

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole - Shadow Executive

Report Subject	Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS)
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Status	Public
Classification	For decision
Executive summary	<p>Further to a report to the BCP Joint Committee on the 24 July 2018 a consultation has been undertaken in respect of creating a consistent Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) across the conurbation. BCP is required to put in place a consistent LCTSS within its first 24 months of operation. Establishing a common approach from day one is wholly consistent with the approved Financial Strategy for the BCP Unitary Authority.</p> <p>The proposed scheme slightly amends the current policies of Bournemouth and Poole to be in line with the latest good practice and amends the Christchurch policy to ensure conurbation wide consistency.</p> <p>The proposal ensures that every person considered vulnerable remains protected.</p>

<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Members of the Shadow Executive are requested to note that;</p> <p>1. All the proposals put forward as part of this report have been consulted upon.</p> <p><i>Local Council Tax Support Scheme</i> formerly <i>Council Tax Benefit</i></p> <p>2. Under these proposals, Council Tax Support applicants or their partners in receipt of one of the following, will continue to be protected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disability Premium - Enhanced Disability Premium - Severe Disability Premium - Disabled Child Premium - Carer Premium - Support component within the ESA - War Disablement Pension - War Widow Pension - War Widows Disablement Pension or - Universal Credit recipients, who are not pensioners, but the applicant or their partner is in receipt of an income or premium listed above <p>Members of the Shadow Executive are requested to approve;</p> <p>3. To establish Local Council Tax Support Scheme as set out in item 50 of this report to be implemented from 1 April 2019.</p>
<p>Reasons for recommendations</p>	<p>Council Tax operating policies and discounts should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are accurate and up to date and adhere to the latest good practice.</p> <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) requires a council to operate a consistent Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) policy within its boundaries. MHCLG will require this to be in place for the new council within 24 months from 1 April 2019.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place and those considered vulnerable in existing LCTSS policies to remain protected.</p>

Background detail

1. The implementation of common financial policies was adopted by the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Joint Committee in May 2018 as a key element of its approved Financial Strategy for 2019/20.
2. Examples given in that document included Council Tax Discounts and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS).
3. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have indicated that they would expect the new Council to have aligned policies in place within 24 months of the 1 April 2019 or sooner where possible.
4. The administration of a single LCTSS operating policy will meet the expectations of MHCLG and assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the Revenue and Benefits service.
5. The proposals set out in this report will support the delivery of the Revenue and Benefit Service efficiency savings currently assumed in the BCP Unitary Authorities budget for 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). They will also align the scheme in areas to the award process for Housing Benefit to make it simpler for claimants to understand and officers to process.

Background to proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for BCP

6. From April 2013 Government devolved responsibility for Council Tax Benefit from Whitehall to 326 individual local authorities. At the same time the budget was reduced by 10%. Nationally this equated to a £414m reduction.
7. Using the reduced money available, local authorities were required to design, consult upon and implement their own local scheme to replace the previous national system. However, despite the then 10% cut in the total funding, the Government required local authorities to protect claimants of pension age (approximately 42% of the claimants). In addition, the Councils decided to protect the most vulnerable in our society.
8. Based upon the funding restriction it was acknowledged that a 20% liability would in most circumstances in Dorset achieve a “break even” position in April 2013. Dorset councils consulted on this scheme, but prior to implementation, the Government announced additional funding for 1 year where Councils limited their LCTSS to an 8.5% Scheme. Bournemouth continued with a 20% Scheme, Poole commenced with an 8.5% Scheme then moving to 14.5% and now 20%. Christchurch commenced and remained with an 8.5% Scheme.
9. Since its implementation, the resources made available by Government have been further reduced as part of the annual reductions to each Council Revenue Support Grant (RSG).
10. On 24 July 2018 the Shadow Executive approved that they should consult on a range of proposals in respect of the operation of a common Local Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2019 onwards. In supporting the proposed consultation the Shadow Executive

noted that the following groups have been and will continue to be protected in respect of the local scheme;

(A) Council Tax Support claimants of state pension credit age. The Government's view is that they cannot go back to work and they deserve dignity and security in retirement.

(B) The prevailing Councils have previously chosen to protect working age Council Tax Support claimants from the liability restrictions where the applicant or partner is in receipt of any of the following;

- Disability Premium
- Enhanced Disability Premium
- Severe Disability Premium
- Disabled Child Premium
- Carer Premium
- Support component within the ESA
- War Disablement Pension
- War Widow Pension
- War Widows Disablement Pension, or
- Universal Credit recipients, who are not pensioners, but the applicant or their partner is in receipt of an income or premium listed above

11. Collecting Council Tax from working age customers where their LCTSS is restricted by 20% is challenging especially where Council Tax increases exceed income rises for claimants. The collection implications will continue to be kept under constant review. It should be highlighted that the Finance Task and Finish Group looking into Council Tax Harmonisation within the BCP Unitary Council are working to a Joint Committee resolution to prioritise options which include freezes and or reductions to the absolute level of Council Tax paid by Christchurch residents.

Explanation of potential changes

12. After careful consideration of this background the Shadow Executive on the 24 July 2018 agreed to undertake a consultation on the proposed changes for their potential implementation from April 2019 onwards.

13. **Proposal A:** Everyone of working age (who is not in a protected group) would have to pay a minimum of 20% of their Council Tax bill.

14. **Proposal B:** That the family premium will not be included in the Council Tax Support applicable amount for new entitlements to Council Tax Support from 1 April 2019 or for any existing claimants who have, or become responsible for, a child (under 16) or young person (under 20) for the first time on or after 1 April 2019.

15. **Proposal C:** To limit 'backdating' from 1 April 2019 up to a maximum of one calendar month for all working age claims. A claim is 'backdated' where a request is made in writing to the Benefits Service, and the person is able to show they have continuous

good cause for their failure to make a claim at the relevant time. This means that for everyone of working age, 'backdating' would be limited to up to a maximum of one calendar month to make it consistent with the Housing Benefit rules.

16. **Proposal D:** To cap the Council Tax Support Scheme to Band C. This would mean everyone of working age who is not in a protected group, whose Council Tax charge is Band D or above, would have their eligible Council Tax charge in the assessment of Council Tax Support restricted to the Band C equivalent.
17. **Proposal E:** That where a working age customer's entitlement to Council Tax Support is less than 50p per week, the reduction would not be paid, making the entitlement "nil". It is difficult to justify the administrative cost of very small awards and mirrors the Housing Benefit rule.
18. **Proposal F:** If someone does not qualify for Council Tax Support on their own income but a non-dependant on a low income lives with them, the liable person may be able to receive Council Tax Support of up to 25% of the eligible Council Tax charge. This is known as Second Adult Rebate. This is not the same as a Single Person Discount which remains unaffected. It is proposed that the Second Adult Rebate will end on 31 March 2019 for all working age claimants, including those in protected groups. This means that all claimants of working age (including those in protected groups) would be unable to apply for or receive Second Adult Rebate from 1st April 2019.
19. **Proposal G:** Housing Benefit rules state for new claims or new dependants, no more than two children are taken into account when calculating an entitlement. It is proposed to include this rule to simplify the new scheme to align with Housing Benefit.
20. **Proposal H:** It is proposed to disregard the Bereavement Support Payment & Infected Blood Schemes financial support payments to reflect changes in the Housing Benefit rules in order to provide consistency for those working age claimants. This means for a working age claim where Bereavement Support Payment and/or Infected Blood Schemes financial support payments are received, this income would not be included in the total income used in the calculations and could potentially receive more Council Tax Support.
21. **Proposal I:** Council Tax Support is usually only granted to a claimant who lives in a property as their main home. In certain circumstances, support can continue while you are 'temporarily away from your main home'. The Government changed the Housing Benefit temporary absence rules to introduce a maximum time limit to apply to temporary absences that are outside of Great Britain. This is currently 4 weeks, reduced from 13 weeks. The proposal is to apply these same rules to the new scheme so that they mirror the Housing Benefit Rules to make the scheme consistent for claimants.
22. **Proposal J:** To be consistent with Universal Credit rules, a minimum income would apply if claimant's self-employed income is less than the National Living Wage (or the National Minimum Wage) multiplied by up to 35 hours worked per week.

If claimants already receive both Universal Credit and Council Tax Support and are self-employed they will already be subject to this rule within the calculation because of the existing requirements within the Universal Credit and Council Tax Support Legislation.

If claimants are self-employed, and their business has been running for more than 12 months, but their income from the business is low, we would use a minimum income to calculate their Council Tax Support. This is an assumed income based on what we would expect an employed person to receive in similar circumstances. It is calculated using the National Minimum Wage for the claimant's age group, multiplied by up to 35 hours per week, less notional Tax and National Insurance and half of any pension contributions.

If claimant's self-employed earnings are below the minimum income floor, we will use this calculation to work out your Council Tax Support entitlement instead of their actual earnings.

If claimants have been self-employed for less than 12 months, the minimum income floor will not apply to them. However, if after 12 months of self-employment, their income is below the minimum income floor amount, their Council Tax Support will be recalculated to reflect the minimum income floor calculation.

23. **Proposal K:** To only carry out an assessment for those claimants receiving Universal Credit (UC) either every 26 or 52 weeks to see whether any changes in Universal Credit alters their Council Tax Support entitlement.

As Universal Credit is calculated using real time information, a person's entitlement can change for each Universal Credit monthly assessment period. Currently this results in the Local Authorities Benefits Service having to review and revise a claimants' Council Tax Support entitlement monthly, if necessary. A new Council Tax bill is then issued if a change has occurred. This review can take place 12 times per financial year and takes considerable administrative time, when often the Council Tax Support changes by a small amount.

By fixing the assessment period, this will avoid monthly changes to reflect Universal Credit changes. Instead there would be a re-assessment of Council Tax Support every 26 or 52 weeks to take account of the latest Universal Credit income.

Consultation with Major Preceptors

24. As the proposal impacts on the arrangements for the recovery of the total council tax levied, the Council is required to consult the Major Preceptors (Dorset Police and the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority). Therefore officers representing the Stour Valley and Poole Partnership, and Bournemouth Council wrote to the major preceptors on the principles of the draft scheme for 2019/20.
25. The Office of the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner responded and advised that "we understand your proposals and your reasoning and have no objections to them".
26. The Finance Director (& Treasurer) of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority responded and confirmed that they are "fully supportive of the alignment and standardisation to achieve a common scheme in the interests of efficiency as effectiveness, as a Fire and Rescue Service much of the work we do specifically around vulnerable groups is in

relation to many of the groups which are protected under the scheme changes proposed, and we would continue to support that principle”.

27. Subject to the recommendation of the Shadow Executive, the major preceptors will be informed on any changes to the scheme as set out in the original consultation.

Financial Implications - Local Council Tax Support Scheme

28. The financial modelling that has been completed is based on the estimated Council Tax Support expenditure for 2018/19 without a Council Tax increase and without any uprating of "applicable amounts" and incomes etc., other than where explicitly part of the proposal. It also reflects the current profile of Christchurch claimants between those that are working age unprotected claimants, protected pensioners and those locally protected vulnerable people.

29. The modelling shows that the following amounts would be generated by a consistent LCTSS;

	Amount £
Consistent LCTSS	146,000
Total	146,000

30. The proposal would mean claimants in Bournemouth and Poole would see no change in their entitlement, but for Christchurch residents they would see an increase from 8.5% contribution to 20%. Taking account of the Council Tax charges being higher in Christchurch and the Council Tax harmonisation considerations, this scheme may in future years impact on Council Tax collection.

Publication of the 2019/20 Draft Scheme and Consultation Feedback

31. All current recipients of LCTSS and all Council Tax payers had the opportunity to share their views on the proposals. Consultation questionnaires were prepared alongside background information and a summary of the proposed changes. A letter was sent to all 14,506 working age recipients of Council Tax Support inviting them to have their say, either by completing a questionnaire online or by requesting a postal copy.
32. Phone numbers for Bournemouth Council's Council Tax Support Team and Stour Valley Partnership were included in the letter to claimants to help those who wanted hard copies of the questionnaire, or who had general enquiries about the consultation.
33. The consultation ran for 6 weeks from Monday 3rd September to Monday 15th October 2018. The online questionnaire and background information were available on the BCP Shadow Authority's website and supported by a helpline. The letter to claimants also invited them to use a computer in any library in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, as well as at their local Council offices. Promotional material and paper versions of the consultation were also available from all libraries and customer access points.

34. The Consultation Report Summary produced by the Council's Insight Team is attached as appendix A, with the detailed consultation response being attached as Appendix B to this report.
35. In summary, the total number of responses to the consultation was 351, of which 284 were online and 67 were paper responses:

Area	Number	Response Rate
Bournemouth	197	2.3%
Christchurch	36	2.5%
Poole	107	2.4%
Other or no responses	11	-
Total for BCP Council area	351	2.4%

36. Of the 351 responses, 240 were LCTSS claimants and 100 were non-claimants. 11 responses were received which did not state whether the respondent was a claimant or non-claimant.
37. In overall summary the responses were as follows;

Proposal	Agree	Neither	Disagree
A	48%	21%	31%
B	33%	29%	38%
C	48%	17%	35%
D	47%	25%	27%
E	45%	29%	26%
F	39%	30%	31%
G	54%	18%	28%
H	46%	18%	36%
I	54%	29%	17%
J	55%	27%	18%
K	56%	23%	20%

Evaluation undertaken by officers from Revenues and Benefit Service

38. A letter was sent to all existing recipients of LCTSS for the three Councils, inviting them to review the consultation and make comment on the proposals.
39. Whilst the proposed Scheme in many areas mirrored that in place currently for Bournemouth and Poole, it is the proposal to create a "new scheme" for the BCP Council for 1 April 2019.
40. In carrying out the review it was duly noted that the main financial impact of the proposed LCTSS for BCP Council would be the changes detailed in Proposals A and D for those residents of Christchurch, as residents of Bournemouth and Poole already have claims considered under these parameters.
41. It is recognised with the existing schemes that recipients of LCTSS where there is a 20% Liability and a Band restriction in some cases have difficulty in paying their Council Tax.

It is noted that officers and support agencies proactively work with the Taxpayer in these circumstances to agree a maintainable payment arrangement.

42. Respondents to the survey detailed that they would look for support on housing options, budgeting, financial or debt advice and health advice. Officers from Revenues and Benefits work closely with housing and advice agencies to support customers and give debt advice. Where possible payment arrangements that are affordable and timely are entered into.

Traditionally the s151 Officer is given delegated power to reduce or remit Council Tax on the grounds of extreme hardship. It is accepted that it may be necessary to take a more liberal approach to the use of any hardship fund and other discretionary powers to support the scheme for BCP Council. To support this approach the review of earmarked and unearmarked reserves considered as part of the MTFP Update report presented elsewhere on this agenda looks to further increase the resources set aside as a Welfare Reform earmarked reserve / Hardship Fund for the new authority.

43. In addition, should a Council Taxpayer also be receiving Housing Benefit / Universal Credit to assist with the cost of their rent, the amount of Council Tax they have to pay will be taken into consideration when deciding the level of any Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to help them meet any shortfall between their Housing Benefit / Universal Credit and their contractual rent.
44. During the consultation period the Governments Budget and proposed changes to Universal Credit has given the opportunity for the Council's benefit officers to review some of the proposals where the LCTSS was to be aligned to policies to support the way in which Universal Credit was processed.

From this review it is considered that the following Proposals in the consultation be removed for the reasons detailed:

Proposal J

To be consistent with Universal Credit rules, a minimum income would apply if claimant's self-employed income is less than the National Living Wage (or the National Minimum Wage) multiplied by up to 35 hours worked per week.

Removed as in the Budget the Government extended date for Universal Claimants and the income level of National Living Wage would not be appropriately aligned.

Proposal K

Proposal K: To only carry out an assessment for those claimants receiving Universal Credit (UC) either every 26 or 52 weeks to see whether any changes in Universal Credit alters their Council Tax Support entitlement.

Removed as considered data matching with Government Agencies as currently in place continues to be effective.

Equalities Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) of LCTSS changes

45. MHCLG has undertaken a full equalities impact assessment on the principle of localising support for council tax which was previously published on their website.
46. The Local Government Association has undertaken an assessment of the cumulative impacts and mitigations of all welfare reforms which was published on their website.
47. Equalities implications were fully considered as part of the predecessor authorities' original and amended schemes.
48. The Equality Impact Assessment Template for BCP for the LCTSS is attached as Appendix C to this report.

Proposed LCTSS Scheme for BCP Council as from 1 April 2019

49. BCP is required to put in place a consistent LCTSS scheme within its first 24 months of operation. Establishing a common approach from day one is wholly consistent with the approved Financial Strategy for the BCP Unitary Authority
50. The proposed scheme detailed below slightly amends the current policies of Bournemouth and Poole to be in line with the latest good practice and amends the Christchurch policy to ensure conurbation wide consistency.

Proposed BCP Local Council Tax Support Scheme – April 2019		Current Scheme		
Key characteristics		Bmth	CBC	Poole
A	20% minimum contribution towards Council Tax from working age claimants not in a protected group.	Y	N	Y
B	New entitlement on/after 1 April 2019 do not receive the family premium	Y	N	Y
C	Backdating up to a maximum of one calendar month	Y	N	Y
D	Scheme capped at Council Tax Band C (claimants in bands above C receive support at Council Tax Band C level) for working age claimants not in protected group	Y	N	Y
E	Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p	Y	N	Y
F	No working age Second Adult Rebate	Y	N	Y
G	To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for new applicants/new families	N	N	N
H	Disregard the Bereavement Support and Infected Blood Schemes payments to mirror Housing Benefit rules	N	N	N
I	Mirror the Housing Benefit temporary absence rules	N	N	N

Characteristics B,C,E,G,H & I are being proposed to align the new LCTSS to the award process for Housing Benefit

51. The proposal ensures that every person considered vulnerable remains protected from characteristics A & D.

Alternative option to the proposed scheme

52. The alternative option would be to bring Bournemouth and Poole policies in line with the current arrangements in Christchurch, being an 8.5% Liability Scheme.

Although it is difficult to be absolutely certain it is estimated that such an approach would create a financial pressure of over £680,000 on the new authority.

Summary of finance and resourcing implications

53. Generally, the financing and resourcing implications are set out in the body of this report. The current MTFPs of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole assume £408,000 between 2019 and 2021 from efficiencies within the Revenue and Benefits service.

Summary of legal implications

54. As referenced in the body of the report.

Summary of human resources implications

55. None specifically related to this report

Summary of environmental impact

56. None specifically related to this report

Summary of risk assessment

57. This report and the actions outlined within it will form part of the mitigation strategy associated with the following risks;

- Inability to deliver Council statutory services due to insufficient funding.
- Failure to deliver consistent financial and operating policies within the New Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Unitary Authority.

Background papers

58. Consolidated Medium Term Financial Plan report to the BCP Joint Committee on 23 May can be found at <https://bcpjointcommittee.wordpress.com/meetings/>
59. Council Tax Discounts and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) to 24 July 2018 can be found at <https://moderngov.bcpshadowauthority.com/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=113&Ver=4>

Appendices

60. Appendix A – Consultation Report Summary
61. Appendix B – LCTSS Consultation
62. Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Shadow Authority Council Tax Support Consultation

Committee Report Summary

December 2018

The consultation ran for 6 weeks from Monday 3rd September to Monday 15th October 2018. A letter was sent to all 14,506 working age recipients of Council Tax Support inviting them to have their say, either by completing a questionnaire online or by requesting a postal copy. Phone numbers were included in the letter to help those who wanted paper copies of the information, or who had general enquiries about the consultation. The cost of undertaking the consultation was £12,500.

The total number of responses to the consultation was 351, of which 284 were online and 67 were paper responses. Of the 351 responses, 197 responses were from Bournemouth, 36 from Christchurch and 107 from Poole. A total of 240 of the responses were from Council Tax Support claimants.

The responses have been analysed by area (Overall, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) and into 'claimants' and 'non-claimants'. 'Claimant' refers to respondents who were receiving council tax support at the time of completing the questionnaire.

The consultation report highlights significant differences by area, respondent type and equalities groups.

Respondents could provide further information to explain their answers to each of the proposals. These comments are summarised in the consultation report and included in the appendices in full.

Respondents were also asked what information or support would help them (or others affected) to manage the change. Advice on housing options (46%), budgeting, financial or debt advice (45%) and health advice (36%) are the top three types of information or support that would help respondents to manage the change.

The following tables summarise the responses to each of the proposals in terms of agreement and impact.

Table 1: Agreement with, and the impact of, each of the proposals broken down into Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (% respondents)

Proposal	% Agree				% Impact A Lot / A Little			
	Overall	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole	Overall	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole
A. Set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group	48%	53%	44%	39%	54%	51%	73%	56%
B. Withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families	33%	36%	21%	32%	31%	29%	33%	32%
C. Limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims	48%	49%	39%	52%	33%	34%	25%	37%
D. Cap scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group	47%	51%	29%	47%	36%	38%	48%	30%
E. Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p	45%	49%	33%	45%	30%	31%	24%	27%
F. No working age Second Adult Rebate.	39%	44%	24%	38%	27%	25%	19%	29%
G. Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants	54%	53%	55%	56%	21%	17%	37%	22%
H. Disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support for all working age claimants	46%	46%	37%	50%	18%	19%	13%	14%
I. Mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules	54%	58%	39%	54%	20%	22%	6%	16%
J. Introduce a self-employed minimum income floor	55%	54%	57%	57%	18%	17%	31%	15%
K. Introduce fixed period assessments	56%	56%	59%	59%	-	-	-	-
- Impact of 26 week assessments	-	-	-	-	47%	48%	64%	40%
- Impact of 52 week assessments	-	-	-	-	49%	47%	57%	46%

Table 2: Agreement with, and the impact of, each of the proposals broken by claimants and non-claimants (% respondents)

Proposal	% Agree		% Impact A Lot / A Little	
	Claimant	Non-claimant	Claimant	Non-claimant
A. Set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group	40%	40%	56%	49%
B. Withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families	33%	24%	29%	33%
C. Limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims	41%	68%	34%	31%
D. Cap scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group	43%	59%	36%	35%
E. Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p	42%	52%	34%	20%
F. No working age Second Adult Rebate.	32%	57%	27%	23%
G. Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants	49%	69%	19%	22%
H. Disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support for all working age claimants	43%	54%	17%	16%
I. Mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules	49%	68%	20%	16%
J. Introduce a self-employed minimum income floor	52%	62%	18%	20%
K. Introduce fixed period assessments for Universal Credit recipients f 26 or 52 weeks	51%	72%	-	-
- Impact of 26 week assessments	-	-	55%	29%
- Impact of 52 week assessments	-	-	55%	32%

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Shadow Authority Council Tax Support Scheme

Consultation Report

November 2018

Insight Team

Insight, Policy & Performance | Bournemouth And Poole

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1. Introduction

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Shadow Authority undertook a consultation about its proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for the 2019/20 financial year. The results are reported in this document. A consultation document was designed with an accompanying questionnaire. The fieldwork period opened on Monday 3rd September and closed on Monday 15th October. The results will be considered by the BCP Shadow Authority at its meeting on 12 December 2018.

2. Background

From April 2019, there will be a new council for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. This new council will replace the existing local authorities – Bournemouth Borough Council, Christchurch Borough Council and Borough of Poole. The three councils each have their own Council Tax Support Scheme, each with different characteristics/criteria. The new council needs a single Council Tax Support Scheme for the 2019/20 financial year that is affordable, consistent and fair, not only for those who receive support, but also for residents who depend on wider services.

It is proposed that the new scheme would also be aligned with changes made by the Government for the national Housing Benefit scheme. This is because most people who claim Housing Benefit also claim Council Tax Support, so aligning the schemes would make it easier for claimants to understand.

As of July 2018, there were 26,869 households in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole who receive some level of Council Tax Support. The Government says that we must fully protect pensioners, who make up 47% of those entitled to Council Tax Support. In addition, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole have protected, and will continue to protect the following groups, from making the minimum contribution to their Council Tax bills, where the applicant or partner is in receipt of:

- War disablement pension, war widows pension or war widows disablement pension
- Disability premium, enhanced disability premium or severe disability premium
- Disabled child premium
- Carer premium
- Support component within their employment and support allowance, or
- Universal Credit recipients, who are not pensioners, but the applicant or their partner is in receipt of an income or premium listed above.

3. The Proposals

The Shadow Authority consulted on eleven proposals, as shown in the table below. Each proposal was explained more fully in the consultation document. The table also compares the proposed scheme to the existing scheme in each authority area.

The Proposed 2019/20 Council Tax Support Scheme	Change to current scheme?		
	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole
A. Set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group	No	Yes	No
B. Withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families	No	Yes	No
C. Limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims	No	Yes	No
D. Cap scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group	No	Yes	No
E. Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p	No	Yes	No
F. No working age Second Adult Rebate.	No	Yes	No
G. Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants	Yes	Yes	Yes
H. Disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support claimants for all working age claimants	Yes	Yes	Yes
I. Mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules	Yes	Yes	Yes
J. Introduce a self-employed minimum income floor	Yes	Yes	Yes
K. Introduce fixed period assessments for Universal Credit recipients of 26 or 52 weeks	Yes	Yes	Yes

4. Methodology

All current recipients of Council Tax Support and Council Tax payers had the opportunity to share their views on the proposals. Consultation questionnaires were prepared alongside background information and a summary of the proposed changes.

A letter was sent to all 14,506 working age recipients of Council Tax Support inviting them to have their say, either by completing a questionnaire online at www.bcpshadowauthority.com/consultations or by requesting a postal copy. A total of 44 letters were returned to the Council by the Royal Mail as undeliverable.

Phone numbers for Bournemouth Council's Council Tax Support Team and Stour Valley Partnership were included in the letter to claimants to help those who wanted hard copies of the questionnaire, or who had general enquiries about the consultation. The two helpline numbers responded to requests for over 50 paper copies of the questionnaire and supporting information, and two requests for alternative formats (one large print and one audio version).

The consultation ran for 6 weeks from Monday 3rd September to Monday 15th October 2018. The online questionnaire and background information were available on the BCP Shadow Authority's website (www.bcpshadowauthority.com/consultations). The letter to claimants also invited them to use a computer in any library in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, as well as at their local Council offices. Paper versions were also available from all libraries across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and at the following customer service centres:

- St Stephen's Road, Bournemouth Town Hall
- Civic Centre, Poole
- Christchurch Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street

5. Promoting the consultation

A letter was sent to all claimants with a link to the consultation page on the BCP Shadow Authority website (bcpshadowauthority.com/consultations). In addition, three councils existing communications channels were used to promote the consultation to claimants and non-claimants:

The consultation was listed in all three council consultation areas and banner adverts were added to the Council Tax Support Scheme webpages on each council's website. In addition, banner adverts were shown on each council's homepage.

Posters were displayed at customer contact centres and at all libraries in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, with copies of the forms and documents also available. Staff also promoted the consultation to claimants when they contacted the centre face to face or over the phone.

Social media post on Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Shadow Authority account which was retweeted from council accounts in September and October.

6. Results

The total number of responses to the consultation was 351, of which 284 were online and 67 were paper responses:

Area	Number	% Response Rate
Bournemouth	197	2.3%
Christchurch	36	2.5%
Poole	107	2.4%
Other or no response	11	-
Total	351	2.4%

Of the 351 responses, 240 were Council Tax Support claimants and 100 were non-claimants. Non-claimants included people who had received Council Tax Support in the past, Council Tax payers and people who work with those affected or work for community organisations. There were also 11 responses from people whose status and area is unknown.

The responses have been analysed by area (Overall, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) and into 'claimants' and 'non-claimants'. 'Claimant' refers to respondents who were receiving council tax support at the time of completing the questionnaire.

Due to the relatively small sample size, care needs to be taken not to place too much emphasis on small statistical differences as there will inevitably be some degree of error in the results. Differences between overall responses and groups of respondents have been highlighted in the report where they are large enough to represent a statistically significant difference. Where no differences are stated, this means that no statistically significant differences exist or that the total number of responses from the target group was too small to draw any reliable conclusions.

Figures in this report are presented as a percentage of people who answered the question i.e. excluding 'don't know', 'does not apply' and 'no reply'. The percentages in this report will not always add up to 100% this can be because of rounding or because respondents can select more than one response to a question.

This report also summarises the nature of comments and suggestions made by respondents and the type of themes arising. The numbers of people mentioning the most prevalent themes are provided to give an indication of the magnitude of response. Importantly, however, given the nature of qualitative data, this does not provide an indication of significance or salience in relation to the question asked. Some comments were coded to more than one theme to reflect the range of issues mentioned. All comments are available in full in Appendix 3.

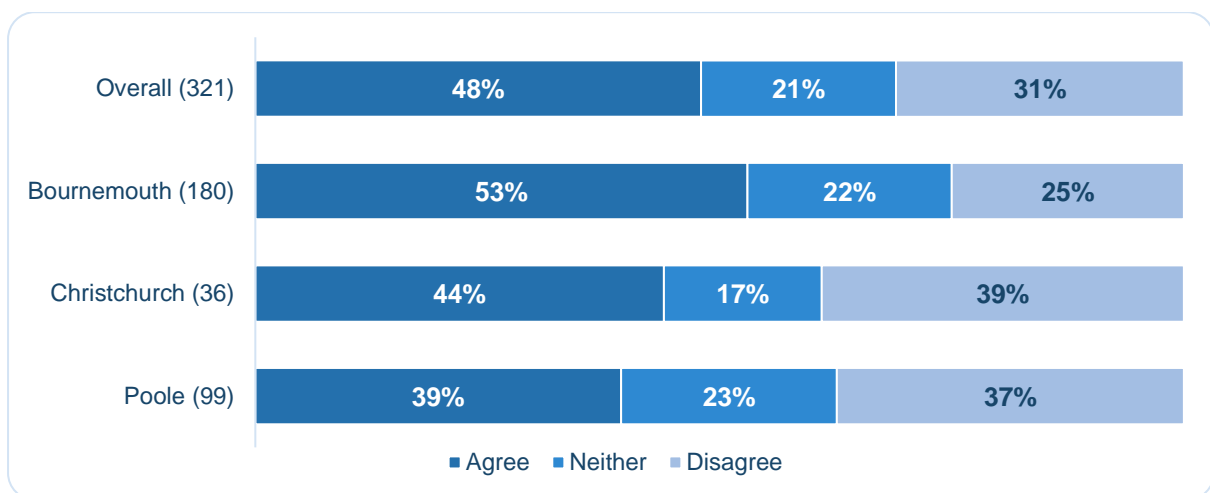
7. Summary of findings

Proposal A: Set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group

Levels of agreement with Proposal A

Almost half of respondents (48%) agreed with the proposal to set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group whilst just under one third of respondents (31%) disagreed. Respondents in Poole were significantly less likely to agree (39%) with the proposal compared to respondents in Bournemouth (53%).

