

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.

Detailed findings

Questionnaire responses

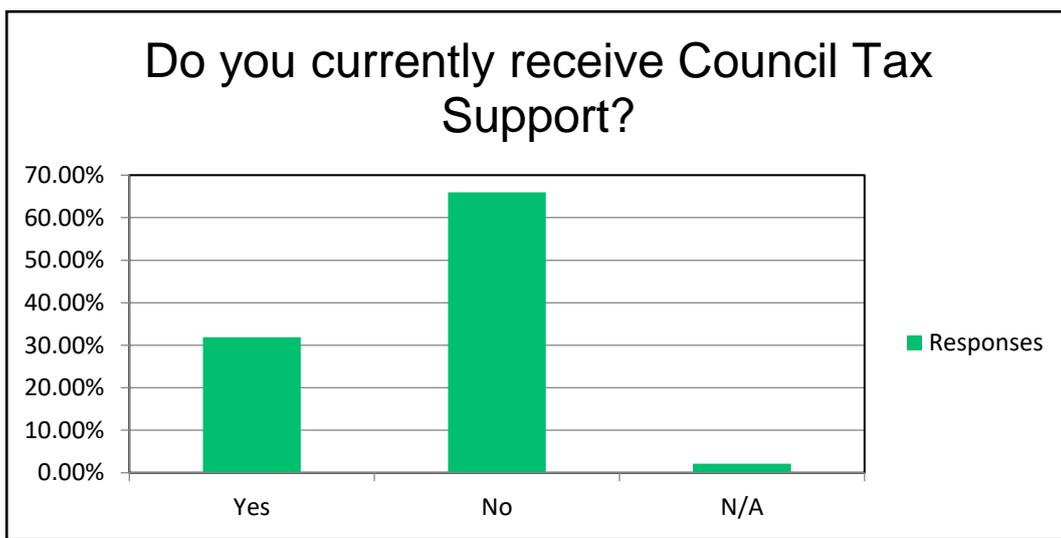
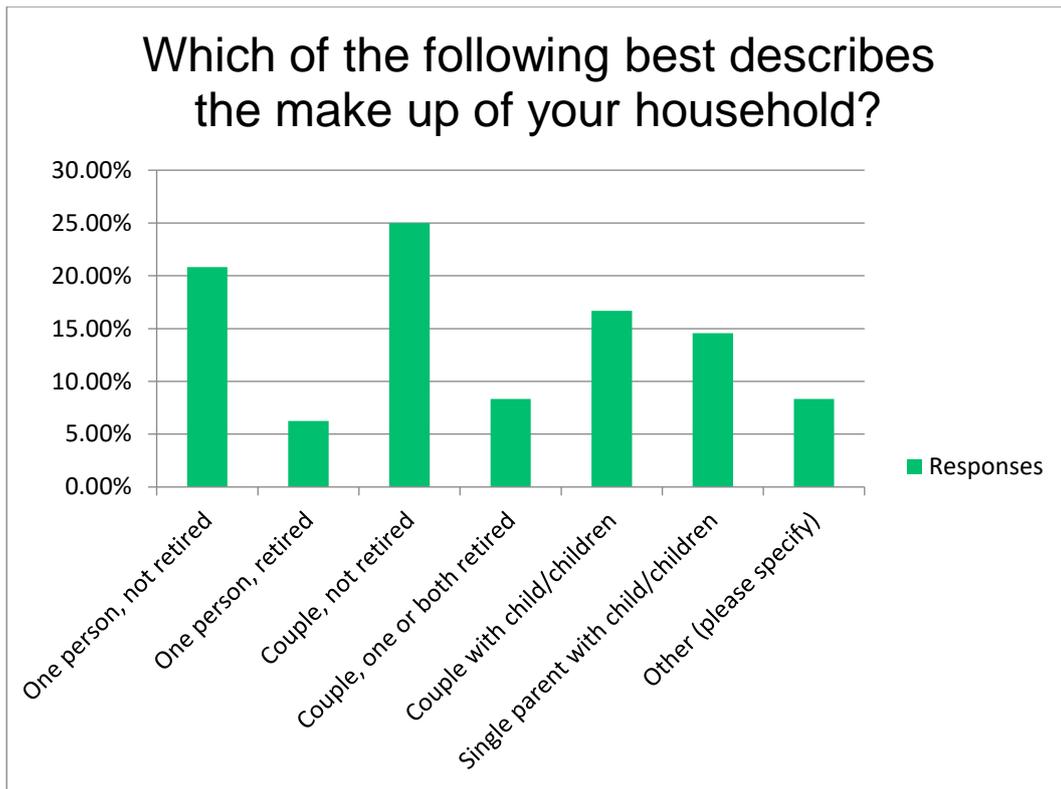
77 people viewed the survey of which 42 responses were received:

- 14% from representative organisations / charities
- 86% from individuals / residents

Residents were asked:

