

# **Big changes to council tax benefit**

## **Have your say**



## **Questionnaire**

# **Your views on our proposed council tax support scheme**

Your views are important to us. Please complete all of the questions you are comfortable answering. All of the information you provide will be treated in confidence.

Please return your completed questionnaire by **30 October 2012** to the Freepost address below. You don't need a stamp.

**Council tax support consultation  
FREEPOST RRBZ-TECL-GLRZ  
Leicester City Council  
Revenues & Benefits Service  
Wellington House,  
22-32 Wellington Street,  
Leicester LE1 6HL**

Or you can fill it in online at **<http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk>**

The booklet that accompanies this questionnaire outlines the ideas that we are proposing. Please read this booklet before answering these questions. This will help you to understand what we are asking.

The consultation closes on **Tuesday 30 October 2012**.

If you did not receive an information booklet with this questionnaire, you can view an online version at **<http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk>** or you can call **0116 252 7000** or email **[consultations@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@leicester.gov.uk)**

You can also use these details to find out more information from us about the consultation, or if you need help understanding this questionnaire.

## **Where can I get help to give you my views?**

If you need help filling in the questionnaire or understanding any of the changes we are proposing, you can call customer services on **0116 252 7000** or call in at any city council library, where help is available.

We will also be out and about holding roadshows in the following locations:

- 7 Sept: New Parks Housing Office, 291 Aikman Ave, 9am-12pm
- 10 Sept: Stocking Farm Healthy Living Centre, Marwood Road, 10am-12pm
- 10 Sept: Tudor Centre, Bewcastle Grove, 1-3pm
- 13 Sept: Brite Centre, Braunstone Ave, 11am-2pm
- 17-21 Sept: Information stand at the Central Library, Bishop Street
- 18 Sept: Clock Tower, Leicester, 11am-1pm
- 25 Sept: Leicester Market, 11am-1pm
- 1 Oct: Saffron Housing Office, 499 Saffron Lane, 9am-12pm
- 2 Oct: St Matthews Housing Office, Malabar Road, 2-4pm
- 9 Oct: Charnwood Housing Office, 1 Spinney Hill Road, 9am-12pm
- 12 Oct: Leicester Haymarket shopping centre, 11am-2pm

You can also visit us for help filling in the questionnaire, at Revenues & Benefits Customer Centre, Wellington House, 22-32 Wellington Street, Leicester LE1 6HL.

# Your views on our proposed council tax support scheme

## Capping the council tax support to a band B property

**Currently** people in any size of property can get help with all their council tax if their income is low. Properties are given a valuation band between A (with a council tax bill of £969.80 per year) and H (with a council tax bill of £2,909.40 per year), based on their value.

Out of all those currently receiving council tax benefit in Leicester, 93 per cent live in homes in bands A and B and seven per cent live in homes above band B.

**The proposed change** will mean council tax support would be worked out at the band B rate, even if you live in a higher band property.

**Q1** Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?  
Please **4** one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Putting a maximum limit on the amount of council tax support that can be paid to all working age people – where everyone would pay at least 20 per cent towards their council tax bill.**

The government is cutting the amount they pay local authorities towards help with council tax. Leicester City Council cannot afford to make up for all of this cut so people of working age who claim for help with their council tax will receive less council tax support than under the present council tax benefit scheme.

This would mean that all working age people who get council tax benefit will have to pay something towards their council tax bill from April 2013.

**Currently** some people get all of their council tax paid.

**The proposed change** would mean that from April 2013 everyone of working age would pay at least 20 per cent towards their council tax bill at bands A or B. If someone claiming council tax support is living in a property above this band (C, D, E, F, G or H) they will have to pay more.

**For example**

For a couple in a band D property who currently get all of their council tax paid with council tax benefit, under the proposed scheme they would receive £905.14 in help and need to pay £549.56 towards their council tax bill for the year.

**Q2** Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?  
Please 4 one box.

Strongly  
agree

☐

Agree

☐

Neither  
agree nor  
disagree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly  
disagree

☐

Don't  
know

☐

**Reducing the upper savings limit from £16,000 to £6,000**

**Currently** if a person has savings of more than £16,000 council tax benefit is not paid. Any savings their partner may have are also taken into account.

**The proposed change** is for the savings limit to be reduced from £16,000 to £6,000. This would mean people with more than £6,000 of savings will not be able to claim council tax support.

**Q3** Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?  
Please 4 one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Removing second adult rebate**

**Currently** if a resident can afford to pay their council tax but lives with someone on a low income, who is not their partner, they may be able to get up to 25 per cent off their council tax bill. This is called second adult rebate

**The proposed change** is for second adult rebate to be stopped.

**Q4** Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?  
Please 4 one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Removing backdating

**Currently** we can pay council tax benefit claims for up to six months earlier than when the claim was made if the claimant can show a good reason why we should do this.