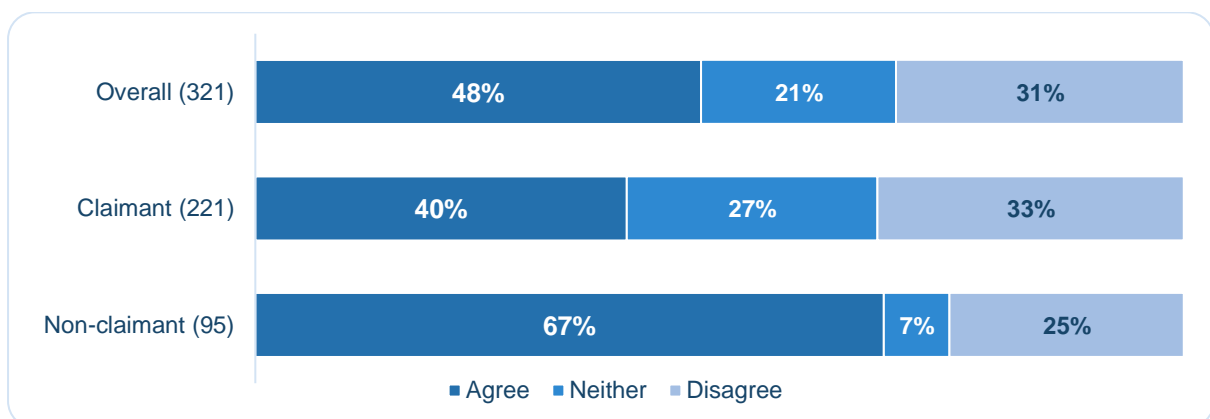
Figure 1: Levels of agreement to Proposal A by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Two fifths of claimants (40%) agreed with proposal A. This compares to 67% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. One third of claimants (33%) disagreed with the proposal whilst one quarter (25%) of non-claimants disagreed.

Figure 2: Levels of agreement to Proposal A by respondent type (% respondents)

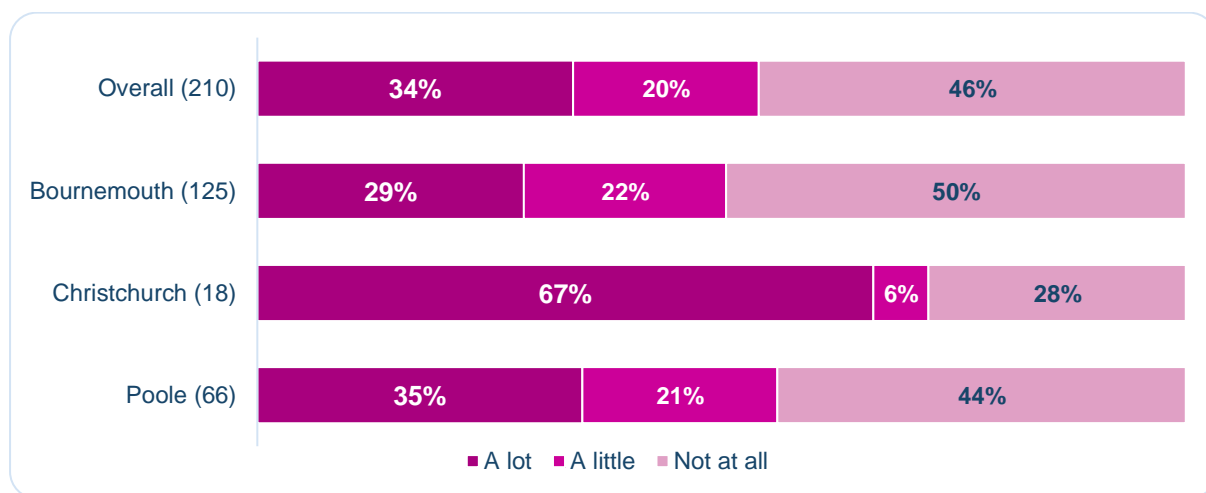


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal A

Just over one third of respondents (34%) thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst one fifth (20%) thought it would impact on them a little. A total of 46% of respondents thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. Respondents in Christchurch (67%) were significantly more likely to think that the proposed change would impact them a lot compared to respondents in Bournemouth (29%) and Poole (35%).

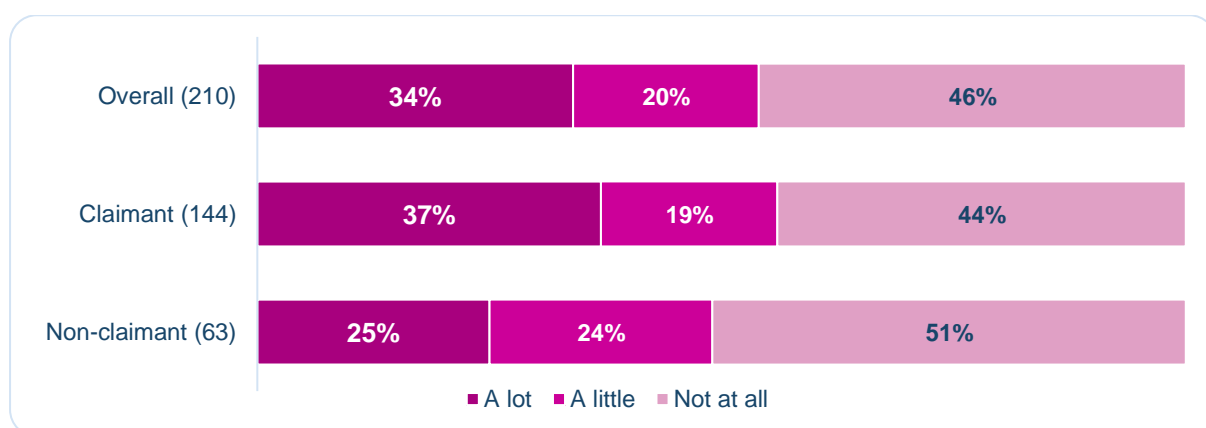
Figure 3: Levels of impact to Proposal A by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Almost two fifths of claimants (37%) thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst 19% thought it would impact on them a little. Over two fifths of claimants (44%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact between claimants and no-claimants.

Figure 4: Levels of impact to Proposal A respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 65 and over are significantly more likely to agree with proposal A (74%) compared to those aged 16 to 64 (47%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Respondents with no religion are significantly more likely to agree with proposal A (36%) than Christian respondents (24%).

Respondents from other white backgrounds are significantly more likely to think that proposal A would impact them to some extent (80%) compared to white British respondents (49%).

Comments on Proposal A

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal A. There were 91 additional comments regarding the proposal to set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group. The most common theme arising from these comments was the negative financial impact of the proposal (22 comments).

"I am already struggling as it is. Further increase in Council tax will cause a further burden." (claimant)

"Even an extra £10 would have a huge impact on my family." (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

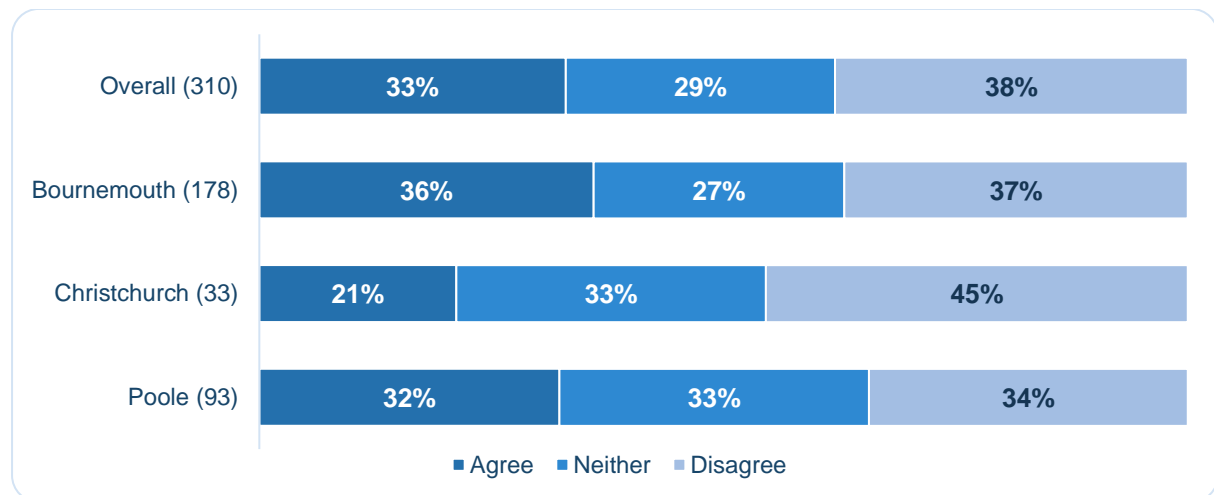
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (13 comments)
- Not personally affected (12 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (10 comments)
- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (9 comments)
- Impact is unknown (7 comments)
- Negative impact (7 comments)
- Other comments (7 comments)
- Individuals' needs should be assessed (5 comments)
- Comments on the new council (5 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (5 comments)
- Comments on Council Tax in general (3 comments)
- Comments on other proposals (1 comment)
- Positive impact (1 comment)

Proposal B: Withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families

Levels of agreement with Proposal B

One third of respondents (33%) agreed with the proposal to withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families whilst almost two fifths of respondents (38%) disagreed. There were no significant differences in agreement by area.

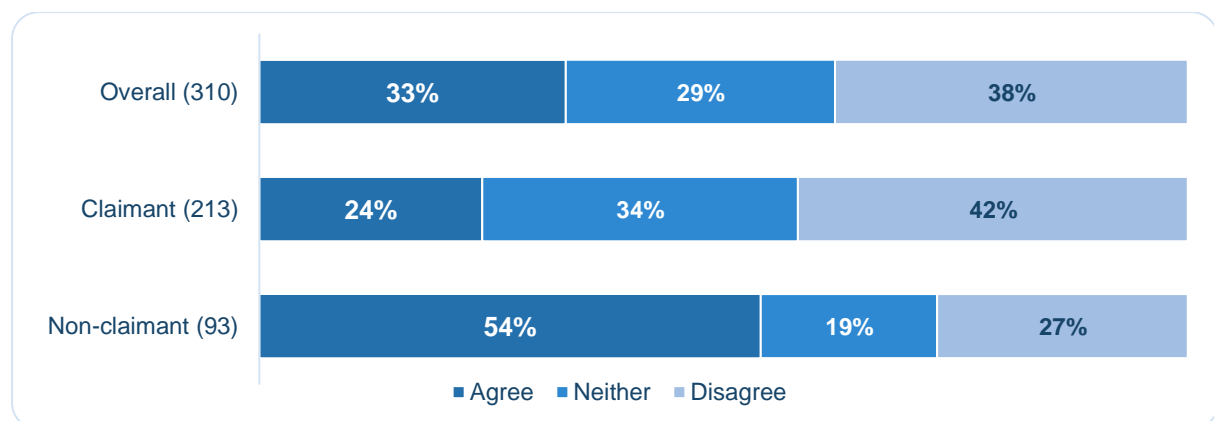
Figure 5: Levels of agreement to Proposal B by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just under one quarter of claimants (24%) agreed with proposal B. This compares to 54% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. Over two fifths of claimants (42%) disagreed with the proposal whilst over one quarter (27%) of non-claimants disagreed.

Figure 6: Levels of agreement to Proposal B by respondent type (% respondents)

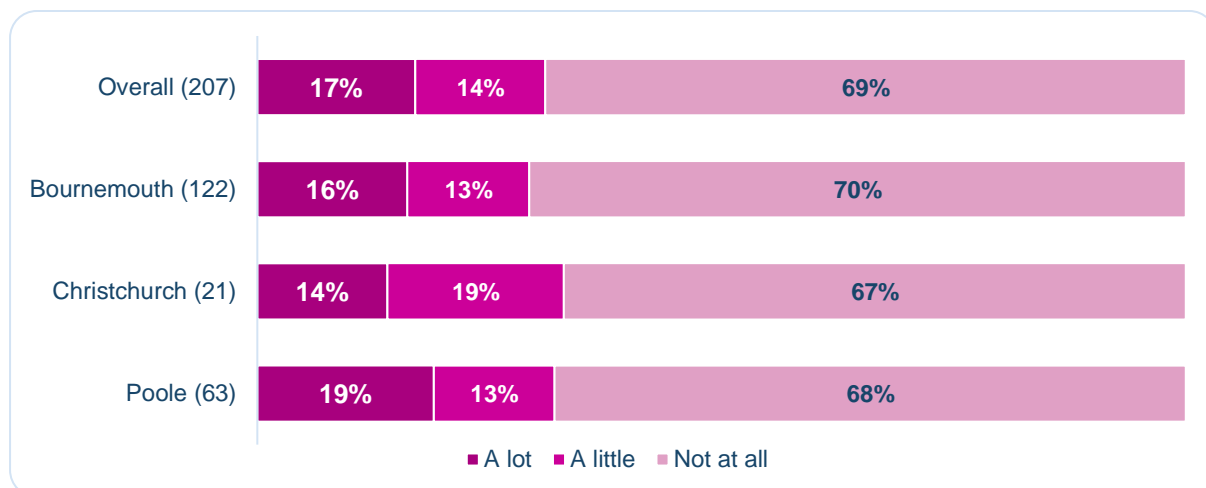


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal B

Less than one fifth of respondents (17%) thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst 14% thought it would impact on them a little. Almost seven in ten respondents (69%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact by area.

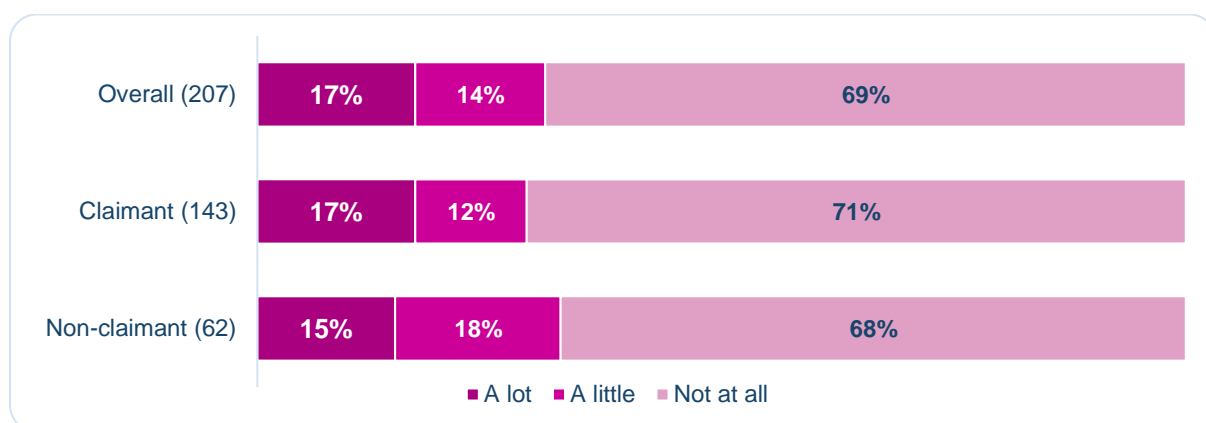
Figure 7: Levels of impact to Proposal B by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Views of claimants mirrored the overall results with less than one fifth (17%) of claimants thinking that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot and 12% thinking it would impact on them a little. More than seven in ten claimants (71%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact between claimants and no-claimants.

Figure 8: Levels of impact to Proposal B respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 65 and over are significantly more likely to agree with proposal B (52%) compared to those aged 45 to 64 (28%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal. Respondents aged 16 to 34 are significantly more likely to think that proposal B would impact them to some extent (57%) compared to those aged 45 to 64 (26%).

Respondents from other white backgrounds are significantly more likely to agree with proposal B (55%) compared to white British respondents (31%) but are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (58% of white other respondents compared to 25% of white British respondents).

Parents are significantly more likely to disagree with proposal B (53%) compared to respondents without children (31%) and are significantly more likely to think that the proposal will impact on them a lot (26% of parents compared to 13% of those without children).

Comments on Proposal B

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal B. There were 51 additional comments regarding the proposal to withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families. The most common theme arising from these comments was the negative financial impact of the proposal (14 comments).

"I would not be able to pay the full premium." (claimant)

"...Withdrawing the family premium will mean working families on low incomes are worse off yet again, increasing the number of children living in poverty in the new council area." (non-claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

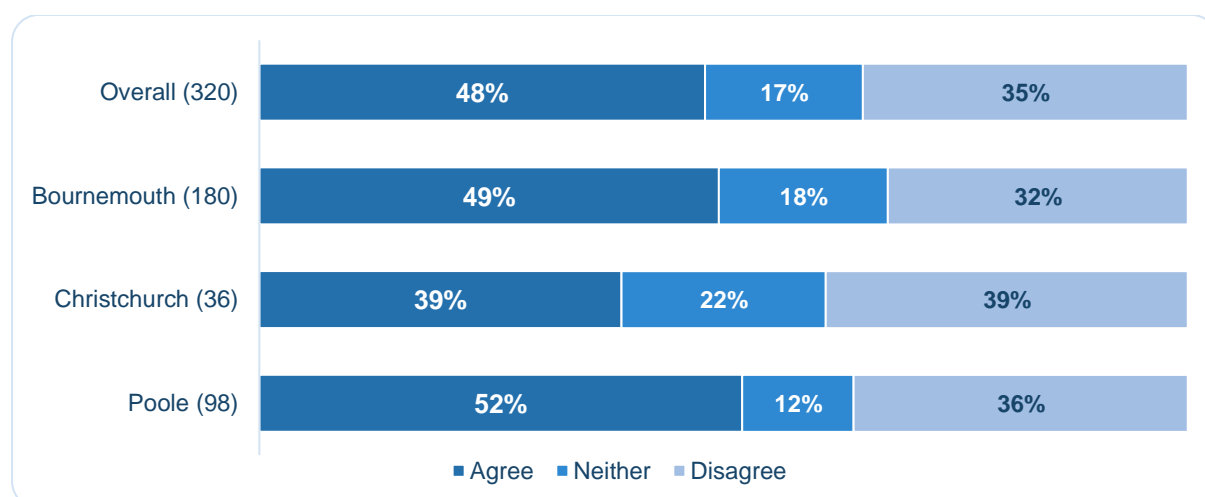
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (12 comments)
- Discrimination between new and existing claimants (6 comments)
- Not personally affected (6 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (5 comments)
- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (5 comments)
- Negative impact (5 comments)
- Other comments (4 comments)
- Individuals' needs should be assessed (4 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (2 comments)
- Impact is unknown (2 comments)
- Comments on the new council (1 comment)
- Comments on Council Tax in general (1 comment)

Proposal C: Limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims

Levels of agreement with Proposal C

Just under half of respondents (48%) agreed with the proposal to limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims whilst over one third of respondents (35%) disagreed. There were no significant differences in agreement by area.

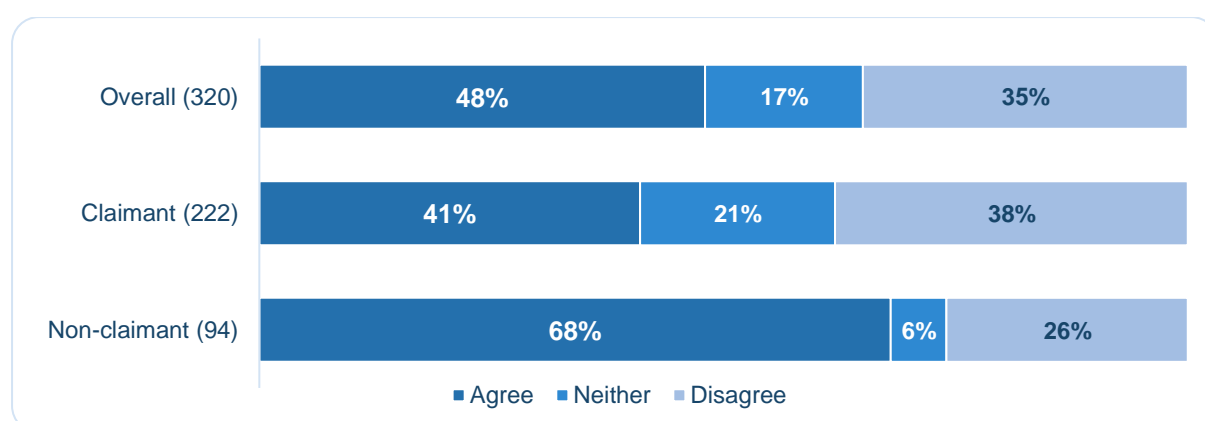
Figure 9: Levels of agreement to Proposal C by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just over two fifths of claimants (41%) agreed with proposal C. This compares to 68% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. Just under two fifths of claimants (38%) disagreed with the proposal whilst just over one quarter (26%) of non-claimants disagreed.

Figure 10: Levels of agreement to Proposal C by respondent type (% respondents)

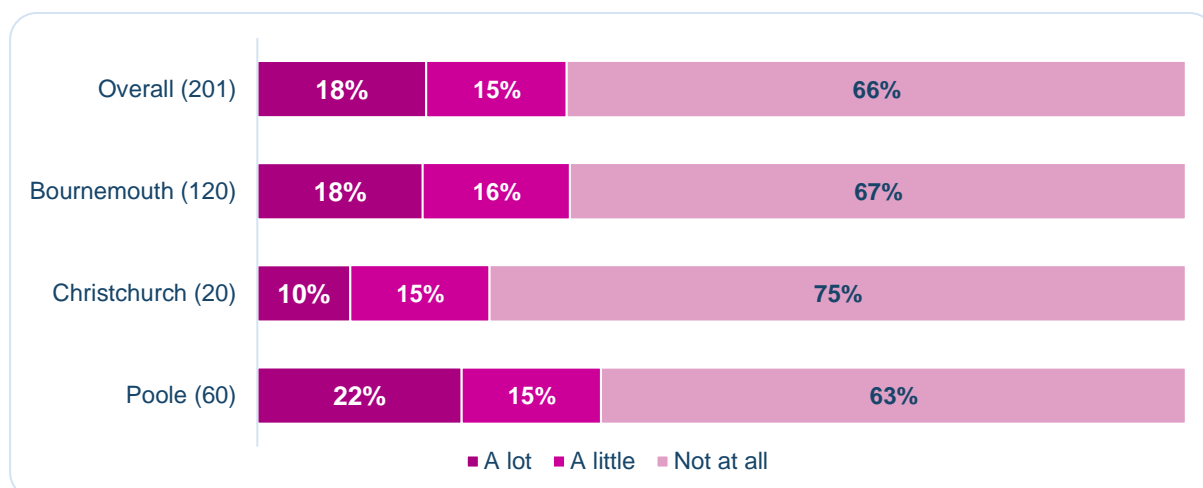


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal C

Just under one fifth of respondents (18%) thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst 15% thought it would impact on them a little. Two thirds of respondents (66%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact by area.

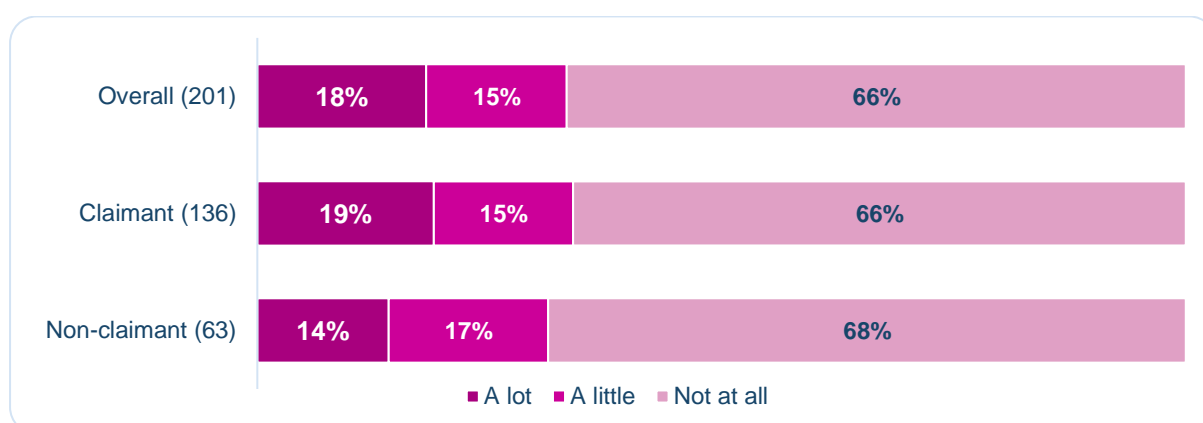
Figure 11: Levels of impact to Proposal C by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Views of claimants mirrored the overall results with almost one fifth (19%) of claimants thinking that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot, 15% thinking it would impact on them a little and two thirds (66%) thinking the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact between claimants and non-claimants.

Figure 12: Levels of impact to Proposal C respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 65 and over are significantly more likely to agree with proposal C (76%) compared to those aged 35 to 64 (46%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Respondents without a disability are significantly more likely to agree with proposal C (64%) compared to those with a disability (43%).

Christian respondents are significantly less likely to disagree with proposal C (27%) compared to those with no religion (40%).

Comments on Proposal C

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal C. There were 70 additional comments regarding the proposal to limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims. The most common theme arising from these comments was around timeframes in terms of the length of time a claim can take and that it can be a slow process (19 comments).

"I found my benefits took a lot longer to sort and one type took the recommended 13 weeks."
(claimant)

"That's a bit unfair if it takes longer than a month to sort out the claim which it usually does. How are people claiming supposed to cover the rest of the backdating dates payments."
(claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

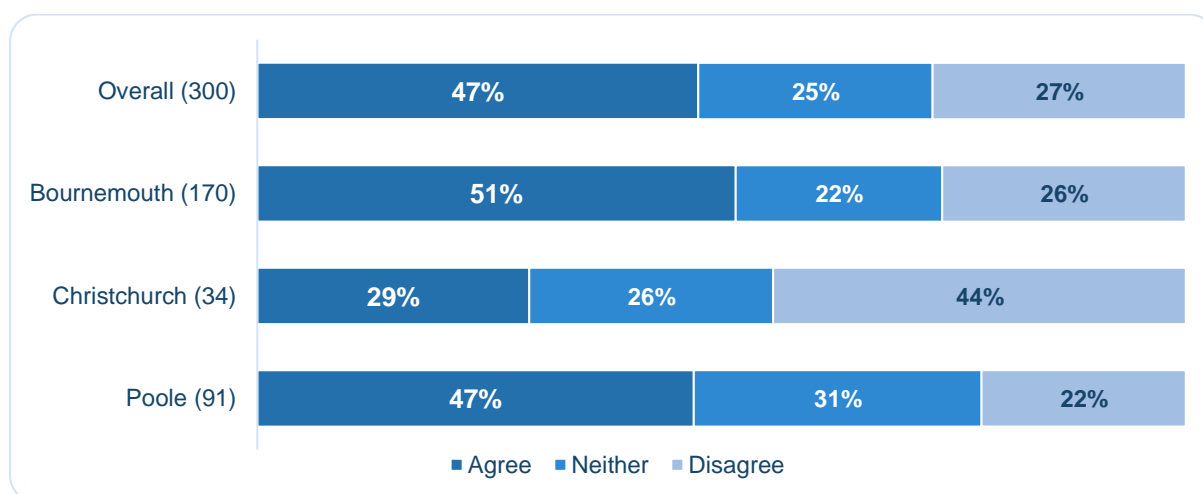
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (17 comments)
- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (9 comments)
- Individuals' needs should be assessed / flexibility (9 comments)
- Negative financial impact (6 comments)
- Dependent on information available / knowledge of claimant (6 comments)
- Other comments (5 comments)
- Impact is unknown (4 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (3 comments)
- Misinterpreting proposal (3 comments)
- Negative impact (2 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)
- Comments on Council Tax in general (1 comment)

Proposal D: Cap scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group

Levels of agreement with Proposal D

Just under half of respondents (47%) agreed with the proposal to cap the scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group whilst just over one quarter of respondents (27%) disagreed. Respondents in Christchurch (29%) were significantly more likely to disagree with proposal D compared to respondents in Bournemouth (51%) and Poole (47%).

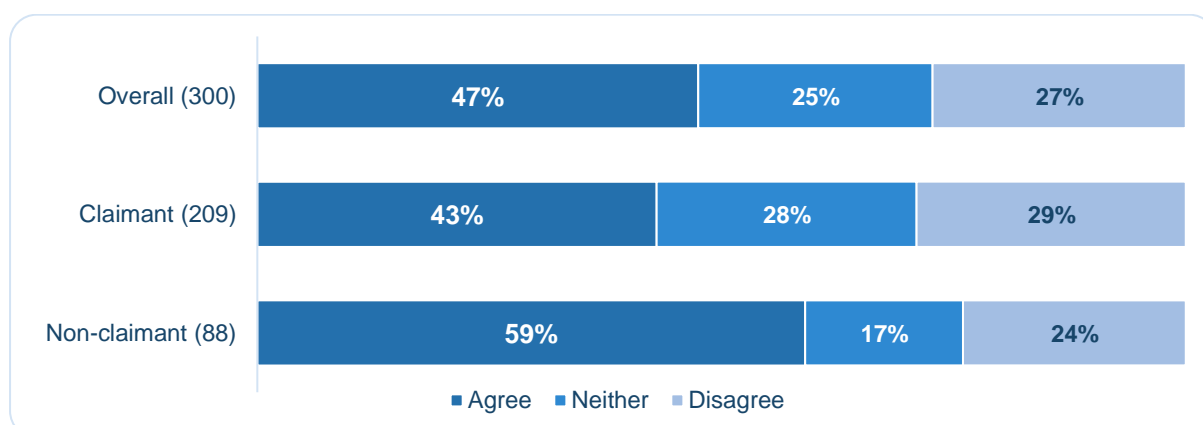
Figure 13: Levels of agreement to Proposal D by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just over two fifths of claimants (43%) agreed with proposal D. This compares to 59% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. Just under one in three claimants (29%) disagreed with the proposal whilst just under one quarter (24%) of non-claimants disagreed.

