

Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24

Appendices A – D to the engagement report. The report and appendices are available to view on our [website page](#).

DECEMBER 2022

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Note: Any personal information supplied to us within the comments that could identify anyone has been redacted and will not be shared or published in the main consultation report or this appendix. Further information on data protection is available in our general consultation’s privacy statement on our [Vale](#) website; some comments received were blank responses; some spelling, grammatical and punctual errors in the original comments raised were corrected in the main consultation report; a full list of unedited comments can be found in this appendix.

APPENDIX A – BACKGROUND TO THE ENGAGEMENT

The following information is taken from the first few pages of the online consultation.

The Vale of White Horse District Council is considering some amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and would like to know your opinion. If approved, changes will take effect from **1 April 2023**.

We believe that by amending the current entitlement to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme the council would ensure that everyone contributes to services on a fairer basis. We are now inviting you to give your views on the following proposals:

- that the maximum council tax reduction for eligible claimants be increased from 91.5 per cent to 100 per cent (full reduction)
- that council tax reduction should no longer be capped to Band E
- that a single person living with another adult on low income should be entitled to up to 25 per cent reduction in council tax

Please note the deadline for completing this survey is **11.59pm on Monday 7 November 2022**.

What happens next?

Once the consultation has closed all responses will be collated and presented to the council's scrutiny committee in November 2022. Full details of the new scheme will then be published in early 2023 and will be ready to be launched on **1 April 2023**. A summary report on the findings of this consultation will be published on the [council's website](#).

A 'save and continue later' option is available using a link at the bottom of each page, so that you can save your progress and then return later to your survey. Simply provide your name and email address and you will automatically receive a link via email.

Please note, we will only use your response when you have clicked 'finish survey' at the end of the comment form.

Personal details

If you are responding as an individual, we will not ask for your name or any contact details. Any personal information you provide to the council within your comments that could identify you will not be published in the summary report. You also do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or business, we ask you to provide its name - the summary report will include this information. All personal information supplied to the council will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information on data protection is available in our [privacy statement](#).

If you have any questions about this survey, need further information on how to claim council tax support, or want to discuss your council tax, please contact vowh.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk. If you require this survey in an alternative format (for example large print, Braille, audio, email, Easy Read and alternative languages) please email haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk or call **01235 422425**.

APPENDIX B – EMAIL NOTIFICATION

Dear xxx,

The Vale of White Horse District Council is considering some amendments to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and would like to know your opinion on these.

We are carrying out a four-week consultation which runs from Monday 10 October until 11.59pm on Monday **7 November 2022**.

How to comment

The quickest and easiest way to comment is to use our online comment form which is available here.

Note that this is a unique link just for you and is tied to your email address. You should not forward this message to anybody else.

What happens next

Once the consultation has closed all responses will be collated and presented to the council's scrutiny committee in November 2022. Full details of the new scheme will then be published in early 2023 and will be ready to be launched on 1 April 2023. A summary report on the findings of this consultation will be published on the council's website.

We look forward to hearing your views.

Kind regards,

Trevor Gaffney

Revenues and Benefits Manager

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please email vowh.benefits@secure.capita.co.uk, and you will be removed from our mailing list. Please note, we may still need to contact you for certain consultations if we have a legal obligation to do so.

Data protection: Please refer to our privacy policy regarding how your personal data is used for this consultation. If you would like to know more about the council's data protection registration, or to find out about your personal data, please visit our website.

APPENDIX C – SURVEY

A little bit about you

1. Before giving your views about changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme you may find it helpful to read the background information provided on the previous page.

How are you responding to this consultation? *

- On my own behalf
- On behalf of somebody else

2. I am responding as / on behalf of: *

- A resident / member of the public
- A carer
- A landlord
- A business / organisation
- A housing association
- A district/county or parish/town council
- Other (please specify):

3. If you are responding on behalf of a business / organisation, please let us know its name

A little bit about you

4. Do you live in the Vale of White Horse District Council area? *

- Yes

No

5. Do you currently receive a council tax reduction (previously council tax benefit)?

Yes

No

6. Please indicate the level of council tax reduction you receive

100% - full reduction (i.e. you pay no council tax)

Partial reduction (i.e. you pay a reduced amount of council tax)

7. The following groups will not be affected by any changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in the Vale of White Horse, and will continue to receive the same level of support that they were entitled to when in receipt of council tax benefit.