**The proposed change** is that we will no longer offer the backdating of claims.

**Q5** Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?  
Please 4 one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Setting a minimum award level

**Currently** there is no minimum amount of council tax benefit that a claimant can receive.

**The proposed change** is that under the draft scheme we do not award support if the amount is less than £2-£4 a week, depending on what is affordable within the scheme.

**Q6** Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?  
Please 4 one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Recognising the needs of particular households

Within our local scheme the government has asked us to consider the needs of:

- 1 families
- 1 households with disabled people
- 1 households with a war widow/ers or war disablement pension

**Currently** council tax benefit allows for some incomes received by these households to be ignored when we calculate the household income. For some of these households, we also give an additional allowance towards living costs. This can lead to a higher amount of council tax benefit being paid.

At the moment, when we calculate council tax benefit, we look at the amount of money the household has to live on. Certain benefits, such as child benefit and disability living allowance, are not taken into account. Under the new scheme, this will not change.

### **Households with children**

Childcare costs will continue to be treated in the same way as we do now. Child benefit will not be taken into account when we calculate your income.

### **Households with a disabled person**

Disabled people will continue to receive an additional allowance towards living costs when we calculate income. Benefits such as disability living allowance will not be taken into account when we calculate your income.

### **Households with a carer**

Carers will continue to receive an additional allowance towards living costs when we calculate income.

### **Households with a war widow/ers pension**

War pensions will not be counted when we calculate income.



**We are proposing** that this will not change under the new scheme.

**Q7** Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?  
Please 4 one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Do you think we should also provide extra support for all or some of these households? For us to increase support to these households, all other working age people who claim council tax support in Leicester may have to pay between 21 per cent more and 27 per cent more of their council tax bill.**

**Q8** Do you think that some households should get more support than others? Please 4 one box.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q9** If 'Yes', which of these options do you think we should consider to pay for this extra support? Please show your preference for the options below, with 1 being your preferred option and with 4 being your least preferred option.

putting a maximum limit on the amount of Council Tax support that can be paid to all working age people – where everyone would pay more than 20 per cent towards their Council Tax bill

capping the Council Tax support to a band A property

reducing the upper savings limit to below £6,000

setting a minimum award level of above £4

other

other, please say

**How these changes will affect you**

**Q10** What would these changes mean for your household?  
Please ~~4~~ all that apply.

I / we would...

reduce household spending on essential items such as food and heating. ☐

reduce household spending on non-essential items such as leisure activities. ☐

need to borrow money to meet this additional cost ☐

be able to meet this additional cost ☐

not have any additional costs as result of this proposed scheme ☐

other ☐

other, please say

**Q11** Do you have any comments about the proposed scheme or how it may affect you and your household?

**About you**

We are interested in your views whatever your age or background. The next few questions are about you.

This will help us to understand how representative the response we receive is of people living in Leicester, as well as the views of different groups of people.

**Q12** Are you responding to this survey as:  
Please ~~4~~ all that apply.

a resident of Leicester

a local business

a local voluntary community sector organisation

a local charity

a landlord

Other

Other please say

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

**If you are responding as a resident, please answer the next few questions**

**Q13** What is your postcode?

**Q14** Does your household currently...  
Please 4 one option for each.

	Yes	No	Don't know
receive council tax benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
receive a second adult rebate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
pay council tax without support from council tax benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
receive a war widow/ers pension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
receive any other benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q15** Does your name appear on the council tax bill for your household? Please 4 one box only.

Yes	No	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q16** Are you service personnel (Armed Forces) or ex-service personnel? Please 4 one box only.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q17** How would you best describe your household?  
Please **4** all that apply.

A family with one or two dependent children

☐

A family with three or more dependent children

☐

A lone parent household

☐

A carer

☐

A household with full and/or part time workers

☐

A household that includes a disabled person

☐

A single person household or a couple without dependent children

☐

Other

☐

**Q18** How old were you at your last birthday?

**Q19** Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?  
Please **4** one box only.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say ☐

**Q20** Are you...  
Please **4** one box only.

Male ☐ Female ☐

**Q21** To which group do you consider you belong?  
Please ~~4~~ one box only.

White	British	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gypsy or Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other white background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dual Heritage	White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
	White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
	White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian/Asian British	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black/Black British	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other Black background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ethnic groups	Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other ethnic group		<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say		<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have selected one of the ‘Any other background’ options,  
please give further details.

**Q22** Do you consider yourself to be...  
Please 4 one box only.

- Heterosexual or straight?
- a gay man?
- a gay woman / lesbian?
- bisexual?
- other?
- Prefer not to say.


**Q23** What is your religion?  
Please 4 one box only.

- None
- Christian (including Church of England,  
Roman Catholic, Protestant and all other  
Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Any other religion
- Prefer not to say


Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

The information you have provided will be kept in accordance with terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 . Your details will not be passed on to any other individual, organisation or group. Leicester City Council is the data controller for the information on this form for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.