
COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT – SCHEME APPROVAL

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker
Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith,
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the draft Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2018/19.

Summary

2. On 24 November 2016, Council approved the local CTS scheme for 2017/18 and the scheme became operational on 1 April 2017.
3. Councils are required to set a CTS scheme each year and as part of that exercise:
 - (a) Consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme, and
 - (b) Where changes are made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should apply to anyone affected by those changes.
4. This report sets out the details of the CTS scheme for 2018/19. Currently, working aged people on low incomes can receive a discount of up to 80% of their Council Tax through the CTS scheme. It is proposed from 1 April 2018 to provide up to 100% discount for care leavers under the age of 25. No other changes are proposed.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the draft CTS scheme for 2018/19 at **Appendix 1** for submission to Council for consideration and adoption.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme for 2018/19 by 31 January 2018.

- (b) The CTS schemes since 2013/14 have all been implemented successfully without any major challenges.
- (c) The financial position of the Council has not improved and therefore the continued application of a reduced entitlement for working aged people is still appropriate.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources

Background Papers

- (i) Local Government Finance Bill 2012
- (ii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012
- (iii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- (iv) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- (v) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- (vi) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- (vii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Well Being	The CTS scheme may have an adverse impact on the health and well-being of low income groups
Sustainability	There is no environmental impact in this report
Diversity	Working aged recipients of CTS are treated differently to pensioners. An equality impact assessment was undertaken before the existing scheme was approved
Wards Affected	All wards are affected, but in particular those with higher numbers of people claiming CTS
Groups Affected	Anyone of working age receiving CTS is affected by the local scheme. Pensioners are protected from any cuts under a national set of regulations.
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report do not represent a change to Council budget or the Council's policy framework
Key Decision	This is not an Executive decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Executive decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report has implications for the 'Healthy Darlington' and 'Prosperous Darlington' themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Efficiency	The operation of the local CTS scheme continues to represent a significant financial

	challenge to the Council and other precepting authorities.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed changes for 2018/19 will assist young care leavers who do not have the family support most young people have, to establish themselves in the community

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. From April 2013, the Government replaced the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme with new local CTS schemes, designed and administered by local authorities. Grants are paid to local authorities to fund the new scheme, but the overall amount has been cut from actual expenditure levels.
8. The Council was required to design and publish a new scheme by 31 January 2013, in time to implement for annual Council Tax billing in 2013/14. A full public consultation exercise and an equality impact assessment were undertaken on the proposals.
9. On 24 January 2013, members approved the CTS scheme for 2013/14, which included a 20% reduction in the amount of Council Tax relief available for working age people on low incomes. Pensioners are protected from any cuts under a national set of regulations.
10. On 28 November 2013, members approved the CTS scheme for 2014/15, with no significant changes from the 2013/14 scheme.
11. On 4 December 2014, members approved the CTS scheme for 2015/16, with no significant changes from the 2014/15 scheme.
12. On 19 November 2015, members approved the CTS scheme for 2016/17. Some changes were implemented in the 2016/17 CTS scheme as a result of a number of national welfare reforms introduced in 2016/17. Public consultation and an equality impact assessment of these changes were undertaken in 2015.
13. On 24 November 2016, members approved the CTS scheme for 2017/18, with no significant changes from the 2016/17 scheme.

The CTS scheme for 2018/19

14. On 3 July 2017 the following communication was received from Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England.

"I am writing to ask you to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax in your area.

As you will know, children leaving care often struggle with the new financial responsibilities of independence. Some are unaware they even need to pay Council Tax, others don't know how, and many tell me that Council Tax bills are an

unexpected and onerous financial burden that can force them into arrears.

Unfortunately, the speed with which Council Tax debt can escalate creates a “lose-lose” situation for everyone. These young people can face court summons and enforcement action very quickly and even eviction. It’s not only bad for that care leaver but self-defeating for the local authority who are then have to meet the costs of emergency housing.

The Children’s Society raised many of these issues in their *Wolf at the Door* report last year and have since been working with some councils to make positive changes for children leaving care since then.

Taking on new financial responsibilities is part of the move to independence for all young people but care leavers have to face these responsibilities much younger than most and often without family members to fall back on for guidance and support. The Centre for Social Justice found that 57% of care leavers find it difficult to manage money and avoid debt. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that accumulation of debt and threats to tenancies are some of the biggest ongoing issues of concern for care leavers. Research by the Children’s Society shows care leavers are three times more likely to have had a benefit sanction – most of which are overturned when challenged.

The Government’s Care Leavers’ Strategy – *Keep on Caring* encourages Councils to do what any reasonable parent would do to help their children get the best start in adult life. The Children and Families Act encourages Councils to do all they can to support Care Leavers and this has been further enhanced by Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act which places a statutory duty on Councils to make a clear offer to care leavers. Exempting care leavers from Council Tax is an excellent step towards meeting the spirit of all these obligations in a way that will meaningfully improve the lives of care leavers.

Almost twenty local authorities have now taken this positive step to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax – most at a cost of no more than £15,000 - £30,000 in lost revenue, which in relative terms means a lesser loss to the council than would be the significant gain to the care leaver. I have, also, anecdotally heard that local authorities have found the move cost neutral because it saves on chasing Council Tax arrears and on the costs associated with supporting a care leaver who has become statutorily homeless.

I hope that you will now consider this positive move for care leavers in your local authority and remove the requirement to pay Council Tax for care leavers to the age of 25. I would be very grateful if you could inform me of your decision and I look forward to hearing from you soon.”

15. In response to this communication it is proposed that, rather than offer an exemption to pay Council Tax to all care leavers under the age of 25, Darlington Borough Council should amend its CTS scheme to specifically target additional support to those care leavers liable to pay Council Tax on a low income.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended to provide up to 100% CTS for care leavers under the age of 25, from 1 April 2018.
17. No other significant changes are recommended for the 2018/19 CTS scheme.

Financial Implications

18. It is estimated that Darlington Borough Council has 66 care leavers under the age of 25 who are currently liable for Council Tax. Assuming that all of those eligible are receiving the maximum 80% CTS entitlement, the cost of this proposal will be the additional 20%.
19. Based on the 2017/18 Council Tax for a band A property (less 25% single person discount), the cost per person would be £165. The total estimated cost therefore would be approximately £11,000.
20. Eligible care leavers receiving up to 100% CTS from 1 April 2018 will also have any Council Tax debt for previous years reviewed, on the basis that the 100% entitlement should have applied prior to 1 April 2018. Therefore any outstanding Council Tax debt will be written-off. The existing bad debt provision for Council Tax will be able to absorb these costs, therefore there are no financial implications for this proposal.

Consultation

21. Consultation on this proposal was undertaken with organisations who work with care leavers in Darlington, including:
 - (a) Darlington Borough Council's Looked after Children and Through Care Team.
 - (b) Barnardos
 - (c) Action for Children
 - (d) Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community (DISC)
 - (e) Foundation UK
 - (f) Tees Valley YMCA
22. Overwhelming support has been given for the proposals, including the following comments:
 - (a) "That is fantastic news and brings us into line with 1 in 6 councils according to a recent report in CYP Now".
 - (b) "This is an excellent idea which demonstrates the council's commitment to corporate parenting. It will assist young care leavers, who do not have the family support that most young people enjoy, to establish themselves in the community."
 - (c) "It is inspirational that Darlington Borough Council's role as Corporate Parent to young people who really need their support is willing to think in such and innovative way."