Figure 14: Levels of agreement to Proposal D by respondent type (% respondents)

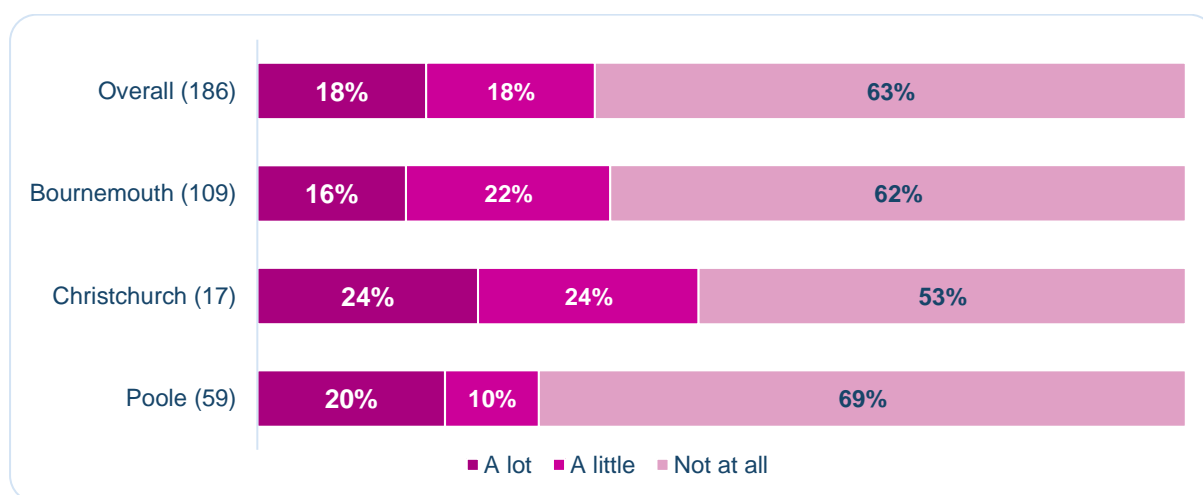


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal D

Just under one fifth of respondents (18%) thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot, whilst the same proportion (18%) thought it would impact on them a little. Just under two thirds of respondents (63%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. Respondents in Poole (10%) were significantly less likely to think the proposal would impact them a little compared to respondents in Bournemouth (22%).

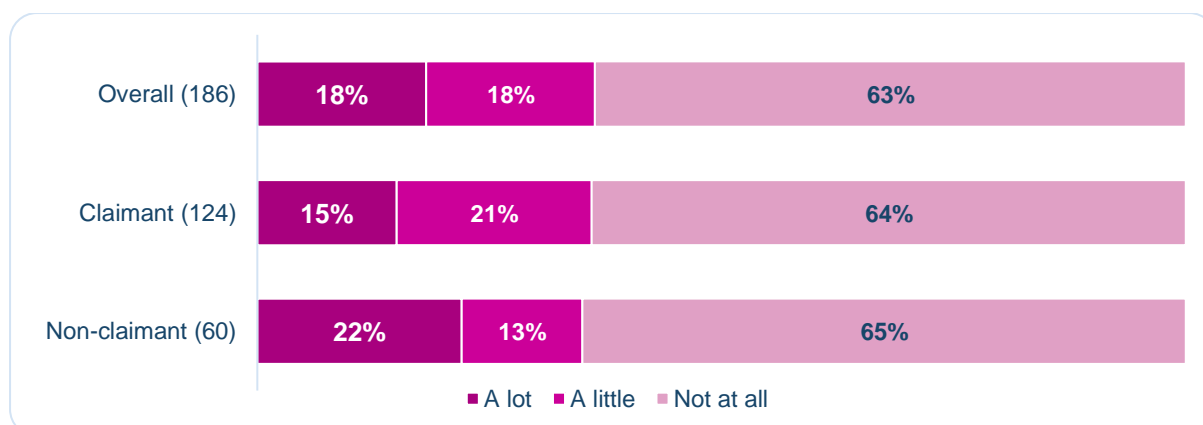
Figure 15: Levels of impact to Proposal D by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Views of claimants broadly mirrored the overall results with 15% of claimants thinking that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot, just over one fifth (21%) thinking it would impact on them a little and just under two thirds (64%) thinking the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact between claimants and no-claimants.

Figure 16: Levels of impact to Proposal D respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 35 to 44 are significantly more likely to think that proposal D would impact them to some extent (56%) compared to respondents aged 55 to 64 (33%).

Respondents with a disability are significantly more likely to disagree with proposal D (30%) compared to those without a disability (19%).

Christian respondents are significantly more likely to agree with proposal D (55%) compared to those with no religion (43%).

Comments on Proposal D

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal D. There were 48 additional comments regarding the proposal to cap the scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group. The most common theme arising from these comments was general disagreement with the proposal and it being unfair (10 comments).

“Not everybody in council tax band D and above have pots of money in fact their property may be their only asset.” (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

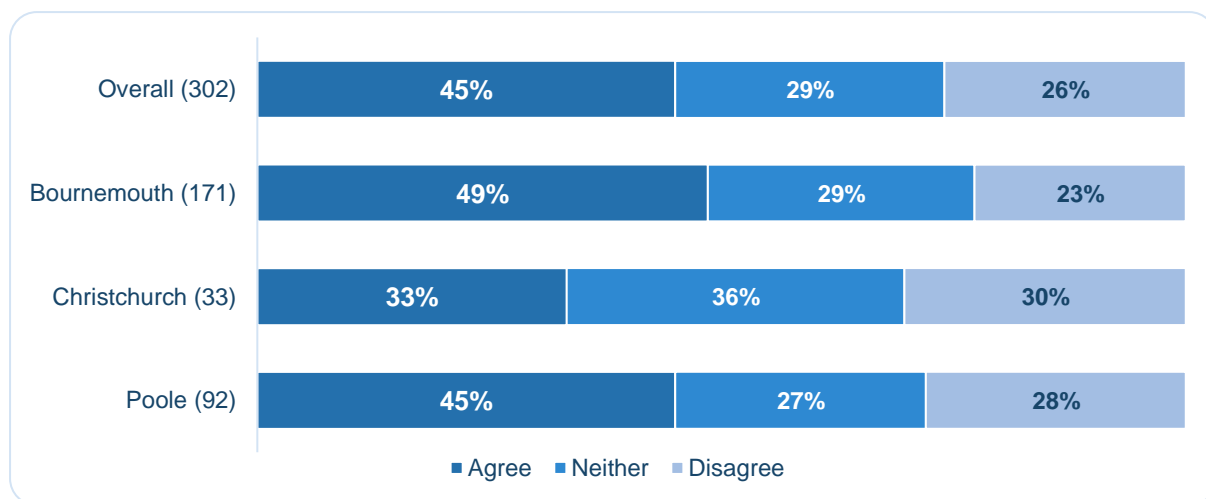
- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (7 comments)
- People in Band D can afford it (7 comments)
- Other comments (7 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (5 comments)
- Negative financial impact (5 comments)
- Individuals' needs should be assessed (3 comments)
- Impact is unknown (3 comments)
- Negative impact (1 comment)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)
- Misinterpreting proposal (1 comment)

Proposal E: Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p

Levels of agreement with Proposal E

Overall, 45% of respondents agreed with the proposal to have a minimum weekly entitlement of 50p whilst just over one quarter of respondents (26%) disagreed. There were no significant differences in agreement by area.

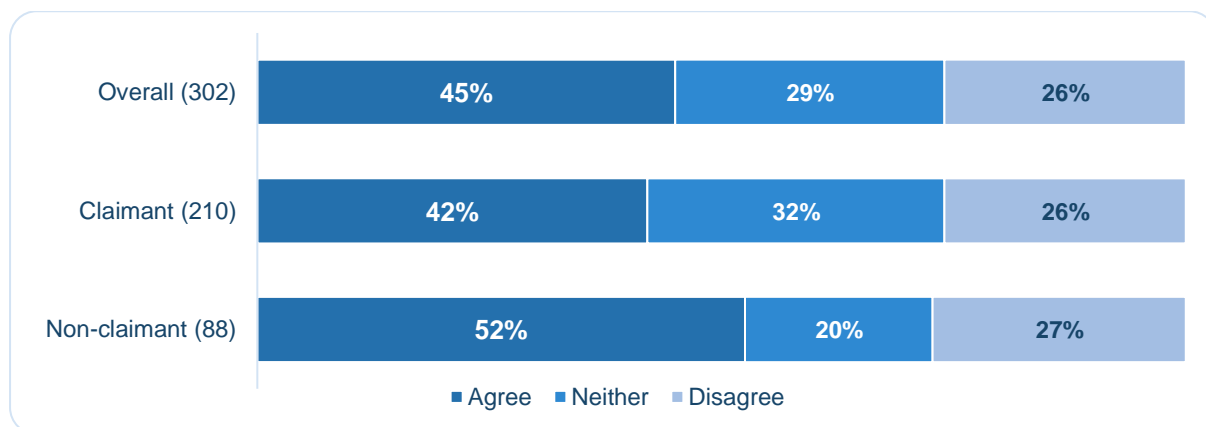
Figure 17: Levels of agreement to Proposal E by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just over two fifths of claimants (42%) agreed with proposal E. This compares to 52% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. Just over one quarter of claimants (26%) disagreed with the proposal which is consistent with non-claimants (27%).

Figure 18: Levels of agreement to Proposal E by respondent type (% respondents)

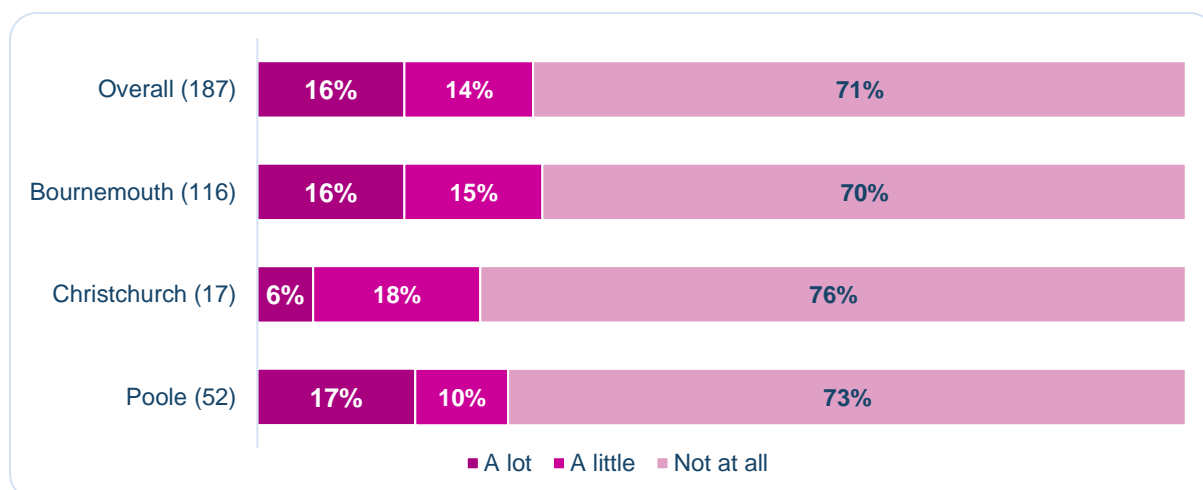


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal E

Overall, 16% of respondents thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst 14% thought it would impact on them a little. Over seven in ten respondents (71%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact by area.

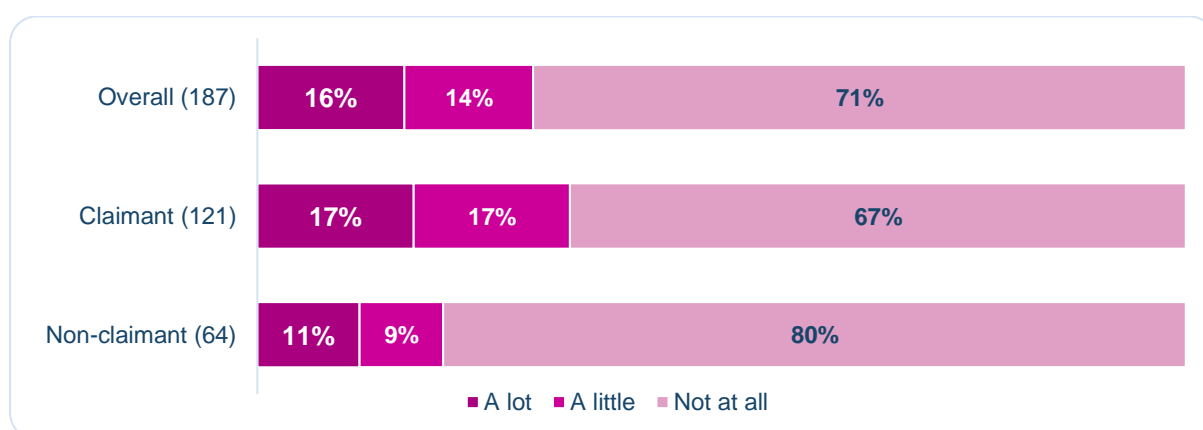
Figure 19: Levels of impact to Proposal E by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Views of claimants broadly mirrored the overall results, with 17% of claimants thinking that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot and the same proportion (17%) thinking it would impact on them a little. Just over two thirds (67%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. Claimants were significantly less likely to think that the proposal wouldn't impact on them at all compared to non-claimants.

Figure 20: Levels of impact to Proposal E respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 65 and over are significantly more likely to agree with proposal E (64%) compared to those aged 16 to 34 (35%) and 55 to 64 (40%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Respondents with a disability are significantly more likely to disagree with proposal E (29%) compared to those without a disability (19%).

Christian respondents are significantly more likely to agree with proposal E (54%) compared to those with no religion (39%).

Comments on Proposal E

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal E. There were 42 additional comments regarding the proposal to have a minimum weekly entitlement of 50p. The most common theme arising from these comments was that 50p is not worth the administrative cost (8 comments).

"It will cost more to administer than the value of the award." (claimant)

"Waste of office costs/postage etc." (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

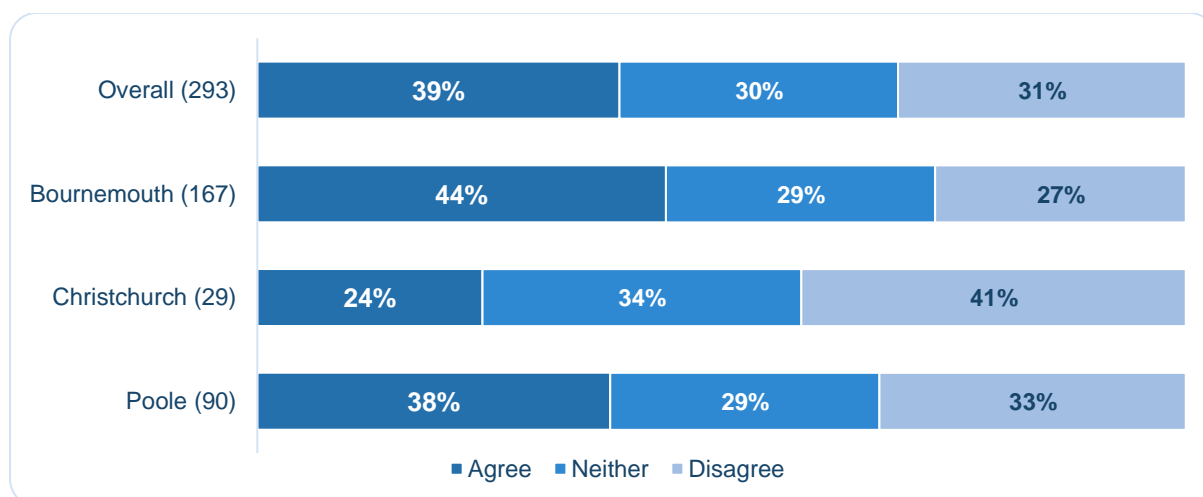
- 50p is no money at all / wouldn't impact people (6 comments)
- Other comments (5 comments)
- Minimum payment should be higher (4 comments)
- 50p is a lot of money to some people (4 comments)
- Impact is unknown (3 comments)
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (3 comments)
- Not personally affected (3 comments)
- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (2 comments)
- Misinterpreting proposal (2 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)
- Individuals' needs should be assessed (1 comment)
- Minimum payment should be lower (1 comment)

Proposal F: No working age Second Adult Rebate.

Levels of agreement with Proposal F

Just under two fifths of respondents (39%) agreed with the proposal to have no working age Second Adult Rebate whilst just under one third of respondents (31%) disagreed. Respondents in Christchurch (24%) were significantly less likely to agree with the proposal compared to respondents in Bournemouth (44%).

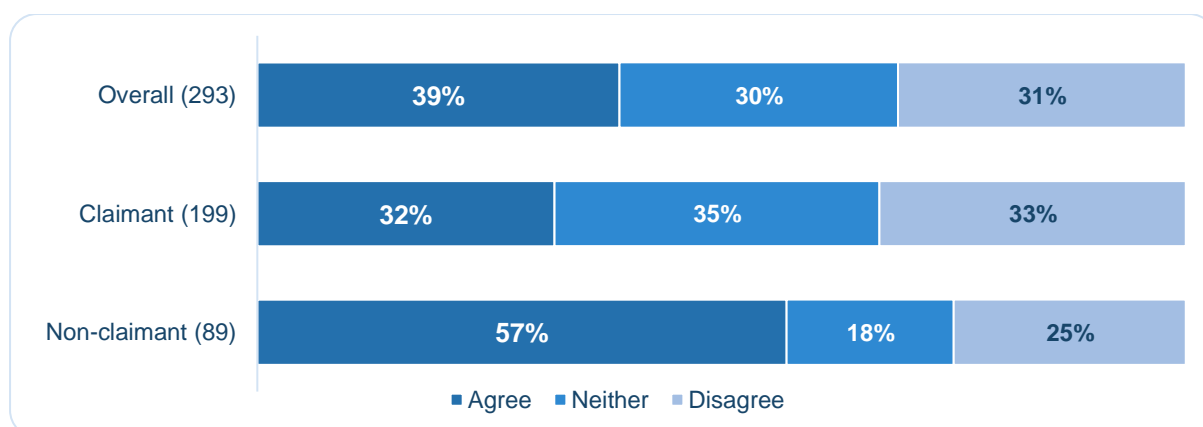
Figure 21: Levels of agreement to Proposal F by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just under one third of claimants (32%) agreed with proposal F. This compares to 57% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. One third of claimants (33%) disagreed with the proposal compared to one quarter of non-claimants (25%).

Figure 22: Levels of agreement to Proposal F by respondent type (% respondents)

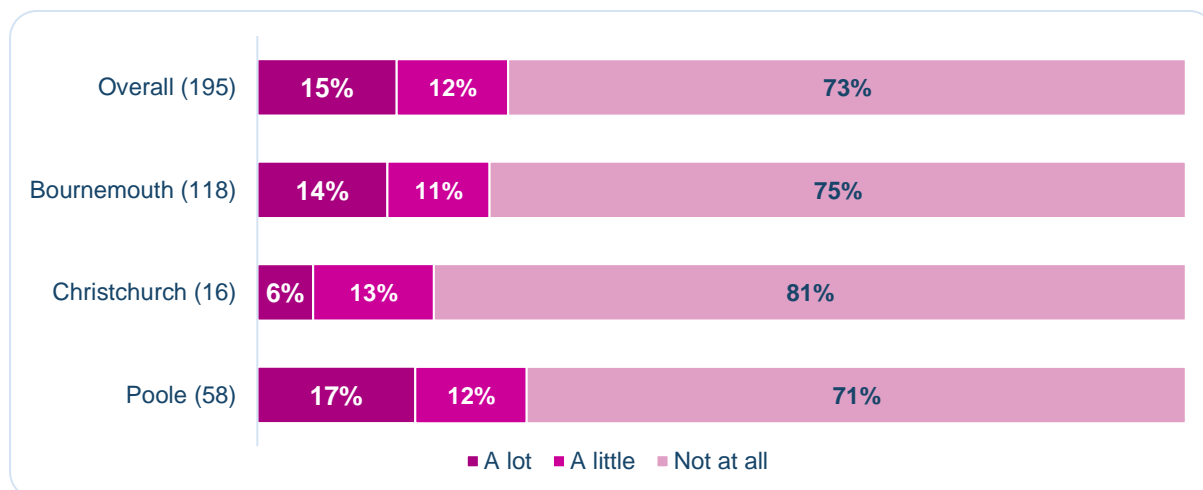


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal F

Overall, 15% of respondents thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst 12% thought it would impact on them a little. Just under three quarters of respondents (73%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences in impact by area.

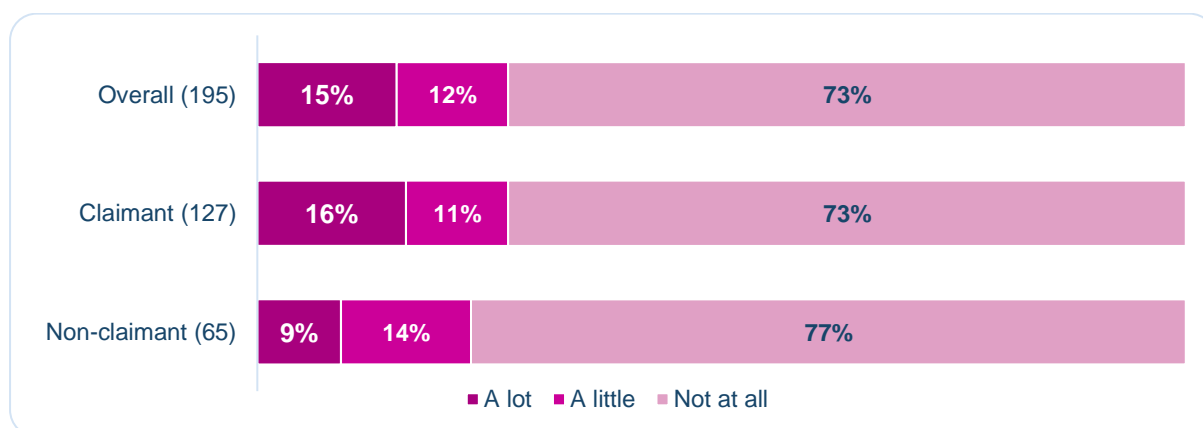
Figure 23: Levels of impact to Proposal F by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Views of claimants mirrored the overall results, with 16% of claimants thinking that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot, 11% thinking it would impact on them a little and just under three quarters (73%) thinking it wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences between claimants and non-claimants.

Figure 24: Levels of impact to Proposal F respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 65 and over are significantly more likely to agree with proposal F (63%) compared to those aged 35 to 44 (28%) and 55 to 64 (36%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Respondents without a disability are significantly more likely to agree with proposal F (54%) compared to those with a disability (35%).

Respondents from other white backgrounds are significantly more likely to agree with proposal F (72%) compared to white British respondents (40%) but are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (58% of white other respondents compared to 20% of white British respondents).

Christian respondents are significantly more likely to agree with proposal F (47%) compared to those with no religion (31%).

Comments on Proposal F

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal F. There were 39 additional comments regarding the proposal to have no working age Second Adult Rebate. The most common theme arising from these comments was general agreement with the proposal and it being fair (7 comments).

“Basic common sense.” (non-claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

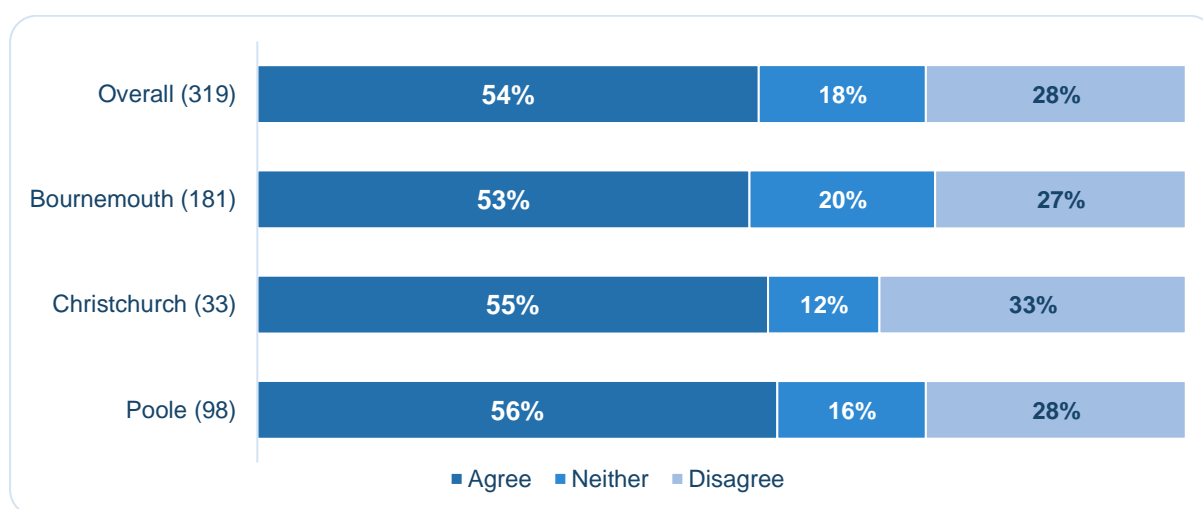
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (6 comments)
- Negative financial impact (5 comments)
- Not personally affected (5 comments)
- Other comments (5 comments)
- Individuals' needs should be assessed (4 comment)
- Impact is unknown (3 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (2 comments)
- Would be impacted (2 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)

Proposal G: Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants

Levels of agreement with Proposal G

Over half of respondents (54%) agreed with the proposal to limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants. Just under three in ten respondents (28%) disagreed. There were no significant differences in agreement by area.

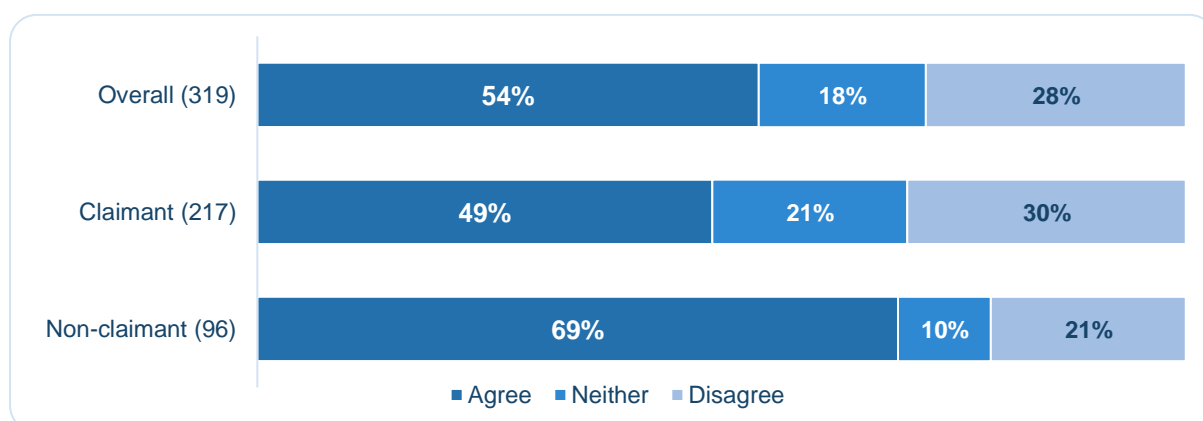
Figure 25: Levels of agreement to Proposal G by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just under half of claimants (49%) agreed with proposal G. This compares to 69% of non-claimants agreeing with the proposal. Three in ten claimants (30%) disagreed with the proposal compared to just over one fifth of non-claimants (21%).

Figure 26: Levels of agreement to Proposal G by respondent type (% respondents)

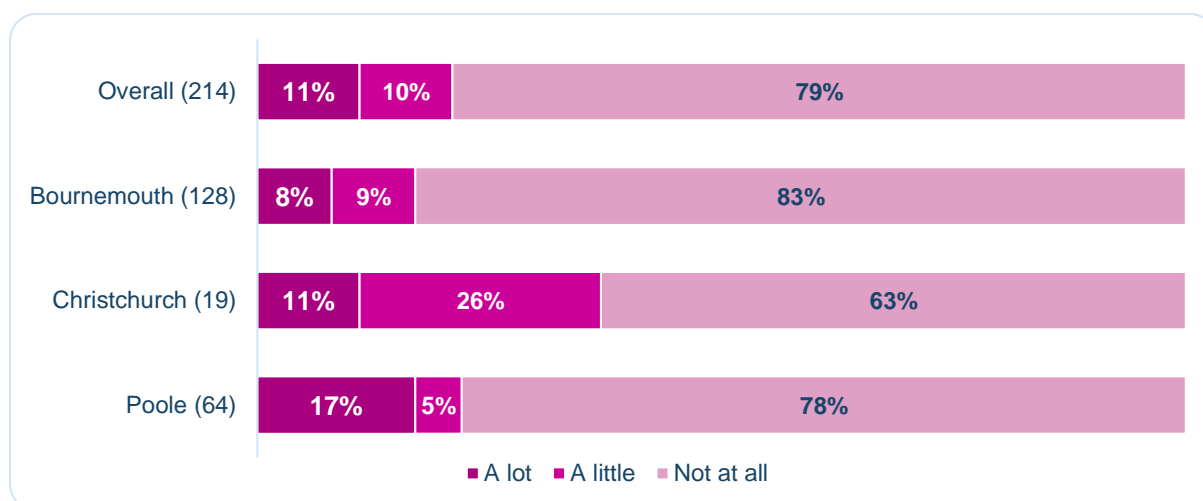


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal G

Just over one in ten respondents (11%) thought that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot whilst 10% thought it would impact on them a little. Just under four fifths of respondents (79%) thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all. Respondents in Christchurch (63%) were significantly less likely to think that the proposal wouldn't impact on them at all compared to respondents in Bournemouth (83%).

