

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Initial Screening

Title of EQIA	Shared Revenues Partnership – Benefits Service Screening
Date	11 th September 2020
Officer carrying out screening	Amy Mayes
Service Area	Shared Revenues Partnership - Benefits
Project Sponsor	John Chance

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are: **Disability, Age, Sex (gender), Gender reassignment, Marriage/civil partnership, Pregnancy/maternity, Race, Sexual orientation and Religion/belief.**

The purpose of this Equality Impact Assessment is to achieve the following.

By law we must have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Further information on each of the characteristics can be found at the end of the document.

1. Project/Proposal/ Service changes

What is proposed?	Provision of Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payment, Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and Covid19 Hardship Fund assessment & award.
Why are the changes being introduced?	Delivery of new Hardship Fund for 2020-21 only
What evidence is being used to support this equality impact analysis?	Government guidance
How will this change be implemented?	This will be implemented on individual new claims at the point of CTR assessment and by bulk review for all existing CTR recipients.

Attached – Covid19 Hardship Fund Guidance.



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2 Equality Impact Analysis

Who is affected?	Impact (positive/negative/no change)	Explanation of impact	Actions to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact
Age	<p>Positive impact for customers who have balance of Council Tax to pay under the Working Age Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Affecting customers below Pension Age.</p> <p>Pensioners have a nationally prescribed CTR scheme which already gives 100% reduction to the poorest households.</p> <p>The working Age scheme require that everyone pays at least 5% per year.</p>	<p>Up to £150 per Household additional relief was determined appropriate by central Government for all customers in receipt of CTR. Due to the generous nature of the CTR scheme, this was increased to up to £250 per Household by the Councils Executive on 16th July 2020.</p> <p>Pensioners in receipt of CTR do not receive a Covid19 Hardship Payment regardless of the balance they have to pay.</p>	<p>The availability of this Covid19 Hardship Fund was publicised nationally and promoted locally – there was no requirement to apply, it was automatically awarded to all those who qualified (or will qualify) within financial year 2020/21.</p> <p>Discretionary Financial Assistance is separately funded and available to anyone with a balance of Council Tax to pay – this could be awarded to mitigate against any financial impact on grounds of age.</p>
Disability	<p>The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at</p>		<p>N/A</p>

Who is affected?	Impact (positive/negative/no change)	Explanation of impact	Actions to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact
	household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of disability.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	
Gender reassignment	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of gender.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A
Race	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of race.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A
Religion or belief	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of religion or belief.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A

Who is affected?	Impact (positive/negative/no change)	Explanation of impact	Actions to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact
Sex	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of sex.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A
Sexual orientation	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of sexual orientation.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	The scheme is based on a means-test which looks at household incomes. There is no impact on the grounds of marriage/civil partnership.	None - any customer entitled to CTR will automatically receive the Covid19 Hardship Fund Payment.	N/A

Q. The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):

A. The Hardship Fund is available to all who meet the qualifying criteria for the Local (Working Age) Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Q. The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):

A. The Hardship Fund is available to all who meet the qualifying criteria for the Local (Working Age) Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Q. The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):

A. The Hardship Fund helps foster good relations by reducing the Council Tax charge for the poorest households in Ipswich.

Q. The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s):

A. The new provision is only available for the financial year 2020/21. There will be no requirement to review the provision as it will either be legislated for in future years, or not.

3 Sign Off

Assessment Author:	Amy Mayes	
Project Sponsor:	John Chance	

Please provide any supporting documents in the appendices below.

Appendix 1 – Definition of the nine Protected Characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010

Age	Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 - 30 year olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	This refers to a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a change from one gender to another. The Equality Act introduced a number of changes to the legal protection of transgender and transsexual people. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected - for example, a woman who decides to live permanently as a man (or visa-versa), but does not undergo any medical procedures is protected by law.
Marriage and civil partnership	Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between same-sex couples. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and 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, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	This refers to a group of people defined by their race, skin colour, and/or nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. The term ethnic minority community is used to define a group of people that is numerically smaller than the predominant white British community. This includes people from communities such as Irish, Turkish, Cypriot, Eastern European and Travelling people.
Religion and belief	The term "religion" refers to both the personal practices related to communal faith and to group rituals and communication stemming from shared conviction. Belief can include religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in this definition.
Sex (Gender)	This refers to either a male (man) or female (woman).
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Further information on the protected characteristics can be found on the [Office of Public Sector Information Website](#)