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Results Text

Thurrock Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Consultation

Respondents: 94 **Status:** Open
Launched Date: **Closed Date:** 21/10/2013

6. **Please use the space below for any comments about the proposed scheme for 2014/15**

- I think it is discriminatory to exclude residents who have not been living here for 5 years because, these people would have been living ex-where in the country working and paying their taxes or have been living here in the past 4 years working and paying their taxes but suddenly lost their work to fall into this category. How then do you consider the taxes they paid before this time. Is the council going to remove those who have not live here for 5 years from paying taxes if not, why should they not get the benefits that go with taxes they pay? I think we need to be more empathetic.
1. Child Benefit should be considered as families are increasing in size in Thurrock and gaining a lot of income through Child benefit.
 2. This does seem fair, particularly if some one moves into the borough and loses their their job within the 5 year qualifying period.
 3. All benefits should be means tested.
 4. We definitely need to make these changes, all income should be used in the calculation of LCTS, this needs to be made fair for everyone.
 - Point 1 Everybody of working age should be treated equally
 - Point 2 u say people on very low income have 75% council tax benefit paid through my council tax - that should continue but not on all bands it should only go to band C properties
 - Point 3 is not fair to people whom would have to move for medical/financial reasons i.e. rent price in london and new build properties.
 5. Point 4 No council should allow anybody a tax free allowance this is done by the tax office by giving the £9,440.
 - Point 5 No way this is un taxed income already and the rules should be changed for housing benefit in this term on average if somebody was earning £7.20 they would pay for 1 child £2236 per year therefore they should pay council tax as they have more than somebody without. therefore they are not on a (very low income)
 6. Question 2 - I believe that expecting all to be able to pay 25% is set too high and a figure closer to 15% is more reasonable or a fixed sum such as £5 per week.
 Question 3 - The residency rule does not need to be in line with the housing allocation policy. What about those living in the private rented sector or owner occupiers who may fall on hard times but manage to get by without requiring housing from the public sector. This is very shortsighted and should not be adopted. CT support is nothing to do with housing policy and residency rules.
 Question 5 - Child maintenance should be treated as income for CT support scheme purposes. It is rarely used just to support the cost of raising children but rather goes into the household pot. I agree that child benefit should not be treated as income.
 7. .
 8. Working age people who are not working should have all of their Council Tax paid (100%). People on low incomes should receive help. The length of time someone has lived in the borough should not affect their entitlement to Council Tax Benefit.

unemployed are given the minimum allowed by law to live on... To take further from these people is forcing them into hardship and poverty.. This is wrong and has largely been forgotten about due to the bedroom tax overshadowing it.
 9. To build so much new housing in the borough and to add a residency portion to rules is deeply disturbing and is deliberately designed to stop mobility about the country and of course will force the poorest into poverty a debt. Maybe write to the UN to see if this is further human rights abuse.

I find the idea of charging the poorest people offensive when they are giving the lowest amount possible to live on by law already. If someone is already in poverty then taking this additional money from the means they are on hungry and cold rather than just hungry or cold. It is appalling and certainly not fair.
 10. The residency part is disgraceful and abhorrent and quite likely against human rights as of course it affects the poor and reduces their mobility about the country to seek work. This will cause significant problems in helping the poor find work and being able to relocate to places where work is more readily available.

I also find it disgraceful that I came upon this survey by chance and was not informed by letter by the council (We no longer get a local paper delivered so putting it in there if you did was a pointless exercise and most poor which this would affect would not buy that paper anyway or have access to the internet.. shameful.)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Response to the Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation - October 2013

I am writing to you on behalf of Thurrock Diversity Network and its members.

In all its work as a co-operative, Thurrock Diversity Network aims to:

 - a) Benefit disabled adult residents of Thurrock by the promotion of citizenship and the development of inclusive communities;

- b) Promote disabled people's active participation in and full integration into society;
- c) Encourage the provision of services which improve residents' conditions of life, facilitate independent living and give them choice and control over service delivery;
- d) Act as a co-ordinating body for and provide support to voluntary organisations in Thurrock that work with disabled people;
- e) Promote the advancement of understanding of human rights, equality and diversity;
- f) Work within and promote the social model of disability in all aspects of the Co-operative's activities.

In accordance with the above aims I am writing to you to respond to and provide feedback for the Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation.

Making changes to the existing CTS Scheme

General observations relating to definitions within the scheme

It is not clear from the consultation document exactly what constitutes a "low income". Clarity is needed on this issue.

What definition does the Council use in relation to "vulnerable groups"? Are there plans to align this with adult safeguarding definitions and/or definitions of the various 9 Protected Characteristics in the Equality Act 2010

What definition does the Council use in relation to a "very low income"? How does the definition align or compare with existing means-tested benefits? More detail is needed on these thresholds.

Local Residency Requirement

We have a number of alternative suggestions to the proposed Local Residency Rule:

How was the 5 year time period reached and decided upon? It appears to be an obstacle to social mobility. The test appears also to be out of line with arrangements for all EU nationals' habitual residency test and entitlement to claim other welfare benefits, for example Job Seekers' Allowance.

The 5 year residency rule should not apply in any event, as people move around the country for lots of reasons and this would penalise people who move to the borough for valid reasons and make valuable economic, social and cultural contributions to Thurrock. We suggest that eligibility for Council Tax Support should be based upon need from the start of the individual's residency in Thurrock.

In addition, if an individual or family has paid council tax, with support, in another Local Authority, they should be exempt from the Local Residency Requirement; we suggest that some transfer/accumulation arrangements should be put in place.

11. Vulnerable Groups and "low income"

In our view, vulnerable people should not have to pay towards their Council Tax. Many disabled people have a great deal of additional expense arising from their impairments and thus often cannot afford to pay.

We suggest that the Scheme should be altered so that "vulnerable groups" and those individuals on a 'very low' income are exempt from paying any Council Tax.

The amount of contribution towards Council Tax for people who are in work but on a low income should be a fixed percentage of their wages, taking into account their individual circumstances

Income/wage disregards?

There is a discrepancy in the consultation question on this issue. Does the policy relate to income or wages? Which components of Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment or other benefits (if any) are taken into account?

We suggest that the first £50 of income should be disregarded for those on a low income. People who are on "very low" income should be exempt.

Pensioners.

We agree that pensioners of pension credit qualifying age should continue to be fully protected

Child related benefits

Child related benefits should continue to be disregarded.

The Capital Limit

Whilst the introduction to the consultation makes reference to the £6,000 capital/savings limit, there is no question addressing the issue within the consultation itself. We suggest that the capital limit should be increased to £12,000 per household.

Thank you for considering our response and feedback in relation to this consultation.

If you have any questions or queries or would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter, please contact me, details can be found at the foot of this letter

Yours faithfully,

Ian Evans, LLB (Hons) LLM, PG.Dip.

Company Secretary TDN,
Programme Co-ordinator
Thurrock Coalition

Telephone: 01375 389864.
Email: ian@thurrockcoalition.co.uk

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