

## **Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation 2021/2022**

### **Background information**

Each year the Council has to decide whether to change the Council Tax Support Scheme for working age residents. This consultation is in respect of Torbay's proposed Council Tax Support Scheme from 1st April 2021.

### **What is Council Tax Support?**

Council Tax Support is a means tested discount administered by local authorities. It provides a discount for people who are unemployed, on a low income or unable to work, meaning they have help towards paying their Council Tax charge.

Residents who are of **working age** (by this we mean people who have not yet reached state pension age) can receive a maximum reduction of 70% of their total Council Tax charge. Therefore everybody of working age who receives Council Tax Support must contribute at least 30% towards their Council Tax bill.

### **What is this consultation about?**

The Council Tax Support Scheme is approved by the Council every December to take effect from 1st April the following year.

In reaction to the impacts of Corona virus, Central Government introduced a number of financial enhancements and initiatives to help support people during periods of reduced opportunities to work. We want to ensure that the Council Tax Support Scheme offers an increased level of flexibility to positively support residents.

# **TORBAY**

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# **COUNCIL**

## **Will less money be available within the new proposed Council Tax Support Scheme?**

No. The Council is not looking to spend less money on Council Tax Support. The amount of money available for the Council Tax Support Scheme would not be reduced.

## **Who could be affected by the outcome of this consultation?**

Residents who are of working age that currently receive Council Tax Support and working age residents who may apply in the future may be affected by the outcome of this consultation.

However, residents of pension age will not be affected as they are protected by Central Government legislation. These proposed changes will only affect claims from those of working age.

The closing date for this consultation is midnight on 18 October 2020 We will consider carefully what residents tell us when making a final decision on the 2021/22 Scheme. Full results from the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

If approved, the new Scheme will start on 1st April 2021.

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← Back

↺ Reset

Next →

# TORBAY COUNCIL

## Proposals for the 2021/2022 Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Are you currently receiving Council Tax Support?

- Yes  No

### Proposal 1

The Council will have discretion to increase the levels of income that claimants of Council Tax Support are allowed to receive where there are exceptional circumstances, such as the Corona virus pandemic.

This discretion would be applied where failure to do so could result in working age applicants generally receiving less Council Tax Support due to increases they have received in Government benefits or tax credits.

Q1 Do you agree that this discretion should be included in the new Scheme?

- Strongly Agree  Agree  Don't Know  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

### Proposal 2

In April 2017 the Bereavement Allowance and Bereavement Payments Scheme was replaced with Bereavement Support payments. Since these payments have been introduced they have been ignored as income but the Scheme had not been updated to include this.

This change will update the proposed Scheme so that Bereavement Support payments will continue to not be counted as an income within the calculation of Council Tax Support.

Q2 Do you agree with this proposal?

- Strongly Agree  Agree  Don't Know  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

← Back

↺ Reset

Next →

## Proposal 3

Payments made to financially compensate people under the Windrush Compensation Scheme (including urgent and exceptional payments made in advance of the Scheme being operational) or from the "We Love Manchester" or "London Emergency" funds will be disregarded when calculating an applicant's income and capital for Council Tax Support.

This change has already been made by Central Government for pension age claimants of Council Tax Support and we wish to make the same change for working age customers as well.

Q3 Do you agree with this proposal?

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Don't Know       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

## Proposal 4

Payment of early years assistance to be disregarded when calculating an applicant's income and capital for Council Tax Support.

This change has already been made by Central Government for pension age claimants of Council Tax Support and we wish to make the same change for working age customers.

Q4 Do you agree with this proposal?

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Don't Know       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

← Back

↻ Reset

Next →

## Proposal 5

Payments of funeral expense assistance will be disregarded when calculating an applicant's income and capital for Council Tax Support.

This change has already been made by Central Government for pension age claimants of Council Tax Support and we wish to make the same change for working age customers.

Q5 Do you agree with this proposal?

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Don't Know       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

## Proposal 6

Payments of arrears of maternity allowance or payments made as compensation for non-payment of maternity allowance to be disregarded when calculating an applicant's capital for Council Tax Support.

This change has already been made by Central Government for pension age claimants of Council Tax Support and we wish to make the same change for working age customers.

Q6 Do you agree with this proposal?

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Don't Know       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

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← Back

↻ Reset

Next →

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## Proposal 7

For those residents receiving payments relating to the Grenfell Tower fire, the council will disregard these payments when calculating an applicant's income and capital for Council Tax Support.

These include payments made out of certain charitable funds, support payment made by the council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and payment made under the Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund. This change has already been made by Central Government for pension age claimants of Council Tax Support and we wish to make this change for working age customers as well.

Q7 Do you agree with this proposal?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Don't Know

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

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← Back

↻ Reset

Next →

## Outcomes of consultation ended 18 October 2020

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total Responses</b>
<b>Prop 1</b>	8	8	2	3	6	27
<b>Prop 2</b>	11	8	4	1	3	27
<b>Prop 3</b>	12	7	1	3	4	27
<b>Prop 4</b>	12	7	2	3	3	27
<b>Prop 5</b>	16	8	1	1	0	26
<b>Prop 6</b>	13	6	3	1	3	26
<b>Prop 7</b>	11	7	3	2	4	27
<b>Totals</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	
	115			33		