

Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation October 2020

Survey Information

City of York Council is consulting residents on proposals to make some changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS). The specific details, along with what impact changing the scheme would have, are explained in the survey before we ask you any questions. The change is also explained as you complete the survey.

All questions are optional. If you feel unable to answer any of the questions in this survey please feel free to leave your response blank and move on to the next question. Please only answer the questions you feel comfortable responding to.

Our survey asks for some personal information which you may choose not to give. We do not publish or share any information which can identify you. Please read our privacy notice to find out more about how we protect your personal information. We will ask for your consent to this at the start of the survey.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by Susan.Wood@york.gov.uk.

Question 1

Do you confirm that you have read and understood the privacy notice?

You must select 'Yes' in order to take the survey.

Tick

Yes _____ **No** _____

What is the Council Tax Support Scheme?

The Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) helps residents on a low income to pay their council tax. Under the current scheme, a York resident liable for council tax who is a pensioner could get up to 100% of the charge paid through the scheme, or if they are of working age could get up to 77.5% of the charge paid (i.e. the council tax bill payer is under pension credit age).

The amount of support a household can get through the scheme is determined through a “means test” – this means we look at your total income and any money that you and your partner (if you have one) have as savings. We then compare it against a minimum allowance that you need to live on, depending on your circumstances.

At the moment, the council tax support scheme helps around 9590 York households on a low income to pay their local council tax; 4000 people over pension age and 5590 of our working age residents get support to pay some of their council tax.

Why are we reviewing the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

We’re proposing a change to our local council tax support scheme so it works better for working-age people. We’d like your views before we decide.

The proposed change will simplify what happens to local council tax support when a person’s income changes by small amounts. Currently we send over 30,000 adjustment notices a year. Most people receiving council tax support get 1 or 2 bills if they have a change; but for an increasing number of people whose income changes regularly they receive numerous bills.

The number of people this affects has increased significantly through the introduction of Universal Credit. When a person is receiving Universal Credit, their entitlement to Universal Credit is assessed each month. If they are claiming Council

Tax Support (CTS) from the council, the council is notified each month of the change to the person's award.

At the moment, every change in a person's income means their Council Tax Support has to be reassessed, their council tax bill recalculated and a new bill sent.

Constant changes to a person's council tax bill can result in people finding it harder to keep up with their payments, as the number of instalments they are given reduces through the year.

In many cases, these changes often make little or no difference to the person's entitlement to Council Tax Support, but still have to be assessed. This creates additional work for the council, excessive paperwork for persons and costs the council money.

The council is considering introducing a new approach to assessing these changes from April 2021 to reduce the impact of income changes on Council Tax Support claims.

Question 2 *I am answering this survey:

- As a resident

Question 2a

Which of the following best describes the make-up of your household?

- One person, not retired
- One person, retired
- Couple, not retired
- Couple, one or both retired
- Couple with child/children
- Single parent with child/children
- Other (please specify)

Question 2b

Do you currently receive Council Tax Support?

Yes No N/A

- On behalf of a business
- On behalf of a public sector organisation
- On behalf of a charity that covers the York area
- On behalf of a community group in York
- Other (please specify)

Please tell us who you are answering on behalf of:

Organisation _____

Contact email _____

Option 1: Introduction of a Tolerance Scheme

A tolerance scheme is where a person's income can change up to an amount set by the council before their council tax support claim is affected.

The council is proposing that if a person's income goes up or down and the difference in their council tax support award would be either plus /minus £2.50 per week, the change will not be assessed. This means that a person's Council Tax Support would not be changed and their bill would remain the same.

If the change in their award is more than £2.50 per week, their Council Tax Support and bill will be recalculated as it is now.

The proposal means the council would process fewer changes to a person's council tax support claim, which in turn would result in fewer changes to amount of Council Tax due and monthly instalments. Which would reduce the number of amended bills they would receive.

We have looked at a sample of award notifications for the current council tax support awards. On this basis we recommend a monthly tolerance amount of £2.50 per week.

Based on this amount we would achieve 43% reduction in the number of bills sent out due to changes in income. Of these changes which would be ignored 64% would have seen a reduction in their council tax support if the change was implemented and 36% would have seen an increase in Council Tax Support.

If the tolerance level was set below £2.50 this would be less effective, whilst there is little to gain by increasing the tolerance level. The attached examples show a range of changes to peoples Council Tax Support accounts and how they would be affected.

Most people who are affected by regular small changes have both increases and decreases which level out the amount of support. However, anyone disproportionately affected by the changes they would be able to apply for discretionary council tax reduction.

