

London Borough of Bromley
Council Tax Reduction – Consultation Report

22nd December 2022

1. Details of Recommendations

The council is asked to agree the following:

- 1.1 To note the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for Bromley residents is to come into effect from 1st April 2023.
- 1.2 To note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken with regard to the proposed scheme.
- 1.3 To note the findings on equalities and other impacts arising from the proposed Scheme.
- 1.4 To approve the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for Bromley at Full Council 27th February 2023. A consultation exercise was undertaken to seek resident's views as to whether to grant Council Tax Reduction for working-age claimants at a maximum of 70% of Council Tax liability, also whether the maximum council tax band to be used in the calculations should be restricted to Band D.

2. Report Summary

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the previous system of Council Tax Benefit with effect from 31st March 2013. Its replacement, Localised Support for Council Tax, was introduced from 1st April 2013 through Council Tax Reduction.

Bromley formally approved a scheme limiting increases to 8.5% of Council Tax liability for 2013/14, rising to 19% in 2014/15 and 25% for 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

This report is to approve the new scheme, this will be required to be formally approved at full council on 27th February 2023 for the next financial year commencing 1st April 2023.

The proposal is to amend the scheme rules from the financial year 2023/24 onwards, to restrict the grant of a Council Tax Reduction under the scheme to a maximum of 70% of Council Tax liability and to restrict the highest band used for the purposes of the calculation of the award to a maximum of Band D.

This reports sets out:

The background to the design of a local scheme of Council Tax Reduction for 2023/24 for the London Borough of Bromley and details of the interaction with legislation and guidance supplied by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Details the proposed scheme of Council Tax Reduction for Bromley, recognising that the matter is one which will need to be approved by full Council.

Details of the consultation exercise undertaken on the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme during a period from 20 September 2022 until 15 November 2022.

The financial implications of the proposed scheme for Council Tax Reduction for the residents of Bromley and risks associated with the design of a local scheme.

3. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the existing system of Council Tax Benefit with effect from 31st March 2013. Its replacement, Localised Support for Council Tax was introduced from 1st April 2013 and was contained within the Local Government Finance Act which received Royal Assent on 31st October 2012

There are a number of key differences between the two schemes of assistance with Council tax liabilities. These include the fact that responsibility has changed from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to the DLUHC.

In addition the funding regime changed from being demand-led Annual Managed Expenditure (AME).

While Bromley was able to design its own scheme to support working age applicants, the Government desire to protect those of state pension credit age resulted in centrally provided legislation covering those in this group.

These Prescribed Regulations introduced a Statutory Scheme, similar to the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme, for those of pensionable age and also maintains previous provisions with regard to limiting entitlement to those classed as Persons from Abroad and deals with minor administrative issues. These provisions are replicated for 2023/24 subject to any legislative amendments that may be imposed by Central Government.

Once a local Council Tax Reduction scheme has been made by the Council, it cannot be revised for at least one financial year. A Billing Authority must however *consider* whether to revise or replace its scheme with another one on an annual basis.

Any revision to a scheme must be made by the Council by the 11th March 2023 immediately preceding the financial year in which it is to take effect and will require consultation arrangements to be applied. Additionally, consideration must be given to providing transitional protection where the support is to be reduced or removed.

3. Key Implications

The proposed Council Tax Reduction scheme for Bromley for 2023/24 has been established with due regard to the Council's statutory obligations, consultation responses and in order to attempt to distribute the reduced funding available amongst those claimants most in need of financial assistance, while still achieving the necessary financial savings to meet the funding deficit.

Bromley again proposes to follow the DLUHC Prescribed Scheme for those who have reached pensionable age, ensuring that they are protected from the effects of the funding reduction and continue to receive assistance with their Council Tax liability as now.

It is intended that the working age scheme will continue to be based on the rules introduced for 2013/14. This largely mirrored the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme with the exception of protecting the level of support relevant classes of individual's receive. This adjustment was required in order to pass on the reduction in funding received.

The outline principles for the Bromley working age Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for 2023/24 are:

- All working age customers will have to make some payment towards their council tax as the maximum help under the Council Tax Reduction scheme available for residents of London Borough of Bromley will be limited to 70% of the charge.
- The scheme will be reviewed annually.
- Non-dependant deductions will be aligned with any increase supplied by DLUHC in the Prescribed Requirement Regulations updates and will be in line with the pensioner claims.
- Applicable amounts will be up-rated or frozen in line with Housing Benefits for working age claimants.
- Maximum band for calculating CTR will be a band D.

The scheme will also be adapted to meet any further legislative requirements imposed by DLUHC and consideration will be given as to how to determine income from benefits established under the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Other requirements

A number of other scheme principles introduced in 2013/14 will be carried forward to 2023/24;

- New customers will be required to complete an application form for all new claims from 1 April 2023, existing awards under the 2022/23 scheme will continue in payment, where entitlement remains.
- The scheme allows for a review period. The period will be agreed and failure by the customer to provide details requested may mean their entitlement to CTR is ended.

- Any award or adjustment will be confirmed in the council tax bill but the bill itself will not be formal notification and a separate notification of entitlement will be supplied.
- Where awarded the notification letter will also:
 - a) inform the applicant that there is a duty to notify the authority of the relevant change in circumstances
 - b) explain the possible consequences (including prosecution) of failing to comply with that duty; and
 - c) set out the circumstances in which a change of circumstances might affect entitlement
- Any “overpayments” of CTR will be reclaimed by recovery through the council tax billing process
- Where an applicant is aggrieved about a decision regarding entitlement they may appeal under Section 16 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- A person may only appeal to the Valuation Tribunal where:
 - a) They are notified in writing by the authority that it believes the grievance is not well founded, but they are still aggrieved;
 - b) They are notified in writing that steps have been taken to deal with the grievance, but they are still aggrieved; or
 - c) The period of two months, beginning with the date of service of their notice being ended, has elapsed and they have not received notification under paragraph a) or b) above.

Level of Entitlement

Bromley made a decision, for the 2022/23 scheme, to pass on a maximum of 25% of the cost (resulting in a maximum entitlement, for working age claimants, of 75% of their liability).

The proposal for 2023/24 is to reduce this level of support and limit working age recipients to 70% of their council tax liability.

Also to restrict the highest band used in the calculation of CTR to a maximum of Band D.

4. Financial Details

Financial Impact On The Budget (Mandatory)

Costs of 2023/24 Scheme

Specific central government grant levels for Council Tax Reduction now form part of the overall Revenue Support Grant and are not therefore distinguishable.

5. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

Equality Impact Assessment

The Council has to give due regard to its Equalities Duties, in particular with respect to general duties arising pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, section 149. Having due regard to the need to advance equality involves, in particular, to the need to remove or minimize disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

The Council's tax system is programmed to identify all Council Tax Reduction accounts. The Council keeps under review the impact of the revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme and has found no evidence to indicate that any equalities protected groups have been disproportionately affected by the operation of the scheme.