Please indicate if you belong to any of these groups:

Pensioner or currently treated as a pensioner for council tax reduction purposes

Person with disabilities (in receipt of any of the benefits listed at the beginning of this survey)

War widows pension recipient

War disablement pension recipient

Single parent with a child under the age of five

I don't belong to any of the above groups

Council Tax Reduction Scheme - proposed changes

8. Proposed change 1:

In order to ensure that everyone contributes on a fairer basis to council services, we are proposing a Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would remove the provision to pay at least 8.5 per cent of council tax (around £180.00 per year, based on a Band D property). This would mean that all eligible applicants could receive support for 100 per cent of their council tax (*).

The proposed change would apply to all eligible claimants except for those already in protected groups (pensioners, people with disabilities, war widows, war disabled and single parents with children under the age of five years old), whose entitlement will not be affected.

Example: John is a single person who is currently without a job and is in receipt of job seeker's allowance. He lives in a one-bedroom flat (council tax band B) with a council tax bill of £1,652.00 per year. John currently receives 91.5 per cent reduction and pays around £140 per year towards his council tax.

The proposed change would mean that John would now receive 100 per cent reduction and pay no council tax.

(* Please note, to be eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme you must be liable to pay council tax, your income must be low enough to satisfy the means test and your savings must not exceed £16,000.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase the entitlement to council tax reduction for eligible claimants from 91.5 per cent to 100 per cent (full reduction)?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

Council Tax Reduction Scheme - proposed changes

9. Proposed change 2:

Vale of White Horse District Council is planning to implement a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would allow a single person living with another adult on low income to claim up to 25 per cent reduction in council tax.

Current situation: A single person who has a second adult living with them does not receive any reduction, even if the second adult is on low income.

Proposed change: A single person who lives with another adult who is on a low income can receive up to 25 per cent reduction on their council tax, regardless of their own income (excluding lodgers).

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal that a single person who lives with another adult on low income could claim up to 25 per cent council tax reduction regardless of their income (excluding lodgers)?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

10. Proposed change 3:

Vale of White Horse District Council is planning to introduce a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme so that entitlement to council tax reduction will no longer be capped at Band E.

Current situation: Where someone is living in a property where a higher council tax is paid (bands F, G and H), there is an upper limit on the level of council tax reduction that can be claimed.

Proposed change: Those who live in properties where a higher council tax is paid (bands F, G and H) may be entitled to a full reduction on their council tax.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to extend entitlement to full council tax reduction to those living in properties where higher council tax is paid (bands F, G and H)?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Comments:

Anything else?

11. If you have any other comments about the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in the Vale of White Horse, please write them in the space below:

Our commitment to equal access for all

12. We are committed to making sure that residents have equal access to all council services. Please help us keep track of how successfully we are achieving this by ticking the appropriate boxes below.

All questions are optional. All information is confidential and will only be used to help us monitor whether views differ across the community.

Which of the following describes how you identify yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Neither of the above (specify below if you would like to)
- Prefer not to say
- I identify as:

13. How old are you?

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54

- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

14. What is your ethnic group?

- Prefer not to say

White

- English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other white background

Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African

Any other black background

Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed background

Other Ethnic Group

Arab

Other (please specify):

15. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

If yes, please provide further information if you would like to

16. How did you hear about this survey?

Twitter

Facebook

Instagram

Poster

Newsletter

Email

Letter

Our website

Another website

Word of mouth

Radio/TV

Read it in the newspaper

District Council

Parish Council

Other (please specify):

Are you ready to submit form?

If you are ready to submit your comments, please tick the box below, then select the 'Finish Survey' button. Note: once ticked you will not be able to return to your comments and they will be submitted.

If not, please use the 'previous page' button to go back through the survey to amend or review your response.

Alternatively you can use the 'save and continue later' so that you can save your progress, and return later to your comments. Simply provide your name and email address and you will automatically receive a link via email to return to your draft comments when you are ready. *

Yes, I have finished and am ready to submit

APPENDIX D – FULL LIST OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

Below are the qualitative findings which were not included in the main report.

Q2. I am responding as / on behalf of:

Other (please specify).