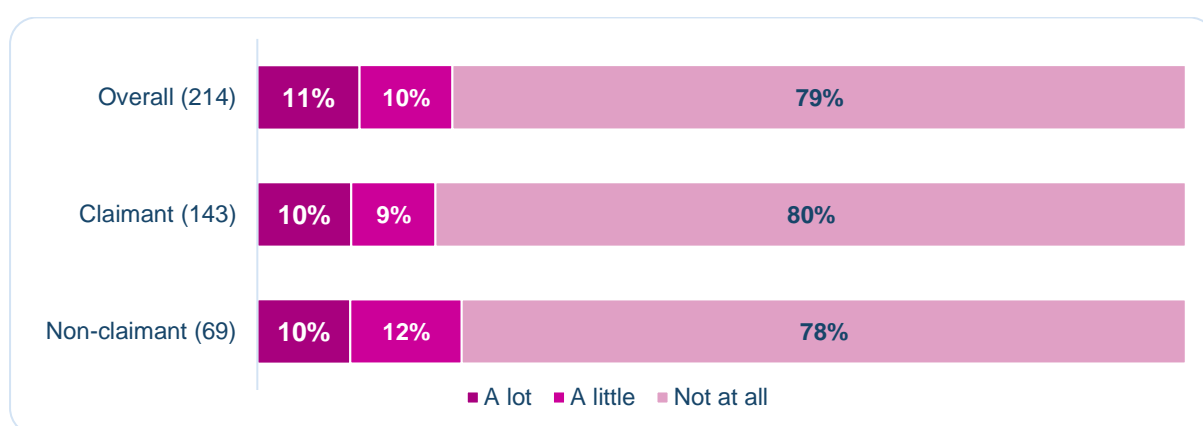
Figure 27: Levels of impact to Proposal G by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Views of claimants mirrored the overall results with 10% of claimants thinking that the proposed change would impact on them and their family a lot, 9% thinking it would impact on them a little and four fifths (80%) thinking it wouldn't impact on them at all. There were no significant differences between claimants and non-claimants.

Figure 28: Levels of impact to Proposal G respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 16 to 34 are significantly less likely to agree with proposal G (32%) compared to those aged 55 to 64 (58%). Respondents aged 16 to 34 and 35 to 44 are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (53% and 32% respectively) compared to those aged 45 to 64 (10%).

Respondents without a disability are significantly more likely to think that proposal G would impact them to some extent (27%) compared to those with a disability (13%).

Respondents from other white backgrounds are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (42%) compared to white British respondents (15%).

Parents are significantly less likely to agree with proposal G (43%) compared to those without children (60%). Parents are also significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact on them a lot (18%) compared to those without children (7%).

Comments on Proposal G

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal G. There were 55 additional comments regarding the proposal to limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants. The most common theme arising from these comments was general disagreement with the proposal and it being unfair (15 comments).

“Not quite sure how it’s fair to restrict a family to 2 children or where to draw a line.”
(claimant)

“It’s not really fair as some families will struggle...” (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (11 comments)
- Negative financial impact / families will struggle (10 comments)
- Other comments (8 comments)
- Not personally affected (5 comments)
- People should take responsibility for number/cost of children (5 comments)
- Should be assessed on income (3 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (3 comments)
- Multiple births should be excluded (2 comments)
- Misinterpreting proposal (2 comments)
- Impact is unknown (1 comment)
- Comments on the new council (1 comment)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)

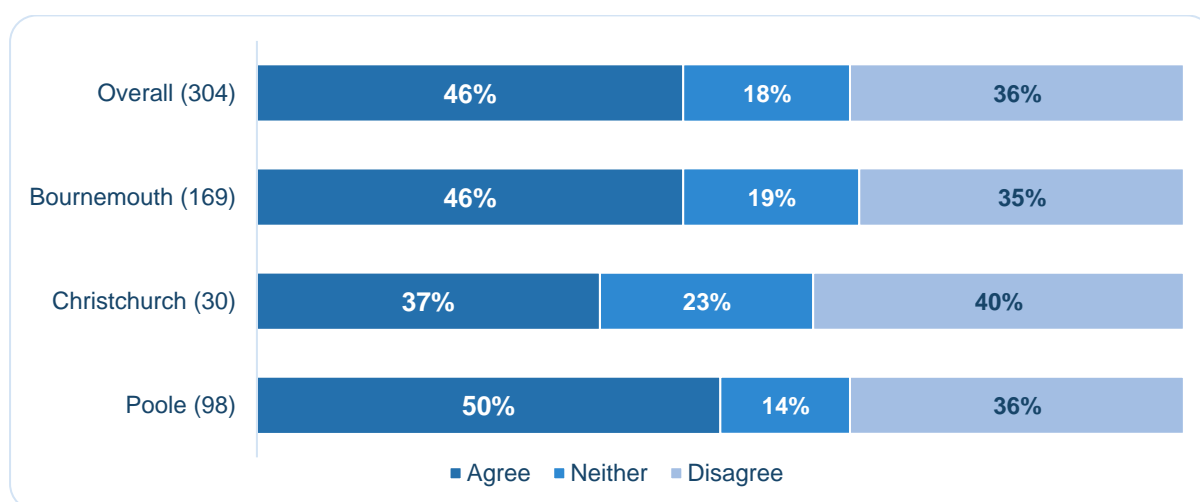
Proposal H: Disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support for all working age claimants

Levels of agreement with Proposal H

Under half of respondents (46%) agreed with the proposal to disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support. Just under two out of ten (18%) neither agreed nor disagreed and just over one third (36%) disagreed.

There are no statistically significant differences in the results by area.

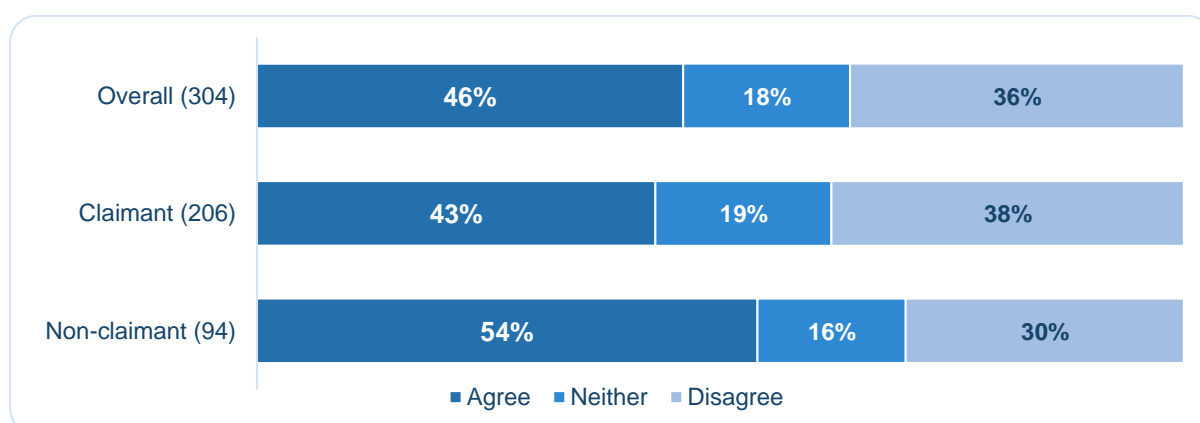
Figure 29: Levels of agreement to Proposal H by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Claimants are less likely to agree (43%) and more likely to disagree (38%) than non-claimants.

Figure 30: Levels of agreement to Proposal H by respondent type (% respondents)

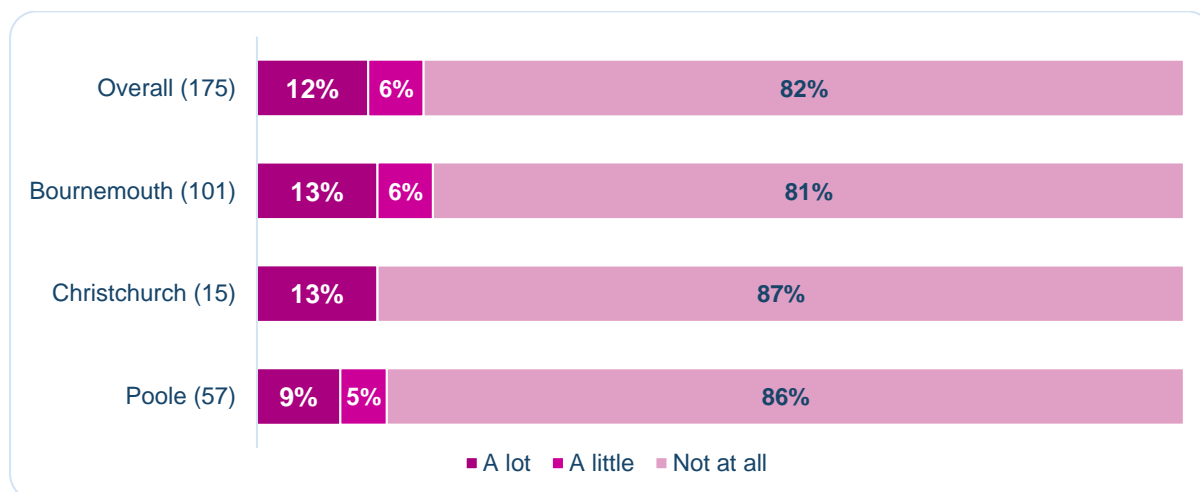


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal H

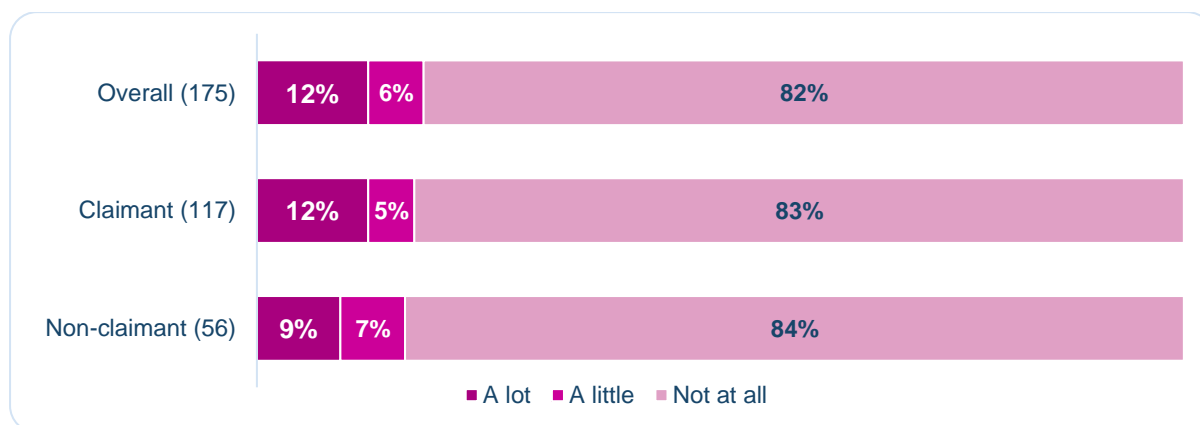
Just over one in ten respondents (12%) said that they would be impacted by Proposal H a lot, with 6% saying that they would be affected a little. Over four fifths (82%) thought that they would not be impacted by this proposal at all. There are no statistically significant differences in the results by area or by respondent type.

Figure 31: Levels of impact to Proposal H by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Figure 32: Levels of impact to Proposal H by respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Those aged 35-44 are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (30%) compared to those aged 55-64 (12%).

Respondents from other white backgrounds are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (43%) compared to white British respondents (12%).

Parents are significantly more likely to neither agree nor disagree (25%) with this proposal than respondents without children (15%). Two fifths of parents (40%) agree with the proposal compared to 49% of those with no children.

Comments on Proposal H

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal H. There were 34 additional comments regarding the proposal to disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support for all working age claimants. The most common theme arising from these comments was a general misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the proposal (15 comments). Respondents interpreted that the proposal would make people worse off.

“Another example of taking money away from people who aren’t in a position to argue back..” (claimant)

“Why should those who are already suffering be made to suffer more?” (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

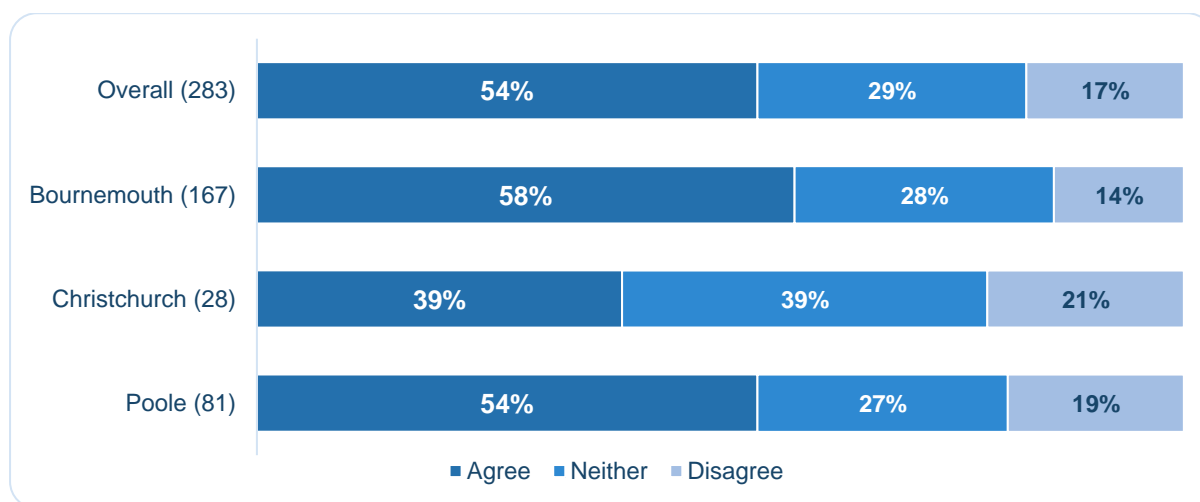
- General agreement with the proposal / fair proposal (7 comments)
- Other comments (5 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (3 comments)
- Impact is unknown (3 comments)
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (3 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)

Proposal I: Mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules

Levels of agreement with Proposal I

Over half of respondents (54%) agreed with the proposal to mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules. Just under three out of ten (29%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 17% disagreed. The results vary by area, with respondents from Bournemouth (58%) significantly more likely to agree with the proposal than those from Christchurch (39%).

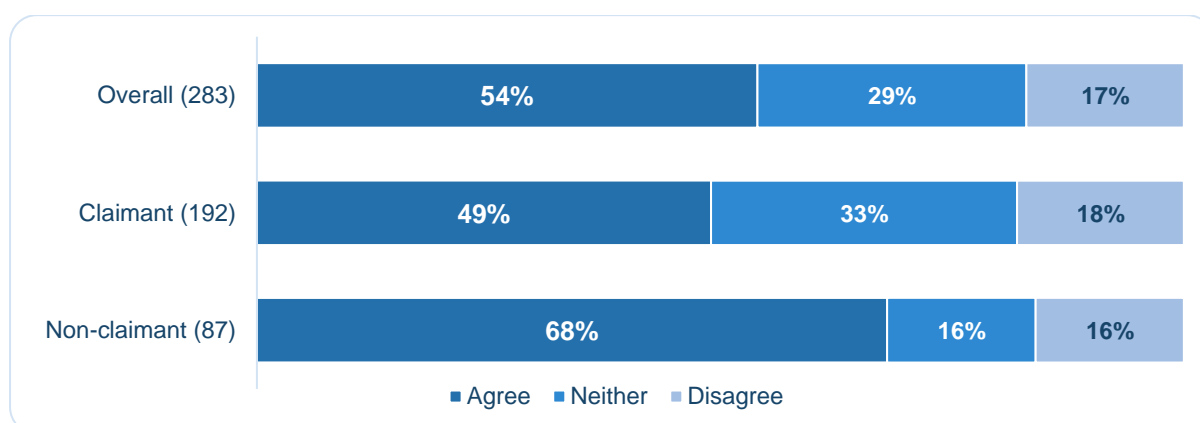
Figure 33: Levels of agreement to Proposal I by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Claimants (49%) are less likely to agree and more likely to neither agree nor disagree (33%) with the proposal than non-claimants (68% agree and 16% neither agree nor disagree). There are no statistically significant differences in levels of disagreement between claimants and non-claimants.

Figure 34: Levels of agreement to Proposal I by respondent type (% respondents)



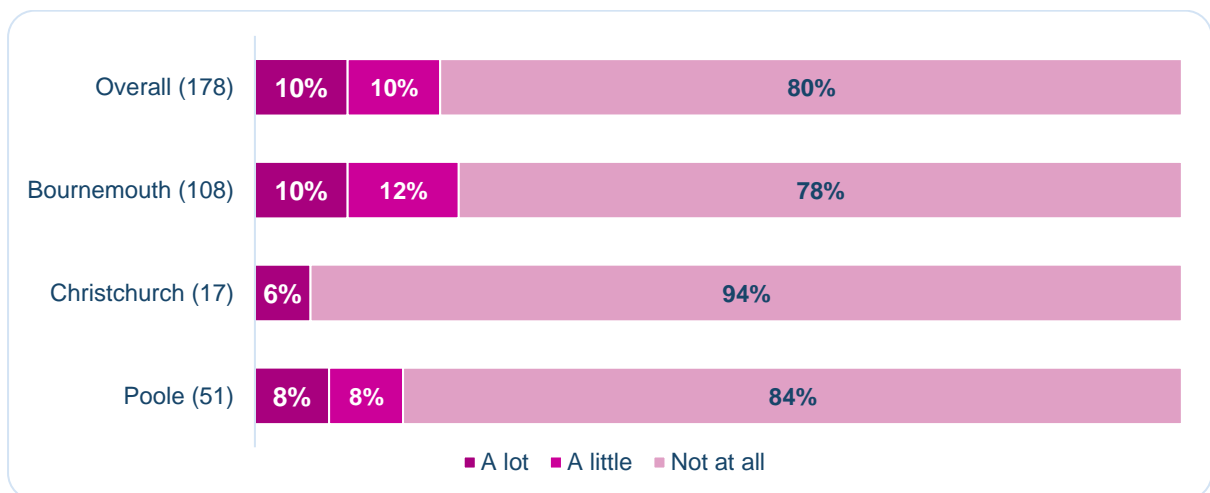
BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal I

One out of ten of respondents (10%) said that they would be impacted by Proposal I a lot, with 10% saying that they would be affected a little. Four fifths of respondents (80%) thought that they would not be affected by this proposal.

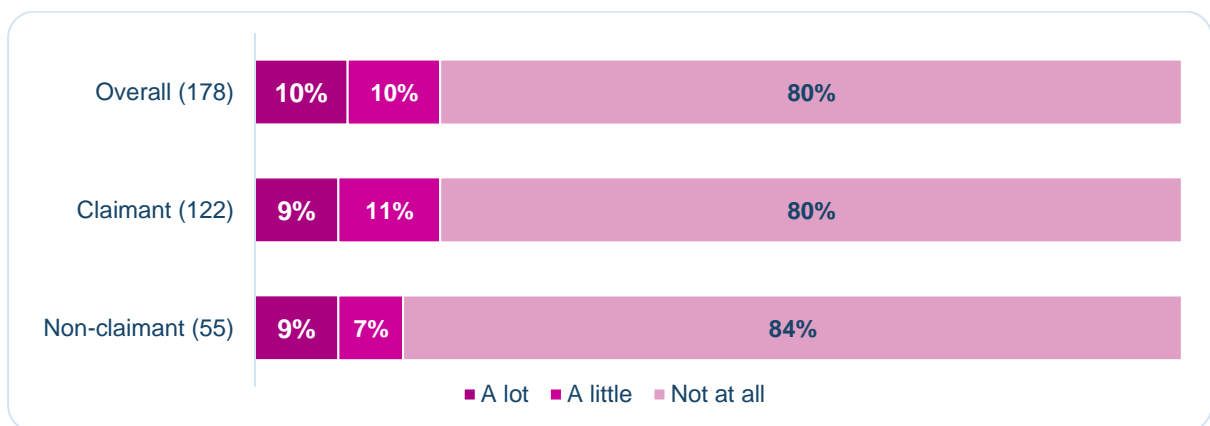
There are no statistically significant differences in the results by area or by respondent type.

Figure 35: Levels of impact to Proposal I by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Figure 36: Levels of impact to Proposal I by respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Respondents aged 35 to 44 and 55 to 64 are significantly less likely to agree with Proposal I (43% and 49% respectively) compared to those aged 45 to 54 (65%).

Respondents with a disability are significantly more likely to disagree with the proposal (21%) compared to those without a disability (9%).

Respondents from other white backgrounds are significantly more likely to agree with proposal I (80%) compared to white British respondents (57%) but are significantly more likely to think that the proposal would impact them to some extent (39% of white other respondents compared to 14% of white British respondents).

Comments on Proposal I

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal I. There were 30 additional comments regarding the proposal to mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules. The most common theme arising from these comments was general agreement with the proposal and it being fair (11 comments).

"I feel that the authority would be justified in bringing the rules in line with those of Housing Benefit (LHA) as it would make the process the same across all of the authorities benefit schemes." (claimant)

"I understand these rules and agree with them." (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

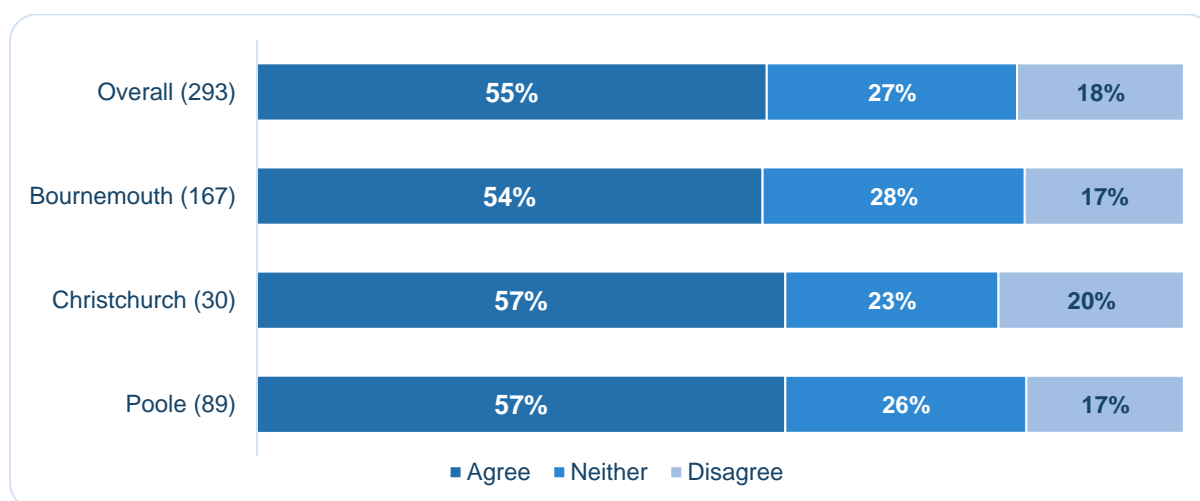
- Rules should depend on the reasons for absence (6 comments)
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (5 comments)
- Other comments (5 comments)
- Negative financial impact (4 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (2 comments)
- Comments on the consultation (2 comments)
- Impact is unknown (1 comment)
- Misinterpreting proposal (1 comment)

Proposal J: Introduce a self-employed minimum income floor

Levels of agreement with Proposal J

Over half of respondents (55%) agreed with the proposal to introduce a self-employed minimum income floor. Just over one quarter (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 18% disagreed. There are no significant differences by area.

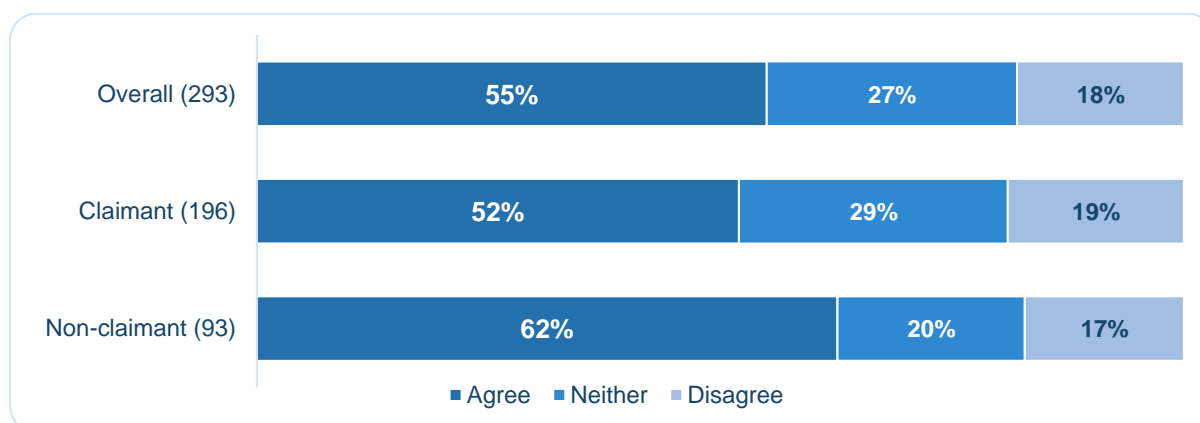
Figure 37: Levels of agreement to Proposal J by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Non-claimants are more likely to agree with Proposal J (62%) than claimants (52%). Just under three out of ten (29%) claimants neither agree nor disagree. There are no significant differences in levels of disagreement between claimants and non-claimants.

Figure 38: Levels of agreement to Proposal J by respondent type (% respondents)

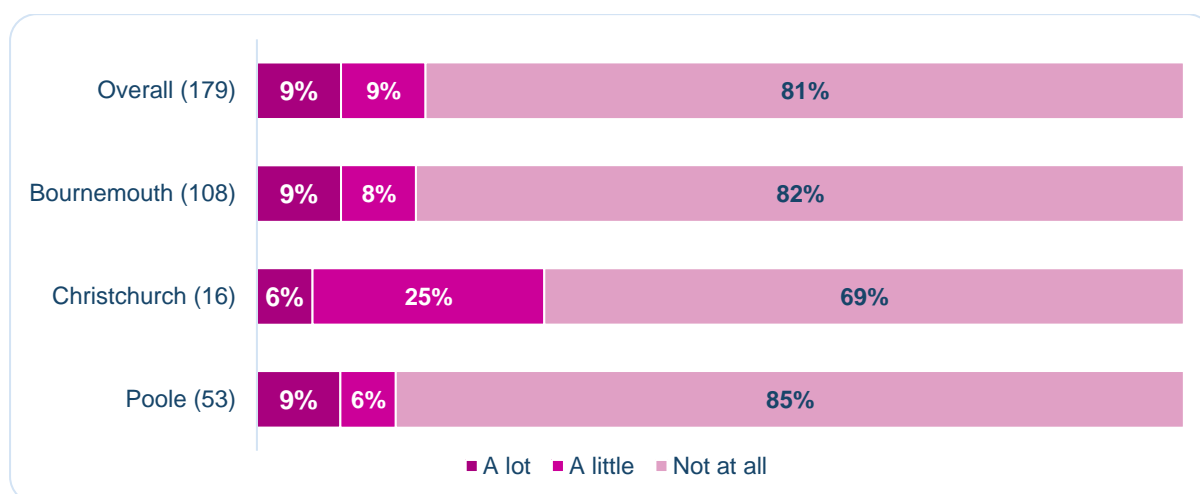


BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal J

Just under one out of ten of respondents (9%) said that they would be impacted by Proposal J a lot, with 9% said that they would be affected a little. Just over four fifths of respondents (81%) thought that they would not be affected by this proposal. The response varies by area, with slightly fewer respondents in Christchurch feeling that the proposal would affect them a lot (6%), but one quarter (25%) responded that the proposal would affect them a little.

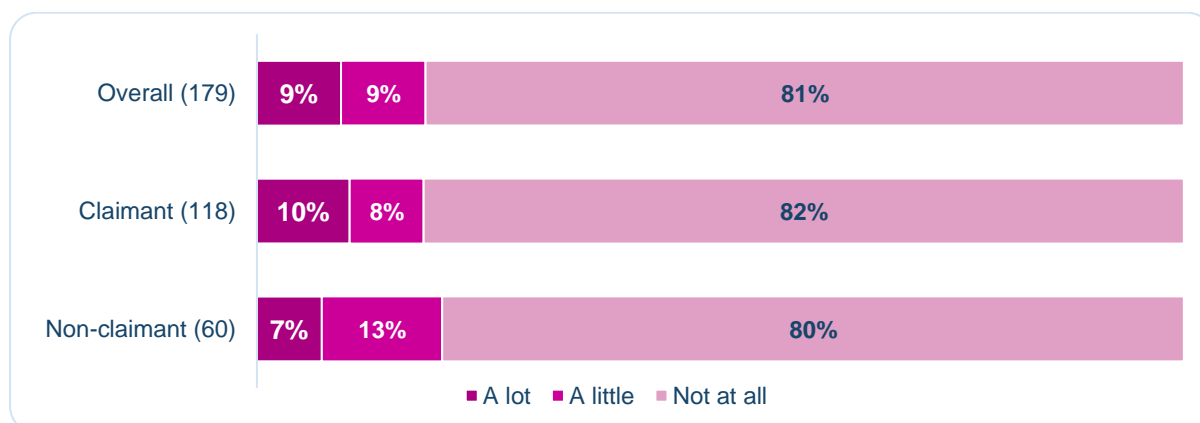
Figure 39: Levels of impact to Proposal J by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

There are no differences between the views of claimants and non-claimants.

Figure 40: Levels of impact to Proposal J by respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

There are differences by age, with fewer people aged 16-34 agreeing with this proposal (34%) than those aged 65 and over (69%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Respondents aged 35 to 44 are significantly more likely to think that the proposal will impact them to some extent (43%) compared to those aged 45 to 54 (15%) and 55 to 64 (10%).

Respondents without a disability are significantly more likely to think that proposal J would impact them to some extent (30%) compared to those with a disability (10%).

Christian respondents (63%) are significantly more likely to agree with Proposal J compared to those with no religion (57%).

Respondents without children are significantly more likely to feel that this proposal will not impact them at all (86%) than parents (70%).

There are no differences by employment type for this proposal.

Comments on Proposal J

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal J. There were 32 additional comments regarding the proposal to introduce a self-employed minimum income floor. The most common theme arising from these comments was general agreement with the proposal and it being fair (8 comments).