Specific regard has also been paid to the guidance provided by DLUHC which will also provide mitigation to minimise disadvantage to those most likely to experience disadvantage.

The previous Equalities Analysis has been updated to reflect the options proposed in the consultation exercise. This can be found as enclosure 1 to the Executive Report entitled "Council Tax Support/Reduction scheme 2023/24". For information, the document is on the Council's website via the URL link below:

www.bromley.gov.uk/CouncilTaxSupport

Incentivising Work

It is again intended that Bromley will incentivise work by continuing the disregards of weekly income currently offered which are dependent upon the applicant's status:

- Lone parent £25 per week
- Disabled individual or carer £20 per week
- Single person £5 per week and Couple £10 per week

Where the applicant pays child care costs in order to achieve employment an additional weekly disregard of up to £175 (for 1 child) or £300 (for 2 or more children) from earnings will apply subject to the circumstances of the applicant and age of the child.

Where the applicant works in excess of 30 hours per week a further disregard of at least £17.10 will apply.

Customers who have been out of work, and receiving an appropriate benefit for 26 weeks, will receive an Extended Payment of Council Tax Reduction, at the same rate as they received when out of work, for the first 4 weeks of their new employment.

Child Poverty

It is intended that Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance will be disregarded as income types during the means tested assessment of Council Tax Reduction.

Access to relevant dependants allowances and family premiums within the applicable amount calculation will continue where applicants have responsibility for children and have been continuously in receipt of CTR since prior to 1st April 2016.

Armed Forces

Income derived from war widow's/widower's pensions, war disablement pensions or Guaranteed Income Payments from the Armed Forces/Reserve Forces Compensation Fund will be fully disregarded during the means tested assessment of Council Tax Reduction, whether for working or pensionable age applicants.

Disabled Applicants

Income derived from Disability Living Allowance or its replacement (Personal Independence Payments) and Attendance Allowance will be fully disregarded but receipt of such benefits will allow access to premiums within the applicable amount calculation.

There will be no non-dependant deduction taken as a result of the claimant or partner receiving Disability Living Allowance (care component), Attendance Allowance, the daily living component of PIP or where the claimant or partner is registered blind.

6. Consultation

A public consultation exercise was undertaken for the 2023/24 Council Tax Reduction Scheme during a period from 20 September 2022 until 15 November 2022.

The survey was available through a variety of channels:

- A link was available on the Bromley website
- A paper copy was issued to 4,000 households comprising of a mix of CTR recipients and non CTR recipients (2000 households not in receipt of CTR, 1334 recipients of working age and 666 recipients of pensionable age in line with current caseload ratio)
- A paper flyer enclosed with all Council Tax Bills and Housing Benefits letters issued during this period advising of the link on the website. This was issued to 31,420 residents.

In total there were 540 responses received. Of these 502 were from verified responders, 207 (38%) being via the website and the majority 295 (55%) received by post. There were also another 38 (7%) unverified forms received via the website where it was impossible to ascertain if the person completing the survey was actually a Bromley resident.

Supplementary questions were asked, for monitoring purposes, to determine whether respondents were currently in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or were completing the consultation on behalf of a representative body.

Of those who chose to respond to these questions, 64% stated that they were not currently in receipt of CTR.

The consultation exercise was based on 6 simple questions to residents of the Borough, 4 of which required specific responses with the remaining 2 being less direct and allowing a degree of free text response.

Of those that were specific, they sought responses in respect of:

- Q1: a. Do you agree that there should be a hardship fund?
b. Do you agree with increasing the hardship fund to £225,000?**
- Q2: a. Do you agree with setting assistance level at 70%?
b. If NO do you think Council Tax Support claimants should; Pay more Council Tax and receive less support?
c. Pay less Council Tax and receive more support?
d. Continue with current support of 75%**
- Q3: Please confirm whether you:
a. Agree with limiting assistance to the maximum of a Band D liability
b. If NO do you think Council Tax Support claimants should; Pay more council tax and receive less support
c. Pay less council tax and receive more support**
- Q4: If you think that the Council should increase the level of Council Tax Support for working-age people, how do you think this should be funded?
a. Increase Council Tax
b. Cut Services
c. Spend Council Reserves
d. All of the above**

Standard Equality and Diversity questions were also asked but it was made clear that providing this information was voluntary.

To summarise the main finds were:

- **92% of the verified respondents agreed that there should be a hardship fund, with 81% agreeing that the fund should be increased to £225k**
- **54% of the verified respondents agreed that the level of assistance should be reduced**
- **52% of the verified respondents agreed that the level of assistance should be restricted to band “D”**

7. Detailed Outcomes.

Details of the full consultation question and analysis responses, both overall and broken down, are detailed below.

Question 1.

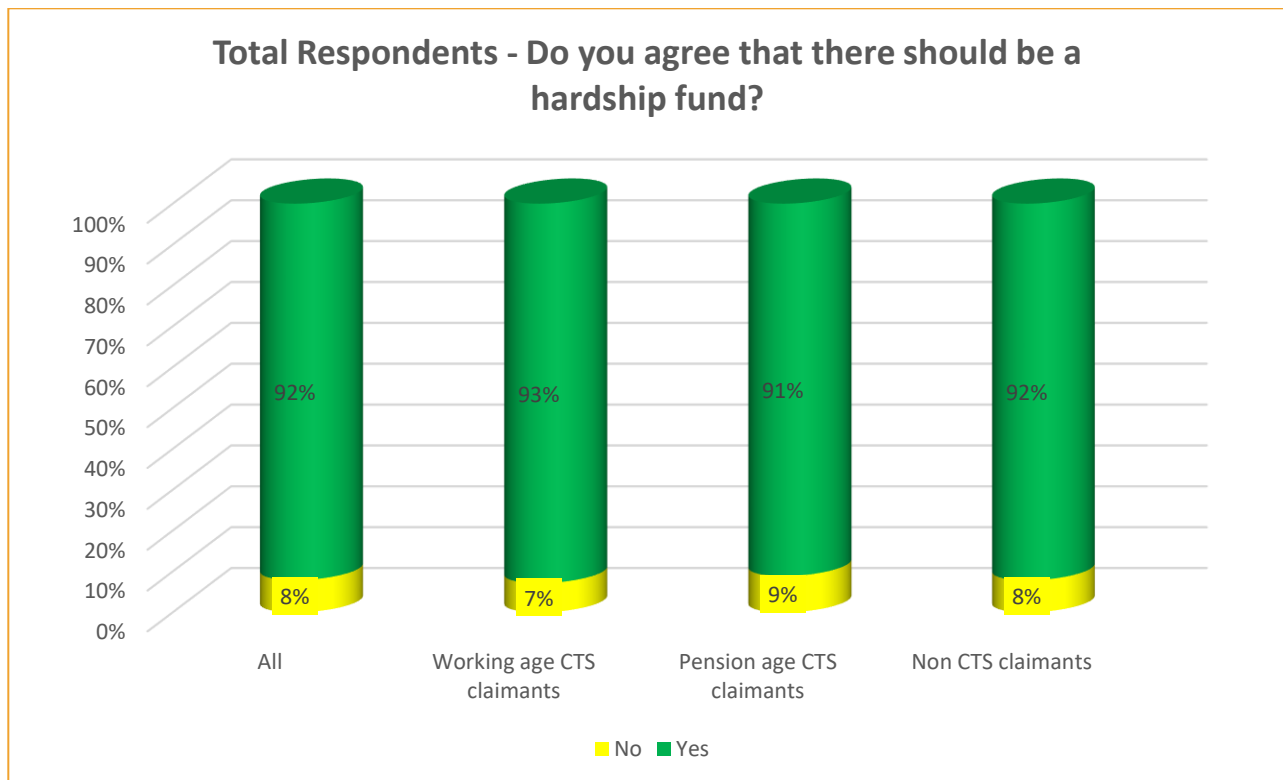
Q1 The Council has a hardship fund of £200,000, all of which will be fully utilised in 2022/23 to protect the most vulnerable. This is used to provide extra help to residents who are experiencing exceptional financial hardship and are unable to contribute to their Council Tax.