It should be noted where customers' circumstances noticeably change, for example when employment ceases, the tolerance rule will not apply, given the change will be greater than £2.50 per week. In these circumstances the customer's council tax support will be immediately adjusted to provide extra benefit.

It is also recommended that the changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme include discretion to reassess entitlement where a reduction in earnings occurs and it is clear that this level of earnings have and will be likely to continue at a lower level.

Option 2: Leave the current process in place

The current process is to at the moment, each change notified to the council has to be reassessed, the person has to be notified of the effect on their council tax support, and where necessary, their council tax bill will be recalculated.

Examples of implementation of proposed tolerance scheme for Council Tax Support – Sept 20

Single parent - 2 children	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
07/09/2010	£362.35	£2.06	−£2.74	New bill
12/07/2020	£348.67	£4.8	£2.54	New bill
11/05/2020	£361.36	£2.26	−£6.17	New bill
01/04/2020	£338.47	8.43		New bill

Single person	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
29/06/2020	£264.09	£6.18	£2.43	No change
01/06/2020	£276.27	£3.75	£3.37	New bill
04/05/2020	£293.08	£0.38	−£13.95	New bill
01/04/2020	£220.35	£14.33		

Single parent - 2 children	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
29/06/2020	£341.45	£12.04	0	No change
15/06/2020	£341.45	£12.04	−£2.21	No change
11/05/2020	£352.49	£9.83	£5.01	Bill
13/04/2020	£376.92	£4.95	−£0.13	No change
01/04/2020	£375.61	£4.82		

11/5/20 bill will show change from in amount from £4.82 – £9.83

Couple	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
15/06/2020	£231.22	£14.51	£1.72	No change
10/05/2020	£239.82	£12.79		

Single parent - 1 child	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
20/07/2020	£264.42	£7.16	£1.79	No change
22/06/2020	£273.33	£5.37	−£3.07	New bill
15/06/2020	£258.02	£8.44	£8.44	New bill
18/05/2020	£321.75	0	−£14.93	New bill
11/05/2020	63.73	£14.93	0	No change

Single person	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
	£204.07	£2.84	£2.19	No change
	£193.10	£5.03	−£2.19	No change
	£204.07	£2.84		

Annex A

Single parent - 2 children	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
06/07/2020	£348.99	£2.89	-0.51	No change
22/06/2007	£346.46	£3.40	£11.53	New bill
11/05/2020	288.81	£14.93	£11.86	New bill
01/04/2020	£346.19	£3.07		

Single	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
15/06/2020	£177.47	£10.38	£0.98	No change
18/05/2020	£172.56	£11.36	£1.44	No change
13/04/2020	£165.39	£12.8	£0.58	No change
01/04/2020	£168.28	£12.22		

Couple 2 children	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
27/07/2020	£337.65	£2.54	£1.25	No change
29/06/2020	£337.65	£1.29	£2.13	No change
01/06/2020	405.86	£3.42	£0.01	No change
27/04/2020	£405.88	£3.41		

couple	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
27/07/2020	£307.58	£14.04	£2.42	No change

01/06/2020	£295.49	£16.46		
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Single parent - 1 child	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
13/07/20	£282.41	£0.81	£1.53	No change
08/05/20	£274.77	£2.34	£1.74	No change
11/05/20	£222.48	£0.06	£3.56	New bill
13/04/20	£274.77	£2.34	£1.82	No change
01/04/20	£264.98	£4.16		

11/5/20 bill will show change from in amount from £4.16 – £0.06

Couple	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
13/07/2020	£303.58	£7.12	£3.78	New bill
08/06/2020	284.70	£10.90	£4.49	New bill
23/05/2020	£307.16	£6.41	5.04	New bill
11/05/2020	£307.16	£1.37		

Single	Net weekly income after disregards	Weekly CTS Amount	Difference	
15/06/2020	£105.22	£12.80	£3.45	New bill
18/05/2020	£122.50	£9.35	£8.85	New bill
20/04/2020	£146.51	£0.50	£5.10	New bill

01/04/2020	£14.22	£5.60		
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Tolerance scheme proposals

A new bill will only be issued if a change of income causes a person's weekly Council Tax Support scheme entitlement to increase or decrease by £2.50 per week.

Question 3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with tolerance scheme proposal?

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither/nor Agree Strongly agree Don't know

Question 4 Do you agree the amount should be set at £2.50 per week?

Yes No Don't know

Question 5 If no, do you think the amount should be:

Lower Higher

Please give amount and tell us why you think the amount should be lower or higher:

Question 6 If you would like to make any further comments about the proposed changes please use the box below.

Question 7 If you have any comments or feedback about the Council Tax Support Scheme in general, please use the box below.

On the following page we will ask some questions about you.

