

Summary of Results

Introduction

As part of national welfare benefits reform, from 1st April the Coalition Government is ending Council Tax Benefit (CTB), and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD) is required to design a new scheme, known as Council Tax Support (CTS). The new scheme will not be fully funded by the government, and there will be a shortfall of £2 million if LBBD continues to run CTB in its current form. LBBD is not able to absorb this loss in funding, and it has been proposed that payment support for Council Tax liability be reduced from 100% to 85% for all working age adult claimants.

Consultation Aims

LBBD aimed to consult with residents, particularly benefit claimants who will be directly affected by the changes, in order to identify groups that may be particularly badly affected by the changes.

What we did

From 2nd October 2012 LBBD sent letters to the 16,375 benefit claimants in the borough of working age, stating that they would be affected by changes to CTB from 1st April 2013, and inviting them to participate in an online survey about the changes. Other residents were informed via the council newspaper 'The News,' and a prominent link to both information on the changes and the survey on the homepage of the council website. In addition two public consultation meetings were held, on Thursday 11th and Monday 15th October, which were attended in total by over 100 residents. Attendees were asked to fill in a paper copy of the same survey, which have been collated with the online results analysed in this summary.

The consultation was open from 2nd October to 18th November 2012, and asked respondents whether they considered the proposals for a new scheme fair. In particular respondents were asked whether they thought the new scheme should be 'mainly the same' as the current scheme, whether every working age adult should contribute, and whether all working age adults should be affected equally. Respondents were then asked to identify groups which they thought would be more affected than others by the changes, and to contribute any other comments about the draft scheme.

Results Summary

Survey results showed overall support for the principles of the scheme, with the majority agreeing that the new Council Tax Support Scheme should be similar to the current Council Tax Benefit scheme, and that every working age adult who currently receives support should pay some Council Tax. There were concerns expressed that some groups may be more affected than others, though some self selection may be evident in these results. 323 people completed the survey.

Survey Results

(1) A majority of respondents (63.2%) agreed that the new Council Tax Support Scheme should be 'mainly the same as the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme.'

Strongly Agree	37.5%	(121)	Agreed or Disagreed		
Agree	25.7%	(83)	Agree	63.2%	(204)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.4%	(40)			
Disagree	8.7%	(28)	Disagree	17.0%	(55)
Strongly Disagree	8.4%	(27)			
Don't Know	7.4%	(24)			
Total		(323)			

(2) A small majority of respondents who expressed an opinion agreed that 'every working age adult who receives Council Tax support should pay at least something towards their Council Tax bill.'

Strongly Agree	12.7%	(40)	Agreed or Disagreed		
Agree	32.0%	(101)	Agree	44.6%	(141)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13.3%	(42)			
Disagree	20.6%	(65)	Disagree	39.2%	(124)
Strongly Disagree	18.7%	(59)			
Don't Know	2.8%	(9)			
Total		(316)			

(3) A small majority of respondents who expressed an opinion did not agree 'that the 15% reduction required to cover the Government's cut in our grant should be applied equally to all working age adults.'

Strongly Agree	9.8%	(30)	Agreed or Disagreed		
Agree	26.7%	(82)	Agree	36.5%	(112)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15.6%	(48)			
Disagree	21.2%	(65)	Disagree	40.7%	(125)
Strongly Disagree	19.5%	(60)			
Don't Know	7.2%	(22)			
Total		(307)			

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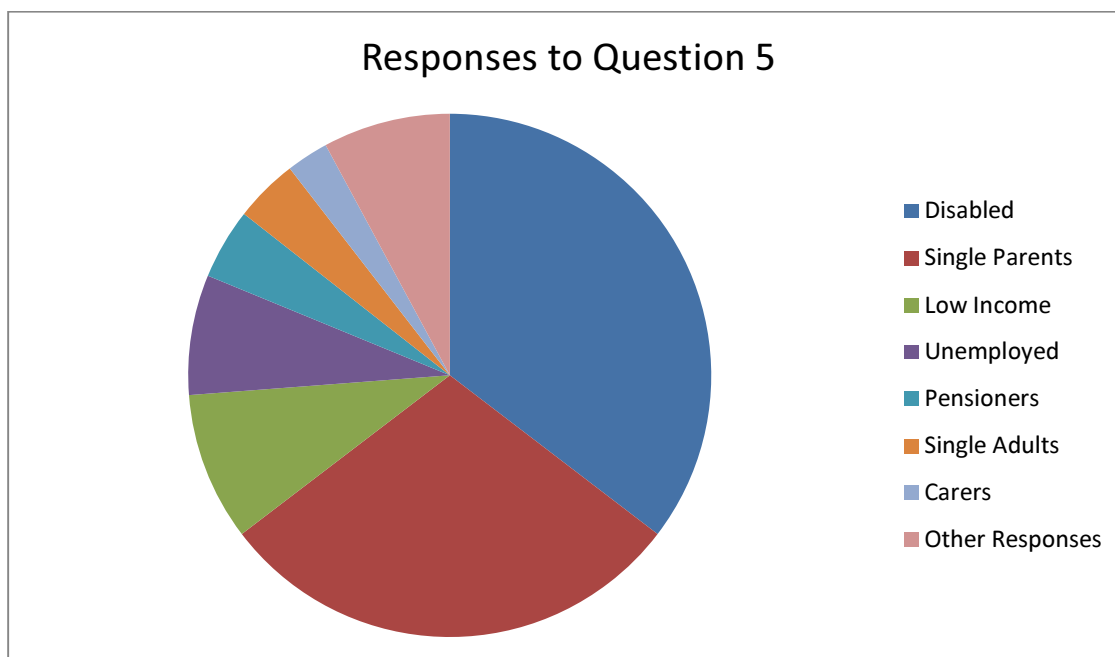
(4) A majority thought that 'there are groups of people in the community who would be affected more than others by these changes.'