- (d) "I would fully support this proposal which will benefit the young people in my service area greatly."

What other Councils are proposing

23. Benchmarking has been undertaken with other Councils in the North East to find out whether they are considering any proposals for care leavers and the information we have obtained so far is as follows:

Council	Proposal
Durham	100% relief for care leavers aged 18 to 24 from 1 April 2017
Gateshead	No proposals as yet
Hartlepool	100% relief for care leavers aged 18 to 24 from 1 April 2017
Middlesbrough	100% relief for care leavers aged 18 to 21
Newcastle	Currently offer 100% relief for care leavers in an apprenticeship. No further proposals planned
Northumberland	No proposals as yet
North Tyneside	100% relief for the first year after leaving care, followed by 50% relief for the second year and 0% from year 3 onwards
Redcar and Cleveland	Not known
South Tyneside	No proposals as yet
Stockton	Not known
Sunderland	100% relief for care leavers aged 18 to 24 from 1 April 2017

Darlington Borough Council
Council Tax Support scheme
2018 - 2019

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Council Tax Support (also referred to as Council Tax Reduction) is the means of helping people on low incomes pay their Council Tax. Each Council Tax billing authority is responsible for setting its own local Council Tax Support scheme every year.
- 1.1.2 Pensioners are protected from the effects of local schemes by a national framework of rules and eligibility. Working aged people however are subject to the provisions of the locally defined scheme.
- 1.1.3 On 24th November 2016, Darlington Borough Council approved the Council Tax Support scheme for 2017/2018, which became operational from 1st April 2017.
- 1.1.4 This document sets out Darlington Borough Council's scheme for 2018/2019 and should be read in conjunction with:
 - 1.1.4.1 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012.
 - 1.1.4.2 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.
 - 1.1.4.3 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
 - 1.1.4.4 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.
 - 1.1.4.5 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014.
 - 1.1.4.6 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
 - 1.1.4.7 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Prescribed requirements

- 2.1.1 There are a number of prescribed requirements that will apply to all local Council Tax Support schemes and are therefore not included in Darlington's local scheme. These are set out in the regulations referred to in 1.1.4.1 to 1.1.4.7, copies of which can be found at:
- 2.1.2 www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2885/contents/made
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/3085/contents/made
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/3181/contents/made
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/448/contents/made
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3312/contents/made
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/2041/contents/made
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/1262/contents/made
- 2.1.3 Where the prescribed regulations apply, reference has been made to the relevant parts in the Council Tax Support scheme. For the purpose of this document, "the regulations" are the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended. A summary of the key features of the regulations are as follows:
- 2.1.4 There is a prescribed scheme for persons who have reached the qualifying age for state Pension Credit. 'Working aged' is defined as people who have not yet reached the qualifying age for state Pension Credit.
- 2.1.5 There are restrictions excluding foreign nationals with limited immigration status and non-economically active European Union individuals.
- 2.1.6 Individuals with refugee status, humanitarian protection, discretionary or exceptional leave to remain granted outside the immigration rules and who are exempt from the habitual residence test are entitled to support with their Council Tax.
- 2.1.7 Regulations allow arrangements for a person to act on behalf of another, for example where a person has been granted a power of attorney over a liable Council Tax payer.
- 2.1.8 Formal rights of appeal are set out in the regulations and appeals are heard by Valuation Tribunals.
- 2.1.9 Billing authorities are required to consider whether to revise or replace their Council Tax Support schemes each year and under such circumstances, to consider what transitional arrangements may be required to move from an existing local scheme to a replacement scheme. Schemes cannot be amended within a financial year.

2.2 Key features of Darlington's Council Tax Support scheme

2.2.1 The requirements for Council Tax Support schemes are set out in an amendment to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, under schedule 1A.

2.2.2 Council Tax Support for most working aged claimants will be based on 80% of their Council Tax liability (as opposed to pensioners, where entitlement is based on 100%).

2.2.3 Entitlement to Council Tax Support will be means tested. The amount of Council Tax Support awarded will depend on:

2.2.3.1 The circumstances of the claimant and their family, such as their income and savings.

2.2.3.2 The number of children who live in the household and their circumstances.

2.2.3.3 The number of other adults who live in the household and their circumstances.

2.2.3.4 The amount of Council Tax, less any other discounts or reliefs.

2.3 Temporary absence from home

2.3.1 There are no temporary absence rules for working aged people in Darlington's Council Tax Support scheme. Anyone who is liable for Council Tax on a dwelling which is their sole or main residence and not subject to a Council Tax exemption is able to claim Council Tax Support. Temporary absence rules for pensioners are set out in the regulations.

2.4 Students

2.4.1 There are no specific exclusions for students in the Council Tax Support scheme. Anyone who is liable for Council Tax and not subject to the Council Tax student exemption is able to claim Council Tax Support.

2.5 Extended payments

2.5.1 Under the Council Tax Support scheme, anyone losing entitlement to a qualifying benefit, such as Income Support or income-based Jobseekers Allowance due to moving into work or increasing their hours or pay, automatically qualifies for a 4 week run on of their Council Tax Support.

2.6 Backdating

2.6.1 An automatic backdating rule exists for Council Tax Support claims, although backdated Council Tax Support is limited to a maximum of one month only.

2.6.2 There is no requirement for a person to show 'good cause' as to why they didn't claim earlier.

2.7 Discretionary discounts

2.7.1 The Council has the power under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to reduce the Council Tax liability of a person “to such an extent as it thinks fit”. This includes the power to reduce the amount to nil.

2.7.2 The Council has a Council Tax Discretionary Discount policy, details of which can be found at: [Darlington Borough Council - Discounts and Exemptions](#).

3 **People who can claim Council Tax Support**

3.1 Who can claim

3.1.1 The rules for making an application to Council Tax Support is set out in schedule 8, part 2, paragraph 4 of the regulations. These state:

- In the case of a couple or members of a polygamous marriage an application is to be made by whichever one of them they agree should apply or, in default of agreement, by such one of them as the council decides.
- Where the person who is liable for Council Tax is unable to act the Council will accept or appoint a person who may make an application on their behalf, in accordance with the provisions contained within this part of the regulations.

3.1.2 The classes of working aged people entitled to a reduction under the Council’s scheme are as follows:

3.2 People in receipt of a qualifying benefit

People in receipt of a qualifying benefit are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Entitled to Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

3.2.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.3 People with income equal to or less than their applicable amount

People with income equal to or less than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is equal to or less than their applicable amount.

3.3.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.4 People with income more than their applicable amount

People with income more than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is more than their applicable amount

3.4.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their income compared to their applicable amount. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the applicable amount. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.5 People receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award

People receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.5.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.6 People receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award

People receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit

- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is more than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.6.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit compared to their Universal Credit maximum award. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the Universal Credit maximum award. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.7 Young care leavers in receipt of a qualifying benefit

Young care leavers in receipt of a qualifying benefit are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Entitled to Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

3.7.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.8 Young care leavers with income equal to or less than their applicable amount

Young care leavers with income equal to or less than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is equal to or less than their applicable amount.

3.8.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.9 Young care leavers with income more than their applicable amount

Young care leavers with income more than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence

- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is more than their applicable amount

3.9.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their income compared to their applicable amount. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the applicable amount. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.10 Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award

Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.10.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.11 Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award

Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is more than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.11.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit compared to their Universal Credit maximum award. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the Universal Credit maximum award. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of

100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.12 The classes of pensioners who are entitled to a Council Tax reduction are set out in schedule 1 of the regulations, as follows:

3.13 Pensioners with income equal to or less than their applicable amount

Pensioners with income equal to or less than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is equal to or less than their applicable amount.