It is proposed that this fund will be increased to £225,000 from 2023/24.

	Yes	No
a. Do you agree that there should be a hardship fund?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Do you agree with increasing the hardship fund to £225,000?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

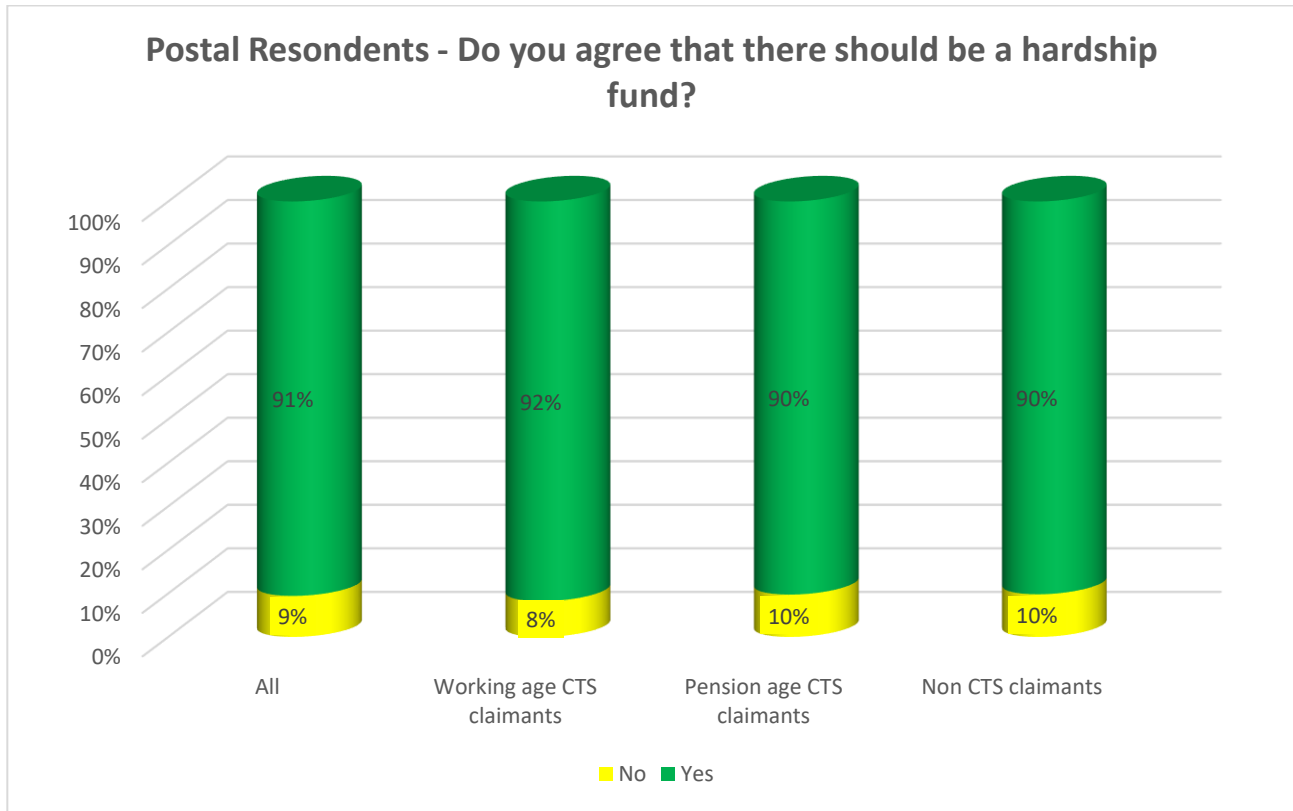
Overall response – part a.

The overall response to part (a) of this question was that, yes, the Council should have a hardship fund with 92% agreeing with this statement.

