

## Equality Impact Assessment: *The Household Support Fund – scheme 4*

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Executive 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2023  Council 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	The Household Support Fund – scheme 4	Adopt policy for disbursement of grant funding for the fourth Households Support Fund. To include a direct award to low income households with high likelihood of having Council Tax arrears and an application process for customers who have missed out on other support payments.	Disability Sex / Gender Age

**Factors to consider in the assessment:** For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this

conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

**High impact** – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

**Medium impact** – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

**Low impact** – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
<b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	<b>Neutral</b>		Entitlement based on Council Tax Support award details which do not distinguish. Application scheme will be promoted widely. DCC are also allocating HSF 4 funds directly to support groups for Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse people.
<b>Disability:</b> as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	<b>Both</b>	<b>Low</b>	Group not specifically targeted by the HSF 4 direct award scheme, other than households including a disabled child. Data available in Council Tax Support gives an incomplete picture of householder disability, so wouldn't be possible to identify all cases. Many will have been entitled to a disability Cost of Living payment and may also have received the income related benefit and / or pensioner payments. Application based scheme will prioritise awards for households with a disabled member who missed out on other support payments.
<b>Sex/Gender</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Low</b>	The scheme does not specifically target one gender over another. A higher proportion of households receiving a direct payment from HSF4 are led by a single female than the overall Council Tax Support population.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Neutral</b>		Entitlement to a direct payment is based on Council Tax Support award details which do not distinguish on these grounds. Applications made to the scheme will not require this information.
<b>Religion and belief</b> (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	<b>Neutral</b>		Entitlement to a direct payment is based on Council Tax Support award details which do not distinguish on these grounds. Applications made to the scheme will not require this information.

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	<b>Neutral</b>		Entitlement to a direct payment is based on Council Tax Support award details which do not distinguish on these grounds. Applications made to the scheme will not require this information.
<b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).	<b>Both</b>	<b>Low</b>	Households with 3 or more children will be positively affected with an award from HSF4. This group is often disadvantaged in the welfare system with rules limiting support to 2 children. They are also likely to face higher absolute costs than smaller families. Older people are not specifically helped through this scheme, but the support they receive through the Council Tax Support scheme is higher than their working age equivalents. They will also receive the Cost of Living payment linked to the Winter Fuel Payment. The application based scheme will prioritise awards for households with a member of pensionable age who missed out on other support payments.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> including new and breast feeding mothers	<b>Neutral</b>		Children count towards eligibility for a payment from birth. Customers who miss out on a payment due to the birth date of a child falling after the entitlement date will be able to claim from the application based scheme.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership status</b>	<b>Neutral</b>		Entitlement to a direct payment is based on Council Tax Support award details which do not distinguish on these grounds. Applications made to the scheme will not require this information.

#### Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

- The groups who will be eligible for a direct payment are those that have been identified as needing extra help
- Other groups who could also be considered for help with be entitled to alternative support through the government's Cost of Living Payments or other Household Support Fund schemes funded by Devon County Council
- Vulnerable customers who have missed out on this or alternative direct support will be able to make an application for help through the HSF4 application based scheme which will be promoted through support networks
- Additional and crisis support will be available through the Economic Vulnerability Fund

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