

Consultation – Summary of Responses

Part 1 - Authority Discretion

Q1. Extra Help for People Starting Work

The current rules give some Council Tax Benefit claimants protection when they or their partner starts work and has been receiving a qualifying benefit for the previous 26 weeks. Their benefit continues for 4 weeks at the higher rate to help them with the move into work.

This rule stays the same under the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme. However Caerphilly CBC could choose to extend this period beyond the 4 weeks currently allowed if the Council is able to make funding available.

For how many weeks do you think the entitlement should continue?

655 (56.2%)	4 weeks (current)
183 (15.7%)	6 weeks
328 (28.1%)	8 weeks

Q2. Extra Help for War Widow and Disablement Pensioners

At present Caerphilly CBC disregards all income from War Widows Pension and War Disablement Pension. This income is not taken into account when calculating Council Tax Benefit. The UK Government currently funds 75% of the cost of this disregard.

From April 2013 the new regulations will allow a £10 per week disregard from these pensions, the remainder of the income will be taken into account when the Council Tax Reduction is calculated.

Caerphilly CBC has the option to keep the current income disregard for war pensioners but must fund this itself from within its own budgets. War pensioners will still be affected by the overall percentage cut in the funding of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Should Caerphilly CBC continue to disregard all of this income when the DWP funding ceases?

815 (70.0%)	Yes
349 (30.0%)	No

Q3. Backdating Claims

Normally Council Tax Benefit only starts when a claim form is received. However in appropriate circumstances the claim can be backdated and the benefit can start earlier.

Under the current Council Tax Benefit scheme claims from working age people can be backdated up to six months however claims from pensioners can only be backdated up to three months.

Under the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme the maximum backdate is 3 months for all claims but Caerphilly CBC could choose to increase this backdating limit.

For how many months do you think the Council should allow a claim to be backdated?

630 (52.2%)	3 months
343 (28.4%)	6 months
235 (19.4%)	9 months

Q4 Do you have any other views on the limited discretionary elements available to Caerphilly CBC?

251 offered a response

Part 2 - Welsh Government Statutory Scheme

Caerphilly CBC has no power to change Welsh Government Regulations, but it is still interested in your views.

In respect of questions 5 to 8 below, your responses will be collated and forwarded to Welsh Government.

Q5. Introducing a maximum limit to the amount of Council Tax Reduction that can be paid

Currently we are able to give people on the lowest incomes help to pay all of their Council Tax. This will change so that people can only get help for part of their Council Tax, no matter what their circumstances are. This rule will be applied across all benefit claimants.

The exact level of cuts has yet to be determined. Once advised by Welsh Government of the exact % reduction we will post the information on the Council's website, hopefully by the 21st December 2012

This cut will affect the amount of Council Tax Reduction for all claimants, including pensioners and disabled people. The Welsh Government believes that this is fairer; otherwise the cut to some groups would be much higher.

For those in receipt of partial CTB, the additional amount payable will depend on the individual circumstances.

Do you agree or disagree that all claimants should share the reduction in funding?

745 (61.9%) Agree
459 (38.1%) Disagree

Q6. Removing Second Adult Rebate

At the moment if you can afford to pay your Council Tax but live with someone on a low income you may be able to receive help with your Council Tax. Welsh Government is proposing to change this so that we no longer offer this reduction.

You may be able to claim help with your Council Tax under the main Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This would be based on your own income and savings.

Do you agree or disagree that the second adult rebate should be abolished?

529 (44.6%) Agree
657 (55.4%) Disagree

Q7 Having read the information available, I understand the changes.

917 (75.4%) Agree
299 (24.6%) Disagree

Q8 Do you have any other views on the statutory elements of the Welsh Government Council Tax Reduction Scheme proposed by Welsh Government?

285 offered views

Part 3 - About You

We need to ask you the following questions to make sure we get as wide a response as possible to this consultation. If you don't want to answer any of the questions however, you are welcome to skip them and go on to the next one.

The information from this section will only be made available as total numbers and WILL NOT be related back to any individual, to ensure your privacy is respected.

Please tick one option below for each question.

Q9 Are you completing this survey as:

1242 An individual
(99.4%)
8 (0.6%) On behalf of an organisation

Q10 Do you currently claim council tax benefit?

1135 Yes
(91.5%)
105 (8.5%) No

Q11 I am... (please tick one)

714 (58.1%) Female
512 (41.7%) Male
2 (0.2%) Transgender

Q12 What was your age last birthday? (Please tick one)

8 (0.7%) 16-24
62 (5.1%) 25-34
101 (8.2%) 35-44
122 (9.9%) 45-54
132 (10.7%) 55-61
803 (65.4%) 61+

Q13 Are you disabled?

655 (53.3%) Yes
573 (46.7%) No

Q14 What is your ethnicity?

1187 White
(97.7%)
7 (0.6%) Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
5 (0.4%) Asian/Asian British
3 (0.2%) Black/African/Carribbean/Black British
Other, please write in
13
(1.1%)

Q15 What is your main language? (Please tick one)

1183 English
(96.3%)
33 (2.7%) Welsh
Other, please write in (including sign language)
13
(1%)

Q16 What is your religion or belief? (Please tick one)

358 (28.9%) No Religion
808 (65.1%) Christian (All Denominations)
0 (0.0%) Jewish
3 (0.2%) Buddhist
6 (0.5%) Muslim
0 (0.0%) Hindu
0 (0.0%) Sikh
Other, please write in
66
(5.3%)

Q17 What is your sexual orientation?

1094 Heterosexual/straight
(98.7%)
7 (0.6%) Gay man
2 (0.2%) Gay woman/Lesbian
6 (0.5%) Bisexual

Q18 What additional help do you think you may need as a result of these changes?

Tick all that apply.

216 Financial management advice
135 Debt management advice
393 Advice on how to pay your council tax e.g. direct debit etc.

Q19 Do you have any other views on the additional help that may be needed?

258 offered a view

Q20 If you require any additional advice or help please provide your contact details below
393 expressed a view or left contact details