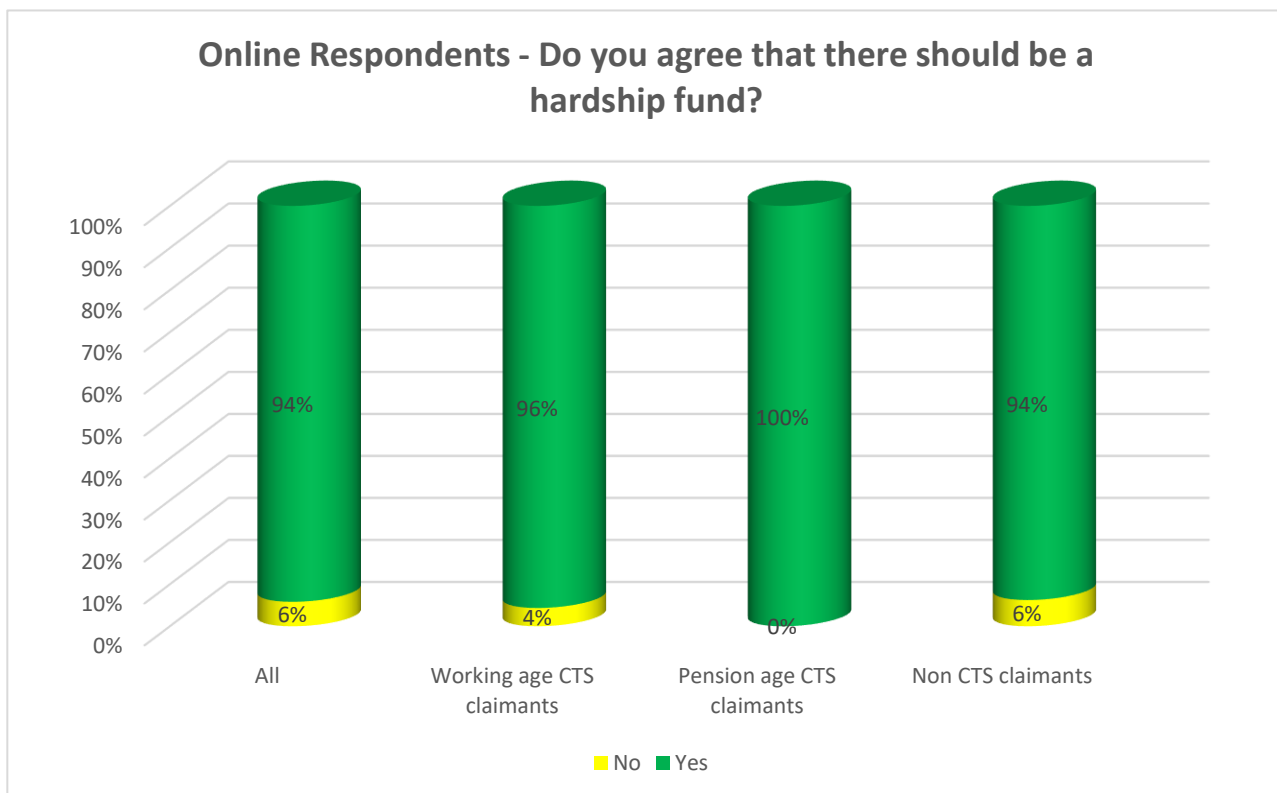


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

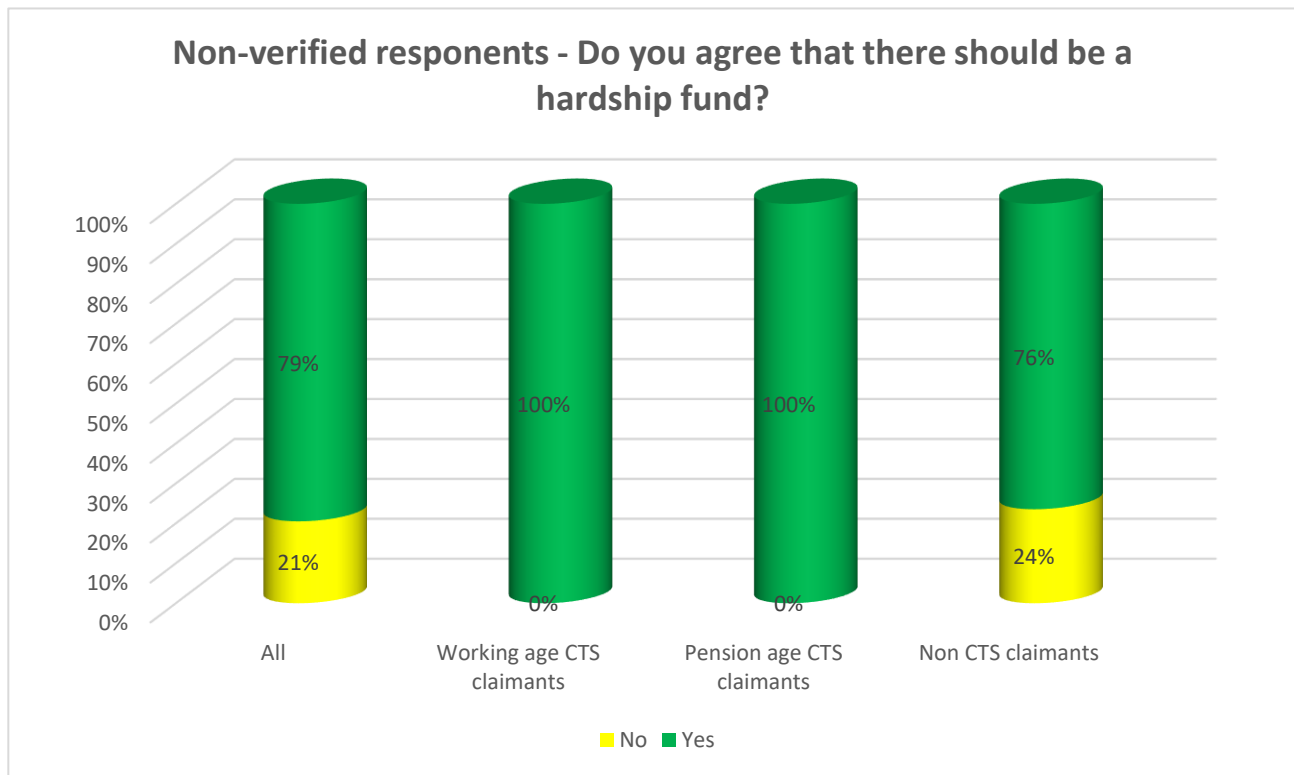
Of the postal responses received, overall 91% were in favour of there being a hardship fund. The result was irrespective of whether they were in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or not.



Of the online respondents 94% overall agreed that there should be a hardship fund, regardless of whether they were in receipt of Council tax reduction or not.