Q1 - the make-up of their household

Q2 - whether they are receiving Council Tax Support



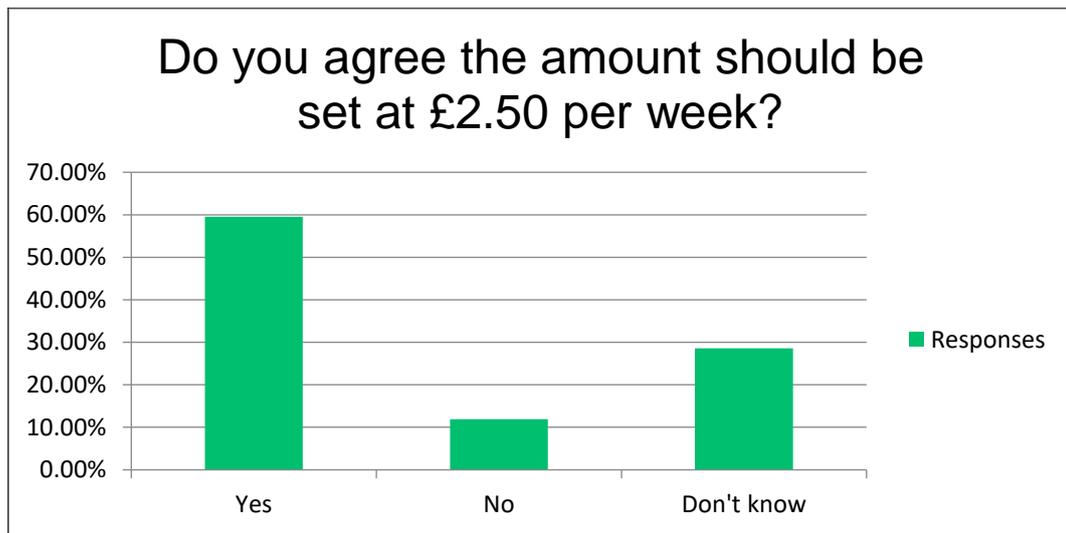
Organisational responses were received from

- Welfare Benefits Unit
- York Mind
- Peasholme Charity
- Age UK York
- Citizens Advice York

Q3 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with tolerance scheme proposal?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/nor	Agree	Strongly agree
4.76%	2.38%	16.67%	40.48%	35.71%

Q4 - Do you agree the amount should be set at £2.50 per week?



Q5 - If no, do you think the amount should be higher or lower?

5 responses received of which:

- 2 higher
- 3 lower

Q6 - 3 comments were received about the proposed amount

I think the concern is that is someone should have got a reduction of £2.50 every week over 52 weeks that is £130 a year which is a significant sum. Although that may be unlikely we think someone on a low income would want to be able to access that saving and know they are getting that money back.
not lower otherwise it won't be effective
£10 Probable cost of notifying the claimant of the increase/decrease so no loss to the council.

Q7 - 9 comments were received about the proposed changes

Not sure of the optimal tolerance level without knowing cost implications of varying amounts
There needs to be some way of picking up if someone is getting a significant refund on an ongoing basis - so if there is a change then after a number of months, perhaps writing to the resident. Any communication needs to be clear, and offered in a range of accessible formats.
Also if someone is meticulous about their bills and then finds their bill is different to what they thought it should be, they are likely to contact you which will then cause more work. So at the start of each CTAX year it will be really important to make it really clear what you are doing.
I think the tolerance scheme is a sensible way to reduce the bureaucracy involved and helps keep people's bills consistent
The proposed changes will have a positive impact on people's well-being as it can be daunting and frustrating finding that a change has happened due to a very slight increase in wages and by the time all the council's protocols have been put in place i.e. 10 days notification period for DDs or Instalment plans it can have a detrimental affect on the family's finances
Use the £2.50 as a trial and I assume it could be changed once the effectiveness of this action has been assessed
Good idea. Would lower costs to the council too in paper and postage. Any saving is good
You need to make sure that you get these bills sorted as soon as possible for people so they aren't paying too much or too little. It will help keep people budget and get money in for the council.
The exemptions to the tolerance exact rule are important for people whose circumstances have changed negatively, and seriously such as complete job loss.
Anything that simplifies things can only be good.

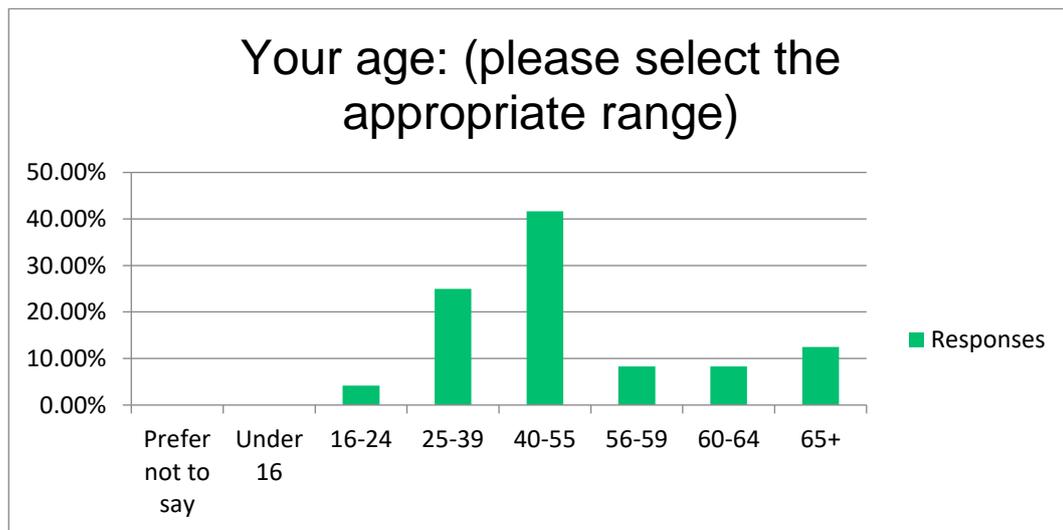
Q8 - 5 comments were received about the Council Tax Support Scheme in general