3.13.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.14 Pensioners with income more than their applicable amount

Pensioners with income more than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is more than their applicable amount.

3.14.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their income compared to their applicable amount. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the applicable amount. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.15 Alternative maximum Council Tax Support

People entitled to alternative maximum Council Tax Support are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations

- One or more people reside with the claimant who are not a member of their family.
- No other resident in the dwelling is liable to pay rent to the claimant in respect of that dwelling.

3.15.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their Council Tax Support calculated on the income, or aggregate incomes, of one or more people who reside in the dwelling, up to a maximum of 25% of their eligible Council Tax.

3.16 Pensioners with war pensions

Pensioners with war pensions are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- In receipt of War Disablement Pension, War Widow's Pension or War Widower's Pension

3.16.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be assessed in accordance with the prescribed regulations for pensioners. War Disablement Pension, War Widow's Pension and War Widower's Pension will be fully disregarded.

3.17 Pensioners

3.17.1 The provisions for pensioners are set out in Schedules 1 to 6 of the regulations.

3.17.2 The meaning of who is and who is not a pensioner is set out in paragraph 3 of the regulations. These state:

- A person is a 'pensioner' if they have attained the qualifying age for state Pension Credit; and
- They, or their partner are not in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit
- A person is 'not a pensioner' if they have not attained the qualifying age for state Pension Credit; or
- They have attained the qualifying age for state Pension Credit and they, or their partner are in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit.

3.18 Membership of a family

3.18.1 The meaning of a 'couple' is set out in paragraph 4 of the regulations. These state a 'couple' is:

- A man and woman who are married to each other and are members of the same household,
- A man and a woman who are not married to each other but are living together as husband and wife,
- Two people of the same sex who are civil partners of each other and are members of the same household; or
- Two people of the same sex who are not civil partners of each other but are living together as if they were civil partners.

3.18.2 The rules for polygamous marriages are set out in paragraph 5 of the regulations. This regulation applies to:

- A person who is a husband or wife by virtue of a marriage entered into under a law which permits polygamy, and
- Either party to the marriage has for the time being any spouse additional to the other party.

3.18.3 The meaning of 'family' is set out in paragraph 6 of the regulations. These state a 'family' is:

- A couple
- A couple and a member of the same household for whom one of them is or both responsible and who is a child or a young person
- A person who is not a member of a couple and a member of the same household for whom one of them is or both responsible and who is a child or a young person
- A child or young person includes those in respect of whom section 145A of the Social Security Child Benefit Act 2005 applies for the purposes of entitlement to Child Benefit
- A young person does not include those who are in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit; or a person to whom section 6 of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 applies.

3.18.4 The rules for circumstances in which a person is to be treated as responsible or not responsible for another are set out in paragraph 7 of the regulations. These state:

- A person is to be treated as responsible for a child or young person who is normally living with them.
- Where a child or young person spends equal amounts of time in different households, or where there is a question as to which household they are living in, they will be treated as normally living with;
 - the person who receives Child Benefit in respect of that child or young person, or
 - if there is no such person, the person who has claimed Child Benefit, or the person who has the primary responsibility for them.

3.18.5 The rules for membership of a household are set out in paragraph 8 of the regulations. These state:

- The claimant and any partner who are treated as responsible for a child or young person, that child or young person and any child of that child or young person, are to be treated as members of the same household.
- A child or young person is not treated as a member of the claimant's household where they are;
 - placed with the claimant or their partner by a local authority under section 22C or 23(2)(a) of the Children Act 2002 or by a voluntary organisation under section 59(1)(a) of that Act, or
 - placed with the claimant or their partner prior to adoption, or
 - placed with the claimant or their partner in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002
- A child or young person is not treated as a member of the claimant's household where they are not living with the claimant as they are;
 - being looked after by a local authority under a relevant enactment, unless they live with the claimant for part or all of a relevant week or the authority considers it reasonable to do so taking into account the nature and frequency of that child's or young person's visits, or
 - placed with a person other than the claimant prior to adoption, or
 - placed for adoption in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

3.19 Non-dependants

3.19.1 The meaning of non-dependants is set out in paragraph 9 of the regulations. These state a 'non-dependant' is:

- Any person who normally resides with the claimant or with whom the claimant normally resides.
- This excludes;
 - any member of the claimant's family,
 - a child or young person who is living with the claimant but is not classed as a member of their household,
 - any person who is jointly and severally liable to pay Council Tax in respect of the dwelling,
 - any person who is liable to make payments on a commercial basis to the claimant or their partner in respect of occupation of the dwelling, unless that person is a close relative of the claimant or their partner, or the tenancy or other agreement between them is other than on a commercial basis, or where it appears to the authority to have been created to take advantage of a scheme
 - a person who lives with the claimant in order to care for them or their partner and who is engaged with a charitable or voluntary organisation which makes a charge to the claimant or their partner for the services provided by that person.

3.20 Persons from Abroad

3.20.1 The rules for persons treated as not being in Great Britain are set out in paragraph 12 of the regulations. These state:

- Persons treated as not being in Great Britain are a class of person prescribed for the purposes of paragraph 2(9)(b) of Schedule 1A to the 1992 Act and which must not be included in the Council's scheme.
- A person is to be treated as not being in Great Britain if the person is not habitually resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland, except;
 - a qualified person (or their family member), for the purposes of regulation 6 of the EEA regulations 2006 as a worker or self-employed person,
 - a person who has a right to reside permanently in the United Kingdom by virtue of regulation 15(1)(c), (d) or (e) of the EEA regulations 2006,
 - a person recorded by the Secretary of State as a refugee within the definition in Article 1 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as extended by Article 1(2) of the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees,
 - a person who has been granted leave outside of the rules under section 3(2) of the Immigration Act 1971 where that leave is discretionary leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, leave to remain under the Destitution Domestic Violence concession, or leave deemed to have been granted by virtue of regulation 3 of the Displaced Persons (Temporary Protection) Regulations 2005,
 - a person who has humanitarian protection granted under those rules,
 - a person who is not subject to immigration control within the meaning of section 115(9) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and who is in the United Kingdom as a result of their deportation, expulsion or other removal by compulsion of law from another country to the United Kingdom,
 - a person in receipt of Income Support or income related Employment and Support Allowance,
 - a person in receipt of income based Jobseekers Allowance and has a right to reside in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland,
 - a person who is treated as a worker for the purpose of the definition of a 'qualified person' in regulation 6(1) of the EEA regulations 2006 pursuant to regulation 5 of the Accession of Croatia (Immigration and Worker Authorisation) Regulations 2013 (right of residence of a Croatian who is an "accession state national subject to worker authorisation"),
 - a Crown servant or member of HM forces posted overseas and the person is performing overseas the duties of a Crown servant or member of Her Majesty's forces and was, immediately before the posting or the first of consecutive postings, habitually resident in the United Kingdom.
- A person must not be treated as habitually resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland unless the person has a right to reside in one of those places.
- A right to reside does not include a right which exists by virtue of, or in accordance with;
 - regulation 13 of the EEA regulations 2006 or Article 6 of Council Directive 2004/38/EC,

- regulation 14 of the EEA regulations 2006, but only in a case where the rights exist under that regulation because the person, or a family member, is a jobseeker for the purpose of the definition of a 'qualified person' in regulation 6(1) of those regulations,
- article 45 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU (in a case where the person is seeking work in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland)
- regulation 15A(1) of the EEA regulations 2006, but only in a case where the right exists under that regulation because the claimant satisfies the criteria in paragraph (4A) of that regulation or Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (in a case where the right to reside arises because a British citizen would otherwise be deprived of the genuine enjoyment of their rights as a European Union citizen).