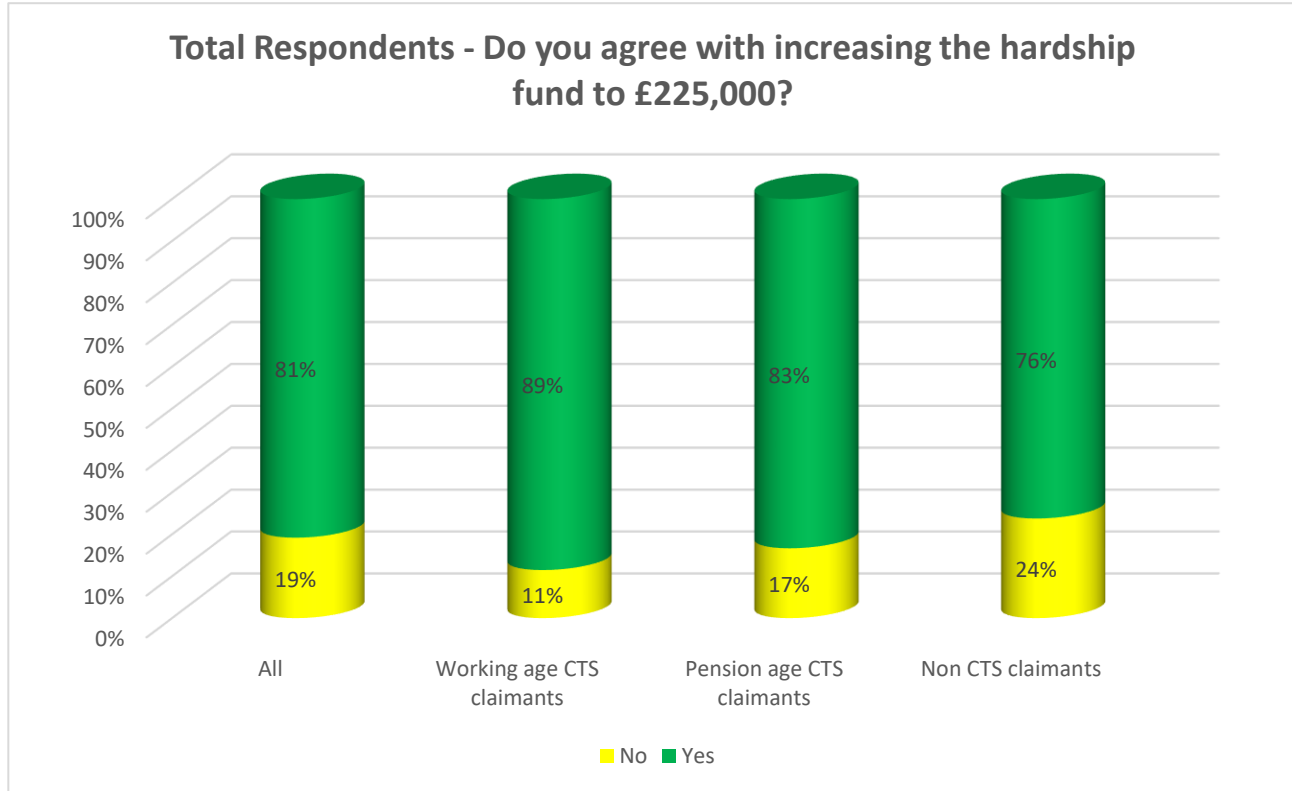
For the non-verified results, overall 79% agreed that there should be a hardship fund, once again regardless of being in receipt of council tax reduction.



Question 1 Part B

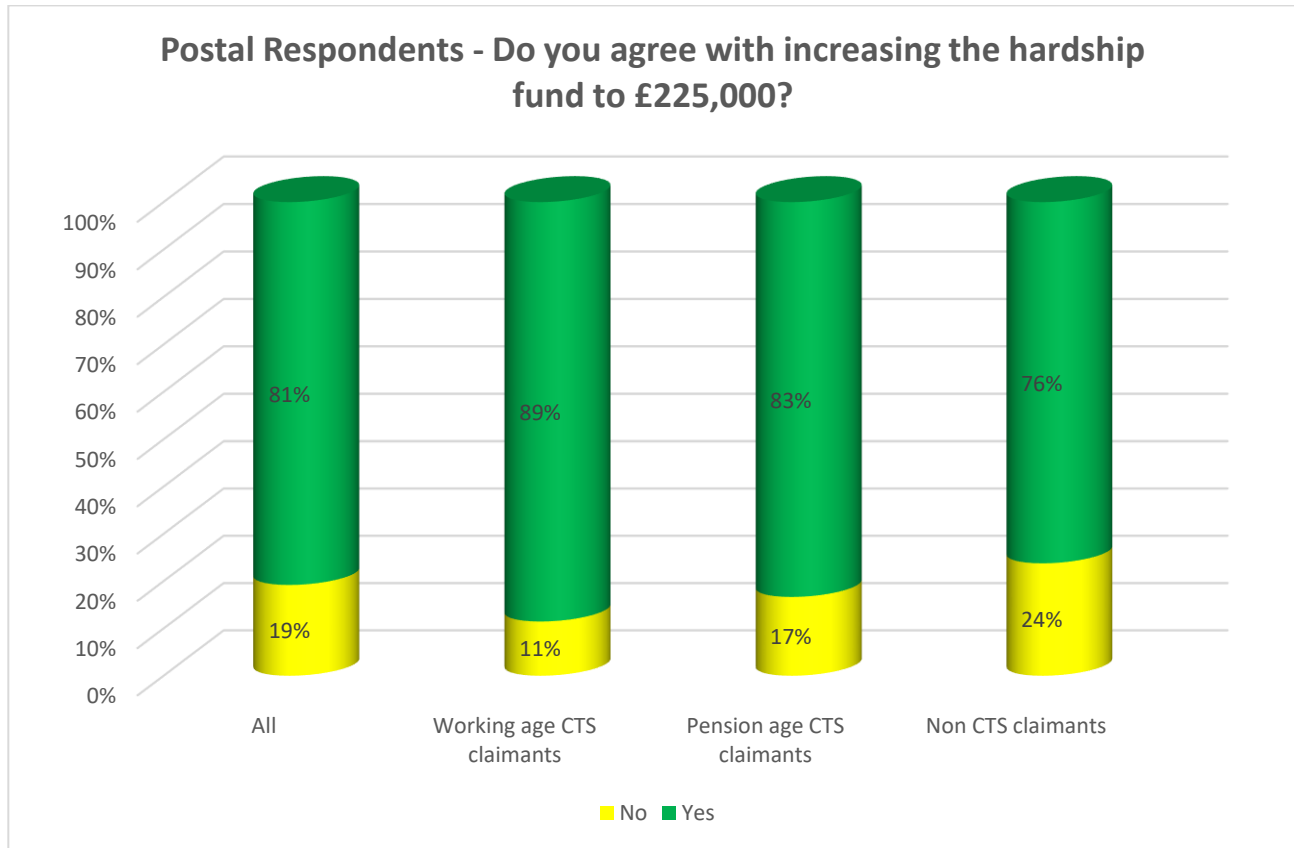
b. Do you agree with increasing the hardship fund to £225,000?

The overall response to part B of question 1 is that 81% agreed with increasing the hardship fund to £225,000 regardless of being in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.