I think it is difficult for residents to understand. A simplification may help
It seems to make sense to me. Anything that cuts down on the paper work (at least for something which I think is on the whole, quite minor like this is) and lets people live their lives is a benefit.
I agree that too many bills are sent out and confuses people.
Good idea
It shows that the universal credit doesn't make things like this any easier as the government promised it would. A total waste of money.

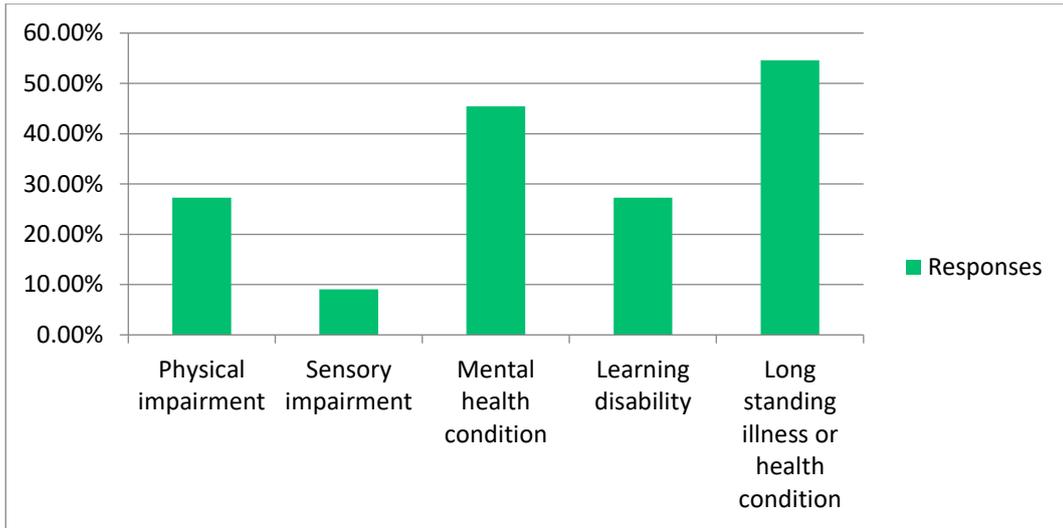
Monitoring Questions

24 people completed the monitoring questions

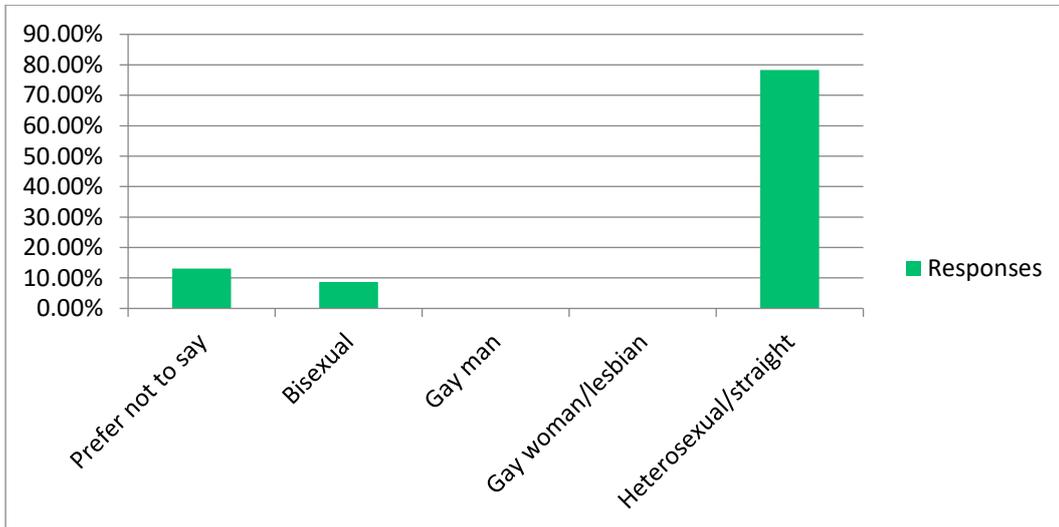
- Responses were received from people across age ranges



- 3 out of 4 respondents were women
- Only 1 person identified as non-white British
- 42% of respondents identified as having a disability



- 23 responded regarding their sexual orientation



- 13% of respondents identified as being a carer