"This change seems fair." (non-claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

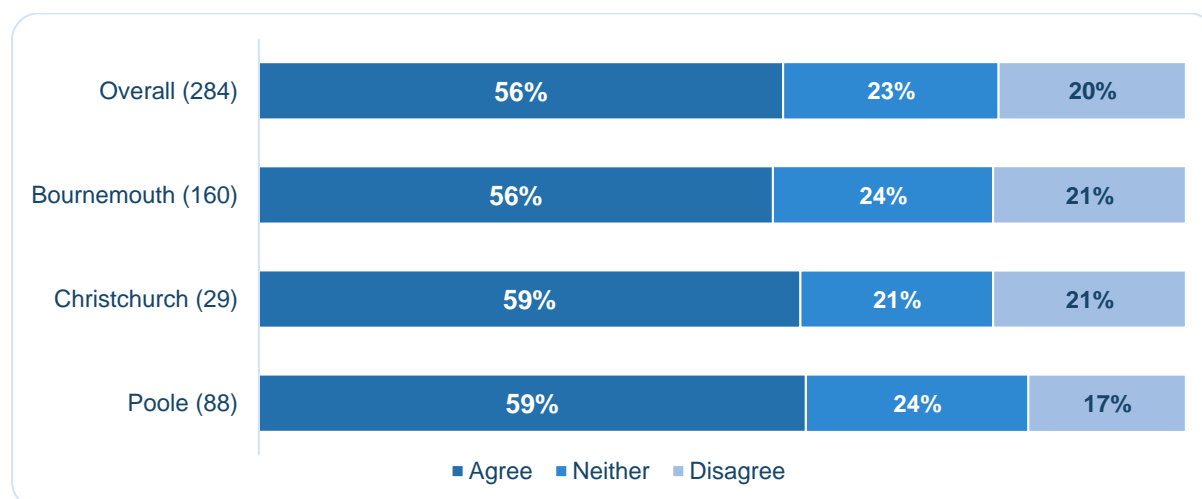
- General disagreement with the proposal / unfair proposal (7 comments)
- Other comments (7 comments)
- Negative financial impact (4 comments)
- Calculation should be based on actual earnings (4 comments)
- Positive financial impact (3 comments)
- Description of personal circumstances (2 comments)
- New business should have more time (2 comments)
- Should be dependent on circumstances (1 comment)
- Comments on the consultation (1 comment)
- Impact is unknown (1 comment)

Proposal K: Introduce fixed period assessments for Universal Credit recipients of 26 or 52 weeks

Levels of agreement with Proposal K

Over half of respondents (56%) agreed with the proposal to introduce fixed period assessments for Universal Credit recipients. Two in ten respondents (20%) disagreed. There are no significant differences by area.

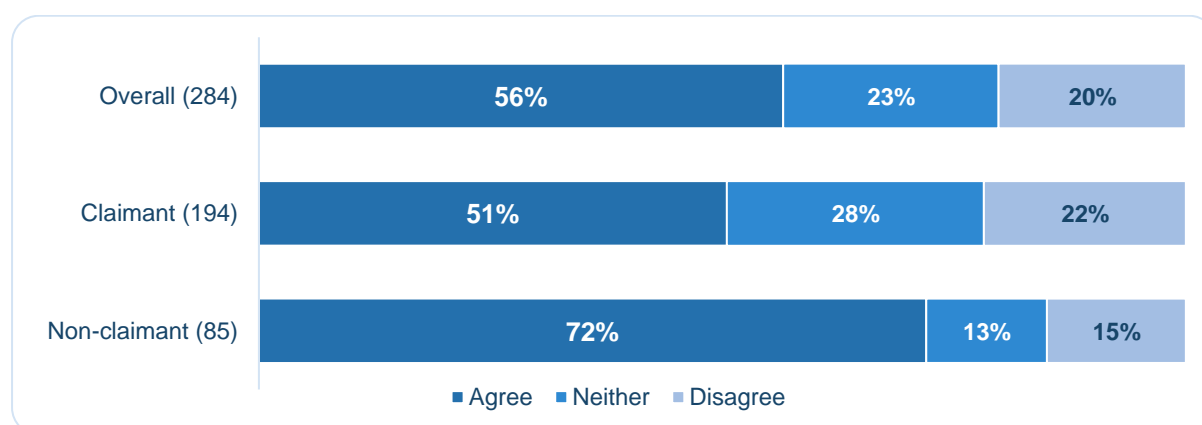
Figure 41: Levels of agreement to Proposal K by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Just over half of claimants (51%) agreed with Proposal K, compared to just under three quarters of non-claimants (72%). Just over two out of ten claimants (22%) disagreed, whilst 15% of non-claimants disagreed.

Figure 42: Levels of agreement to Proposal K by respondent type (% respondents)



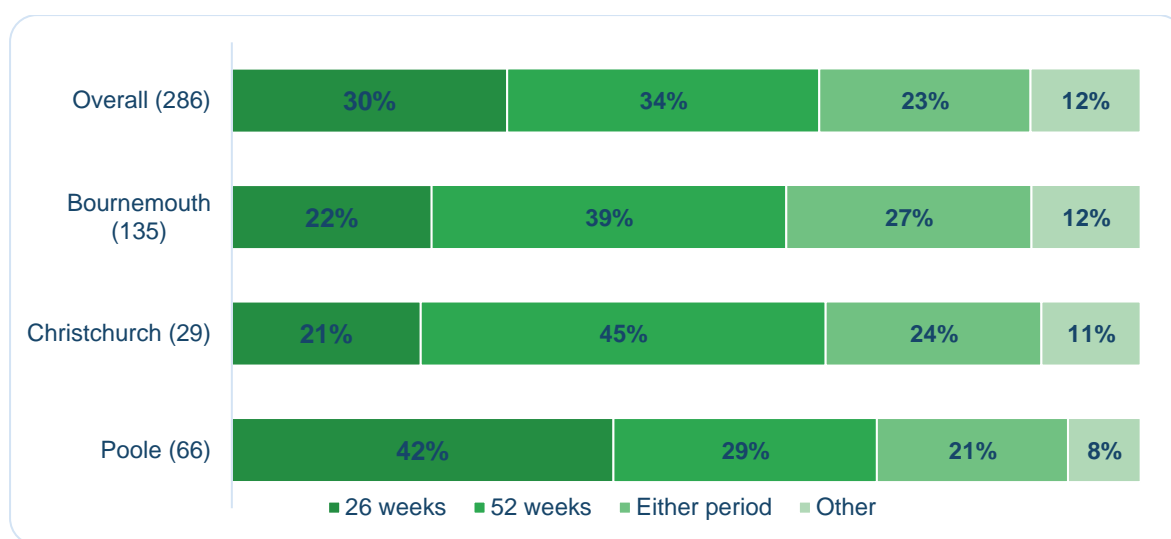
BASE: Varied as labelled

Views on the assessment period

Respondents were asked whether they would prefer a 26 week or 52 week assessment period. Overall, 30% of respondents would prefer a 26 week assessment period, with just over one third (34%) selecting 52 weeks. Just over one out of ten (12%) respondents gave 'other' as their response, with 4 of these giving their suggestion. Just under one quarter of respondents (23%) would have 'either period'.

The results vary by area, with Bournemouth (39%) and Christchurch (45%) preferring a 52 week period, whilst Poole respondents (42%) prefer 26 weeks.

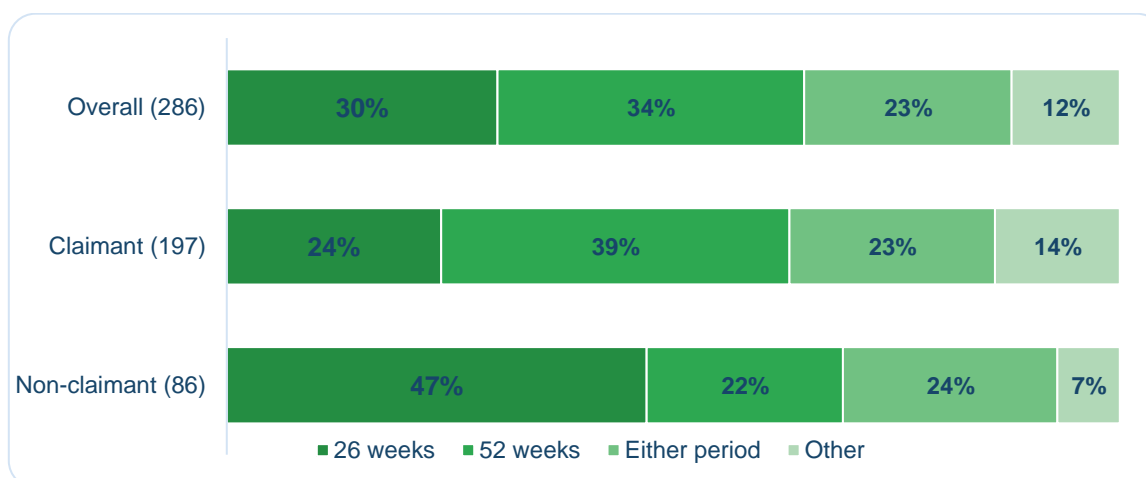
Figure 43: Preferred assessment period by area



BASE: Varied as labelled

When looking at claimants and non-claimants, just under four out of ten of claimants (39%) prefer a 52 week period, with just under a quarter (24%) favouring a 26 week period. Just under one half of non-claimants (47%) chose a 26 week period and 22% chose 52 weeks.

Figure 44: Preferred assessment period by respondent type



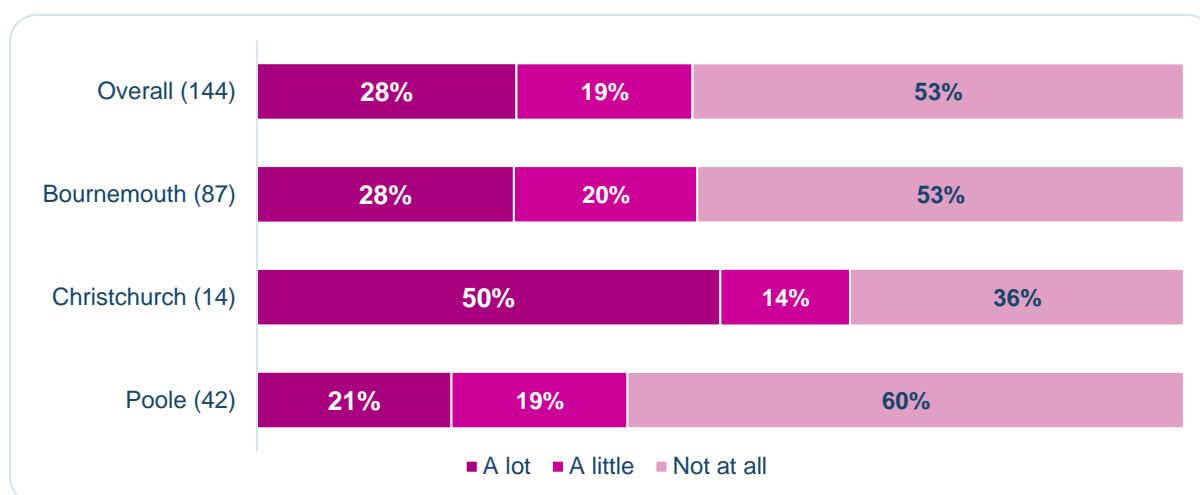
BASE: Varied as labelled

Impact of Proposal K

Just under one third of respondents (28%) thought that introducing both a 26 week and a 52 week assessment period would impact on them and their family a lot whilst around one fifth (19% for 26 weeks and 21% for 52 weeks) thought it would impact on them a little. Just over half of respondents thought the proposed change wouldn't impact on them at all.

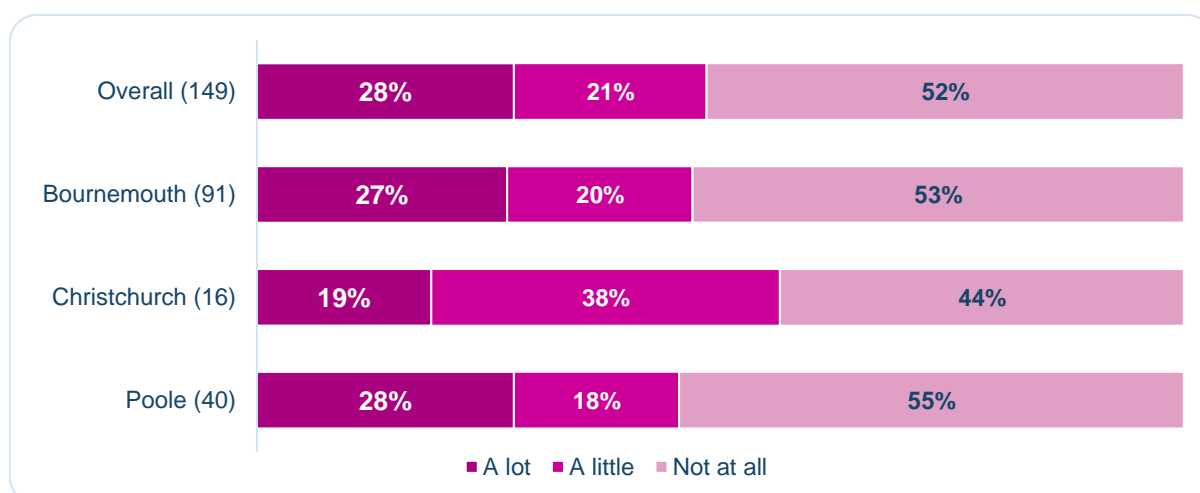
The results vary by area, with respondents in Christchurch significantly more likely to think that an assessment period of 26 weeks would impact them a lot (50%) compared an assessment period of 52 weeks (19%). More respondents in Poole (28%) felt that they would be impacted a lot by a 52 week assessment period (28%) compared to 26 week period (21%). Respondents in Bournemouth thought there would be a similar impact for either assessment period.

Figure 45: Levels of impact of a 26 week assessment period by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

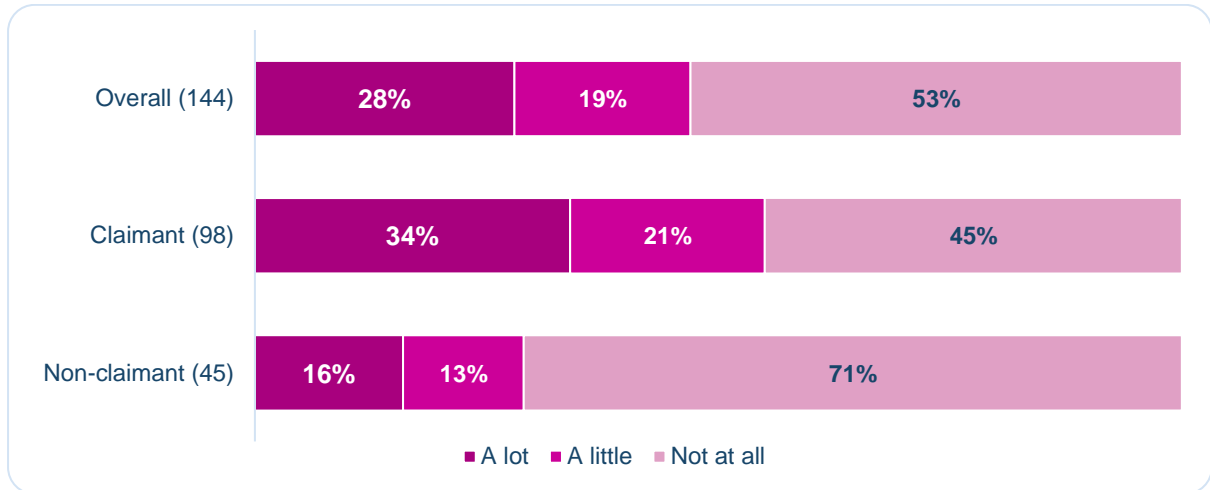
Figure 46: Levels of impact of a 52 week assessment period by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

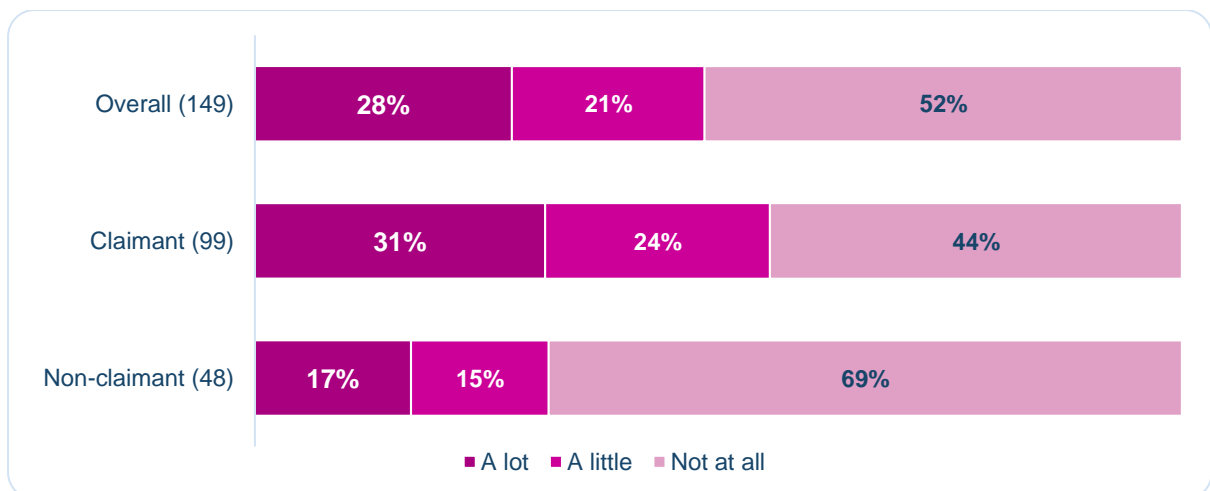
Looking at claimants, the results are fairly similar for impact of the two assessment periods; 34% of claimants feel that a 26 week assessment period would affect them a lot, compared 31% for a 52 week assessment period.

Figure 47: Levels of impact of a 26 week assessment period by respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Figure 48: Levels of impact of a 52 week assessment period by respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

There are differences in responses by age, with those aged 65 and over significantly more likely to agree with the proposal (79%) than those aged 35-44 (48%), those aged 45-54 (55%) and those aged 55-64 (56%). However, this is likely to be because non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Respondents aged 65 and over are more likely to prefer a 26 week assessment period (62%) than those aged under 65. Conversely, those aged 16-34 and 55-64 are more likely to prefer a 52 week assessment period (40% and 39% respectively) than those aged 65 and over (17%). However, non-working age claimants are not affected by the proposal.

Comments on Proposal K

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments about proposal K. There were 49 additional comments regarding the proposal introduce fixed period assessments for Universal Credit recipients of 26 or 52 weeks. The most common theme arising from these comments related to the monitoring period they prefer (9 comments).

"I think every 26 weeks is a good amount of time although I would worry that this time could mean a significant amount is either overpaid or owed?" (claimant)

"I agree with this period [52 weeks] because it should be up to everyone to disclose information at the right time, but the government needs to check once a year to make sure." (claimant)

"I think 52 weeks is more realistic as its also ties in with self-employed reviews and avoids a potentially un-payable bill with only 6 months worth of collection time." (claimant)

The other comments were themed as follows:

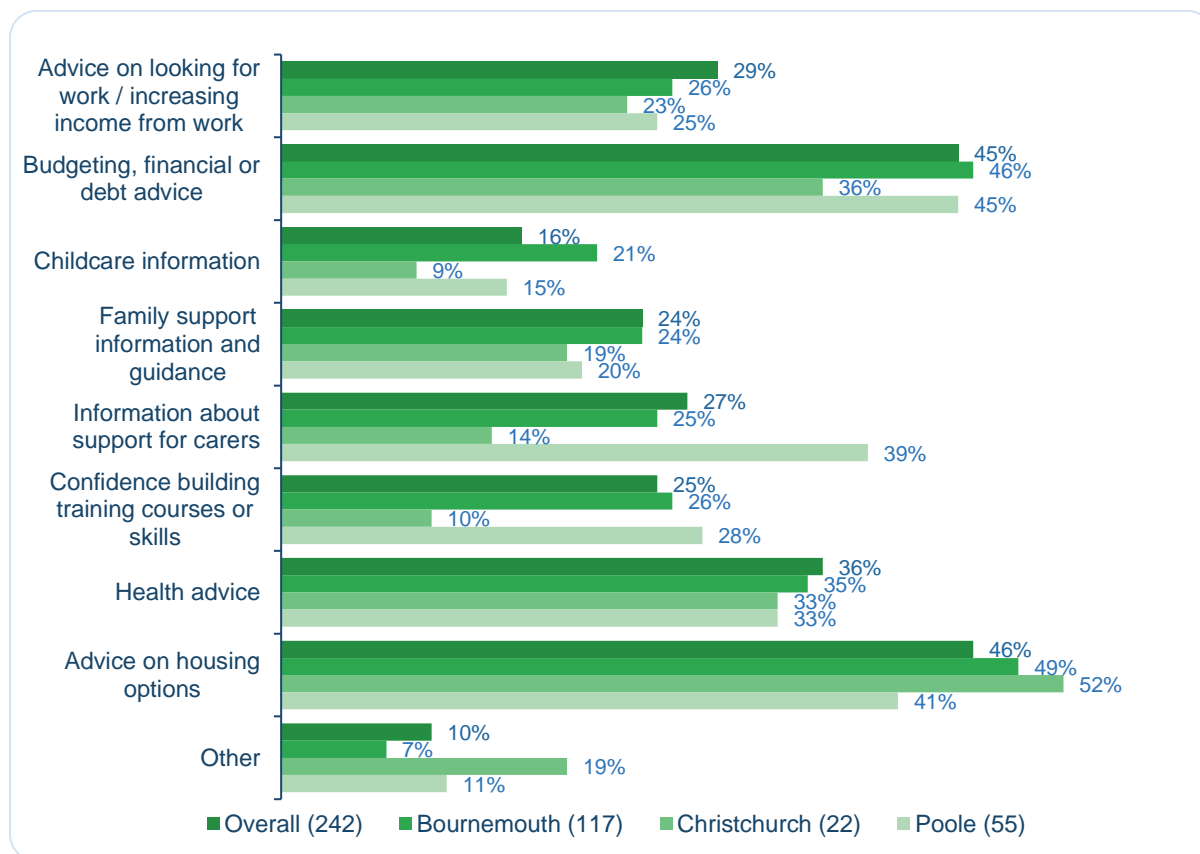
- Related to reducing administrative time / bureaucracy (7 comments)
- Other comments (7 comments)
- There is a potential for overpaying or arrears (5 comments)
- It makes sense to align with Universal Credit (5 comments)
- Suggesting alternative assessment periods (5 comments)
- Introducing a review period could cause stress/anxiety (5 comments)
- Doesn't want the proposed changes to affect them (4 comments)
- They are disabled/have mobility issues (3 comments)
- Not personally affected (3 comments)
- A fixed period will disadvantage those who have a genuine change in circumstances (1 comment)

Information and Support

Respondents were asked what information or support would help them (or others affected) to manage the change. Advice on housing options (46%), budgeting, financial or debt advice (45%) and health advice (36%) are the top three types of information or support that would help respondents to manage the change.

Respondents from Poole were more likely to require information about support for carers (39%) than respondents from Bournemouth (25%) or Christchurch (14%).

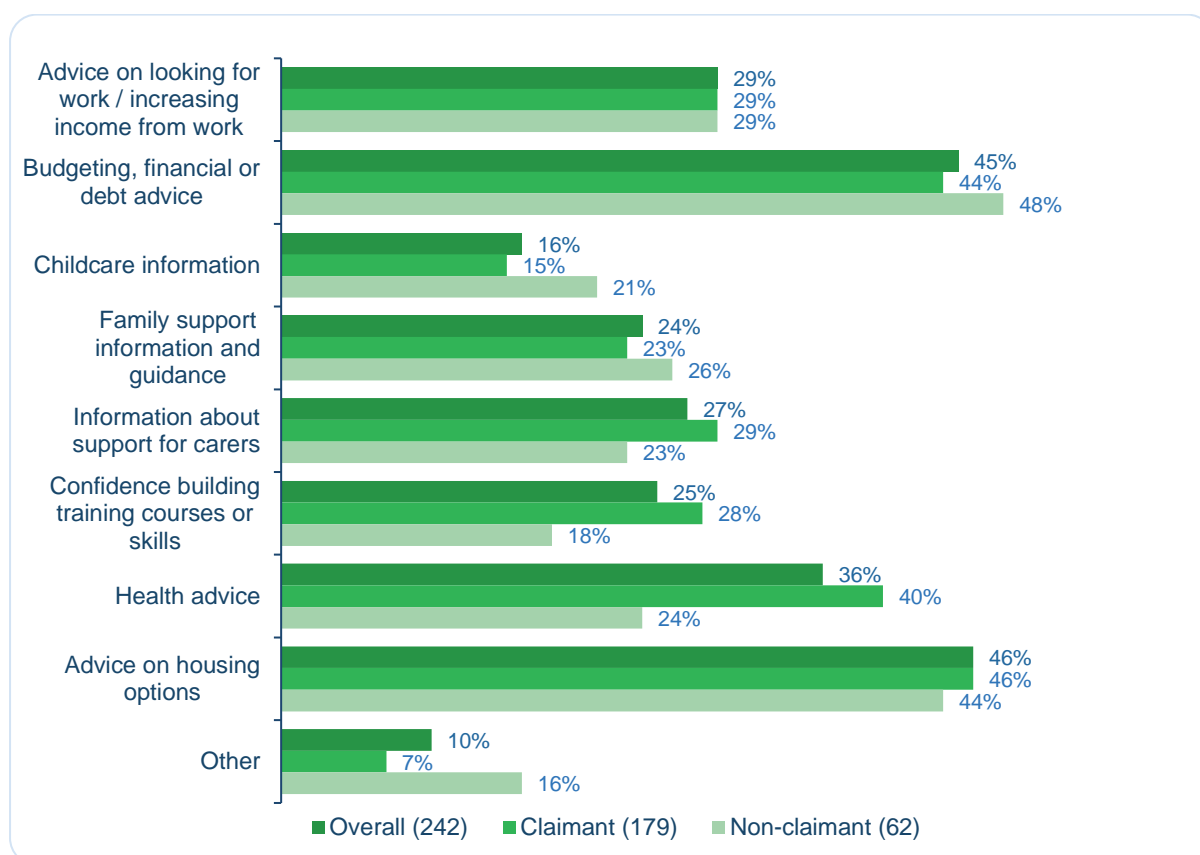
Figure 49: Information and Support by area (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Claimants were more likely to request health advice (40%) than non-claimants (24%).

Figure 50: Information and Support by respondent type (% respondents)



BASE: Varied as labelled

Differences in response

Parents are more likely to need budgeting, financial and debt advice (58%), family support information (38%) and childcare information (32%) than those without children.

Those aged 35-44 and 45-54 are more likely to require budgeting, financial and debt advice (27% and 20% respectively) than other age groups.

Those aged over 45 are more likely to need information about support for carers, with this need being highest amongst those aged 65 and over (39%).

Higher proportions of those age groups under 45 would like confidence building training courses or skills, with support highest for those aged 35-44 (38%) and aged 16-34 (37%).

The proportion of those stating they need housing advice is highest amongst other sexual orientations (83%), although the number in this group is low (n=12).

There also appears to be more demand for family support information amongst BME groups (50%), but the number is low (n=10).

8. Additional comments

The survey gave respondents the opportunity to give any comments or suggestions about the proposed new scheme, or about any other options they would like considered. A total of 94 respondents left a comment. Many of these comments were about the new council or the government rather than about the proposed scheme. However, several key themes emerged and are outlined below. All of the comments are available in Appendix 3.