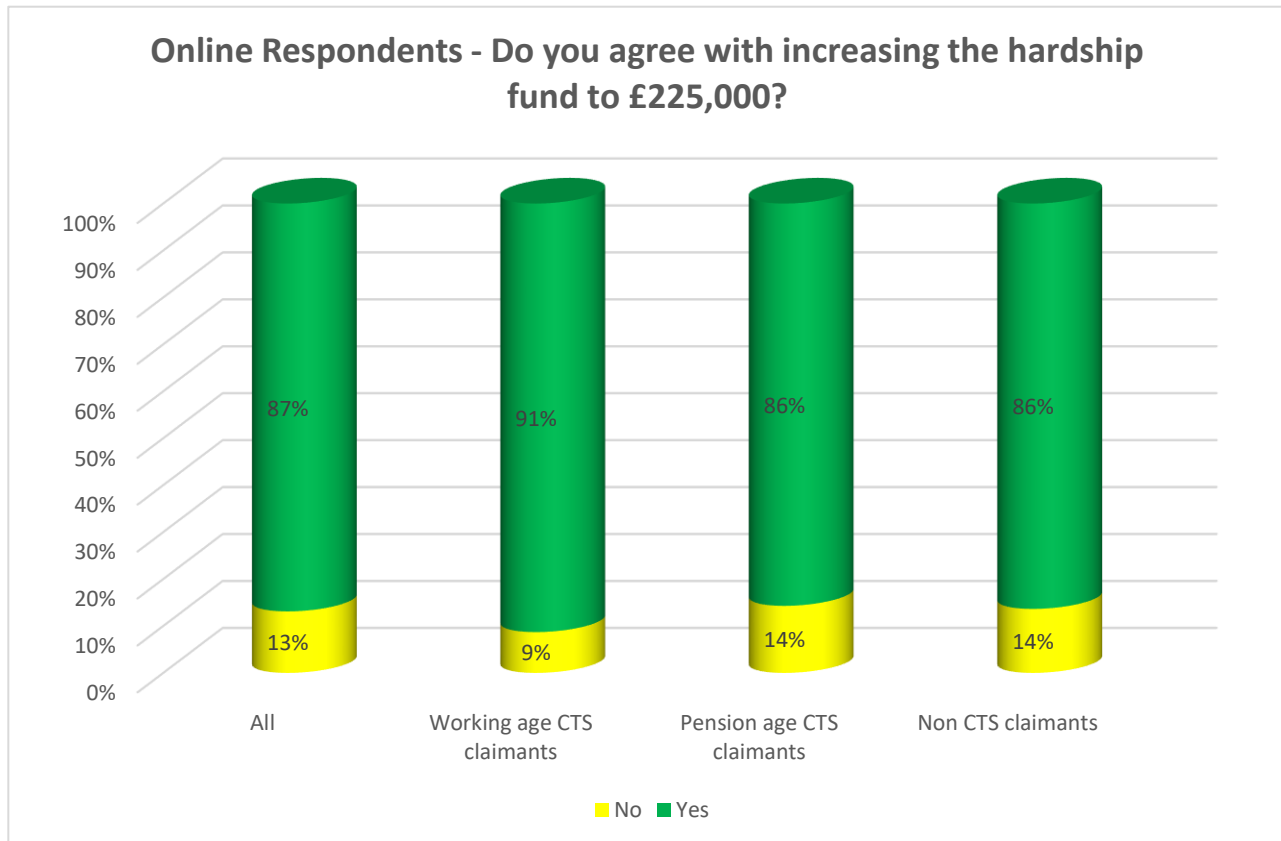


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

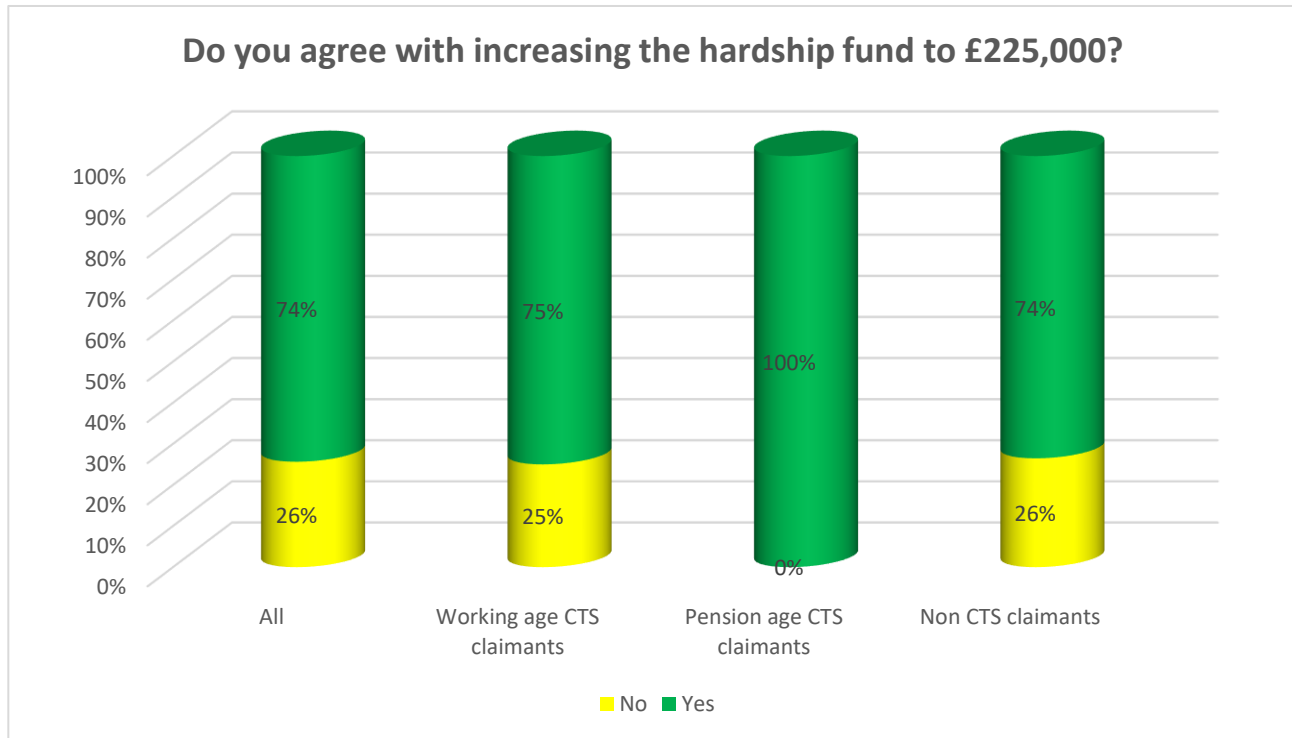
Of the postal respondents for part B of question 1, overall 81% agreed with increasing the hardship fund to £225,000.



For the online respondents, overall 87% of the answers showed that they would agree to increasing the hardship fund to £225,000 as shown below.



For the non-verified respondents, 74% agreed that the hardship fund should be increased, as shown below.



Question 2

- Q2 The Council is recommending from 2023/24 setting the minimum Council Tax liability for working age claimants at 30%. This means the maximum level of support offered by the Council would be 70% of the household's Council Tax liability after any discounts or exemptions have been applied.