3.20.2 The rules for persons subject to immigration control are set out in paragraph 13 of the regulations. These state:

- Persons subject to immigration control are a class of person prescribed for the purposes of paragraph 2(9)(b) of Schedule 1A to the 1992 Act and which must not be included in the Council's scheme, except;
 - a person who is a national of a state which has ratified the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance, or a state which has ratified the Council of Europe Social Charter and who is lawfully present in the United Kingdom.
- 'Persons subject to immigration control' has the same meaning as in section 115(9) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

3.21 Applicable amounts

3.21.1 The applicable amount will be made up of a number of elements. These may include, depending upon individual circumstances:

- A personal allowance for the claimant and their partner.
- An amount for every child or young person who is a member of the family.
- A family premium where at least one child or young person is part of the household.
- Premiums for people in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance.
- Premiums which may apply in special circumstances.

3.21.2 The weekly amounts to be included in the applicable amount are detailed below. The qualifying conditions for each of these personal allowances and premiums are set out in Schedule 3 of The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012. These are summarised in Table 1. The applicable amounts for pensioners are set out in schedule 2 of the regulations.

3.21.3 The amounts detailed below in Table 1 are those stated within the 2017/2018 scheme and will be uprated for 2018/2019. The uprated amounts will be calculated with reference to the amended prescribed requirement regulations and Social Security Up-rating Order 2017.

3.21.4 People in receipt of Universal Credit will have their Council Tax Support calculated based on their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.21.5 The Family Premium does not apply from 1st May 2016, unless the conditions in 3.20.6 apply.

3.21.6 Claims for Council Tax Support where the Family Premium applied at 30th April 2016 will continue to be entitled to the Family Premium from 1st May 2016 until their claim for Council Tax Support ends or their household no longer includes at least one child or young person.

Table 1: Applicable Amounts

Personal allowances	Weekly amount 2017/2018	Weekly amount 2018/2019
Single claimant aged 18 to 24	£57.90	
Single claimant aged 25 or over	£73.10	
Single claimant entitled to main phase Employment and Support Allowance	£73.10	
Lone parent	£73.10	
Couple	£114.85	
A child or young person until the day before their twentieth birthday	£66.90	
Family premium	Weekly amount 2017/2018	Weekly amount 2018/2019
A household which includes at least one child or young person (but see 3.20.5 and 3.20.6)	£17.45	
Employment and Support Allowance premiums	Weekly amount 2017/2018	Weekly amount 2018/2019
The claimant or their partner are in receipt of the work related activity component of Employment and Support Allowance	£29.05	
The claimant or their partner are in receipt of the support component of Employment and Support Allowance	£36.55	
Special circumstances premiums (entitlement limited to only one of the premiums below)	Weekly amount 2017/2018	Weekly amount 2018/2019
Disability premium (single) – the claimant is registered blind, or in receipt of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Allowance • Disability Living Allowance 	£32.55	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility Supplement • Long term Incapacity Benefit • Severe Disablement Allowance • The disability or severe disability element of Working Tax Credit • Personal Independence Payment • Armed Forces Independence Payment 		
<p>Disability premium (couple) – the claimant or partner is registered blind, or in receipt of one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Allowance • Disability Living Allowance • Mobility Supplement • Long term Incapacity Benefit • Severe Disablement Allowance • The disability or severe disability element of Working Tax Credit • Personal Independence Payment • Armed Forces Independence Payment 	£46.40	
<p>Carers premium – the claimant or partner is entitled to Carers Allowance</p>	£34.95	
<p>Special circumstances premiums (entitlement can be applied on top of any other premiums awarded)</p>	Weekly amount 2017/2018	Weekly amount 2018/2019
<p>Severe disability premium (single rate) - for a single claimant, lone parent or couple where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The claimant or partner is receiving Attendance Allowance, or the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the higher or middle rate, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment, and • No non-dependants aged 18 or over reside with them, and • No one is in receipt of a Carers Allowance or the carer element of Universal Credit for looking after them. 	£62.45	
<p>Severe disability premium (double rate) - for a couple where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the claimant and partner are receiving Attendance Allowance, or the care component of Disability Living Allowance at 	£124.90	

<p>the higher or middle rate, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No non-dependants aged 18 or over reside with them, and • No one is in receipt of a Carers Allowance or the carer element of Universal Credit for looking after both of them. 		
<p>Enhanced disability premium (single) – where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The claimant has limited capability for work related activity, or • The highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is payable for the claimant or any member of the claimant’s family, or • The daily living component of Personal Independence Payment is payable for the claimant or any member of the claimant’s family. 	£15.90	
<p>Enhanced disability premium (couple) – where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The claimant or partner has limited capability for work related activity, or • The highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is payable for the claimant or any member of the claimant’s family. 	£22.85	
<p>Enhanced disability premium (disabled child) – where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is payable for a child or young person, or • The daily living component of Personal Independence Payment is payable for a child or young person. 	£24.78	
<p>Disabled child premium – where a child or young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives Disability Living Allowance, or • Receives Personal Independence Payment, or 	£60.90	

• Is registered blind.		
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4 Making a claim

- 4.1.1 The rules by which a person may apply for a reduction under an authority's scheme are set out in Schedule 7, Part 1 of the regulations. These state that:
- The claim may be made in writing, by electronic communication means or by telephone.
 - A claim made in writing must be made to the Council on a properly completed form.
 - A claim is considered properly completed if it has been completed in accordance with the instructions on the form, including any instructions to provide information and evidence in connection with the claim.
 - Where a claim is defective because it has not been made on a form approved for the purpose, the Council may request the claimant to complete an approved form.
 - Where a claim is defective because it is not accepted as being properly completed, the Council may allow the claimant sufficient time to provide information and evidence in connection with the claim, or request further information and evidence.
 - If a claim made by electronic communication is defective, the Council must provide the claimant with an opportunity to correct the defect. A claim made by electronic communication is defective if the claimant does not provide all the information the Council requires.

4.2 Time and manner of making a claim

- 4.2.1 A claim for Council Tax Support will be made with the Council on a form prescribed and provided by the Council. Where the Council holds sufficient information to decide entitlement to Council Tax Support, the claim may be made by telephone.
- 4.2.2 Where the Council becomes aware that a person may be entitled to Council Tax Support, or where a claim form has been requested, they will invite a claim by asking them to complete an electronic claim form or by contacting them by telephone.
- 4.2.3 Where a claim is made for Housing Benefit and the claimant or their partner is liable for Council Tax in respect of that dwelling, the claim for Housing Benefit will be deemed to be a claim for Council Tax Support.
- 4.2.4 Where a claimant notifies the Department for Work and Pensions of their intention to apply for Council Tax Support and as a consequence of this notification, the Department for Work and Pensions share details of the claimant's Department for Work and Pensions benefit with the Council, this data share will constitute an application for Council Tax Support.
- 4.2.5 The Council will offer assistance to the claimant to make their claim for Council Tax Support, where this is required.