- The negative impact of the proposals (32 comments)
- Comments related to the proposals (22 comments)
- The new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Authority (12 comments)
- Other comment (11 comments)
- Made a suggestion (8 comments)
- The government (4 comments)
- Council tax (5 comments)
- Universal Credits (5 comments)
- Disabilities (4 comments)
- Asked a question about the proposals (3 comments)

Appendix 1: Summary of Responses

Proposal	% Agree				% Impact A Lot / A Little			
	Overall	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole	Overall	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole
A. Set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group	48%	53%	44%	39%	54%	51%	73%	56%
B. Withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families	33%	36%	21%	32%	31%	29%	33%	32%
C. Limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims	48%	49%	39%	52%	33%	34%	25%	37%
D. Cap scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group	47%	51%	29%	47%	36%	38%	48%	30%
E. Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p	45%	49%	33%	45%	30%	31%	24%	27%
F. No working age Second Adult Rebate.	39%	44%	24%	38%	27%	25%	19%	29%
G. Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants	54%	53%	55%	56%	21%	17%	37%	22%
H. Disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support for all working age claimants	46%	46%	37%	50%	18%	19%	13%	14%
I. Mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules	54%	58%	39%	54%	20%	22%	6%	16%
J. Introduce a self-employed minimum income floor	55%	54%	57%	57%	18%	17%	31%	15%
K. Introduce fixed period assessments	56%	56%	59%	59%	-	-	-	-
Impact of 26 week fixed period assessments	-	-	-	-	47%	48%	64%	40%
Impact of 52 week fixed period assessments	-	-	-	-	49%	47%	57%	46%

Proposal	% Agree		% Impact A Lot / A Little	
	Claimant	Non-claimant	Claimant	Non-claimant
A. Set the minimum contribution at 20% for working age residents not in a protected group	40%	40%	56%	49%
B. Withdraw the family premium for new working age claims and new families	33%	24%	29%	33%
C. Limit backdating to up to a maximum of one calendar month for working age claims	41%	68%	34%	31%
D. Cap scheme at Council Tax Band C for working age claimants not in a protected group	43%	59%	36%	35%
E. Minimum weekly entitlement of 50p	42%	52%	34%	20%
F. No working age Second Adult Rebate.	32%	57%	27%	23%
G. Limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for working age claimants	49%	69%	19%	22%
H. Disregard Bereavement Support Payment and Infected Blood Schemes financial support for all working age claimants	43%	54%	17%	16%
I. Mirror the Housing Benefit 'Temporary Absence' rules	49%	68%	20%	16%
J. Introduce a self-employed minimum income floor	52%	62%	18%	20%
K. Introduce fixed period assessments for Universal Credit recipients of 26 or 52 weeks	51%	72%	-	-
Impact of 26 week fixed period assessments	-	-	55%	29%
Impact of 52 week fixed period assessments	-	-	55%	32%

Appendix 2: Respondent Profile

		Overall	Bournemouth	Christchurch	Poole
Gender	Male	148	88	10	49
	Female	167	89	24	53
Age	16 - 34 years	26	12	<10	<10
	35 - 44 years	46	31	<10	<10
	45 - 54 years	87	49	<10	30
	55 - 64 years	127	73	14	40
	65+ years	30	13	<10	15
Disability	Yes	194	109	23	61
	No	109	60	9	39
Ethnicity	White British	272	146	33	91
	White Other	26	17	<10	<10
	BME	12	10	-	<10
Religion	No religion	123	67	11	44
	Christian	162	91	20	50
	Other religion	20	15	<10	<10
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	274	157	25	90
	All other sexual orientations	19	<10	<10	<10
Employment	Economically active	85	55	12	17
	Economically inactive	137	76	16	45
Household Status	A family with one or more dependent children	65	37	<10	18
	A single parent household	41	19	<10	14
	A couple without children	42	24	<10	16
	A single person household	133	83	12	38
	A household that includes someone who is disabled	104	54	12	37
	A household that includes a carer	53	24	<10	22

		Claimants	Non-claimants
Gender	Male	109	39
	Female	118	51
Age	16 - 34 years	19	<10
	35 - 44 years	37	<10
	45 - 54 years	66	21
	55 - 64 years	107	21
	65+ years	<10	29
Disability	Yes	166	29
	No	51	59
Ethnicity	White British	196	78
	White Other	17	<10
	BME	<10	<10
Religion	No religion	89	34
	Christian	114	50
	Other religion	17	<10
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	193	83
	All other sexual orientations	16	<10
Employment	Economically active	85	50
	Economically inactive	137	40
Household Status	A family with one or more dependent children	42	23
	A single parent household	34	<10
	A couple without children	14	28
	A single person household	110	25
	A household that includes someone who is disabled	93	11
	A household that includes a carer	45	<10

Appendix 3: Comments

Additional comments about Proposal A

People on benefits receive so little I'm not sure how they would meet 20% of the council tax bill.	Poole	Claimant
The Unitary Authority has to be seen to be fair, as a majority of claimants would not be affected by the change it would be justifiable for the authority to bring all residents in line with the majority. As a Bournemouth Resident (in a Protected Group) I am already subject to this under the current scheme so I would not be affected by this change.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Irrelevant above question as I do not have a crystal ball.	Other	Non-claimant
Good idea but tax cannot be avoided it's a shame as some people cannot afford it.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am extremely concerned that many people not in the protected groups may not be able to afford this Council Tax. Examples where DWP makes errors, deliberately more often than not, removing benefits, a year wait to Tribunals or not capable of fighting, maybe sick or disabled and can't work but then DWP removed the monies or simply low income in poverty. Council Tax is extortionate especially where person lives alone.	Poole	Claimant
I will be my official pension age so it should not affect me.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think this is a very fair proposal.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Hi I haven't been able to work since 2010...my only income is on disability which is hopeless!	Poole	Claimant
There are other people who are on low incomes, not just your protected groups. Everyone should receive a fair assessment.	Christchurch	Claimant
I already pay 20% so this does not affect me.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The problem is "How long is a piece of string"? you state that a minimum of 20% would be payable you are asking for people to give views on what has not been stated as in a maximum figure, which indicates there will be no maximum figure.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think it's massively unfair to change a benefit that you have already been awarded and you rely on to support your family when your wages etc haven't changed i.e. gone up to account for the loss. As someone who suffers with mental health this would affect me a lot.	Christchurch	Claimant
Very low income so 20% would put me in poverty.	Poole	Claimant
I am in receipt of PIP and my husband is my carer, so am in a protected group, but I feel that some working families on minimum wage would really struggle to pay £20 a month. Surely this should be means tested.	Bournemouth	Claimant

I already pay above that amount.	Bournemouth	Claimant
There seems to be no change for Bournemouth, which is why I agree.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
As I am on JSA at the moment I have to consider a lot of factors; as I do not know if I'm in a protected group.	Poole	Claimant
I live in Bournemouth and the level of support does not change for my area.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
I am suffering from a heart condition and polycythemia....unable to work and already battling the DWP in ESA payments that have not increased in 4 years, and yet rent and council tax have increased year on year.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am on JSA at the moment, and as this benefit is capped and with bills and cost of living going up all the time I feel it would be an extra bill to add without support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It should be very clear that anybody on benefits should not have to pay council tax! It is crippling and so are the costs of housing! I am in a protected group but if I was not I would not be able to survive on the income that I have at present! My outgoings exceed my income in the main anyway! I believe it should apply only to people actually in work and not according to their age! If they earn under a certain amount their contribution should be at a lower rate! Christchurch residents should be determined individually! We never wanted to be pushed in to this situation anyway!	Christchurch	Claimant
As I live in Bournemouth this rule applies to me.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Conservative Party....creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
I don't think this apply to me.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am already struggling as it is. Further increase in Council tax will cause a further burden.	Poole	Claimant
This won't change anything for me. I think all the councils should be the same.	Bournemouth	Claimant

People on low incomes need more help.	Poole	Non-claimant
The proposal significantly reduces support for people in Christchurch who are already in poverty. If the new council isn't a just cost cutting exercise in overheads of running 3 councils, then it would be better to aggregate the support across the 3 councils to increase support in Bournemouth and Poole and not decrease it so much in Christchurch.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Council tax should be frozen for the next few years.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
People who received benefits and live on them, such as housing benefit and JSA, should not pay council tax on that amount.	Poole	Non-claimant
As a service worker living alone this reduction in council tax will assist me greatly in being able to eat more regularly and help to heat my home.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I'm already paying 20% so nothing will change. I still think on the benefits I get this is still far too much.	Poole	Claimant
Seems to be hitting the most vulnerable, who are struggling to make ends meet now.	Poole	Non-claimant
I get no reduction in my council tax at present & don't ever expect to qualify - however I am unaware how many qualify for reductions at present - so if the first question is to increase overall payments of council tax - I feel I will NOT be impacted. BUT if the proposal will decrease overall contributions I do feel I will be impacted as in the end " someone has to pay to keep services " & that someone may well be me as my council tax will go up.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
People need to be able afford their council tax. It should not be related to the value of their home. People need to see in their area what they are paying for.	Poole	Claimant
Why spend 30'000'40.000 on this pathetic survey. as you will do it any way. like you went against the vote NOT to join councils. and you ignored the peplos vote and did it anyway. now you have started this. just to ROB the people to finance for spending on rubbish. that do not benefit anybody but yourselves. to keep you all in your ivory towers and sky-high wages. . waging your finger. saying it's good for the town. which town I say. as you now it won't be spent in Poole which I admit looks like a slum run down .not fit for the disabled as the paths are like going off roading and damage owe mobility scooters ... you all make me sick I have an idea STOP STEELING OF THE POOR. and take a cut in wages. . don't have companies to do these things. do it in house do your jobs your paid over the top for. don't have 10 managers and still contract it out. and where do you think people on benefit's will find . 20 percent. of the food shopping money or the electric and gas. or shall we take it out of the budgets for their kid's school uniforms. as that's just a stupid expense that the poor don't need. so I don't now why I'm filling this in as you will do it anyway .. like you lot normally do .democracy my foot.	Poole	Unknown
The new rules should primarily be fair to the people who have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant

As a tenant in receipt of ESA (support group) with a severe disability premium I should continue to be exempt. I am concerned that currently I keep having to provide evidence to the HB/CTC office that my adult son is a full-time student (was college, now University) not earning any income, despite my carer's premium in my ESA and my PIP daily Living (care) premium meaning exemption should be automatic. I hope you will take this opportunity to train your staff to accept the primary reason for exemption as sufficient and stop asking for further reasons to be provided.	Christchurch	Claimant
Even an extra £10 would have a huge impact on my family.	Poole	Claimant
May affect members of my extended family but the reasons for it are agreeable.	Christchurch	Claimant
It seems right that all residents in the area should be subject to paying the same amount.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Especially as on universal credit.	Bournemouth	Claimant
As my partner is in the protected group, It wouldn't affect us. Should our circumstances eventually change, we would start paying. Some families would still struggle affording to pay though.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The 26 or 52 week review could be an issue. If a drastic change happens, potentially too long to wait for a review, will there be override in these cases?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Working age residents not in employment and not in a protected group already find it difficult to make ends meet, mostly families with children but, also single people on Universal Credit. I already find it difficult to live on benefits as I have long and enduring health problems and would find it hard to pay 20% if I were not in a protected group.	Bournemouth	Claimant
We are a family with 2 disabled children that myself and my partner are full time carers for. For us to be able to function we need the both of us at home to be able to care for all 3 of our children. I feel it will put us into poverty.	Poole	Claimant
There are families who can't afford to pay even 20%.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't think it should be a set amount it should be based on the individuals circumstances.	Christchurch	Claimant
People with life long disabilities are struggling enough surviving on benefits without this being added too.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I feel that some people will benefit from this however some will still struggle.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Have a 17-year-old - I assume they will be expected pay once they turn 18 and they are in employment.	Poole	Claimant
Not sure where I stand as due to my mental health I cannot work.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am a single working parent who suffers from arthritis and so moved near my daughter's school to rented accommodation. The council tax band is the highest, which I was not expecting and so 20% is far too high a minimum contribution under the circumstances.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am in receipt of PIP and ESA these proposals are a cause for concern.	Bournemouth	Claimant
20% is too small an amount.	Poole	Claimant
All I know is I....had been living at a place that was just a room with a bathroom and a sink. Online when I was looking at the place it said council tax was included in the rent. After living there three years I get a 3 year back dated council tax bill of almost 3,000 pounds! For one I've been on and off benefits trying to find work and two if the rules are changed on how	Bournemouth	Non-claimant

certain properties are taxed then fine but backdating my bill three years is wrong. I'm still fighting this but its difficult getting all the benefits documents they need. I don't believe I should owe any of this money I would however be ok with it being a future bill but it being backdated like this is just so wrong I don't understand how this got the go ahead....		
The amount paid for council tax is already absurd and should have nothing to do with income (unless when it comes to reductions for lower incomes) as the rents already high and take up the majority of a person's income.	Poole	Non-claimant
Whilst I always thought that everyone working person should most certainly be paying a fair council tax, when I retired and lived on my own I felt the allocated percentage of tax was to high.	Poole	Non-claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
I applied for the help but never heard anything back from Poole Council. I put this down to them loosing my paperwork I should have sent it back by recorded delivery. I'm 40% disabled...my injury was a patient assaulting me while working.in an NHS hospital.	Poole	Non-claimant
Seems a rather generous 'minimum', as some of these working age residents have undeclared income from the 'black economy'.	Poole	Non-claimant
At the moment Bournemouth council have not changed to Universal credit scheme. I don't know what the implications are when that happens.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Too expensive.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
What about the workers paying full price in xchurch. Bring the payments down! £157 a month every month is too high.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
I think setting an arbitrary figure (in this case at 20%) without reference to the actual earnings of working age residents could easily give rise to actual hardship for some residents on low/minimal income. A mechanism needs to be put in place to allow some flexibility/discretion having regard to any individual's ability to pay to avoid a repressive tax regime hurting the poorest in society, simply because they are not in a protected group. I make the assumption that you are using the term "protected group" within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 (although this is not clear from your supporting documentation). If this is so, then in some respects it is a pretty stupid definition to use in the context of the ability to pay, since other than for the "disabled" (where there are ample [and publicly available] correlation statistics linking disability of	Bournemouth	Claimant

individuals to poverty [and child poverty] in the UK). Conversely, there is no direct correlation between the ability to earn (and consequently pay Council Tax) when considering race, sexual orientation etc; since these are characteristics which have no bearing on earnings and hence the ability to pay any particular charge without said charge running the risk of creating hardship as to the ability to pay, and for the associated economic oppression on said individual arising from any actions from the Council in pursuing such debts.		
I think is better to spend less money.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
If someone who has a long-standing health condition is deemed fit to work, rightly, wrongly, or temporarily, and they have yet to find work, or are only able to find or sustain temporary or part-time work, they would be receiving universal credit, which is a low amount and is well-known to often be delayed. The payment of 20% council tax could easily be the amount that causes them to be unable to pay their rent, which would leave them homeless. For this reason I think the protected group should be extended to anyone receiving Universal credit, or until then, anyone receiving ESA (work-related activity group) or JSA.	Bournemouth	Claimant
These questions are not clear.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
I find it very difficult because sometimes I don't have enough money to.	Bournemouth	Unknown
Obviously when changes occur, it can affect a vulnerable person's mental health. Hopefully this new amalgamation of three councils has already been tried and tested and should be alright for most people.	Christchurch	Claimant
As a single person living in own home and working part time I think that 25% discount on council tax is not enough.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Everybody needs to make some contribution to council tax no matter how minimal, otherwise we continue to encourage/support 'something for nothing' mentality. We all need to share the burden as we all benefit from services provided.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
We think it will be a very good idea all the councils merging together.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How will a working age person pay such contributions if and when they have no job or household in low income etc? Personally, don't agree with the council merger itself. Multi-millions spending on a costly merger with unclear benefits. Poole Council should stay.	Poole	Claimant
Costs limited funds income 200-00 year, overall 1300full tax. 1 pay - 200, 1100 subsidy.	Poole	Claimant
It will affect people working on a low income.	Poole	Claimant
This is completely non-sensed. How can one reply to questions that mean nothing?	Unknown	Unknown
20% of £1000.000 a year is £200+ at minimum £18.00 a month depending on what income 'low wages'.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't know what is a reference number. I left the letter that I have received from the council. I Don't have family.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Minimum salaries are too restrictive to see anymore to see any more rises in any capacity. Anything under £18,000 p.a	Bournemouth	Claimant

I know couples that are both working and cannot make ends meet.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It does not say how much the 20% is of. What changes to the council tax? How can we tell, when we haven't been told?	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'm confused.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Some people may not be able to cover the extra expense.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Contributions should be the same across the board.	Poole	Non-claimant
Due to my disability ad sickness, as I am semi-retired.	Poole	Non-claimant
Was there any point in having a vote some months ago, which 3/4 of Christchurch voted against?	Christchurch	Claimant
Ability to pay it on a fixed income or benefit.	Poole	Claimant
I can't say, I have struggled to even have a TV or get a TV licence over the last few years, as the mortgage had to be paid and I didn't have enough for food or bills and had to give something a miss for the last X years. So I don't know how this might affect the individuals	Bournemouth	Unknown

Additional comments about Proposal B

I thought the new authority was to save money, not impose new austerity. Unfair and harmful policy.	Christchurch	Claimant
The Unitary Authority has to be seen to be fair, as a majority of claimants would not be affected by the change it would be justifiable for the authority to bring all residents in line with the majority. As a Bournemouth Resident (in a Protected Group) I am already subject to this under the current scheme so I would not be affected by this change.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Don't make matters worse. Too many in extreme poverty as it is.	Poole	Claimant
Each case should be assessed for its own merits.	Christchurch	Claimant
Having family members who earn just over the threshold to receive UC (that replaces tax credits), families living in in-work poverty need all the help they can get.	Poole	Claimant
Families working or not are already under extreme pressure financially, you state that some 20 plus thousand households receive the benefit of reduction, that equates to tens of thousands of people within the borough financial hardship is inevitable to some of the most vulnerable people who have children	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think it's massively unfair to change a benefit that you have already been awarded and you rely on to support your family when your wages etc haven't changed i.e. gone up to account for the loss. As someone who suffers with mental health this would affect me a lot.	Christchurch	Claimant
Just a tax for disabled people.	Bournemouth	Claimant
See previous answer. Also, what happened to means testing these benefits, it's disgusting that the poorest working families are going to be the worst hit.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Haven't got any family.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why only new claims, that's not fair? Withdraw it for all.	Poole	Claimant
This does not affect me but if a family had to fine an extra £15 a week or more they could struggle for heating clothing food etc. it could be the difference between them having a life and having to struggle to exist.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears	Poole	Unknown

that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.		
Joining the other councils which can barely hold their own anyway compared to Christchurch will affect me! If help is withdrawn I will be badly affected financially! I am no longer in a family but it is families who get hit hard and who have to cut out other essentials if they do not get helped! It would be a lot better if it was determined according to their ability to pay so that anyone on any benefit did not have it withdrawn! The system needs a shake up and there needs to be some leniency where claims are mucked up and you have to start a new claim or are forced to!	Christchurch	Claimant
New working age claims and new families should be supported not hindered.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Conservative...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
New families may need more assistance.	Bournemouth	Claimant
As I don't have any children under 16 this doesn't apply to me but I know this will make things very difficult for people with young children.	Bournemouth	Claimant
People on low incomes need more help.	Poole	Non-claimant
Working families on low incomes are already struggling to make ends meet in the current environment and this will get no better with inflation on the rise and Brexit approaching and potential significant increases in food costs. Withdrawing the family premium will mean working families on low incomes are worse off yet again, increasing the number of children living in poverty in the new council area.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
New families face a lot of expense in a country where there are too many cut back. Some new families face travel costs for a sick baby/mother,	Poole	Claimant
Like I said YOU WILL DO IT ANY WAY.	Poole	Unknown
The rules should primarily be fair to the people who have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
It would have a huge impact.	Poole	Claimant
A lot of new families moving into the area is costing the council and the town a lot of money and therefore this will ensure families are aware of the costs and can then decide if the town is the right place for them.	Christchurch	Claimant
Seems a bit like you are punishing people with more than two children by not taking them into consideration for support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Would mean paying full council tax when on a limited income.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Bournemouth and Poole have this in place. Only fair all councils have the same policy once joined together.	Bournemouth	Claimant

As a single person this proposal would not affect me. I think that for new claims it would affect families a lot especially for families with children. At a time of loss of income, redundancy or unemployment, this is where families need that extra means of support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This is not right because everyone should get family premium who have family. We have it and other families are same so why do you want to discriminate them.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why would it be any different for new claimants. The struggle will be the same.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Will be affected if have to renew claim or move I believe and any reduced benefits causes stress and strain.	Poole	Claimant
Isn't this just a duplication of dependent children? If these children are older and working and/or claiming then they have funds to help toward household costs, such as council tax.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'm retired with a health condition so am in no way affected by such a change but only think that all forms of taxation should be fairly shared amongst the community.	Poole	Non-claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
Help would be nice.	Poole	Non-claimant
What about the workers paying full price in xchurch. Bring the payments down! £157 a month every month is too high.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
I refer you to my points made in proposal A. However, I would add that this proposal creates a two-tier approach to the eligibility of new claimants, viz a viz existing claimants. Essentially by implementing this proposal you place existing claimants in a far better position than new claimants, essentially raising the bar for people who will be under ever more pressure to meet the threshold for support. Apart from the financial pressure for people already on a very low discretionary income, the fact that you intend to operate a two-tier system seems unjust.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Being a single I do not really understand this question as to how it would affect a family.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't understand these proposals.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why would you want to withdraw it in the first place?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Single.	Christchurch	Claimant
Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Fear that many families will suffer by the withdrawal especially those with one parent, young mothers with young kids who need to invest time between family and work. These proposals can be alarming to such households and poorly paid contract workers.	Poole	Claimant
Could lead to child poverty.	Poole	Claimant
You will be taking away a family's safety net. 'Discrimination' no new claims and families.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Depends on income but probably penalises the poor (single or couple).	Bournemouth	Claimant
I will be going back to work in September 2019 and as a single parent homed how I will be able to cope with bills as childcare costs are very high.	Bournemouth	Claimant
New families are usually foreigners.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I would not be able to pay the full premium.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am semi-retired and disabled.	Poole	Non-claimant

Additional comments about Proposal C

Unless the need for backdating is due to severe negligence on the part of the claimant, this would be punitive and unfair.	Christchurch	Claimant
As long as the claim is dealt with within that period.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why would people not get a claim in right away?	Poole	Claimant
The Unitary Authority has to be seen to be fair, as a majority of claimants would not be affected by the change it would be justifiable for the authority to bring all residents in line with the majority. As a Bournemouth Resident (in a Protected Group) I am already subject to this under the current scheme so I would not be affected by this change.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Not fair!	Bournemouth	Claimant
Rents need to be paid on time.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Come on, this Gov. has caused so many to be in hardship, don't go making worse!	Poole	Claimant
People should be paid what they are entitled to, not have money snatched off them by insidiously placed red tape. This could tip families over the edge and cause homelessness.	Christchurch	Claimant
In principle as a general rule I agree, but again there are sometimes genuine reasons as to why some people may have to ask for further backdating, such as hospital stays, bereavement etc.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Just making more people homeless.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Surely there are circumstances where it would be necessary to be flexible. This government seems to have forgotten that they are dealing with human beings, not statistics.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It would need to depend on circumstances, as I know someone that had to backdate approx. 6 months due to a council error	Bournemouth	Claimant
Sometimes it can take longer than a month to sort claim. Claimant shouldn't be penalised because of slowness of process.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Unless of course the delay is due to lazy council pen pushers.	Poole	Claimant
There seems to be no change for Bournemouth, which is why I agree.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
A month is dark too short, especially for those with learning difficulties.	Christchurch	Claimant
I'm on universal credit but also have health issues and am in process of sorting thing out with my own claim but if I have read it correctly most universal credit claims are assessed monthly and should be given a set period of at least 26 or 52 weeks depending on the claimant's circumstances.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable	Poole	Unknown

in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.		
That's a bit unfair if it takes longer than a month to sort out the claim which it usually does. How are people claiming supposed to cover the rest of the backdating dates payments?	Poole	Claimant
In my experience I have had a claim that should have been paid 6 months prior due to a decision that was overturned! If what you had proposed was to happen in a similar circumstance it would only benefit you! Back date to exactly what is owed and 1 year at least from contacting the department unless evidence can be showed that the department was at failure and the claimant had no choice! Please note for over a year I paid someone else's (with the same name as mine also in Christchurch) council tax. That had to be all paid back to me as I was paying for the two of us due to the council's error! This is a good example of the council's fault and why it should be a minimum of one year backdated!	Christchurch	Claimant
Information has in the past proven difficult to come by for me and often to miss several months of help.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
Consider each case on its own merit. As a rule of thumb the proposal is ok but which possibility to appeal.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Unfair.	Bournemouth	Claimant
If there is an error made by the council tax personnel claimants shouldn't be penalised for it.	Poole	Claimant
It's not our fault it takes u 2-3 months to sort payments.	Poole	Claimant
Processes are so complicated it puts vulnerable people off claiming and no support is available.	Poole	Non-claimant
It doesn't apply to me at the moment but if I had to make a claim it may do. It is unnecessarily harsh to do this and will be detrimental to people who need time to organise their claims.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
That has to be looked at on a case by case basis.	Poole	Non-claimant
Except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. ill health, death of a close relative.	Poole	Non-claimant
People who are in debt have nothing, so why increase debt???	Poole	Claimant
This won't work as you know it can take up to 6 weeks as you are way to slow doing anything.	Poole	Unknown

The rules should be FAIR to the people who have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
Backdating is a lot of admin and is also stressful for the families involved. A cap would be a good idea.	Christchurch	Claimant
Although claimants may be able to make use of the backdated money, I hope that any extra money saved by doing this would be put to good use by the council in the area to benefit everybody.	Bournemouth	Claimant
1 calendar month is enough. Changes need to be reported straight away. Also, already in place in Bournemouth and Poole. Only fair to be consistent once the councils are combined.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Can take (and has taken) UC months to get the payments right, this could have a huge impact. So, unless UC get their act together, this could cost dearly.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This makes it clear for everyone.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think it should be 2 months because sometimes takes longer for claim and to get all documents ready. And people live busy life this days with less time on their hand.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think if an amount of money is owed either way it should be paid.	Christchurch	Claimant
This will only work if people are aware of the services available to them, in some cases a person may struggle for months before finding out about assistance therefore will miss out.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Not relevant now but maybe in future. Clearly some circumstances are extenuating but can understand the cut off for the majority of claims.	Poole	Claimant
The current council takes longer than a month to process claims, so to limit backdating is not fair on claimants	Poole	Claimant
YES YES YES!!!! I hope this applies to my current situation!!!!!!!!!!!! backdating is so wrong there is no way I can pay this huge backdated bill off! Almost 3,000 pound backdated bill!!!!	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
This is truly awful and will impact people in an extremely negative way. It's bad enough now that the council makes you wait so long for them to sort their end!	Poole	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
I would be happy for new claimants to only be back dated 1 month. However, as I am newly on Universal Credit and not familiar with how it affects my Council Tax support I would be unhappy if I found my Council Tax support had been stopped	Poole	Claimant

and I was not aware that I needed to do something to obtain it. I have been told Universal credit is a paperless system so I'm worried I will not hear about changes. The full Council Tax is a huge amount to someone with little or no income.		
I suppose that backdating only a month, could be a little unfair if people need help filling out forms or didn't know what entitlements were available to claim.	Bournemouth	Claimant
What about the workers paying full price in xchurch. Bring the payments down! £157 a month every month is too high.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
I disagree with this because the issue of eligibility for Council Tax support is not necessarily clear, nor explained in a timely manner to individuals. They may not (as was my own case) be fully aware of or misunderstand their entitlement for Council Tax Support for reasons that they were never properly advised by the benefits authorities or by the Council. Essentially, limiting backdating to a month rather than 6 months allows the Council to profit by limiting its liability for reimbursing monies already paid that should not have been paid in the first place, maybe arising from a lack of education/accurate information on the matter. I will add that the default argument of checking with the CAB, a charity which is not always correct in matters of benefits legislation is a weak one. It strikes me that proposal C is a vehicle to keep money that should have not been paid out in the first place. If the situation was reversed and the Council had been paying out to a claimant for 6 months and wanted to claw back money they would be looking at the whole 6 months and not one month. This proposal risks censure for hypocrisy as a means of retaining monies that it should never have received in the first place had the claimant been properly advised to take immediate action upon the change of their circumstances. It is completely disingenuous to make the assumption that claimants are well versed in the arcane details of the benefits system when a lack of proper advice may often be the root cause of why they did not apply earlier.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I did not realise claims could be backdated even though I receive council tax reduction / support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
If someone can provide proof of why they are claiming late, the backdate should not be limited.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Back dating is good otherwise it leads hardship when not corrected.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I found my benefits took a lot longer to sort and one type took the recommended 13 weeks.	Poole	Claimant
It may affect me if my savings were to fluctuate over the £16k threshold as my income from benefits has historically made them do in the past. I am on income-related ESA and DWP are reviewing my finances (six months' worth) in November this year.	Poole	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
I suppose anything new can create an unknown situation.	Christchurch	Claimant
I have repeatedly had issues that have taken months to resolve one current e.g. Six months if I achieve judgment and expect payment from the start of the application not one month's back pay.	Bournemouth	Claimant
People need to take responsibility for making the claims from which they will benefit in a timely manner or one might question the real need for the claim.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant

Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Working age people often caught between jobs, moving home due to work, awaiting wages or benefits, will surely suffer due to such limitations. This can invariably tilt family economics/individuals too very adversely. Severe risk of person losing home, unable to rent etc. low-income family are at high risk.	Poole	Claimant
If you notify changes in circumstances immediately, no need to pay out overpayments after one month.	Poole	Claimant
Process takes a long time, still need the money to pay of the bills that are accumulating during this time.	Poole	Claimant
A family may have an ongoing problem so they may lose out.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am single and I am sick.	Bournemouth	Claimant
One month to reclaim sometimes is not enough (waiting on return of letters, phone calls etc) E.g. you are extremely lucky if you can ever get through to the council by phone or email. Takes them a month or more to acknowledge receipt of letters etc.	Bournemouth	Claimant
DWP and any others like tax credits, housing council tax can take longer than 1 month to sort things out so I think it should 3 months.	Bournemouth	Claimant
You should not limit back dating, you should give people what they are entitled to.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Shorter back dating period, two or three weeks, avoid money hardship.	Poole	Claimant
I didn't know when I moved to Bournemouth that I had to make a new claim and was only months later I received a council tax bill and realised that I now had to pay for the month I hadn't applied. This knowledge should be available to all but no-one tells you about it and if you've not moved before, how are you supposed to know.	Bournemouth	Unknown

Additional comments about Proposal D

You can't punish people for being poor in band c.	Christchurch	Claimant
The Unitary Authority has to be seen to be fair, as a majority of claimants would not be affected by the change it would be justifiable for the authority to bring all residents in line with the majority. As a Bournemouth Resident (in a Protected Group) I am already subject to this under the current scheme so I would not be affected by this change.	Bournemouth	Claimant
You work it out.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Band C is average home it still has people in poverty day by day. People can have no to little income, you would put them liable for Council Tax whilst DWP balls up benefits, it's unfair.	Poole	Claimant
People who are in need of help should receive it - you are paying people with plenty of money and then taking it back off people who are really desperate - what sense is there in this? The government should not bring itself into disrepute by enforcing blanket policies, while claiming to pass them off as reforms.	Christchurch	Claimant
I assume if someone can afford to buy/rent a band D+ property they can probably afford the associated council tax.	Poole	Claimant
Having said does not apply to us, it may be depending on the band of different property as we are supposed to be moving.	Poole	Claimant
I live in a house in band D but need to use the living room as my bedroom as I can no longer manage stairs. The fact that I have the use of bedrooms upstairs is irrelevant as its not practical for me in terms of my disability.	Christchurch	Claimant
Don't understand it.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It would be fair to give that band C support to band D and above, not to just deny support to those groups.	Poole	Claimant
There seems to be no change for Bournemouth, which is why I agree.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
This would help me a lot as I am in band B at present.	Poole	Claimant
I can understand why this applies in Bournemouth and Poole as your social housing areas are atrocious however why should Christchurch be penalised for being a more pleasant environment. There is social housing within band D in Christchurch and this would be highly unfair.	Christchurch	Claimant
It will not affect me personally because Bournemouth already does this but if existing claims in other bands have their support capped at a lower rate this could mean they need to find that they will struggle to cover the extra amounts they may need to pay and this could affect their family life.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only	Poole	Unknown

needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.		
If I ever end up in an unprotected group I will always have the disabilities I have I am band C. I am a working age though I cannot work and hence it would affect me if the rules changed! It would be unfair as I am totally unemployable! Perhaps you ought to look at people's prospects to actually get a job and / or pay it in the first place in reality!	Christchurch	Claimant
Someone live in band C accommodation should not be receiving any support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why make the poor pay for the rich? The highest concentration of income from council tax is from the densely populated poor areas. Yet the largest amount of money spent on maintenance is on the sparsely populated low density rich areas. Why should the poor pay for the rich? Make the rich pay for the rich! Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
I am a Band B resident.	Poole	Claimant
Unfair.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think that all three should be the same.	Bournemouth	Claimant
If applicant has to claim but has lived in current property for more than two years, don't penalise for at least the first two years of claim, this gives time for applicant to downsize.	Poole	Non-claimant
NO NO NO you should pay council tax in accordance to the levy due to be paid on the accommodation you reside in.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
This is a very helpful proposal.	Poole	Claimant
Rules must be fair to the people who have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
Higher house prices, reflects more bedrooms and more rooms in the houses so agree that they shouldn't get a reduced amount as they may have excess space.	Christchurch	Claimant
Again, I think the rules should be the same for all areas. I do see that it might make a big difference to a certain number of residents in Christchurch, however if they find it difficult to pay the extra the document does state that support may be considered for individual cases. I don't know whether the people in these larger homes have more financial security, but the council needs all the income it can get without jeopardising anyone's ability to support themselves and I hope the extra money will be put to good use in the community.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Anything in council tax bands d and e should have enough income.	Bournemouth	Claimant

