total caseload	34,629	
Pensioners	13,622	39%
Working Age	21,007	61%

The LCTRS does not apply to pensioners therefore the Council's scheme cannot influence that element of the caseload.

The proposed changes to the LCTRS will affect the following number of working age customers:

Working Age	Caseload as at October 2018 – Better off		Caseload as at October 2018 – Worse off		Caseload as at October 2018 – Not affected	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Totals	2,797	13%	1,976	9%	16,234	78%

The above statistics indicate that the majority of customers will be unaffected by the proposed changes to the LCTRS.

Ethnic Breakdown of working age caseload

Ethnic Origin	LCTR Caseload as at	
	No.	%
White	14,769	70
Black	1,601	8
Asian	2,879	14
Other	1,502	7
Not known	256	1

2.0 Equality Impact

2.1 Impact - Ethnicity

Information is recorded about working age people who receive Council Tax Reduction, however the policy will not have an adverse impact based on a person's ethnicity as this is not considered or part of any assessment process.

Ethnic Origin	LCTR caseload impacted by changes	
	No.	%
White	2,204	47
Black	469	9
Asian	342	7
Other	1,502	31
Not known	256	6

The above statistics indicate that the policy has had no adverse impact on any of the ethnic minority groups.

2.2 Impact – Disabled Customers

Information relating to a persons disability can be extracted from the Benefits core system as disability is taken into account in the calculation of LCTRS.

The proposed LCTRS disregards incomes that are specifically paid to disabled customers. These incomes are Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payments and the support component of Employment and Support Allowance. The LCTRS also provides additional support to carers by fully disregarding Carers Allowance.

Analysis of the caseload shows that the proposed LCTRS will have the following impact on Disabled customers:

Disability	Caseload as at October 2018 – Better off		Caseload as at October 2018 – Worse off		Caseload as at October 2018 – Not affected	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Totals	263	3	780	9	7364	88

This indicates that the policy overall has had no adverse impact on any of the disability groups as 91% of the customers are unaffected by the changes or are better off, which is proportionate to the overall impact on the total caseload.

2.4 Impact based on sexual orientation

The council has no statistics on the sexual orientation of people who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction however the policy will not have an adverse impact based on a person's sexual orientation as this is not considered or part of any assessment process.

2.5 Impact based on sex

The council believes that the policy will not have an adverse impact based on a person's sex as this is not considered or part of any assessment process.

3 Way Forward

As the Council have powers to change the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme a review will take place annually.

The new scheme will be prescribed and will be implemented based on a documented protocol and in essence no discretion will be made in respect of decision making.

Whilst it is noted that persons encountering disability in their household and households including persons of a working age with more than 2 children will be affected, in balance overall more people will be better off.

In comparison to the total number of LCTRS customers (approx. 37,000) around 13% of people will be better off whereas around 9% will be worse off. This means that 78% of existing claimants will not be affected at all.

In conclusion no further actions are required in respect of equality impact.