

Equality Impact Assessment

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| Directorate: Finance and Resources | |
| Service: Finance & Audit | |
| Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Jackie Adams | |
| Date of Assessment: 15.01.2019 | |
| Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Care Leaver Exemption Scheme 2019-20 onwards | |
| 1. | <p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The policy is designed to give Slough Care Leavers an exemption from Council Tax for the period that the Council has a statutory duty to them.</p> <p>The policy is designed to support Slough Care Leavers in paying their Council Tax whether they live in the borough (via a Council Tax Exemption) or via an ex gratia payment to Slough Care Leavers who do not live in the borough.</p> <p>The policy does not give a Council Tax exemption to Care Leavers who live in the borough of Slough but are supported by another Local Authority but these Care Leavers can claim Council Tax Support and under the Council Tax Support scheme are treated as “vulnerable” which means that they can claim up to 100% Council Tax Support. Council Tax Support is a needs based assessment where as the Care Leavers exemption will provide for a 100% exemption from Council Tax.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.</p> <p>The policy is delivered in the first instance by our partner Arvato, whose role it is to administer Council Tax and Council Tax Support, they will receive the information either from the Care Leaver or in the main from the Slough Children’s Services Trust and will apply a local exemption to the Council Tax system.</p> |
| 3. | <p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc. Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information).</p> |

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| | <p>Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.</p> <p>All Slough Care Leavers who live in or outside the borough of Slough while the borough of Slough has a statutory duty to them.</p> <p>Care Leavers who live in the borough of Slough but the Statutory Duty is the responsibility of another LA will not be eligible to apply for a Care Leavers exemption but can apply for Council Tax Support which will provide a needs based assessment of a reduction in Council Tax, they can also apply for discounts and exemptions based on their personal circumstances e.g. Student exemption if they are a full time student.</p> |
| 4. | <p>What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? You may wish to refer to the Equalities Duties detailed in the background information.</p> <p>Young adults transitioning from care to independent accommodation often struggle to manage their finances and are likely to fall into arrears and debt. The Council acknowledges its role as a Corporate Parent and the responsibilities of keeping our Care Leavers safe and supporting them to have successful lives.</p> <p>Without the family support most young people get as they become adults, Care Leavers often struggle to juggle their household bills and make ends meet. Many find themselves in debt, or having to go without food or other basic necessities.</p> <p>The Council therefore wishes to help give Care Leavers the best start in adult life by exempting them from Council Tax while the Council has a statutory duty to support them.</p> |
| 5. | <p>What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?</p> <p>There are no likely negative impacts for Care Leavers that are supported by Slough Borough Council but Care Leavers who are living in the borough and are not supported by Slough Borough Council but have to claim Council Tax Support and other discounts and exemptions may find that they have a small amount of Council Tax to pay</p> |

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| 6. | <p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc).</p> <p>Yes, every Care Leaver that Slough Council is responsible for were identified in June / July 2017, a review of the benefits, discounts and exemptions that they were claiming was carried out and identified. Since this date there is a process in place with the Care Leavers Team in SCST to provide details of any Care Leaver that becomes a Council Tax payer and the discount is awarded.</p> <p>This review showed that for the majority of Care Leavers they were either not claiming Council Tax Support or were not entitled to it and therefore providing an automatic exemption in most cases would benefit this group.</p> <p>Young Adults leaving care have limited knowledge of the benefits that they are entitled to and “learn as they go along” this will make it easier for them to have their Council Tax reduced</p> <p>We were unable to review Care Leavers living in Slough who another LA has a statutory duty for as we are not aware who they are.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?</p> <p>A report by the Children’s Society published a report in March 2015 entitled Wolf at the Door which called for Council Tax exemptions for Care Leavers up to the age of 21 years old, (which has now been amended up to the age of 25) reviewed and consulted with Care Leavers and their support networks across the country.</p> <p>In addition there has been consultation within Slough with the SCST</p> |
| 8. | <p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>n/a</p> |
| 9. | <p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <p>The Council has a Council Tax Support scheme in place for Care Leavers where Slough Borough Council does not have a statutory duty</p> |

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| | and also hardship policy in place to support those in financial hardship |
| 10. | <p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>The original proposal was that the scheme would be in place for one year and the data would be used to review the scheme and decide on the next steps, it has been agreed that the current scheme works well and that there were no detrimental impacts identified, the Social Workers let the Council Tax team know of Care Leavers who have become chargepayers so the reliance is not on the Care Leaver who may not be aware of this discount.</p> |

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| What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply | ✓ |
| Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken | X |
| Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan). | |
| Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan). | |
| Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan). | |

Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

At this stage a timetabled Action Plan should be developed to address any concerns/issues related to equality in the existing or proposed policy/service or function. This plan will need to be integrated into the appropriate Service/Business Plan.

| Action | Target Groups | Lead Responsibility | Outcomes/Success Criteria | Monitoring & Evaluation | Target Date | Progress to Date |
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Name:

Signed:Jackie Adams(Person completing the EIA)

Name:Neil Wilcox.....

Signed:(Policy Lead if not same as above)

Date: 15.01.2019