Yes	69.5%	(207)
No	10.7%	(32)
Don't Know	19.8%	(59)
Total		(298)

(5) When asked to name which groups they thought would be most affected 175 responded, some giving multiple answers, to give 223 responses.

Group	Number of Responses	Percentage of responses	Responses as a proportion of total surveys
Disabled People	81	35.5%	25.1%
Single Parents	67	29.4%	20.7%
Those on a Low Income	21	9.2%	6.5%
Unemployed	17	7.5%	5.3%
Pensioners	10	4.4%	3.1%
Single Adults	9	4.0%	2.8%
Carers	6	2.6%	1.9%
Families	4	1.8%	1.2%
Parents with Disabled Children	3	1.3%	0.9%
Women	3	1.3%	0.9%
Students	2	0.9%	0.6%
Did not answer	148	n/a	45.8%

Those with dependents, the self-employed, women with young children, homeowners on Job Seeker's Allowance, and couples without children each received one response, or 0.48% of the total responses.



Disabled people (35.5%) and single parents (29.4%) were therefore the groups which most respondents were concerned about. However, 19.4% of respondents identified themselves as disabled, and 15.9% responded that they lived in a household with a disabled person (it was not stated whether this should include the respondent or not). Similarly, while 29.4% of responses identified single parents as a group at risk, 19.3% of respondents were themselves single parents. When the number of responses for these groups is compared to the number of surveys completed instead of people that answered the question, the percentages from a certain group, and answering that the same group was particularly at risk are very close.

Group	Percentage (and number) of Answers	Answers/Total Surveys	Proportion of Respondents
Disabled People	35.5% (81)	25.1%	19.4%
Single Parents	29.4% (67)	20.7%	19.3%

These results may therefore suggest self-selection, and may not translate to a widespread concern that any particular group will be more adversely affected than any other by the proposed scheme.

(6) Question 6 asked for any additional comments about the scheme, these responses have been summarised in the FAQ document.

Who was consulted

In total the council received 323 responses to the survey, a relatively small sample of benefit claimants, and of the borough as a whole. Though respondents were not asked to identify whether they received benefits, it may be presumed from the targeted publicity that a majority of respondents were benefit claimants.

(7) The vast majority of respondents were individuals living in Barking and Dagenham:

Individuals living in Barking and Dagenham	94.7%	(267)
Individuals or organisations supporting local people	3.5%	(10)
Individuals or organisations representing local people	1.8%	(5)
Did not answer		(41)

(8) The majority of respondents (52.3%) lived in families with children, though there were substantial numbers of households that included a disabled person and households with no children:

Families with 1-2 dependent children	23.0%	(62)
Families with 3+ dependent children	10.0%	(27)
Lone parent households	19.3%	(52)
A household with full and/or part-time workers	7.0%	(19)
Households with a disabled person	15.9%	(43)
Single person households, or couples with no children	20.0%	(54)
Did not identify with any of the above categories	4.8%	(13)
Did not answer		(53)

(9) 31.3% of respondents considered themselves carers, whether of children, disabled family members or older family members:

Carers	31.3%	(80)
Non-Carers	68.8%	(176)
Skipped Question		(67)

(10) The highest number claiming to be carers cared for children under 14, more people answered this question than said that they were carers in the previous question.

Caring for:	A child or children under 14	60.0%	(57)
	A disabled person within the family	36.8%	(35)
	An older family member	12.6%	(12)
Did not answer			(219)

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- (11) Almost all respondents were of working age, with 95% between 20 and 59.

Under 20	0.7%	(2)
20-39	39.9%	(106)
40-59	55.1%	(150)
60-65	2.9%	(8)
66-75	2.2%	(6)
75 +	0.0%	(0)
Did not answer		(51)

- (12) There were almost twice as many female respondents (63.9%, 172) as male (36.1%, 97), 54 did not answer the question.

- (13) 4 respondents (1.8%) said that they have at some point in their lives identified as transgender.

- (14-18) The majority of respondents identified themselves as white, although a large number did not answer:

White	75.9%	(211)
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	4.3%	(12)
Asian/Asian British	8.3%	(23)
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	11.2%	(31)
Other	0.4%	(1)
Did not answer		(45)

- (19) Of the 258 (79.9%) who answered the question, 50 (19.4%) respondents considered themselves disabled.