4.3 Information and evidence

4.3.1 The rules for the information and evidence required to support a claim or ongoing award of Council Tax Support is set out in Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 7 of the regulations. These state:

- The claim must be accompanied by a statement of the claimant's (and any other person in respect of whom they are making an application) national insurance number and information or evidence to establish that that number has been allocated to that person.
- Where the person has applied for a national insurance number, the claim must be accompanied by evidence of the application for a national insurance number to be allocated.
- The claim must be accompanied by any certificates, documents, information and evidence in connection with the claim or an award as may reasonably be required by the Council to decide the claim or a continuing award.
- The claimant must provide the Council with the information and evidence it requires to decide the claim or a continuing award within one month of a request to do so, or such longer time as the Council may consider reasonable.
- The claimant is not required to provide evidence of any income or capital which are disregarded under the Council Tax scheme.

4.4 Amendment and withdrawal of claim

4.4.1 The rules for the amendment and withdrawal of a claim for Council Tax Support is set out in Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 8 of the regulations. These state:

- A person who has made a claim may amend it at any time before a decision has been made on it.
- A person who has made a claim may withdraw it at any time before a decision has been made on it.

5 Income and capital

5.1 Treatment of income

5.1.1 The income of the claimant and their partner will be added together, for the purpose of calculating entitlement to Council Tax Support. Where the person is receiving Universal Credit, the income will be the assessment of income provided by Universal Credit, plus the award of Universal Credit.

5.1.2 'Income' includes any of the following:

- Earnings
- Social Security Benefits
- Tax credits
- Pensions
- Maintenance
- Income from rent / board and lodgings
- Royalties
- Student grants
- Compensation payments.

5.1.3 Income will be calculated on a weekly basis. Any income paid for a period other than on a weekly basis, will be converted to a weekly figure. All income will be taken into account in full, unless a disregard applies.

5.1.4 The income to be taken into account will be the actual weekly income or likely average weekly income of the claimant and partner. This will be calculated over such a period as is likely, in the opinion of the Council, to provide the most accurate estimate.

5.1.5 In the case of earnings from employment, the earnings will be taken into account for the period they relate to, even if the person does not actually receive the earnings from their employer during that period.

5.1.6 In the case of earnings from employment, where employment is due to commence, an estimate of likely earnings will be based on whatever information is available from the person or the person's employer.

5.1.7 The treatment of income for a pensioner is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.2 Earnings

5.2.1 The meaning of remunerative work is set out in paragraph 10 of the regulations. These state:

- A person must be treated as in remunerative work if they are engaged on average, for not less than 16 hours a week, in work for which payment is made or expected.
- Where a person's working hours fluctuate, regard must be had to the normal cycle of work, the number of hours they are expected to work, or the 5 weeks

immediately prior to the date of claim or such other length of time that may allow the person's weekly average hours of work to be determined.

- Where a person works at a school or other educational establishment, any vacation periods or holidays where they are not required to work will be disregarded for establishing the average hours for which they are working.
- Any periods of absence from work, such as holiday, will be disregarded for establishing the average hours for which the person is working.
- A person will not be treated as engaged in remunerative work if they are on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or if they are absent from work because they are ill.

5.2.2 'Earnings' mean any remuneration or profit derived from that employment and includes:

- Bonuses or commission
- Payments in lieu of remuneration
- Payments in lieu of notice
- Holiday pay
- Payments by way of a retainer
- Payments for expenses not wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of the employment
- Statutory sick pay, maternity pay, paternity pay or adoption pay.

5.2.3 A claimant or partner's net earnings will be the gross earnings less:

- Income Tax
- National Insurance contributions
- Half of any sum paid by the employee towards an occupational or personal pension scheme.

5.2.4 Where the person is receiving Universal Credit, the earnings will be the assessment of earnings provided by Universal Credit.

5.2.5 The calculation of earned income for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.2.6 The following sums will also be disregarded in the calculation of earnings:

- Temporary care provision payments in the calculation of earnings.
- Payments relating to former employment paid after retirement.
- Compensation payments for loss of employment.
- Guarantee payments on medical or maternity grounds.
- Payments for expenses wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of the employment.
- For a single person, the first £5.00 per week of any earnings.
- For a couple, the first £10.00 per week of any earnings.
- For a lone parent, the first £25.00 per week of any earnings.
- For people in receipt of contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance, where a permitted earnings disregard applies, the first £120.00 per week of any earnings.
- For people entitled to the disability premium, the severe disability premium or one of the Employment and Support Allowance premiums, the first £20.00

per week of any earnings, except where the permitted earnings disregard applies.

- For people entitled to the carers premium, the first £20.00 per week of any earnings.
- For people in certain special occupations, the first £20.00 per week of any earnings. These are:
 - Part-time fire-fighters.
 - Auxiliary coastguards.
 - Part-time life-boat workers.
 - Members of the Territorial Army or similar reserve force.
- For people in receipt of the additional earnings disregard in Working Tax Credit, an additional disregard of £17.10 per week of any earnings. If the additional disregard would result in a negative earned income figure, the disregard will be made from their Working Tax Credit.
- Child care charges (see below).

5.2.7 The sums disregarded from pensioner's earnings are set out in schedule 4 of the regulations.

5.3 Child care charges

5.3.1 Child care charges up to a maximum of £175 per week for one child, or £300 per week for two or more children, will be deducted from earned income, plus any Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit where:

- A lone parent works 16 hours per week or more, or
- Both members of a couple work 16 hours per week or more, or
- One member of a couple works 16 hours per week or more and the other member of the couple is disabled, and the disability premium or one of the Employment and Support Allowance premiums is included in the couple's applicable amount due to this disability, or
- One member of a couple works 16 hours per week or more and the other member of the couple is on maternity leave and receiving Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance
- One member of a couple works 16 hours per week or more and the other member of the couple is in hospital or prison.

5.3.2 The child must be under 15 years of age, or 16 if they are disabled, and the care must be provided by one of the following:

- A registered child minder.
- A registered nursery or play scheme.
- An out of hours scheme run by an approved provider.
- An out of hours club provided by a school on school premises (this applies only if the child is aged 8 or over).

5.3.3 The treatment of child care charges for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.4 Self-employed earnings

- 5.4.1 The weekly earnings of a self-employed claimant or partner will be calculated based on:
- The most recent year's trading accounts, if the claimant or partner have been self-employed for one year or more, or
 - The estimated net weekly profit figure provided by the claimant or partner, if they have been self-employed for less than a year, together with any evidence of their recent actual income and expenses.

- 5.4.2 In calculating the estimated net weekly profit figure, the Council will use the gross income of the employment, less any expenses which are wholly and reasonably incurred for the purpose of the business. The following will not be allowable in the calculation of the estimated net weekly profit figure:
- Sums employed or intended to be employed in setting up or expanding the business.
 - Capital repayments on business loans, except where these are for replacing business equipment or machinery.
 - Any other capital expenditure.
 - Depreciation of any capital asset.
 - Losses incurred before the beginning of the assessment period.
 - Debts, other than proven bad debts.
 - Business entertainment.
 - Any sum for domestic or private use.
 - Drawings from the business.

5.4.3 For child minders, one third of the gross profit will be used to calculate the gross income.

5.4.4 The net income will then be calculated by deducting an amount for tax, national insurance contributions and half of any pension contributions from the gross pre-tax profits.

5.4.5 In cases where the actual tax and national insurance contributions are not provided, the Council will estimate the likely tax and national insurance contributions payable.

5.4.6 The treatment and calculation of self-employed earnings for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.5 Student income

5.6 Student grant

- 5.6.1 The whole amount of a person's grant income will be taken into account, with the exception of the following:
- Payments for tuition fees or examination fees.
 - Payments in relation to the student's disability.
 - Payments for term-time residential study away from the student's educational establishment.
 - Payments for another home at a place other than which the student resides during the course.