If any help can be given to support those on low incomes then that is good. Capping at Band C seems a fair option.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This would have a very direct effect on claimants not in a protected group. Council Tax Benefit should stay the same as now to cover the rent of working age claimants. I am not sure about the law regarding mortgage payments but, at least the interest should be covered to prevent homelessness which is more expensive.	Bournemouth	Claimant
What with people who live in other properties and need help? They will not get help so then they will have to move out to get help. Which could be impossible as moving out costs a lot and you need good earnings to find something new. Which will be closed circle for those people. In my view everyone should be entitled to get help if they need it.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't know what band c is.	Christchurch	Claimant
I feel that some households have large incomes and have overdeveloped their properties therefore these people should pay more, this will help the council with the support bills.	Bournemouth	Claimant
If you can afford a bigger and better house you can afford more money than other people to pay for the services of the borough.	Christchurch	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
Do you really care or is this just a legal necessity?	Poole	Non-claimant
Not everybody in council tax band D and above, have pots of money in fact their property may be their only asset.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Would put price up for everyone else - not fair.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Again, I think setting an arbitrary figure without reference to the actual earnings of working age residents could easily give rise to actual hardship for some residents on low/minimal income. A mechanism needs to be put in place to allow some flexibility/discretion having regard to any individual's ability to pay to avoid a repressive tax regime hurting the poorest in society, simply because they are not in a protected group. I make the assumption that you are using the term "protected group" within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 (although this is not clear from your supporting documentation). If this is so, then in some respects it is a pretty stupid definition to use in the context of the ability to pay, since other than for the "disabled" (where there are ample [and publicly available] correlation statistics linking disability of individuals to poverty [and child poverty] in the UK). Conversely, there is no direct correlation between the ability to earn (and consequently pay	Bournemouth	Claimant

Council Tax) when considering race, sexual orientation etc; since these are characteristics which have no bearing on earnings and hence the ability to pay any particular charge without said charge running the risk of creating hardship as to the ability to pay, and for the associated economic oppression on said individual arising from any actions from the Council in pursuing such debts. As not many people fall into this category, and that the sums involved from the Council's point of view are relatively modest, I think this arbitrary limit should be ignored and instead reference be made to the actual disposable income of the claimants.		
I think each person should be assessed individually (means tested?)	Bournemouth	Claimant
If someone is living in a home banded C or higher which is rented, and their financial circumstances deteriorate, are they supposed to move to a rental which is banded B or A? There is very high demand for such rental properties in this area, so that could not be possible to do.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'm confused!	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
If people can afford to live in residency above band C then one presumes they can afford or should budget for the tax it attracts.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Not clear how this cap impacts/affects people.	Poole	Claimant
Yes, as long as people can afford the amount that is set out.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The larger the residence or area of residence, the more you need to pay.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Additional comments about Proposal E

There has to be a minimum where costing overtakes the amount of work involved. I would suggest that small amounts could be paid yearly.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The Unitary Authority has to be seen to be fair, as a majority of claimants would not be affected by the change it would be justifiable for the authority to bring all residents in line with the majority. As a Bournemouth Resident (in a Protected Group) I am already subject to this under the current scheme so I would not be affected by this change.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Should be more.	Other	Non-claimant
Pathetically low considering the rip off Council Tax is.	Poole	Claimant
Confused!	Poole	Claimant
OK, what the heck can people do with 50p?	Christchurch	Claimant
This makes sense. Anything under 50p isn't going to really affect people's finances dramatically (like a 20p reduction).	Poole	Claimant
Don't send out letters costing MORE than 50p to notify people either.	Bournemouth	Claimant
To be fair 50p is nothing in this day and age. Whether claimants get it or not is not going to make much difference unless it registers that their getting it and enables them to claim other benefits because of it	Bournemouth	Claimant
There seems to be no change for Bournemouth, which is why I agree.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I live in Bournemouth and that is already in place there.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
If local Govt. can afford to spend money on white elephants i.e. Imax, surf reef, two unnecessary structures opp. the Sovereign centre back in the day, they should be held accountable and not try to claw back the money as proposed.	Bournemouth	Claimant

I think it is useful to provide a 50p amount to keep people on benefits where fair! However, I see this being abused by the department to stop paying out a lot more money where it is needed!	Christchurch	Claimant
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
50p is a lot for someone on u/c especially if they have been sanctioned!	Bournemouth	Claimant
Some people need more help.	Poole	Non-claimant
My god are you deranged. this exactly what I'm on about. the rich will benefit not the poor that will have to find it.	Poole	Unknown
Not really sure a payment of £2 a month will be worth the procedure of claiming!	Bournemouth	Claimant
Rules should be fair to the people who have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
Minimum should be set at £5 per week.	Christchurch	Claimant
I think it probably costs more to apply a reduction under 50p than it does cost the council to actually pay it. I am in receipt of certain benefits and I would not mind losing 50p. It does seem hard to justify paying out less than fifty pence.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Agree with this policy.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Not clear of the implications.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I simply could not imagine a minimum weekly payment of 50p meaning anything. Either a claimant has a claim or they have not. I will cost more to administer than the value of the award.	Bournemouth	Claimant
What good is 50p to anyone?	Christchurch	Claimant
Only in future if circumstances change.	Poole	Claimant
Amount too low.	Poole	Claimant
Waste of office costs/postage etc.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant

I think anyone entitled to £1/month should still gain the benefits of the fact that they are on a fairly low income. I doubt it would affect me much but a family on a fairly low income may be entitled to an access to leisure card, which may make a big difference to them. I would make the minimum 25p.	Poole	Claimant
£1 would be a more practical level.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
50p is ok I think?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
Too costly to administer - choose a higher minimum.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I suspect these are small entitlements which is not a huge dent to council coffers, hence should be awarded to the local residents.	Poole	Claimant
One pay more now £20 per month. 50p a week = £200 months, I'm paying £20.	Poole	Claimant
50p to people on low income is a lot of money to lose. Can buy a loaf of bread with it etc. Will increase use at food banks who currently can't manage the demand.	Poole	Claimant
I have no understanding of this 50p of what amount, how long is a piece of string?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Does not justify administration. Donate to charity/homeless.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't understand it!	Bournemouth	Claimant

Additional comments about Proposal F

The Unitary Authority has to be seen to be fair, as a majority of claimants would not be affected by the change it would be justifiable for the authority to bring all residents in line with the majority. As a Bournemouth Resident (in a Protected Group) I am already subject to this under the current scheme so I would not be affected by this change.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Could affect me in the future.	Poole	Claimant
Again, too many in poverty, too many with nil or too low income and DWP no use!	Poole	Claimant
Everyone should have the right to be treated individually and not considered to be 'attached' to someone else.	Christchurch	Claimant
Will this depend on the employment/parental/marital/disability status of the 2nd adult?	Poole	Claimant
Never understood why there was a second adult rebate when earning.	Poole	Claimant
Utterly ridiculous in the first place surely.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Rebates should be given even if two or one adults. If it's been paid and should be rebated then how many adults shouldn't make a difference if they are entitled to it.	Bournemouth	Claimant
There seems to be no change for Bournemouth, which is why I agree.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I am single so the 25% reduction stays but why should couples get an extra reduction for a 2nd person when they have 2 wages coming into the household unless 1 of them is in the protected groups as listed in the written document.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
Why should a couple without children pay twice when they live in the same household? Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant

If the vulnerable person lived on their own they would receive a full rebate. Not only do family carers save the state money caring for vulnerable loved ones it costs them financially.	Poole	Non-claimant
Your nothing but thieves.	Poole	Unknown
Rules must be fair for the people who pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
I live alone so more difficult to comment on this.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It appears not too many families would be impacted with this policy.	Bournemouth	Claimant
As a single claimant this proposal would not affect me at all. For those with partners I would have thought that the Second Adult Rebate was an essential income to prevent homelessness and enable families to get out of poverty.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why shouldn't a second adult receive a rebate.	Christchurch	Claimant
All people should be treated as equal with reference to age, only abilities to work due to disabilities should be considered.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I no longer have a dependant living with me. My Daughter lives overseas.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This will affect a large number of families who currently receive the rebate.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Second adult is disabled, we would lose that benefit.	Poole	Claimant
Surely if the first person does not qualify for Council Tax Support then having another earner in the family/household should have no effect on this.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
Basic common sense.	Poole	Non-claimant
Of course, the problem is every case is different.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I do not think this question applies to me being a single person living alone.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I may need to live in a flat share so this would affect me.	Bournemouth	Claimant
There should be a second adult rebate, why not?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant

Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Worried that my children when they finish studies may be targeted by this while looking for jobs. Many families would be similarly affected - placing them under severe financial strain. It's like the council doing best to break-up families.	Poole	Claimant
Live by myself.	Poole	Claimant
Yet again more cuts for people on low incomes.	Poole	Claimant
I am confused does this mean one parent families?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Fall in line with Bournemouth and Poole Council but I do think every person in their own right should receive discounts if they're eligible for them. Their own circumstances force them to live with others.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why is Christchurch different from Bournemouth and Poole?	Bournemouth	Claimant
They may be working less hours than others.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Additional comments about Proposal G

Unfair.	Christchurch	Claimant
As a Single Person with no Dependent Children I would not be affected by this change. However, I feel that the authority would be justified in bringing the rules in line with those of Housing Benefit (LHA) as it would make the process the same across all of the authorities benefit schemes.	Bournemouth	Claimant
No no no! Totally unfair!	Bournemouth	Claimant
It's wrong, on top of Gov austerity and poverty for so many!	Poole	Claimant
This limiting the amount of children thing - who invented that? Surely it is not the children's fault, so how can you possibly blame them? I see, because they do not have a vote, so they are not someone you are too bothered about. I think the way this Tory government has 'reforming' the welfare system has brought us to a newly bad place and it could have been avoided by taxing the people with plenty of money. Instead, you have chosen to take that money from the poorest because it is easier and people will remember this for a long time.	Christchurch	Claimant
This will affect and penalise any family of multiple (twins, triplets etc) this should be limited per birth and not per child as women cannot physically control the number of children they birth at one time and therefore should not be put under extra strain considering it is already difficult with the expense of having multiples already by with limited work and in some cases disability.	Poole	Claimant
Not everyone who has 2 or more children does so by choice. Perhaps an income-based version of a cap could work better.	Poole	Claimant
Well we can't have people on low incomes breeding can we!! Absolutely disgusting. And what happens if you have triplets, or two sets of twins, or 'an accident'? Again. we are human beings, not animals.	Bournemouth	Claimant
No children.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Children do not pay council tax. They do not need council tax support. Why are children considered at all?	Poole	Claimant
I am single but again for far too long people have fleeced the system and just because they have more than 2 children it does not mean they should continue getting lots of extra help that other families with only 2 children do not receive	Bournemouth	Claimant
Apply this to new born only - not families making claims with existing 2 plus dependents.	Christchurch	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or	Poole	Unknown

even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.		
You should be able to show the reality of the size of your family even if the rates remain the same! Align it with Working Tax Credits.	Christchurch	Claimant
We have no children.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The cost of children needs to be considered by all parents. Not only personally but the cost to education, medical treatment, etc	Bournemouth	Claimant
I have children and don't think we should penalise anyone with more than kids	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why should childless singles and couples pay for other people's children. Make them pay for their own or make condoms cheaper and more easily available for ALL ages Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
Very unfair on poor.	Bournemouth	Claimant
They decide to have them.	Poole	Claimant
We need children.	Poole	Non-claimant
Thankfully I don't have children mine have all grown up, but families are struggling already and it's not the child's fault if they are born into a family and in poverty. This will be detrimental to families who may wish to have additional children. Children should be valued in our society and we already have a problem with the aging population, if people are deterred from having children this will only aggravate this problem.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
That makes no sense if the family has more than two children.	Poole	Non-claimant
Bring in line with child benefit.	Poole	Non-claimant
Generallythis will affect me as if you give discounts to somepeople who pay full council tax will have to pay moreto make up the shortfall	Christchurch	Non-claimant
Pregnancy can happen by accident. Look at their income first.	Poole	Claimant
Have you reading the same bunth I am. stinking Tories.	Poole	Unknown
Rules should be fair to the people that pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant

This will create more child poverty and anti-social behaviour in the long term.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Agree bigger households shouldn't mean more discount is automatically given.	Christchurch	Claimant
I don't have children so I'm not sure how much impact this would have on families?	Bournemouth	Claimant
We only have 2 children with no plans for more. So yes, Supporting the maximum of 2 children in line with other benefits seems totally reasonable.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I do not have children but for those who do each child should be covered in Council Tax Support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This is not fair. Government already cut support for more children which put a lot of families in poverty. This will just push them in to homeless state. It is horrible thing to do to make innocent children suffer to save some pennies.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think the more children there is in a family the more help they need.	Christchurch	Claimant
It's not really fair as some families will struggle. An in depth look into family income should be made as some households could probably manage without the assistance.	Bournemouth	Claimant
People should be made to take responsibility if they decide to have large families rather than depending on the rest of the community to fund and support them. Long past the time for using children to claim benefits/housing/etc.	Bournemouth	Claimant
That would have a significant impact on families with more than 2 children as It could lead to further situations of deprivation where families do not meet your criteria for discounts.	Poole	Non-claimant
This is fair.	Poole	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
If they cannot afford to raise more than two without taxpayers' support, then go celibate.	Poole	Non-claimant
I think this may help, in reducing how many children people may have. For some it's a meal ticket.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This is a pretext proposal to limit the liability of the Council towards low income young families when it will most likely create hardship and child poverty for some of the most financially vulnerable, just so the Council can save some money on liabilities. The parallel and excuse for streamlining this proposal by analogy with the Housing Benefit rules, which have no direct link to the rules for Council Tax support (being entirely separate legislation) is an ill-disguised attempt to reduce costs at the expense of low income families. Given that the government expresses concern at an aging population, you should be	Bournemouth	Claimant

encouraging larger families rather than seeking to restrict the poor from having larger families on the basis of economic sanctions for having more than two children.		
I'm alone with my twins.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Everyone should be treated equally.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Every family with more than 2 children are going to be severely affected, finances for a low-income family will definitely face severe strain. All this because of a dodgy merger of councils at something £42 million? (heard such cost figure in media). It would be better to distribute their funds to local councils that were stripped of their funds due to austerity measures, which didn't work anyway.	Poole	Claimant
No kids.	Poole	Claimant
Child poverty.	Poole	Claimant
I am single, I live alone in a one-bedroom apartment. For a bit family of working age, this will be a good move.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Not quite sure how it's fair to restrict a family to 2 children or where to draw a line.	Bournemouth	Claimant
You can't dictate on how many children a couple choose to have.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Our family have all grown up	Poole	Non-claimant

Additional comments about Proposal H

Not knowing what these are, I can't say.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I feel that the authority would be justified in bringing the rules in line with those of Housing Benefit (LHA) as it would make the process the same across all of the authorities benefit schemes.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Another example of taking money away from people who aren't in a position to argue back. How would you feel if they did this to you? You act like the country is on the verge of bankruptcy all the time, when there is plenty of money in the system. What is going on? People want to know.	Christchurch	Claimant
Good.	Bournemouth	Claimant
These are not payments claimant intended to get. More through unfortunate circumstances so shouldn't be taken into account.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Bereavement Support Payment is very important at a sad and difficult time for people.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I am not in these groups but they should continue getting their help because of the group they are in.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
My son works but would never be able to afford funeral costs etc! People on the net are beginning to advertise their inability to pay for funerals! It should be a legal mandatory obligation for you to help out in every case and only expect repayment if over a certain amount in salary is available!	Christchurch	Claimant
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
During times of stress people need more leniency.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Why should those who are already suffering be made to suffer more?	Poole	Claimant
I didn't get bereavement support. One exemption, the death of a baby or victim of murder.	Poole	Claimant
Do you know what a funeral costs? I have just buried my sister .and the cheapest was 3500 and the peanuts you call help goes no were. . a country wide strike is needed and you lot can empty your own bin. Strike is what we want.	Poole	Unknown
Rules must be fair to the people that have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
I think this means that people would not be assessed and charged on the extra income provided by these support payments? If that is the case then I agree with this.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I have been seriously unwell with cancer for a long period without being able to take up employment or to save. I do not have any savings and, for people like myself, the Bereavement Support Payment is critical. I have known people with infected blood who have needed financial support just to get by. I think that both of these financial support payments should continue.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Funerals are so expensive. If anyone of my family would die we could not afford it. People on benefits don't have savings to pay.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Everyone should be entitled.	Christchurch	Claimant
Some of these people will need the help.	Bournemouth	Claimant
These payments have already been calculated to cover extra costs and so should not be reduced in paying for council tax.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
I lost my husband a few years ago, the allowance helped me through a bad time. When it happens, you need time to decide how you are going to carry on.	Bournemouth	Claimant
When I finally drop dead the council will have to pay for my disposal, I certainly cannot !!	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't understand why people in such situations would be disregarded for receiving council tax reduction.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Times are hard and again everyone should be treated equally.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
Please do not do it - it is wrong.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
These support payments are crucial to affected people. It has to stay, councils are cutting deeper and deeper to what result? Not certain. This will be a good time to cancel the proposal to merge councils before worse damage is done.	Poole	Claimant
Not a fair proposal.	Poole	Claimant
At the time you are trying to sort out your life with the loss of your husband and extra £'s is very welcome to reduce the stress and worry from 2 wage packets to only part-time (16 hours) money.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I have not got a clue, I am not a lawyer.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Some people need the bereavement support payment would if something happened to us.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Additional comments about Proposal I

A must.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I feel that the authority would be justified in bringing the rules in line with those of Housing Benefit (LHA) as it would make the process the same across all of the authorities benefit schemes.	Bournemouth	Claimant
OK, I see the point if people are living in more than one house, but what if there is a genuine reason for their absence? Again, each case should be assessed for its own merits and stop forcing people into irrational situations.	Christchurch	Claimant
Seems fair.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think this would maybe depend on the circumstances for the absence.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I am on the lowest benefits and can't afford a holiday but why should people be penalised for being absent for just a couple of days.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
I have to go to hospital a lot and have had some long stays there over the years! With those on housing benefit they still have to pay the bills as you do council tax! Both should be payable where absent for health reasons especially. People need to keep their accommodation not get kicked out of it as the bills cannot be paid! That is more expensive for the state!	Christchurch	Claimant
If it ends up with a detrimental effect on benefit paid I would be opposed.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
You should not pay for empty property.	Bournemouth	Claimant
My god.	Poole	Unknown

Fair rules for the people who pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
I understand these rules and agree with them.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I assume this includes foreign holidays, and anyone who can afford more than 4 weeks per year surely has the funds and does not require subsidising by the rest of the community.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
I think people who are away from their property are not using services so should be entitled to Council Tax support. People who are unemployed may choose to do voluntary work or study away from home, both of which would make them more employable. They should not be discouraged from doing this by losing Council Tax support.	Poole	Claimant
Again, you are conflating matters on Council tax support with an entirely different set of rules - that for Housing benefit. If for some reason someone had to go abroad for 6 weeks - perhaps a serious family matter are you seriously suggesting that upon their return they should owe the Council a backdated two weeks of Council Tax, and have to go through the rigmarole of reapplying for Local Council Tax support? This is just another conflation with other benefit laws to seek to justify a limitation of liability - in this case probably fairly rarely - but nonetheless an artificial argument for the Council to obtain a financial benefit for itself by reducing the existing rights of the claimants at the expense of the most financially vulnerable in the community.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I agree, unless you have to be absent due to medical treatments that are outside UK.	Bournemouth	Claimant
There are many reasons why someone might have to be temporarily absent from their main home, for instance to provide free care to a friend or relative, and I do not see why this should be penalised.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Unless someone is in hospital or caring for some elsewhere, no homes should be empty at all unless in dis-repair.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
But for myself a lot.	Bournemouth	Unknown
Dorset is a rich area. Most folk cannot afford X1 homes. Four weeks is more than adequate grace - thank you.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Surely there are certain individuals who have for beneficial means been relocated for periods elsewhere but have to keep their main residence? Just because they are somewhere else does not mean they are any more affluent to pay.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Do not understand how drastic the impact would be on anyone. From your notes it appears to be drastic and make big difference negatively to claimants. The 13 weeks rule must be brought into effect.	Poole	Claimant
If I may say, layman's terms please - I did not go to Oxford.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Consistency and fairness.	Bournemouth	Claimant
If I'm absent for a length of time I shouldn't have to pay anything towards a council that gives nothing anyway.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Additional comments about Proposal J

It's quite hard to work out what the income of someone who is self-employed will earn. Obviously previous accounts should be taken into account and a figure agreed between the 2 parties with any over-payment or underpayment be sorted at the end of the year.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I feel that the authority would be justified in bringing the rules in line with those of other Benefits as it would make the process the same across all of the authorities benefit schemes.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Too much pressure on individual triers.	Poole	Claimant
This is the first balanced proposal you have issued in this whole questionable scheme. Makes sense, doesn't it, that if people need help they should receive it and if they don't they shouldn't. Not just 'bash the poor', there's hope for you yet (although, in some cases, I would say this is a bit of a long shot).	Christchurch	Claimant
So, you just make it up. Helpful to those people trying to make a living independently.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This would benefit claimants who are setting up own business. So don't have to worry so much about paying until earning certain amount.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Only if the council will guarantee a minimum income for the self-employed.	Poole	Claimant
This change seems fair.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
People who are self-employed and earning low wages should get some help juts as the rest of us can if we qualify for it.	Bournemouth	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant

As I am self-employed this one will make things hard for me if I earned below the minimum floor one month it's not fair as if I wanted to take a week of holiday or I was off with an illness this would be tough as my earnings would go down but council tax monthly payments stay the same that would make life a struggle because if you don't earn the minimum floor why should payments be set the same universal credit which I am on now do this also as you know and it's already made me financially worse off so this is the same unfair on the self-employed.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The rules must be fair to the people that have to pay the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
One day in the future I would like to work for myself, but I would be very worried about how I would be able to support myself as I have only ever been employed full time by others. One worry is not being able to pay council tax and rent and this is a huge barrier, so if this means more flexibility and the possibility of support due to the lower threshold then that is a good thing.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Self-employed people work extremely long hours and it is a proven fact that businesses do not make profit for at least the first three years. Whilst trying to make a company a success you will often be working longer hours, single handedly for many different reasons, but more often than not because you cannot afford to pay wages to another person for their help. Self-employed people do not want to work 40+ hours a week, but it is expected when you work on your own that this will be the case. Any money that is made is often put back into the business for supplies and business growth. Many new businesses take loans from banks which need to be paid back monthly before your own wages are taken. If you were also having to pay yourself for working 60+ hours a week how would you ever make a business a success? Most self-employed people take their wage from what is left after supplies, company bills, workshop rent etc have been paid. If you were to ensure that self-employed people were paid minimum wage, it would be taking money away from many businesses and they would not be able to get up and running. It's true the first year of business is the hardest but perhaps you should introduce the floor after 5 years, give businesses a chance or a cap on hours worked? Please remember self-employed people work night and day on their businesses, if not manufacturing their sellable goods but often doing their own paperwork, administration and sales. Surely this cap would lead to people saying they work less hours than they actually do?	Bournemouth	Claimant
It seems unfair that self-employed people may be penalised	Bournemouth	Claimant
As long as a claimant's income does not fall below a certain limit a self-employed person should be paid up to that limit.	Bournemouth	Claimant
A good idea for some trades hitting tough times due to weather or general shortage of work, but again a careful monitoring of each case should take place to ensure nobody takes advantage of the scheme.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Should be a period of time when new registered self-employed people have no minimum income request.	Poole	Claimant
This is important.	Poole	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we	Poole	Non-claimant

should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.		
I am considering self-employment as a health condition limits the hours I can work and I can work when I am well and rest when I am not. I have no skills that I can charge a lot for so I am likely to be needing council Tax support. I think for anyone with a health condition trying to run their own business it would be an additional worry that they would have to pay Council tax based on an income they may not always be able to achieve.	Poole	Claimant
Refer to my Proposal A comments - 'Black Economy'. Don't set it too low.	Poole	Non-claimant
No. This is an entirely arbitrary notional minimum income without any basis in reality. You need to be looking at actual earnings rather than a fictional assumed level of earning that may or may not be a fair reflection of the income status of a claimant. A claimant having been self-employed for one year can evidence this from accounts, bank statements and the like, but having an arbitrary minimum income is making assumptions outside of reality. To conflate this proposal as being valid simply because the rules for Universal Credit use it does not make for a good argument, particularly as the Universal Credit rules have come under serious criticism as to the negative impact on claimants over previous benefit regimes. To take badly drafted, and ill thought out regulations as the basis for conflating those rules with your proposals is not a sound basis for decision making. You should be looking at the actual income, not guessing with an arbitrary value that has no direct connection with the reality for the claimant. That is a fast way to creating injustice.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I believe I am in the system this question refers to, i.e., universal credit, council tax support, self-employed on low income.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The actual income of the self-employed person should be used to calculate their council tax bill, not an imaginary amount based on the minimum wage. I believe this will put people off from starting their own business, and/or put entrepreneurs at risk of homelessness. .	Bournemouth	Claimant
Although I am of working age, I am severely disabled and cannot work, I need most of my money for care. I do volunteer work...	Bournemouth	Claimant
Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think actual income to be taken into account for council tax calculations. Minimum income floor may affect those on a few days' work etc. Unable to comment/understand without actual figures.	Poole	Claimant
When persons are self-employed, work is not always there so monies can be up and down.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Consideration for self-employed.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Why pick on the self-employed it should be the same.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Additional comments about Proposal K

At this present moment in time I am not subject to Universal Credit regulations, however, I feel that the authority would be justified in bringing the rules in line with those of Universal Credit as it would make the process the same across all of the authorities benefit schemes.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Crystal ball?	Other	Non-claimant
As universal credit is applied in real time it should be monitored more frequently as that helps people whose income can drop but also checks if people's income increases and this would help stop people getting into financial difficulty quicker.	Poole	Claimant
People with mental and physical health problems don't just all of a sudden change in 26 weeks or 52 weeks mental health and most physical is life time and having assessments are really stressful and make a lot of anxiety.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I don't want anyone having any benefit or council tax support removed. We see far too many deliberate errors by DWP don't start Council Tax issues.	Poole	Claimant
Have a period that is fixed will disadvantage people who have a genuine change in circumstance and need more support such as losing a job or partner vacates.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Doesn't affect us yet but probably will in the future. I think yearly assessments make sense on the real time information.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'm Disabled & cannot work!	Poole	Claimant
Every year we are assessed for Council Tax, Tax, Working Tax Credits and such like. This is in line with the regular tax year. I agree with this period because it should be up to everyone to disclose information at the right time, but the government needs to check once a year to make sure. Anything else seems a bit patronising - as if the government does not think that people on low incomes are capable of self-assessment and need checking on more often. So, I don't know - maybe they do. It might be a good idea checking more often, or a complete administrative waste of time. So, this is an issue probably best decided by the government (so, of course, they can't decide on it).	Christchurch	Claimant
I think 52 weeks is more realistic as its also ties in with self-employed reviews and avoids a potentially un-payable bill with only 6 months' worth of collection time. Or if it is reviewed every 26 weeks, review in September for everyone on Universal Credit and then in March to tie in with the end of the tax year when everyone is naturally reviewed anyway. Although it means people may be reviewed at odd times to begin with, over the course of a few years everyone will fall into review at the same time and be recalculated at the same times. I think reviewing in set months and set times cuts down the amount of reviews at alternate times for each person and make a set review for everyone easier to calculate quicker and cut admin times.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'm sure quarterly would be better for all involved.	Poole	Claimant
I see potential for some people to end up with arrears being owed.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Surely it could be flexible depending on the individual business, i.e. length of time established, etc. Too complicated?	Bournemouth	Claimant