This would require working age claimants to pay a minimum of 30% of their liability. Based on 2022/23 Council Tax levels, the minimum contribution before means testing is set out in the table below which, for comparative purposes only, shows what the financial impact would be if minimum contribution was 30%

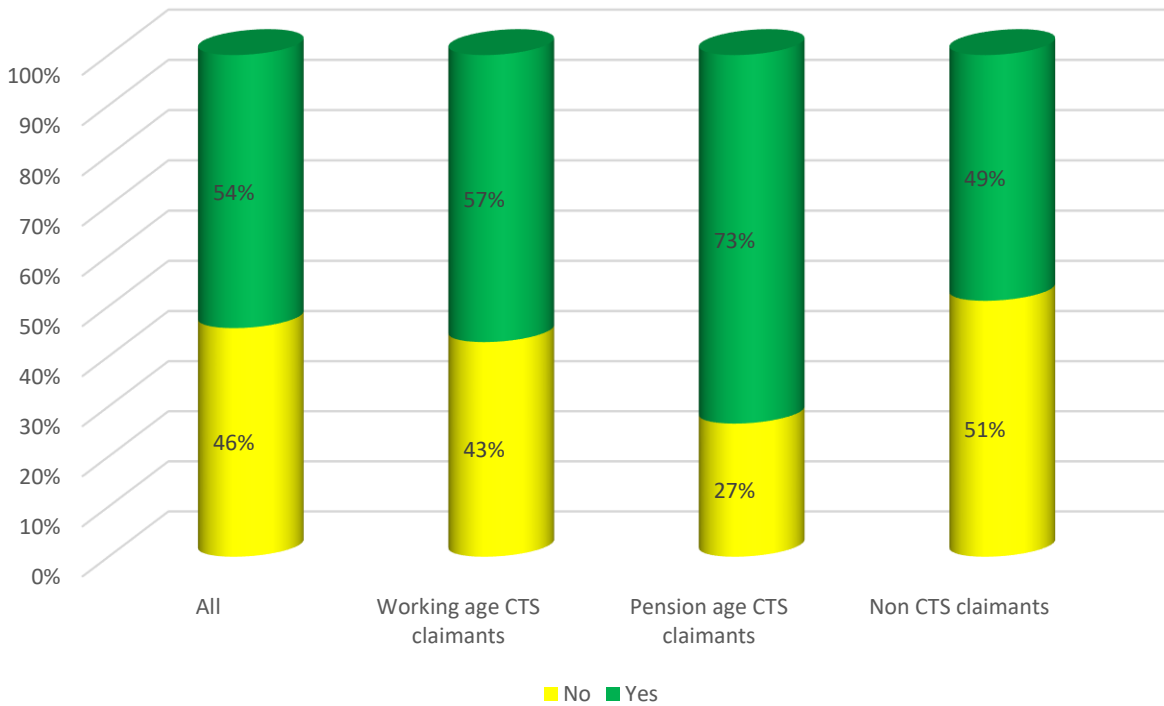
Band	Full Annual Charge	Maximum eligibility at 75% (current scheme)	Maximum eligibility at 70% (proposed scheme)	Annual minimum contribution	Annual Minimum contribution Increase	Weekly Minimum contribution increase
A	1157.82	£868.37	£810.47	£347.35	£57.89	£1.11
B	1350.78	£1,013.09	£945.55	£405.23	£67.54	£1.30
C	1543.76	£1,157.82	£1,080.63	£463.13	£77.19	£1.48
D	1736.72	£1,302.54	£1,215.70	£521.02	£86.84	£1.67
E	2122.66	£1,592.00	£1,485.86	£636.80	£106.13	£2.04
F	2508.59	£1,881.44	£1,756.01	£752.58	£125.43	£2.41
G	2894.54	£2,170.91	£2,026.18	£868.36	£144.73	£2.78
H	3473.44	£2,605.08	£2,431.41	£1,042.03	£173.67	£3.34

	Yes	No
Please confirm whether you:		
a. Agree with setting assistance level at 70%?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. If <i>NO</i> do you think Council Tax Support claimants should; <i>Pay more Council Tax</i> and receive less support?		
c. <i>Pay less Council Tax</i> and receive more support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. <i>Continue at 75%</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall response.

Of those who responded, the *overall* outcome to question 2 part a, was that they agreed with setting the assistance level at 70% with 54% confirming this to be their preference. The majority of people that answered agreed with setting the assistance level to 70% regardless of being in receipt of Council Tax Support or not.

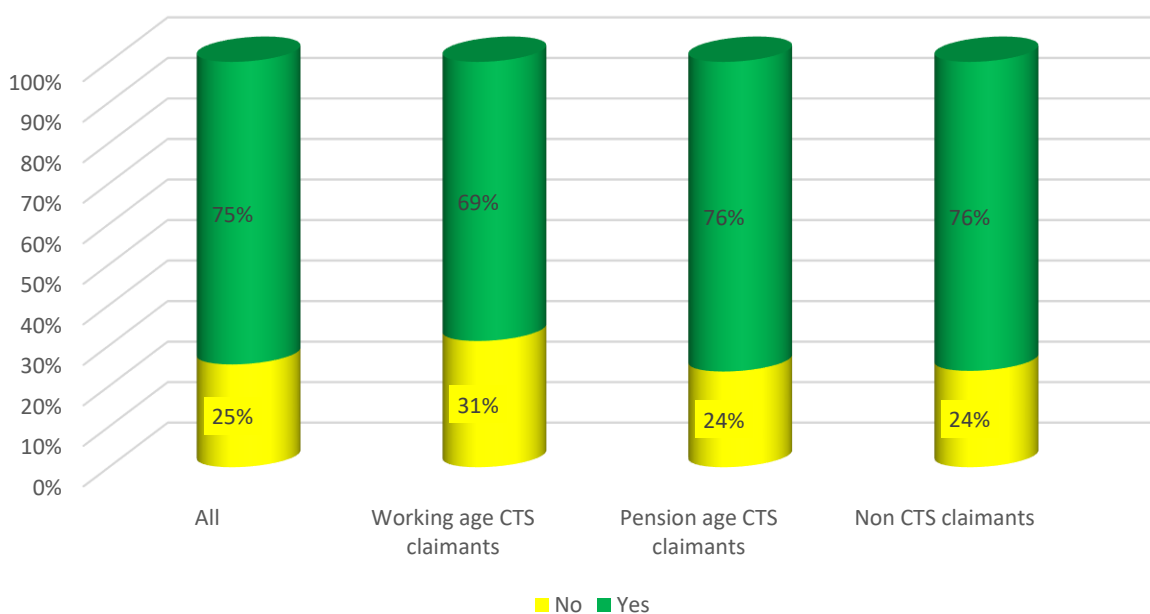
Total respondents - Do you agree with setting assistance level at 70%?