- Payments for books and equipment.
- Payments for travel expenses to attend the course.
- Payments for child care costs.
- Any special support grant, education maintenances allowances, 16-19 bursary fund payments, higher education grant, or higher education bursary for care leavers.
- Any other amounts intended for expenditure necessary to attend the course.

5.6.2 A student's grant income will be apportioned over the period of study the grant relates to.

5.7 Covenant income

5.7.1 Where a student is receiving a grant and a contribution has been assessed, the whole of the covenant income will be taken into account.

5.7.2 A student's covenant income will be apportioned over the whole calendar year and an amount of £5 per week will be disregarded.

5.7.3 Where a student is not receiving a grant, the whole of the covenant income will be taken into account. In these circumstances, a student's covenant income will be apportioned as follows:

5.7.3.1 Any covenant income up to the amount of the standard maintenance grant will be apportioned over the period of study, less any amounts to be disregarded as set out above in 'Student grant'.

5.7.3.2 Any covenant income over the amount of the standard maintenance grant will be apportioned over the whole calendar year and an amount of £5 per week will be disregarded.

5.8 Student loans

5.8.1 The whole amount of a person's student loan will be taken into account, less any amounts to be disregarded as set out above in 'Student grant'. A student's loan will be apportioned over the period of study the loan relates to and an amount of £10 per week will be disregarded.

5.8.2 A person will be treated as having a student loan in respect of an academic year where:

- A student loan has been made to them for that year, or
- They could have taken reasonable steps to acquire a loan. In these cases, the amount to be taken into account will be the maximum amount they could have acquired for that year.

5.8.3 A loan for fees, known as a fee loan or a fee contribution loan will be fully disregarded.

5.9 Payments from access funds

5.9.1 A payment from access funds will be disregarded as income, with the exception of any payments intended for:

- Food
- Ordinary clothing or footwear
- Household fuel
- Water charges
- Rent
- Council Tax

5.9.2 In these circumstances, the whole amount will be taken into account and an amount of £20 per week will be disregarded.

5.9.3 Where a payment from access funds is made to bridge the period until a student loan is received, the whole amount will be disregarded.

5.10 Student income treated as capital

5.10.1 The following amounts paid to students will be treated as capital:

- A refund of tax deducted from a student's covenant income.
- An amount paid from access funds as a single lump sum, whatever the purpose of the payment.

5.11 Notional income

5.11.1 A claimant will be treated as possessing income of which they or their partner have deliberately deprived themselves of, to qualify for Council Tax Support.

5.11.2 The treatment of notional income for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.12 Tariff income from capital

5.12.1 Where the claimant and their partner have capital in excess of £6,000 (but less than £16,000), a tariff income of £1 per week will be taken into account for every £250, or part of £250, over £6,000.

5.12.2 The calculation of tariff income from capital for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.13 Other income

5.13.1 Any other income of the claimant or partner will be taken fully into account, with the exception of 'income disregarded' below.

5.13.2 Where deductions are being made from income in the recovery of overpayments or taxes, by public bodies, the gross income amount will be taken into account.

5.14 Income disregarded

5.14.1 The following income paid to the claimant or partner will be disregarded in full, unless otherwise stated:

- Any payment of expenses for participation in 'work for your benefit' schemes.
- Any payment of expenses for attending mandatory work activity, employment, skills or enterprise schemes.
- Any payment of expenses for a person who is a volunteer for a charitable or voluntary organisation.
- Any payment of expenses for a person who participates as a service user.
- Certain state benefits and pensions:
 - Attendance Allowance.
 - Child Benefit.
 - Disability Living Allowance.
 - Discretionary Housing Payments.
 - Education Maintenance Allowance.
 - Guardian's Allowance.
 - Housing Benefit.
 - Income Support.
 - Income based Jobseekers Allowance.
 - Income related Employment and Support Allowance.
 - Mobility supplements.
 - Personal Independence Payments.
 - Armed Forces Independence Payments.
 - War Disablement Pensions.
 - War Widow's Pensions.
 - War Widower's Pensions.
 - Widowed Mother's Allowance.
 - Widowed Parent's Allowance.
- The income of a person in receipt of Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Any payment made to a person as a holder of the Victoria Cross or George Cross.
- Charitable or voluntary payments.
- Any income from capital.
- Any payments received from dependants or non-dependants.
- The first £20 per week of any rental payments from a person, other than a non-dependant, who occupies the claimant's home.
- The first £20 per week, and then 50% of any income over £20 per week, of any rental payments from a boarder, other than a non-dependant, who occupies the claimant's home.
- Any payment in kind made by a charity.
- Any income payable outside the United Kingdom where there is a prohibition against the transfer to the United Kingdom of that income.
- Any payment made for adoption, fostering, guardianship support or supported lodgings.
- Any payment made for a person who is not normally a member of the claimant's household, but is temporarily in their care.
- Any payment made by a Local Authority under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989.
- Any payment ordered by a court for a personal injury, accident or disease in respect of the claimant or their family.
- Any payment made under an agreement to settle a claim for personal injury.

- Any payment received under an insurance policy taken out to insure against the risk of being unable to maintain repayments of a loan.
- Any income treated as capital.
- Social Fund payments or its equivalent.
- Any payment for banking charges or commission, to convert a payment of income to sterling.
- Any payment made under the Eileen Trust, the Independent Living Fund, the Skipton Funds, the London Bombing Relief Charitable Fund, or the Variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease Trust.
- Any payment of expenses for jurors, witnesses or prison visitors.
- Any refund of Council Tax.
- Any payment of child maintenance.
- The first £15 per week of any maintenance, other than child maintenance.
- Sports awards.

5.14.2 The income disregarded for pensioners is set out in schedule 5 of the regulations.

5.15 Capital

5.15.1 The capital of the claimant and their partner will be added together, for the purpose of calculating entitlement to Council Tax Support. Where the person is receiving Universal Credit, the capital will be the assessment of capital provided by Universal Credit.

5.15.2 All capital of the claimant or partner will be taken fully into account, with the exception of 'capital disregarded' below.

5.15.3 Where capital is jointly held by the claimant or partner and one or more other persons, the Council will apportion the capital to decide what share is held by the claimant or partner.

5.15.4 Where the value of the capital item is not known, the Council will calculate the value of the capital item using the information available to provide the most accurate estimate, including:

- The current market or surrender value of the capital item.
- Less any costs for selling the capital item.
- Less any debt or charge secured against the capital item.

5.15.5 The treatment and calculation of capital for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.16 Income treated as capital

5.16.1 The following payments will be treated as capital:

- Holiday pay, paid 4 weeks or more after termination of employment.
- Tax refunds.
- Lump sum charitable or subsistence payments.
- Arrears of Tax Credits.

5.17 Notional capital

5.17.1 A claimant will be treated as possessing capital of which they or their partner have deliberately deprived themselves of, to qualify for Council Tax Support.