It would be best to implement an assessment period monthly for the first two months & thereafter every 6 months as Universal credit at the moment is very inaccurate in the first couple of months.	Poole	Claimant
Continual re-assessing just causes bureaucracy and therefore delays, and cost to the council.	Poole	Claimant
I live in Bournemouth am already on universal credit and my benefit never changes so it will not really affect me unless things change before the proposed changes come into force.	Bournemouth	Claimant
As long as payments aren't stopped every time it's due for a renewal UNLESS someone is late returning information then I don't see it as a problem.	Christchurch	Claimant
How can anyone provide a sensible answer to this without reading the full 192 pages of the full draft Council Tax Support Scheme document? Why is each group not summarised so that the main points on how the changes will affect people in respect of their particular needs, can be easily read and digested without having to read the full document? This whole proposal smacks of another swipe at the poor, sick and disabled and how to force more of us into poverty. The failure of this report to provide a summary is an exercise in blowing smoke over the whole issue and confusing the most vulnerable in our society so that these proposals will be implemented with the least amount of complaint. As a for instance, one only needs to look at this first question. Without reading through the entire 192 pages of jargon and buzzwords, how is anyone supposed to know who is and isn't in the "protected group?" If one doesn't know who is or isn't in a protected group or even what constitutes a protected group how can you expect a meaningful answer to this or any other question? It appears that this whole merger plan is one being sought as a political decision rather than one out of necessity or for the good of residents.	Poole	Unknown
If I get pushed on to Universal Credit it will be a nightmare! I already prove my case twice a year and fight to keep it! Starting a new benefit would be madness for you and me! Besides it is a waste in administrative costs!	Christchurch	Claimant
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
I do not think this will affect me as my income is likely to remain at a set rate with little or no change.	Poole	Claimant
Surely this is against the EU rules on human rights I will check this.	Poole	Unknown
The rules must be fair to the people that play the full amount!	Poole	Non-claimant
I am currently unemployed and looking for work and whilst I am still looking I want to have a steady stream of money coming into my account so that I can provide for myself and I don't want this to be affected in any way.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It is a financial and emotional burden to have your payments constantly changed. The values change often and it is hard to understand the paperwork that you send out to explain the changes. I think every 26 weeks is a good amount of time	Christchurch	Claimant

although I would worry that this time could mean a significant amount is either overpaid or owed? And this in turn could come at a particularly bad time of the year. Undecided on the best way forward.		
It seems to make sense to have Housing Benefit and Council Tax rules aligned with each other. It can be confusing and if changing some of these things makes the process easier for everybody to understand and administer it is probably a good thing, as long as it doesn't create more financial hardship for residents. It also makes sense to reduce admin time and hopefully costs will be saved there. It would seem more consistent if the customer knew they were to be paying the same every month. Would there be a refund after each assessment if the customer had paid too much?	Bournemouth	Claimant
Especially long term disabled.	Bournemouth	Claimant
UC can change your payment every month, it seems unfair if anything is recorded inaccurately or late, meaning the claimant will be liable still. This would lead to serious hardship. More consultation is needed here.	Bournemouth	Claimant
If circumstances change, this could have a huge impact for a significant length of time resulting in either a huge bill or monthly hardship. There needs to be flexibility like there was before UC.	Bournemouth	Claimant
An assessment should be carried out annually (52 weeks) to enable claimants circumstances to be reviewed on a regular basis, as they are with Direct Payments. Any less than this would be an administrative cost and could block up the system.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Twice annually will be better than on a monthly basis but still cutting down on resources. This also prevents leakage from Council tax funding.	Christchurch	Claimant
More assessment interviews causing more anxiety for people with disabilities.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I have been registered for universal credit since April but out of work since last November, I have been struggling to find suitable employment and it's not through lack of trying. I think that the longer option should be made, this will work as long as people notify the authorities as soon as they have found employment and that the wage is sufficient to survive without much difficulty.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I have mobility issues.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Claimants at supposed to continue paying rent and council tax whilst the claim is being processed. people will get into arrears if they can't afford to do so. 26 weeks is too long a time it should be at the most 6-8 weeks.	Poole	Claimant
No need to waste office/post age costs calculating every month/6 month. A 12-month review should suffice with adjustments being made for the following year and credits/debits carried forward and/or paid back/reclaimed.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It is added pressure for people, and it seems professional bodies do not consider the extra anxiety and upset filling forms and going to interviews can create. What happens if someone is disabled and you decide to conduct interviews etc will you go there? It depends if this is a scheme where you can access the information and send a letter or if you are expecting people to have to do (as an example) a 30 min journey to you at a set time that you choose, to have an interview every 26/52 weeks.	Christchurch	Claimant
I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a	Poole	Non-claimant

lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.		
I anticipate my income could vary quite considerably whether I go self-employed or get work through a temping agency. Council tax is potentially a big bill and I think people should only have to pay it if they are earning enough. Anyone who had an agency job that ended the month of the assessment would have to pay high Council tax for the next 5 months even though they were not earning.	Poole	Claimant
As someone on ESA in the support group for my disabilities I doubt that I fall into the Universal Credit regime. I don't expect any increases in my benefits will change my status, but if it did I would not want to be worrying too frequently as to whether any changes made by the government affected my entitlement under the scheme or not. I would like to know more about the process in contention. Are you saying that the Council can already deduce the level of benefits online at the moment or does it entail having to find paperwork once a year, come into the Council offices (which is not easy for me) etc? I personally prefer that the Council can make such assessments of benefit received directly with the DWP as it is much more straightforward and less stressful and burdensome to a disabled person.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Being in the system, I am assessed by the council / benefits office every March / April anyway. So, I would be happy to leave to 52 weeks.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Stability is key, assessments can be stressful.	Bournemouth	Claimant
There's nothing worse than being put under pressure.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Don't know what the outcome would be.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Not in favour of narrow periods of review, nor cost effective and maybe avoidable expenditures for council. Tw year reviews would be much better and cost-effective measure.	Poole	Claimant
In my case I suffer from P.T.S.D, PAD and CMI. All of these do affect me, so if they wish to assess me on a more regular basis - bring it on.	Bournemouth	Claimant
You will then be expected to repay any outstanding monies instantly or be threatened with court/money withdrawn - it helps nobody. Like working tax credit. A yearly assessment based on a poor year causes more hard ups.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I could not pay a big lump all in one hit.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Possible money hardships.	Poole	Claimant

All other comments or suggestions

Chase the government for funding, don't penalize people for government failings.	Christchurch	Claimant
Council tax needs to be as small as possible.	Poole	Claimant
It's difficult to come up with a plan that everyone will be happy with. As long as due care and attention is given, because circumstances are different for everyone, then things can be sorted out at the end of that period. I suppose a 26-week review but be best for the claimants who are suffering difficulties.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It is essential that residents with a recognised (in Law) long term illness or Disability are protected and I feel that the 'protected groups' definition should reflect this.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Can 3 councils collect the bins properly and fix the roads? I doubt it just more red tape and bureaucracy. Take a wage cut and do your job.	Other	Non-claimant
I think people on benefits with no income should have all of their tax covered there's no way people on benefits can afford it! Under 27+ should have a cap unless your making over x amount, I feel 27+ your more established. I think you need to look at housing tax bands ..and I think you need to look into more housing for people on benefits! Private rent and council! You can't even get a private rent place because no one takes anyone and the amount you get to rent with is not enough with how much the rent prices have gone up and you're on the list for years with council and they turn people away all the time! How can you get a job if you have no fixed address no bank account! This really affects young vulnerable people!	Bournemouth	Claimant
I would love to be a counsellor or MP.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Make sure this is in final say - DO NOT CAUSE ANY BENEFIT RECIPIENTS to end up paying Council Tax, when nil or low income, even if Protected Groups get re-assessed for benefits, it doesn't mean they suddenly have stable income, it more likely means DWP or outsource assessment companies messed up! Too many pitfalls! DO NOT EVER cause SICK / DISABLED to have to pay Council Tax when NOT working! Not even a percentage! ALL should be exempt!	Poole	Claimant
Another change into a bigger non-accountable authority. Loads of Execs at the top getting shed loads of money for doing less. Soon people will have had enough of austerity, where the poor get poorer, and the rich get richer. Sooner or later the rich will be in their conclaves, guarded 24/7, because the poor will have had enough of this 2-tier society and rise up!	Bournemouth	Claimant
You will do what is best for everyone hopefully as that is what you were elected for.	Poole	Claimant
I think considering both Bournemouth and Poole have had the most of these proposals working already it makes sense to bring it right across the board. The whole reason for combining the councils was to save money and it seems Christchurch need to come into line with everyone else.	Bournemouth	Claimant
We live in Christchurch and our rent is 790 a month - the council only pays 600. So, you do not want to know what I think of the housing benefit/council tax system...on some days can hardly walk. Yet, the government says I am fit for work. They will not give me job. What am I supposed to do? If you want to know what I think - the way the country is run now is a great big lie - there is plenty of money in the system, we could create the economic growth we need. But, greed has got into	Christchurch	Claimant

them, because the empire collapsed. Now they would have slavery back to feed their egos. These are not reforms we are witnessing today, my friend - this is a social system eating itself.		
All support/reductions etc should be income-based and make things easier for those living in in-work poverty.	Poole	Claimant
There are a significant number of pensioners who are on significantly better income than me as a disabled person. They should not be protected. It is supposed to be a means tested benefit after all.	Poole	Claimant
It's very difficult, and I understand that the council has to raise money, but I believe people would rather see non-essential services (The frippery items) being eliminated from budgets, councils have empire built for too long, Bournemouth could lead the way in reducing the council dramatically instead of this constant increase of council tax.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Seems like the people of Christchurch are being hugely penalised for a merger they did not want.	Christchurch	Claimant
20% is high if you are on bottom of income bands.	Poole	Claimant
Make more people homeless.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Make rent cheaper and to force landlords to follow the rules.	Poole	Claimant
I would like you to go back to the old system when people on Job Seekers Allowance did not have to pay ant Council Tax!	Bournemouth	Claimant
I think people who earn the most should pay a bit more towards council tax has that's only fair and people on low wages and those who are disabled or sick should still be exempt has these people have enough stress and pain already, I also think has Bournemouth is a bigger area and costs more money in sectors of the council should have a bit more of an increase in their council tax than Poole and Christchurch.	Christchurch	Claimant
I just hope Bournemouth doesn't end up supporting Poole and Christchurch.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Correct council tax so that single residents pay only 50%, rather than 75%.	Poole	Claimant
As I have already stated, I am on JSA so I do not know the impact the proposed changes will have on me until it happens.	Poole	Claimant
I think most of the options seem fair but feel if people have to struggle to find extra money for the household bills it could greatly affect the quality of life the household may have to make a lot of changes to cope with increased bill costs.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I still don't think they should merge- Christchurch residents are the only ones who are getting majorly affected from the sounds of it but what do people's opinions matter hey?	Christchurch	Claimant
Yes, bin this whole crackpot scheme tell Sajid Javid to go...and the Tories to...deliver the Brexit the people voted for. This whole scheme is one dreamt up by the EUSSR, which will give the local people less democratic say in their local area. Thatcher broke up big councils back in the 70's because they didn't work and nothing I've heard or seen so far leads me to believe this giant authority is for one, going to save money or two benefit local people. The one size fits all approach doesn't work for the EUSSR, and for an example of how that approach has had devastating effects on a local population, you only have to look at the Somerset levels, Cumbria, and York. The flooding in these areas was 100% caused by the EUSSR's "Water Framework Directive." It had nothing to do with the storms, The EUSSR decision to treat silt from the rivers as toxic waste added massively to the costs of dredging and their ban on dredging to promote the growth of marine	Poole	Unknown

life caused misery to the populations of the areas I've mentioned plus a good many more. This new unitary authority will be a complete ***** disaster for locals and this insanity needs to stop. It's not ***** broke so don't try to ***** fix it.		
Stop changing things that work, or can work better, this is all just about POWER AND MONEY. And keeping tabs on people.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Send me it in writing.	Christchurch	Claimant
Council tax is another con the government thought up to fiddle even more monies out of the citizens of this once proud country, like VAT etc. the money this government spends on weapons and the EU would be better spent on improving this country instead of running it into the ground and rubbing our noses into it. I could go on and on but it wouldn't do any good because all anybody in power can think about is feathering their own nests.	Poole	Non-claimant
The new council needs to bear in mind that this is a sensitive area that will effect on low income families, including working families. This would be a disincentive for the working poor. Secondly beware what you mean by the term 'fair'. Many people would see that as meaning natural justice but in my experience public bodies don't mean that. They mean, for the most part, that any changes are fair under the law or rules, so you need to be more clear what you mean by that word.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I am a Foster Carer there are no real directives for the council to adhere to. I do not receive a wage as such but am considered working. therefore, need additional help to survive. Universal credits do not work for me because the whole point of being a Foster parent is to care for children needing extra support which means me being at home.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Conservative Party...creating 1st and 3rd class society whilst creating unemployment and lining the pockets of private industry. Conservative Councils have more and more money coming in and spend less and less. Where is the money going that is not being spent! A new car councillor? Holiday in the Bahamas councillor? Going out in your yacht councillor? \$1000 for a hammer?	Poole	Claimant
Yes, I do not agree with this amalgamation with Bournemouth and Poole, with 85% of us living in Christchurch were against. We will see more cut backs in this area, to prop up the other two towns, our crime rate will sky rocket, and as for seeing a local bobby on his beat, is non-existent.....	Christchurch	Claimant
To bring the same discount of 20% across the councils is a good idea. However, for those in Christchurch who pay 8% perhaps a little leeway to adjust to a higher payment.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The application of applying for housing and council tax support is confusing enough, why change something that is no broken. This will not make it any easier to apply and cause more financial heartache for vulnerable people.	Poole	Claimant
I would like a quicker response to claims my last wage slip took two months to sort out so as with anything u need staff to be able to do this.	Poole	Claimant
BELIEVE THERE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A WAY OF HELPING SOMEONE THROUGH THE SYSTEM IF URGENT TEMPORARYSITUATION AROSE WHICH WAS CAUSING GENUINE DISTRESS.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
All these new changes aren't good for anyone especially as it keeps going up steeply.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant

I am an NHS worker living alone. 70% of my salary goes towards rent. This leaves me very little for food and bills. Every month is a struggle to juggle between eating healthy or warming my home...I can't have both. I am 60 years old.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I feel everyone over the age of 18 should pay council tax. As everyone over that age use council services.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
People want to see police on the beat, public toilets opened and pest control.	Poole	Claimant
Stop wasting my time you will do it any way you thieves.	Poole	Unknown
Minimum floor for pensioners who have no other benefits.	Poole	Claimant
It is all aimed at reduction for so many groups. Focus is and should be how much they can pay. The system must be fair for the people that have to pay the full amount.	Poole	Non-claimant
I am not sure from the information you have provided as to whether these changes will impact a household where no adult is liable for Council Tax e.g. Parent in receipt of ESA support Group with severe disability premium and carer's premium, living with an adult non-dependant full time student living on SFE loans. Also, will religious groups (ministers, priests, other clergy etc) still be exempt?	Christchurch	Claimant
Getting discount on my council tax, helps me enormously, being a single parent, trying so hard to make ends meet.	Poole	Claimant
A lot of people are dependant on the council due to bad circumstances (ill health, unemployment etc) and I hope that when you consider your changes you keep these people in mind as ideally they only want to rely on these services for a limited amount of time until they are able to find a way out of dependency on the state-so please don't do anything that punishes or penalises them.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The only comments are that these are all discussed at the same time so that all changes happen together. It may mean a lot if changes for some families so maybe a time period before the new changes come out would be a good idea for people to ensure they are able to cover the increased costs associated with the individual s claims.	Christchurch	Claimant
Every bodies individual needs should be taken into consideration.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The whole UC/Income support etc fiasco has huge bearing on CTR. Until the UC system starts working properly, how can anyone trust that CTR will be calculated properly. I've tried reading the consultation document, seriously, who can understand and follow it? Other than those who wrote it or are solicitors or do that for a living.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I consider that to have one Council Tax System for the whole Authority will be fair and workable. I am concerned for families with more than two children having less income in a period where everything is more expensive, especially food, clothes, and rents. The Authority should have a mind to payments which will protect the vulnerable, prevent homelessness, which will cost more and, seek an equitable society where people feel acknowledged.	Bournemouth	Claimant
This proposal is discriminatory against families and children and it is horrible that council which already have big problem with housing and homelessness would even think of changes to make more people families homeless. Housing in Bournemouth is so expensive, agencies are very unfair and already refuse people on benefits to rent properties. Where	Bournemouth	Claimant

would we all have to go if councils will cut help more. Only streets are left unfortunately. It is very sad that peoples are getting richer and for this other people have to get poor and no one cares.		
I wish everything just stayed the same as this is all very confusing and unsettling.	Christchurch	Claimant
It is going to take a long time to change everything. However, it would be a useful if the ages of each ward should be taken into consideration in relation to fair distribution of funds in particular our ageing community to assist with our ever-increasing requirements for care.	Christchurch	Claimant
People living with disabilities are being targeted again by uncaring authority departments.	Bournemouth	Claimant
It is difficult to say about the time we will need receive some support.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I am a little bit concerned that the well-off people in the area (and there are plenty) will benefit from this council shake up and the people that are struggling to survive (even normal working families), will continue to suffer unless these proposals are handled with great care.	Bournemouth	Claimant
What about Disabled claimants of Council Tax Support what is to happen to them?	Bournemouth	Claimant
The complexities of the system are fully appreciated. However, the amount paid by Council taxpayers must be the same for all Councils from the beginning and not "harmonised" over a period of time. It has therefore to be ensured that amount paid in overall is sufficient to cover claims/services etc.	Christchurch	Non-claimant
The current scheme reinforces the view that the rich should be in a position to get richer whilst the poor get poorer and is grossly unfair! A cap depending on postcodes is the most ridiculous scheme I have possibly come across to date!	Bournemouth	Claimant
The protected groups are the most vulnerable and as such must continue to receive the maximum council tax support.	Bournemouth	Claimant
As stated previously, I am in receipt of PIP and ESA and this situation worries me - if it ain't broke, don't fix it????	Bournemouth	Claimant
No relief for empty homes Increase tax for 2nd homes Take account of air b n b earnings.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
This targets the poorest in society as usual.	Poole	Claimant
This assessment should be sent to all council tax houses within the new area. Sending assessments to people restricting the income they receive is only going to have one result. Ask the people having to give the money (i.e. the tax payers) whether they agree or not.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Why send to recipients of support only?	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I'm not totally sure how Universal Credit works but do the same calculations for UC also cover Council Tax Support or is the calculation duplicated by local council offices just for Council Tax Support element?	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'll just repeat that I think the backdated council tax should defiantly be limited to one month. Back dating it three years for me is just insane. I'm poor and was living in a little room I don't understand why its council taxed to being with.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant

Please ensure that you are not taking even more money from people and take into consideration the extremely high rents in the area.	Poole	Non-claimant
You have stated that UC claimants will receive CTS but you have not mentioned those that are still on legacy benefits such as ESA, will they still receive the benefit?	Poole	Claimant
This questionnaire is pitched on the assumption that the Council Tax subsidy will be implemented and I strongly disagree with it. The consultation is 'fixed' and should have allowed a respondent to disagree with the proposal and exit not force them to answer questions that assume it is already agreed. I think that this proposal will distort the market and lead to conflict between residents, between those who are receiving it and maybe not working and those that get up and go out to work watching their neighbours paying less and also having a lie-in. If a resident or house owner cannot meet the obligations (Mortgage, utility bills etc etc.) of living in that house then we should help them find accommodation that is within their means, not subsidise a situation that leads to false expectations. It is wrong to supplement central government benefits and universal credits by adding more benefits, they are either enough or not enough and we should better focus on getting central govt benefits for those on low incomes at the right level, not 'let them off the hook' by local government adding top-up benefit. This will just make the benefit system more complicated and obscure again.	Poole	Non-claimant
I would like unemployed people to be able to do work for the Council in lieu of paying Council tax. It would give them work experience and, even a small financial saving, would add to the quality of their lives.	Poole	Claimant
Devise a scheme to tax all the unwelcome 'Travellers' who illegally encamp in the area every year. My taxes should not be used to support these low-lives!	Poole	Non-claimant
Means testing is the only way forward Income fluctuates especially in the self-employed.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
Remove student exemption.	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I am concerned with the approach of conflating unrelated legislation to make an argument to restrict Council liability to claimants, given that the claimants for a tax support scheme are probably some of the most vulnerable in our society. It seems somewhat pernicious and self-serving on the part of the Council to the detriment of the existing rights of vulnerable members of the community. I think the Council should be more focused on the claimants ability to pay the Council tax from their income rather than operating arbitrary guidelines. Council officers should be given some latitude to make reasoned decisions based on the financial status of claimants with regard to their ability to pay rather than rely on arbitrary cut-offs.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I didn't see a category referring specifically to 65+ age group. I am concerned that limiting to Council Tax Band C will omit many retired people in homes above that banding:- 1) those 65+ who haven't as yet downsized, but much more specifically 2) those 65+ who have already moved into retirement complexes, where astonishingly the Council Tax bands can be well above Band C. I noticed an advert for a retirement 2 bedroom (generous size for the type)...with a VERY HIGH COUNCIL	Bournemouth	Non-claimant

BANDING equal to a large house in a prestigious area...which is incredible as any additional facilities provided, restaurant, hair dressing, swimming pool, have NOTHING to do with Council Provision.		
Within self-employment I suppose you include live-in landlords, renting out a room in their house to support themselves. In that case you should certainly set the minimum income rule. For me for example, at present that I have not secured a job, and I do not collect any kind of benefits, the monthly council tax represents 25% of my gross income. How I am supposed to live on what is left?? Therefore, it is a must to relate council tax to incomes!	Bournemouth	Non-claimant
I have left various comments with the questions, I will say that the walk-in centre at Bournemouth town hall is brilliant, being able to see someone and sort out a problem quickly is great.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Park home reduction as the land is owned not by the council and the council does not maintain the land.	Other	Claimant
Please stop penalizing those on low and precarious incomes and consider fair, incremental taxes for the more wealthy so that basic services are provided, as ultimately this maintains a civilised society. Please be aware that homelessness and vulnerably housed people are terrible for social health and the cost in the long term is very high indeed.	Bournemouth	Claimant
Stability is key, assessments can be stressful.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I was paying council tax for an open flat with no car park and garden. Yet other tenants in my building don't pay council tax. This is not fair.	Bournemouth	Claimant
You're a bunch of greedy *****.	Unknown	Unknown
This questionnaire is absolutely incomprehensible. I am in receipt of council tax support but I am not a council tax advisor or assessment person. I do not know to who these questions addressed to like what is the minimum contribution of 20% for the working age residents or what is 'temporary absence' rules, to who and how they apply. If you are making a questionnaire, you should explain every question in detail.	Bournemouth	Claimant
The council merger is too drastic to impose on the people of the local county. At a time of drastic changes in local hospitals, NHS, police services etc. Too much changes are detrimental to our society and health to take in. Very long-standing councils like Poole Council, active for some 768 + years must not be axed. Cut out these austerity measures - people did not vote for this. Austerity did not bring benefits.	Poole	Claimant
To save money on bus subsidies make the people of bus passed - all of them pay 50p or £1 each time they get on buses. Reading Council are trialling it. Also cut rent subsidies it's crazy £1200 pcm the council pay a large % of it in benefits don't go for high rent if you can't afford it - what a save.	Poole	Claimant
Pensioners who have large savings/pensions should be assessed and not exempt from paying full council tax fees. Yet again it's the vulnerable people who are targeted by these proposals.	Poole	Claimant
Universal Credit is the worst program that has happened. Persons need to talk to persons, I am not a robot and computers do not have feelings or compassion.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I'm afraid you have to work on a monthly basis. Use email (not letters) bite the bullet and treat everybody on an individual basis and not the easy route for you.	Bournemouth	Claimant

Stop giving foreigners council tax and housing benefit.	Bournemouth	Claimant
I have not claimed/do not claim benefits detailed in this document so know nothing of the process for making a claim. I am aware that increasing pressure for claims must be costly and hat non-claimants are required to meet these costs.	Christchurch	Non-claimant

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 1 - The Project		
Policy/Service under development/review:	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20	
BCP Workstream	Benefits & Revenues	
BCP Workstream Lead	Adam Richens	
Equality Impact Assessment Team:	Sam Johnson Beverly Elliott	
Date assessment started: August 2018	Date assessment completed: 05/11/18	Date approved: 13/11/18
<p>What are the aims/objectives of the policy/service?</p> <p>The Council Tax Support Scheme provides a means tested Council Tax reduction to residents. The Scheme document explains the calculation of the reduction including the means test. The Scheme aims to provide low income residents, upon receipt of a claim, a reduction to their Council Tax within Council budgets, whilst providing protection for vulnerable residents who meet the conditions defined within the 'protected group'.</p> <p>Following public consultation in 2012 the original scheme was approved by Council in December 2012 and started from April 2013. Included in this decision was the definition of the 'protected group'. This was decided based upon the aim of ensuring the most vulnerable in our community are protected from the Council Tax liability restriction calculations (minimum contribution), to continue to give the closest possible calculation to the amount they would have received had Council Tax Benefit continued.</p> <p>The Government prescribes the rules for claimants who have reached the State Pension Credit Qualifying Age but has devolved responsibility to Councils to define a working age Scheme. As of July 2018, there were 26,869 households receiving some level of Council Tax Support in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. 47% of these are of State Pension Credit Qualifying Age and their entitlement is calculated using the Government prescribed Regulations. 53% are of working age (14,241) and of this 14,241, 8,019 meet the 'protected group' criteria. 47% of recipients of Council Tax Support (12,628 are State Pension Credit Qualifying Age) will continue to see no change when compared to how their Council Tax Benefit was calculated when claiming Council Tax Support which replaced it, apart from where the Government has amended the</p>		

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 1 - The Project

prescribed Regulations since 2013.

The proposed changes aim to amend the Council Tax Support scheme for **working age customers** only from April 2019 in line with Government Welfare Reform in Housing Benefit (HB) and continue to provide a reduction to Council Tax on a means tested basis, within Council budgets, whilst protecting vulnerable residents from the minimum contribution change, where the working age claim fits the conditions for the 'protected group'.

The conditions for the 'protected group' (also known as vulnerable group) are:

It is a working age claim and the claimant or partner is in receipt of any of the following:

- War disablement pension, war widows pension or war widows disablement pension
- Disability premium, enhanced disability premium or severe disability premium
- Disabled child premium
- Carer premium
- Support component within their employment and support allowance, or
- Universal Credit recipients, who are not pensioners, but the applicant or their partner is in receipt of an income or premium listed above.

Of the working age Council Tax Support recipients approx. 8,019 meet the 'protected group' criteria, protected from the minimum contribution changes.

The proposed changes to the **working age scheme** reflect that this will be an aligned scheme for the new Council, some of the proposals are already in place in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole:

- Maximum council tax support set at 80% where not in a protected group (already in place in Bournemouth & Poole)
- New entitlement (or where would have become entitled to Family Premium) on/after 1 April 2019 will not receive the family premium (already in place in Bournemouth & Poole)
- Backdating limited to up to a maximum of one calendar month (already in place in Bournemouth & Poole)
- Support capped at Council Tax Band C where not in a protected group (already in place in Bournemouth & Poole)
- Minimum weekly payment of 50p (already in place in Bournemouth & Poole)
- No working age Second Adult Rebate (already in place in Bournemouth & Poole)
- To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for new applicants/new

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 1 - The Project	
<p>families or those who have a 3rd or subsequent child on or after 01/04/19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror the HB Bereavement Support & Infected blood schemes income rules • Mirror the HB temporary absence rules 	
<p>What outcomes will be achieved with the new or changed policy/service?</p> <p>The Council wants to achieve a fair Council Tax Support Scheme within the available budget. Customers who have reached the state pension credit qualifying age are protected from the changes by national legislation (prescribed Regulations). In addition financial protection will continue to apply to the minimum contribution for certain working age customers by maintaining the existing maximum level of Council Tax Support that can be claimed (100% of the eligible liability). This applies where it is a working age claim and the claimant or partner is in receipt of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War disablement pension, war widows pension or war widows disablement pension • Disability premium, enhanced disability premium or severe disability premium • Disabled child premium • Carer premium • Support component within their employment and support allowance, or • Universal Credit recipients, who are not pensioners, but the applicant or their partner is in receipt of an income or premium listed above. 	
<p>Are there any associated services, policies or procedures?</p> <p>S13A and Schedule 1a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992</p> <p>Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/section/13A</p> <p>http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2885/contents/made</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 1 - The Project	
Please list the main people, or groups, that this policy/service is designed to benefit and any other stakeholders involved:	Liable Council Tax payers who are on a low income.
With consideration for their clients, please list any other organisations, statutory, voluntary or community that the policy/service/process will affect:	

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence¹
<p>Please list and/or link to below any recent & relevant consultation & engagement that can be used to demonstrate a clear understanding of those with a legitimate interest in the policy/service/process and the relevant findings:</p> <p>https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/councildemocratic/GetInvolvedHaveyoursay/ConsultationTracker/Consultations/council-tax-support-consultation.aspx</p> <p>Please see attached Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Shadow Authority Council Tax Support Consultation Committee Report Summary December 2018.</p>
<p><i>If there is insufficient consultation or engagement information please explain in the Action plan what further consultation will be undertaken, who with and how.</i></p>

¹ This could include: service monitoring reports, research, customer satisfaction surveys & feedback, workforce monitoring, staff surveys, opinions and information from trade unions, previous completed EIAs (including those of other organisations) feedback from focus groups & individuals or organisations representing the interests of key target groups or similar

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence¹
<p>Please list or link to any relevant research, census and other evidence or information that is available and relevant to this EIA:</p> <p>Link to Government EQIA: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwjrgonb9bzeAhULsaQKHURiAZIQFjAAegQIAxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F474772%2Fhousing-benefit-abolishing-family-premium-regulations.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3gQ6efG8_esHVUIJ2DCyRu</p>
<p>Please list below any service user/employee monitoring data available and relevant to this policy/service/process and what it shows in relation to any Protected Characteristic:</p>
<p><i>If there is insufficient research and monitoring data, please explain in the Action plan what information will be gathered.</i></p>

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic		
<p>Use the evidence to determine the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. <i>Click here</i> for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic. If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.</p>		
	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic

Use the evidence to determine to the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue.

Click [here](#) for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic.

If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.

	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
1. Age ²	<p>Claimants whose claim meets the criteria for meeting the qualifying age for State Pension Credit are not affected by these changes as the scheme is defined within the Prescribed Requirements rules set by Government.</p> <p>Claimants in the protected working age group will pay less Council Tax than those not in the protected group.</p> <p>The protection is similar to that given by Government previously within the Council Tax Benefit legislation.</p>	Working age claimants not in a protected group will pay more Council Tax than those in a protected group or those claims that meet the qualifying age for state pension credit.
2. Disability ³	Working age claimants who due to their disability receive one of the incomes of premiums listed in part 1, page 2 will be considered within the 'protected group'.	Working age claimants who do not meet the conditions of the protected group will be entitled to less Council Tax Support than those in the protected group.
3. Sex/Gender	None	Men and women with dependant children will be equally affected by the following proposals: New entitlements (or where would have become entitled to

² Under this characteristic, The Equality Act only applies to those over 18

³ Consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made to ensure fair access

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic		
<p>Use the evidence to determine to the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. <i>Click here</i> for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic. If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.</p>		
	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
		family premium) on/after 1 April 2019 do not receive the family premium. To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for new applicants/new births after April 2019.
4. Gender reassignment ⁴	None	None
5. Pregnancy and Maternity	None	Women will be affected by the following proposals: New entitlement (or where would have become entitled to family premium)on/after 1 April 2019 do not receive the family premium. To limit the number of dependant children within the calculation of Council Tax Support to a maximum of two for new applicants/new births after April 2019.
6. Marriage and Civil Partnership	None	None
7. Race	None	None

⁴ Transgender refers to someone who considers that they do not identify strictly to one gender to the other, identifying themselves as neither male nor female.

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic		
<p>Use the evidence to determine to the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. <i>Click here for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic.</i> If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.</p>		
	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
8. Religion or Belief	None	None
9. Sexual Orientation	None	None
10. Any other factors/groups e.g. socio-economic status/carers etc. ⁵	Customers liable for Council Tax will continue to be able to apply to the Local Authority for a discretionary reduction under Section 13A(1)(c) of the 1992 Act.	Customers liable for Council Tax will continue to be able to apply to the Local Authority for a discretionary reduction under Section 13A(1)(c) of the 1992 Act.
11. Human Rights	None	None

Any policy which shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination must be stopped, removed or changed.

⁵ People on low incomes or no income, unemployed, carers, part-time, seasonal workers and shift workers

Equality Impact Assessment Template for the BCP Programme

Part 4 – Equality Impact Action Plan			
Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified in the assessment table above.			
Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer

Key contacts for further advice and guidance:

Equality & Diversity:

Sam Johnson - E&D Lead for Bournemouth & Poole	sam.johnson@bournemouth.gov.uk
Beverley Elliott – D&D Lead for Christchurch & East Dorset	belliott@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk
Susan Rice-Ward – E&D Lead for Dorset County Council	susan.ward@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Consultation & Research:

Lisa Stuchberry – Insight Manager for Bournemouth & Poole