201082513	Domestic
202883939	charity sector

Q3. If you are responding on behalf of a business / organisation, please let us know its name

Comments received:

- Age UK Oxfordshire

Q8. Proposed change 1: In order to ensure that everyone contributes on a fairer basis to council services, we are proposing a Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would remove the provision to pay at least 8.5 per cent of council tax (around £180.00 per year, based on a Band D property). This would mean that all eligible applicants could receive support for 100 per cent of their council tax (*). The proposed change would apply to all eligible claimants except for those already in protected groups (pensioners, people with disabilities, war widows, war disabled and single parents with children under the age of five years old), whose entitlement will not be affected.

Example: John is a single person who is currently without a job and is in receipt of job seeker's allowance. He lives in a one-bedroom flat (council tax band B) with a council tax bill of £1,652.00 per year. John currently receives 91.5 per cent

reduction and pays around £140 per year towards his council tax. The proposed change would mean that John would now receive 100 per cent reduction and pay no council tax. (*) Please note, to be eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme you must be liable to pay council tax, your income must be low enough to satisfy the means test and your savings must not exceed £16,000.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to increase the entitlement to council tax reduction for eligible claimants from 91.5 per cent to 100 per cent (full reduction)?

Comments received:

201082120	It used to be 100% then was changed People on certain benefits mentioned need support
201085495	The thing is people on full benefits get everything paid for them full out and some waste their benefits on drinks drugs ect so yes I believe they should pay some. I do however think people who work and get uc should be entitled to more help.
201087572	There is little incentive to get back to work if you don't have to pay any council tax at all and he is still using the services provided by the council. He should still get a reduction because of his circumstances but not a 100% reduction.
201104863	People need to understand what charges they are liable for even if reduced.
201123974	well through the year i have had numerous letters from vale of white horse about my council tax reduction it one higher than the other i have a drawer full of them, plus each one giving less time to pay i'm receiving PIP and universal credits as well so i'm really confused
201127678	I understand that some families may be struggling to afford the increase of cost of living and that Council tax reduction will help them going on.
201144691	I feel if it someone who is able to work should not really be eligible for a 100% reduction , it should be for registered disabled and families who are working but on low incomes.
201412173	As John is on jobseekers benefit, he should get FULL Council Tax Benefit, because Jobseekers Benefit doesn't pay that much, and he wouldn't be able to afford to pay towards his Council Tax Bill each month.
201585008	I fully agree if this doesn't increase council tax rates for those in bands A to C. A fair system is one where those that work their ass off for savings meaning that they don't qualify isn't made responsible for those that don't work (or can't) A fair system taxes those that can afford more than the basics.
201585301	They should make some contribution, they receive government help already. Being given everything is unfair. Or better still take the % from the weekly/monthly benefit before it's paid to the individual at least it will not be such a burden on the full paying households!!

201763938	Sorry I can't justify reducing the tax on people who some are just far too lazy to work when I work so hard and penalised by paying a huge bill ,those on benefits should be only physically and mentally disabled people who they cant do any work not those who pick the work that only helps them to claim benefits
202851595	Too many people on low incomes experience real hardship nowadays
202883939	This is a sensible change for people on recognised low incomes.

Q9. Proposed change 2:

Vale of White Horse District Council is planning to implement a change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would allow a single person living with another adult on low income to claim up to 25 per cent reduction in council tax.

Current situation: A single person who has a second adult living with them does not receive any reduction, even if the second adult is on low income.

Proposed change: A single person who lives with another adult who is on a low income can receive up to 25 per cent reduction on their council tax, regardless of their own income (excluding lodgers).

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal that a single person who lives with another adult on low income could claim up to 25 per cent council tax reduction regardless of their income (excluding lodgers)?