5.17.2 The treatment of notional capital for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.18 Capital disregarded

5.18.1 The following capital held by the claimant or partner will be disregarded in full, unless otherwise stated:

- The dwelling normally occupied by the claimant as their home.
- Any property which is actively being sold.
- Any property acquired by the claimant which they intend to occupy as their home, whilst they are preparing for occupation.
- Any property acquired by the claimant, which they intend to occupy as their home, which is undergoing essential repairs or alterations.
- The proceeds of sale of any property formerly occupied by the claimant as their home, which is to be used for the purchase of another property intended for their occupation.
- Any property occupied by a partner or relative of the claimant or any member of their family, where that person is a pensioner or is disabled.
- Any property occupied by the former partner of the claimant as their home, where the former partner is a lone parent, or where the property is actively being sold.
- The capital of a person in receipt of Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Any future interest in property, other than land or premises where the claimant has granted a lease or tenancy.
- The assets of any business owned by the claimant for the purpose of their self-employment.
- Any arrears of state pensions, benefits or tax credits.
- Any amount paid to the claimant, or acquired by the claimant as a loan, as a result of damage or loss of the home or personal possessions and intended for its repair or replacement.
- Any amount deposited with a Registered Provider, which is to be used for the purchase of another property intended for occupation.
- Any personal possessions.
- The value of the right to receive any income under an annuity or the surrender value of an annuity.
- Where the funds of a trust resulted from a payment for a personal injury to the claimant or their partner, the value of the trust fund and the right to receive any payment under that trust.
- The value of the right to receive any income under a life interest or from a life rent.
- The value of the right to receive any income payable in a country outside the United Kingdom where there is a prohibition against the transfer to the United Kingdom of that income.

- The surrender value of any life insurance policy.
- Where payments of capital are made by instalments, the value of the right to receive any outstanding instalments.
- Any payment made by a local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- Any payment made for adoption, fostering, guardianship support or supported lodgings.
- Any social fund payment or its equivalent.
- Any refund of tax deducted on a payment of loan interest for the purpose of acquiring a home or carrying out repairs or improvement to the home.
- Where a payment of capital is made in a currency other than sterling, any banking charge or commission payable in converting that payment into sterling.
- Any payment made under the Eileen Trust, the Independent Living Fund, the Skipton Funds, the London Bombing Relief Charitable Fund, or the Variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease Trust.
- The value of the right to receive any rent.
- Any payment in kind made by a charity.
- Any refund of Council Tax.
- Any payment made by a local authority to the claimant, to be used to purchase a property for occupation as their home, or to carry out repairs or alterations to the home.
- Any payments for:
 - travel expenses for hospital visits
 - medical supplies and vouchers
 - health in pregnancy grants
- Home Office payments for prison visits.
- Any payment made to assist a disabled person to obtain or retain their employment.
- Any payment made by a local authority under the Blind Homeworkers' Scheme.
- Any capital administered on behalf of a person by the High Court, County Court, or the Court of Protection.
- Any payment to the claimant as a holder of the Victoria Cross or George Cross.
- Any payment made to assist a person under the self-employment route.
- Any payment of a sports award.
- Any payment of an education maintenance allowance.
- Any payment made by a contractor for a person participating in an employment zone programme.
- Any arrears of subsistence allowance.
- Any payment made by a local authority for a service which is provided to develop or sustain the capacity of the claimant or their partner to live independently in their accommodation, including personal budgets.

5.18.2 The capital disregarded for pensioners is set out in schedule 6 of the regulations.

6 Calculation of entitlement

6.1 Maximum Council Tax Support

6.1.1 The amount of a person's maximum Council Tax Support for a day which they are liable to pay Council Tax will be 80% (100% for Young Care Leavers).

6.1.2 The amount of Council Tax Support will be calculated as A divided by B and multiplied by 80% (100% for Young Care Leavers) where:

- A is the amount of Council Tax set for the financial year for the dwelling the person resides in and for which they are liable, less any discount which applies
- B is the number of days in that financial year
- Less any non-dependant deductions.

6.1.3 Where a person is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax, which they are liable with one or more other persons, the maximum amount of Council Tax Support will be the amount in A divided by the number of people who are jointly and severally liable. This will not apply if the only person they are jointly and severally liable with is their partner.

6.1.4 The maximum Council Tax Support for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

6.2 Council Tax Support taper

6.2.1 The percentage of excess income over the applicable amount (or Universal Credit maximum award) which will be deducted from the weekly maximum Council Tax Support will be 20%.

6.3 Non-dependant deductions

6.3.1 A deduction from a person's maximum Council Tax Support will be made for non-dependants, as follows. The amounts detailed below are those stated within the 2017/2018 scheme (Table 2) and will be uprated for 2018/2019 with reference to the amended prescribed requirement regulations for 2017.

Table 2: Non-dependant deductions 2017/2018

Non-dependant type	Weekly amount 2016/2017
A non-dependant aged 18 or over in remunerative work where their normal gross weekly income is:	
• Less than £196.95	£3.80
• Between £196.95 and £341.39	£7.65
• Between £341.40 and £424.19	£9.65
• £424.20 or over	£11.55
A non-dependant aged 18 or over not in remunerative work	£3.80

- 6.3.2 In calculating the gross income of a non-dependant, any amounts which would normally be disregarded for a Council Tax Support claimant, will also be disregarded for a non-dependant.
- 6.3.3 Only one non-dependant deduction will be made for a couple, and the amount deducted will be based on their joint income, calculated as above.
- 6.3.4 Where a person is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax for a dwelling they reside in, which they are liable with one or more other persons, the amount of the non-dependant deduction will be apportioned equally between those liable persons.
- 6.3.5 Non-dependant deductions will not be made in the following circumstances:
- Where the claimant or their partner is blind
 - Where the claimant or their partner receives Attendance Allowance, or the care component of Disability Living Allowance, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment.
 - Where the non-dependant normally resides elsewhere
 - Where the non-dependant receives a training allowance
 - Where the non-dependant is a full-time student
 - Where the non-dependant is not residing with the claimant because they have been an in-patient for more than 52 weeks (without any break exceeding 28 days)
 - Where the non-dependant receives Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, or Pension Credit
 - Where the non-dependant receives Universal Credit, where the award has been calculated on the basis that they do not have any earned income
 - Where the non-dependant is aged under 18
 - Where the non-dependant is not residing with the claimant because they are a member of the armed forces and they are absent, while on operations, from the dwelling usually occupied as their home.
- 6.3.6 Where the income of the non-dependant is not known or has not been provided, the Council will assume that the maximum deduction will apply.
- 6.3.7 The rules for non-dependant deductions for pensioners are set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

6.4 Date on which a claim is made and entitlement begins

- 6.4.1 Entitlement to Council Tax Support will begin on the Monday following the date the claim is received by the Council, unless the claim is treated as being made from a different date. Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 5 of the regulations sets out the rules for the date on which a claim is made. These state:
- Where an award of Pension Credit (guarantee credit), Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit has been made to the claimant or their partner; and the claim for Council Tax Support is made within one month

of the date of the claim for one of those benefits; the date of claim will be the first day of entitlement to those benefits.

- Where the claimant or their partner is receiving Pension Credit (guarantee credit), Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit; and they become liable for Council Tax for the first time; and the claim for Council Tax Support is made within one month of the date of the change; the date of claim will be the date on which the change takes place.
- Where the claimant is the former partner of a person who was entitled to Council Tax Support before the date of death or separation; and the claimant makes a claim for Council Tax Support within one month of the date of death or separation; the date of claim will be the date of death or separation.
- Where the claim for Council Tax Support is made within one month of a request to claim Council Tax Support, or such longer period as the Council considers reasonable, the date of claim will be the date on which the request was made.
- In all other cases, the date of claim for Council Tax Support will be the date the claim form is received by the Council.

6.4.2 Council Tax Support will be paid for an earlier period, up to a maximum of one month before the claim is made, where:

- Council Tax liability starts within one month before the claim is made.
- The claimant requests the claim is paid earlier than the claim is made.

