



## COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME CONSULTATION

### **We are asking for your views on our proposed Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) for 2022/23**

The Council Tax Support Scheme is a way of helping people on low or no income pay their Council Tax bill.

Each year the Council must decide whether to change the scheme for working age applicants in the area.

Pensioners are not affected by changes made to the local scheme as the rules for applicants of pension age continues to be set by Central Government. Pensioners can continue to get up to 100% discount on their Council Tax.

East Lindsey's scheme for working age applicants has been based broadly on the following principles:-

**It protects people over pension age (as prescribed by Government), and all War Disablement Pensioners, War Widows and War Widowers.**

**It is means-tested and allows for vulnerability within the calculation, including people with children, disabilities or caring responsibilities.**

**The maximum support available to working age applicants is 75%, meaning that all working age households have to pay at least 25% towards their Council Tax.**

The overall cost of the scheme currently is around £11.64million, and we pay Council Tax Support to around 7,200 working age households.

We are proposing to keep the Council Tax Support scheme the same for 2022/23 as it is in 2021/22 whilst also up-rating and harmonising our scheme for working age claimants in line with the Department for Work and Pensions provisions for Housing Benefit. This will apply to all Council Tax Support claimants and will keep the local Council Tax Support scheme aligned with national welfare provisions.

Retaining the main characteristics of our current Council Tax Support scheme means there will be no major changes to the support a customer would receive.

In addition, however, we are using this consultation process to seek views on:

- Extending the backdating period. Currently the scheme limits backdating to three months. A change in the scheme to extend this further would help to support working age claimants, where appropriate, over a longer period.

- Increasing the maximum level of support for working age claimants. An increase in the maximum level of support would provide more support, thereby reducing the overall amount that would be required to be paid. However, any increased amounts of CTS would need to be affordable, with funds found elsewhere within Council budgets.

Closing date for submission of responses is Friday, 5th November 2021.

Please read each question and give your response by placing a tick in the appropriate box or providing your comments.

**Do you think the Council should retain the current scheme for the next financial year to provide continuity?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	70.0%
No	26.7%
Don't know	3.3%

**Do you agree that our current scheme is fair and provides support to those most vulnerable?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	61.3%
No	35.5%
Don't know	3.2%

Each year the Government reviews and generally increases the amount people need to live on for the calculation of welfare benefit. By applying the same changes to our Council Tax Support scheme we would ensure that our scheme remains up to date with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) allowances and premiums each year.

**Do you agree with the proposal to increase our scheme in line with the Department for Work and Pensions provisions for Housing Benefit for 2022/23 and future years?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	64.5%
No	19.4%
Don't know	16.1%

As part of this consultation, we are also seeking views on whether we should consider changing the future level of support provided in the scheme.

At the moment we can backdate an application in respect of working age claimants for three months. Recognising that households have been financially affected by covid, but might not have sought help with their Council Tax straight away, extending the backdating period would allow us to support claimants with a longer period of Council Tax Support.

**Do you think we should consider extending the backdating period for working age claimants who can demonstrate good cause for not applying sooner?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	58.1%
No	38.7%
Don't know	3.2%

**If you answered 'Yes' to question 4 above, do you think this should be extended by?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
6 months	57.9%
1 year	26.3%
2 years	15.8%

At the moment the maximum level of support for working age customers is 75%, leaving all households to pay at least 25% of their Council Tax liability. Any increased cost to the Council Tax Support scheme must be affordable and would need to be met from Council budget.

**Do you think the current 75% maximum level of support for working age customers should be increased?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	45.2%
No	51.6%
Don't know	3.2%

If you answered 'Yes' to question 6 above, please tell us what you think the maximum level of support should be, and how you feel this should be paid for. (Please note that any increase would need to be affordable)

100.0%

**Are there any other changes to the scheme you think we need to consider?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	44.8%
No	55.2%

If you answered 'Yes' to question 8 above, please tell us what changes you think we need to consider.

100.0%

**Are there any other people we should protect when considering changes to our Council Tax Support scheme in the future?**

--Click Here-- ▼	
Yes	38.7%
No	32.3%
Don't know	29.0%

If you answered 'Yes' to question 10 above, please tell us who and give your reasons.

100.0%

**About You**

**Are you responding as:**

--Click Here-- ▼	
An ELDC Council Tax payer	64.5%
A person in receipt of, or who has applied for, Council Tax Support	25.8%
A local business	0.0%
A local Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation, please specify below	0.0%
A Parish or Town Council, please specify below	0.0%
Other, please specify below	9.7%

**Please provide details in the box below.**

100.0%

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

--Click Here--	▼
Yes	33.3%
No	60.0%
Prefer not to say	6.7%

**Please tell us which age group you belong to:**

--Click Here--	▼
Under 18	0.0%
18 to 24	3.3%
25 to 44	26.7%
45 to 64	56.7%
Over 65	13.3%

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

All responses to the consultation will be analysed and included in a report that will be published on East Lindsey District Council's website in December 2021. Your responses will help to inform our Council Tax Support scheme for 2022/23 which is due to be considered by Executive Board on Wednesday, 1st December 2021 and Council on 15th December 2021.