Any information you share may help us identify themes in specific groups to aid any future support and will not be used to identify you. You may choose not to answer or select 'prefer not to say' to any question. If you would prefer to opt out of this section please click the relevant option below.

Question 8 **Would you like to continue to the 'About You' section?**

- Yes, continue to this section
- No, skip this section

About you

Question 9 **Your age: (please select the appropriate range)**

- Prefer not to say
- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-39
- 40-55
- 56-59

60-64

65+

Question 10 Your Gender:

- Prefer not to say Male Female Non-binary/Gender Variant

Question 11 Do you identify as transgender/trans?

- Prefer not to say Yes No

Question 12 What is your ethnic group?

Please choose one section from A-E and then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic background or please tick this box:

- Prefer not to say

A: White

- British
- Irish
- Any other white background, please specify:

B: Mixed Race

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian

- Any other Mixed/multiple race background, please specify:

C: Asian and Asian British

- Indian
- Chinese

Annex A

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background,
please specify:

D: Black and Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background, please specify:

E: Other Ethnic Groups:

Gypsy

Traveller

Any other background, please specify:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Prefer not to say Yes No

If you answered “Yes” above, please tick as many boxes below as apply:

Physical impairment

Sensory impairment

Mental health condition

Learning disability

Long standing illness or health condition

What is your religion or belief?

Prefer not to say

Buddhist

Christian

Annex A



- Hindu Muslim No religion
 Jewish Sikh Other

If 'Other' please tell us what your religion or belief is or leave blank if you prefer not to say

What is your sexual orientation?

- Prefer not to say Gay man
 Bisexual Gay woman/lesbian
 Heterosexual/straight

Are you a carer?

A carer is defined as someone who “looks after family, partner or friends in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability...” and that the help they provide is unpaid (except for Carers Allowance). Excluding childcare /family responsibility.

- Prefer not to say Yes No

Thank you for completing our survey.

**Please return the survey to
CTS Survey
Customer Services**

Annex A

City of York Council

West Offices

York YO1 6GA



Privacy Notice for Consultation on Council Tax Support – September 2020

We developed this privacy notice in September 2020 and will keep it under regular review.

When we use your personal data, City of York Council (CYC) complies with data protection legislation, and is the registered 'Controller'. Our data protection notification is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) – reference Z5809563.

Why will information be collected?

This survey is part of consultation on changes to our Local Council Tax Support scheme. We're proposing a change to our Local Council Tax Support scheme so it works better for working-age people. We'd like your views before we decide.

Responses to questions in the 'About you' section may help us identify themes in specific groups to aid any future support and will not be used to identify you. Participation is voluntary and you may choose not to or select 'prefer not to say' to any question. You can withdraw your consent at any time, by contacting: business.intelligence@york.gov.uk or 01904 551550.

What information will be collected?

Through a series of multiple choice and open text questions we will ask for information about views on the proposed changes and how the changes would affect you. We will also ask for personal information including age, disability.

If you are responding on behalf of a group or organisation we will ask for your consent and an email address to contact you for further feedback on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. You can withdraw your consent for this at any time by contacting business.intelligence@york.gov.uk or 01904 551550.

What will we do with the information?

The information we collect will be included in presentations, reports and performance framework. Any data for publication or use outside of the authorised council staff will be anonymised and will not identify any individuals.

We will not use the data for any other purpose than stated and will not disclose to a third party ie other companies or individuals, unless we are required to do so by law for example for the prevention of crime and detection of fraud, etc.

Online data will be collected using SurveyMonkey and paper questionnaires if these are requested.

To find out how they use your information, please visit the council website www.york.gov.uk

Where will the information be kept?

We will keep the information you give us and your personal data in the council's secure network drive and make sure it can only be accessed by authorised staff. Where you complete a paper copy of a survey we will transfer the information you have given onto the council's secure network drive and then securely destroy the paper copy once the transfer is complete.

How long will we keep the information?

We will keep the information you give us and your personal data for up to three years and then will securely destroy it. Where required or appropriate to, at the end of the retention period, we will pass onto the City Archives any relevant information

Further Processing

If we wish to use your personal data for a new purpose, not covered by this Privacy Notice, we will provide you with a new notice explaining the purpose prior to commencing the processing and the processing conditions. Where and whenever necessary, we will seek your consent prior to the new processing.

Your rights

To find out about your rights under data protection law, you can go to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/>

You can also find information about your rights at <https://www.york.gov.uk/privacy> If you have any questions about this email, want to exercise your rights, or if you have a complaint about how your information has been used, please contact us at foi@york.gov.uk or on 01904 554145 or write to: Data Protection Officer, City of York Council, West Offices Station Rise, York YO1 6GA