Providing that the claimant has supplied sufficient information and evidence for the Council to calculate entitlement to Council Tax Support for the earlier period.

6.4.3 The rules for the backdating of claims for pensioners are set out in schedule 8, part 2, paragraph 6 of the regulations.

6.5 Duration of award and reviews

6.5.1 Council Tax Support will be awarded for an indefinite period, until:

- Council Tax liability ends.
- A change in the claimant or partner's circumstances results in Council Tax Support ending.
- The claimant fails to respond to a request for information or evidence in connection with their claim or an award.

6.5.2 The Council may review a person's entitlement to Council Tax Support at any time.

6.6 Extended reductions

6.6.1 A person who is entitled to Council Tax Support will be entitled to an extended reduction where:

- The claimant or their partner were entitled to a qualifying benefit or any combination of those benefits of either;
 - Income Support, or
 - Jobseekers Allowance (income based or contributory), or

- Employment and Support Allowance (income related or contributory), or
- Universal Credit, or
- Incapacity Benefit, or
- Severe Disablement Allowance.
- Entitlement to a qualifying benefit ceased because the claimant or their partner;
 - Commenced employment as an employed or self-employed earner, or
 - Increased their earnings from their employment, or
 - Increased the number of hours in their employment.

6.6.2 Providing that the claimant remains liable for Council Tax at the dwelling in which they reside during the extended reduction period.

6.6.3 The extended reduction period will start on the day after Council Tax Support would normally have ended after the qualifying benefit has ceased and will last for 4 weeks or up to the day Council Tax liability at the dwelling in which they reside ends, if this is earlier.

6.6.4 The amount of the extended reduction will be the higher of:

- The amount of Council Tax Support which the claimant was entitled to before the qualifying benefit ceased, or
- The amount of Council Tax Support which the claimant is entitled to after the qualifying benefit ceased.

6.6.5 The rules for extended reductions for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

6.7 Extended reductions – movers into Darlington

6.7.1 The rules covering people who move into Darlington who are in receipt of an extended reduction is set out in Schedule 8, Part 1 of the regulations. These state:

- Where a claim for Council Tax Support is made and the claimant or their partner is in receipt of an extended reduction from another authority, the Council must reduce any entitlement to Council Tax Support by the amount of that extended reduction.

7 Decision making and notifications

7.1 Decisions and notification

7.1.1 The rules by which the Council must make and notify decisions for Council Tax Support are set out in Schedule 8, Part 3 of the regulations. These state:

- The Council must make a decision on a Council Tax Support claim within 14 days of receiving all the information and evidence for that claim, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.
- The Council must notify the claimant in writing of any decision relating to a Council Tax Support claim within 14 days of making the decision, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.
- The decision notice must include a statement informing the claimant of their duty to notify changes of circumstances, explaining the consequences of failing to comply with that duty, and setting out the changes which may affect entitlement to Council Tax Support.
- Where the decision is to award Council Tax Support, the notice must include a statement as to how it will be paid.
- The decision notice must include the procedure by which an appeal may be made.
- The claimant may request a statement of reasons about the notification, within one month of the date of the notification. The statement of reasons must then be sent to the claimant within 14 days of the request, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.
- A person affected by a decision relating to Council Tax Support will be the claimant, or where the person who is liable for Council Tax is unable to act, the accepted or appointed person who has made an application on their behalf.

7.2 Payment of Council Tax Support

7.2.1 The rules for the payment of Council Tax Support are set out in Schedule 8, Part 4 of the regulations. These state:

- Payment of Council Tax Support will be made to the person entitled to the reduction of their Council Tax liability.
- Where a person is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax, payment of Council Tax Support will be paid to the person entitled to the reduction of an appropriate amount of their Council Tax liability, rounded to the nearest penny.

7.2.2 Payment of Council Tax Support will be made by reducing the Council Tax liability of the person entitled to the reduction.

7.3 Electronic communications

7.3.1 The rules by which the Council can undertake electronic communications is set out in Schedule 7, Part 4 of the regulations. These state:

- The Council must meet certain conditions to allow electronic communication in relation to its Council Tax Support scheme.
- The Council may use intermediaries in connection with electronic communication in relation to its Council Tax Support scheme.
- Any information delivered by the Council by electronic means must meet all the other conditions relating to its Council Tax Support scheme.
- Proof of identity of the sender or recipient of information will need to be verified where information is sent or received by electronic means.
- The Council will need to establish procedures to verify delivery of information by electronic means.

8 Changes in decisions

8.1 Duty to notify changes of circumstances

8.1.1 The duty to notify changes of circumstances is set out in Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 9 of the regulations. These state:

- The claimant, or a person acting on their behalf, must notify the Council of any changes of circumstances which they might reasonably be expected to know may affect their entitlement to Council Tax Support.
- Notification of a change of circumstances may be made in writing, by telephone or by any other means agreed by the Council and within 21 days of the change occurring, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.

8.2 Date on which a change of circumstances will affect Council Tax Support

8.2.1 The Council will review the amount of Council Tax Support, following a change of circumstances, as follows:

- Where entitlement to Council Tax Support continues after the change, Council Tax Support will change on the Monday following the date the change occurred.
- Where entitlement to Council Tax Support ends after the change, Council Tax Support will end on the Sunday of the week in which the change occurred.
- Where Council Tax liability changes or ends, Council Tax Support will be changed or ended on the same day.
- Where the claimant has delayed notifying the Council of a change in their circumstances, which results in more Council Tax Support being awarded, the change will be treated as occurring on the date the Council was notified of the change. A delay is counted as being more than one month after the change occurred.

8.3 Ending Council Tax Support

8.3.1 Council Tax Support will end in the following circumstances:

- Council Tax liability ends.
- A Council Tax exemption applies.
- A change of circumstances occurs, which ends entitlement to Council Tax Support.
- A change of circumstances occurs, but there is insufficient information or evidence to decide if entitlement to Council Tax Support will continue.
- The claimant fails to provide, when requested, sufficient information or evidence to decide if entitlement to Council Tax Support will continue, one month following the date of the request or such longer time as the Council considers reasonable.

8.4 Revisions

8.4.1 An original decision relating to a claim for Council Tax Support may be revised by the Council at any time.

8.5 Appeals

- 8.5.1 The rules by which a person may make an appeal against certain decisions of the authority are set out in Schedule 7, Part 2 of the regulations. These state:
- A person who disagrees with a decision in relation to their Council Tax Support claim may appeal in writing, stating their grounds for appeal.
 - The Council must consider the appeal and notify the person in writing of the outcome of their appeal and the reasons for the decision, within 2 months of the appeal being received.
 - If the person is still aggrieved or if the Council fails to notify the person of the outcome of their appeal within 2 months of receiving their appeal, they may appeal to a valuation tribunal under section 16 of the 1992 Act.

8.6 Downward adjustments of Council Tax Support

- 8.7 Any additional Council Tax liability created as a result of a downward adjustment of Council Tax Support entitlement, will be treated under the national Council Tax regulations.

8.8 Discretionary reductions

- 8.8.1 The rules for an application for a discretionary reduction are set out in Schedule 7, Part 3 of the regulations. These state:
- An application for a reduction under section 13A(1)(c)(a) of the 1992 Act may be made in writing, by telephone, or by electronic means.
 - A claim for Council Tax Support may also be treated as an application for a reduction under section 13A(1)(c) of the 1992 Act.