Comments received:

201082120	Come on people can not afford food and heating Make sure the right people get help
201082519	It seems wrong that there would be no account of total household income
201087572	If it doesn't include a lodger, it must apply to couples, even if one is on a low income, it is still two incomes in the household, the services being used by two people.
201103621	I disagree because one adult could be a high earner and the other adult could be on a low income and by arrangement one works less than the other and cares for the family. If the two adults are a household then the joint income of all adults should be considered. Such a change could result in many households not paying tax when they could actually afford it.
201104863	This should be means tested based on the income of the first person.
201127678	The perspn with low income cannot contribute in the same way towards the Council tax.
201144691	This is fair if they are both working.
201160495	Wages are very low and council tax is a high proportion of living costs

201585008	I think this kind of change is fine, but considering the current housing market, It would make more sense to get landlords to pay council tax. after all, they are the ones profiting the housing.
201585301	If there are two adults brining in a salary then why should they receive the same discount as a single person? Is the single person then going to get a 50% reduction.... Where does it stop?!
202851595	This discriminates against couples in similar situations (eg: one earning, the other on no/a low income), which is morally unjustifiable. This is only justifiable if the CTX payer is not well off and/or if they're genuinely helping someone who would be homeless otherwise.

Q10. Proposed change 3:

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Proposed change: Those who live in properties where a higher council tax is paid (bands F, G and H) may be entitled to a full reduction on their council tax.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to extend entitlement to full council tax reduction to those living in properties where higher council tax is paid (bands F, G and H)?

Comments received:

201082120	It's the poor that need help not those that can afford houses over 500 000
201087572	It would depend on the circumstances. If it is a single person or an unemployed person, why are they living in such an expensive property?
201144691	If you live in an upper band you can afford the council tax.
201160495	People often live cheaper in their property after children have left than downsizing! Rents are much higher than an 'old' mortgage and selling and buying a new property often financially not better so reduction seems fair.
201585008	The housing market is broken. If someone is rich enough to own such a large house, then they should be rich enough to pay the council tax. if they aren't then they should be able to downsize.
201763938	This is ridiculous proposal ,why someone who lives in a large house receives benefits! They must afford to pay its tax or else they should live in a small flat . Very unfair system that praises the lazy people

202851595	Full CTX Reduction should be given for a fixed number of years, then tapered towards a cap over a fixed period, and possibly have variable caps to reflect the different bands.
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Q11. If you have any other comments about the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in the Vale of White Horse, please write them in the space below:

Comments received:

201081808	Do not exclude people on UC who are long-term sick and unable to work.
201082120	Help those that cant help themselves
201085495	we get £500 wages a month and the rest is a top up of uc we struggle and we have to pay basically £200 council tax that's with a reduction. I just find it really poor and wonder why people don't want to work because my husband brings home £500 from a job we pay £200 to you but if we stayed on benifits we would have it all paid. Just think needs looking into more I know people on all full benifits loaded and they don't pay a penny.
201088585	The reduction for a single person household (or single person plus children /students) should be more than 25% (eg 50%), given that the produced waste/water/road usage etc and income is more than 25% lower than in a household with 2 or more people.
201087572	There is no mention of the reduction for a single person living alone. Do we assume that remains unchanged?
201089429	what about household income ? for example : in a house if only one person is working and the patner is out of work , should they not be entitled to council tax reduction?
201096936	My general opinion As we know everything things quite expensive, fuels,goods ect, and people have young children stuck as child care quite expensive a lot of mums straggle , by given family council tax reductions will be very good idea consideration.
201120952	A refund should be paid to tenants like us on all overpayment of council tax over the past years. We believe we have been charged incorrectly.
201144691	It would help me to have a reduction as my son and I both work low income jobs and pay full council tax and tax on our wages .
201412173	My daughter is disabled and claims Universal Credit, LWRCA, Child Tax Credits, Child Benefit and High Rate Pip. She still lives with me and I am primary carer for her. I get Carers Allowance, Income Support , Housing Benefit and a reduction on my Council Tax. I find it a struggle to pay the Council Tax shortfall at times, so the increase in the reduction from 91.5 % to 100% would be a really big help to me.
201585301	Why is everything aimed at low income and single parents and people on benifits and single high earners who live in large houses. where the extra reduction for single people living on a low income struggling to

	pay bills. Looking at this two people in the same house both bringing home a salary each are entitled to the same reduction as a single person, there's no mention of there salary income.
201763938	Help people to live happily, praise the hard workers, provide good service for them to encourage others to be like them ,more tax from them equal more service provided to them

Q15. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more?

If yes, please provide further information if you would like to:

201083656	I am a carer for my partner, so our day-to-day activities are based on her condition on that day.
201084573	Wouldn't know where to start
201097919	Arthritis, depression, anxiety
201144691	Osteoarthritis of the knees