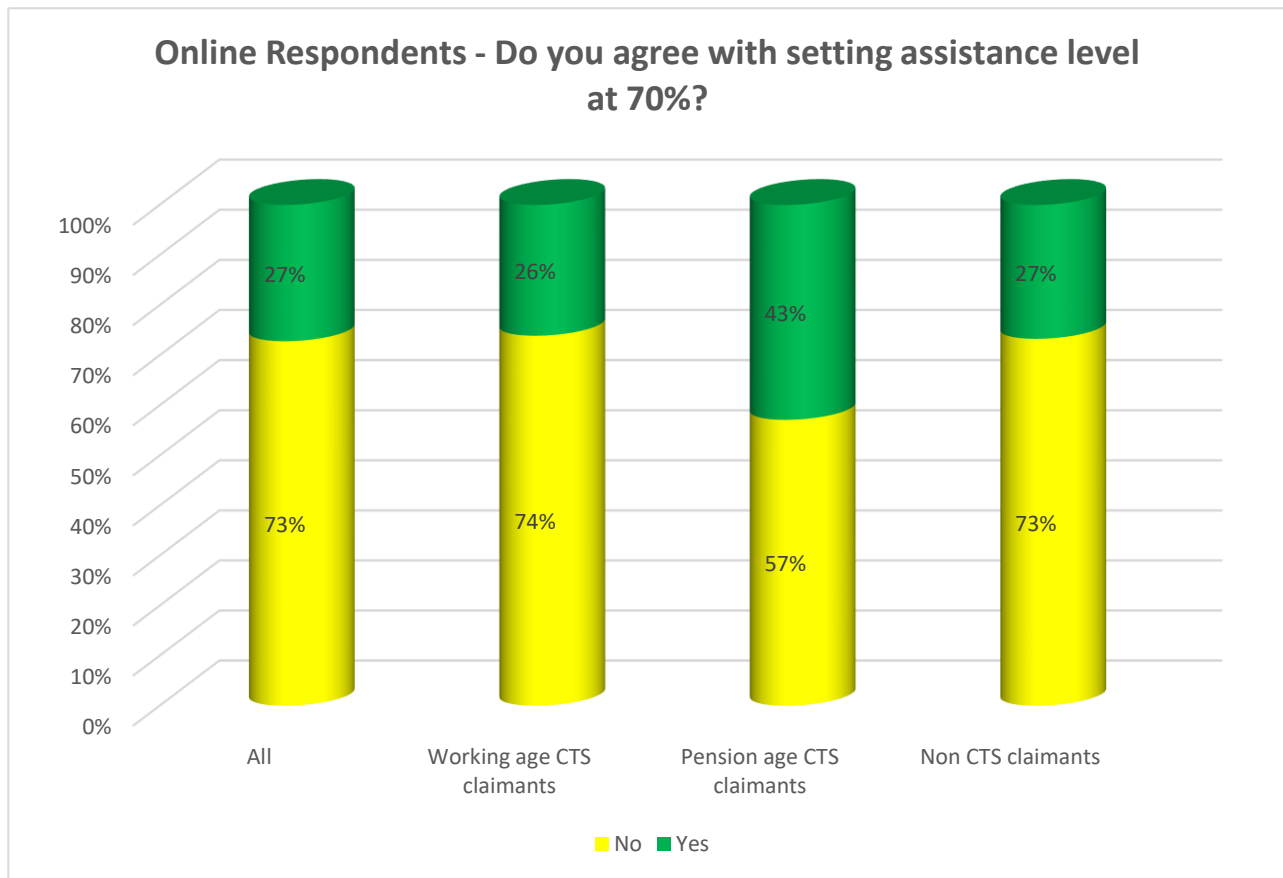
Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

Of the postal responses received, overall 75% were in favour of setting the level of assistance to 70%. Again the result was irrespective of whether they were in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or not.

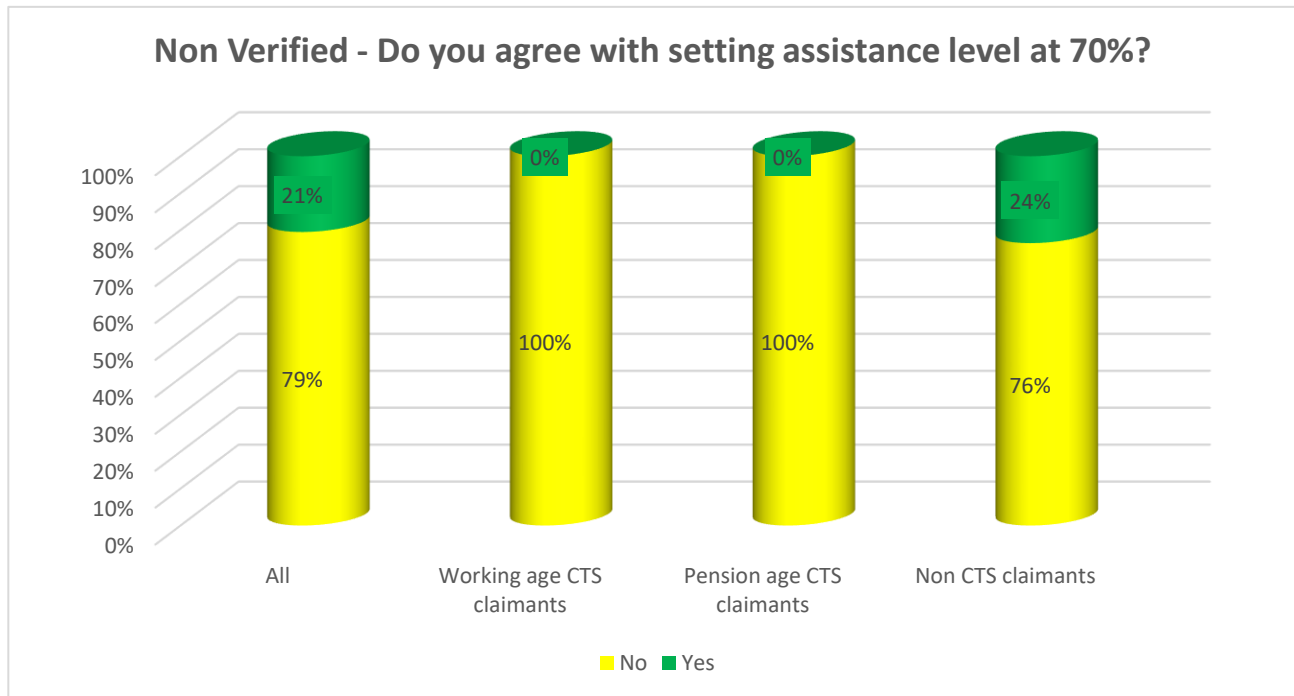
Postal Respondents - Do you agree with setting assistance level at 70%?



For on-line responses received, overall 73% were in favour of retaining the level of support at a maximum of 75%. However for Council Tax Support pension age there were only 57% for retaining the level of support.



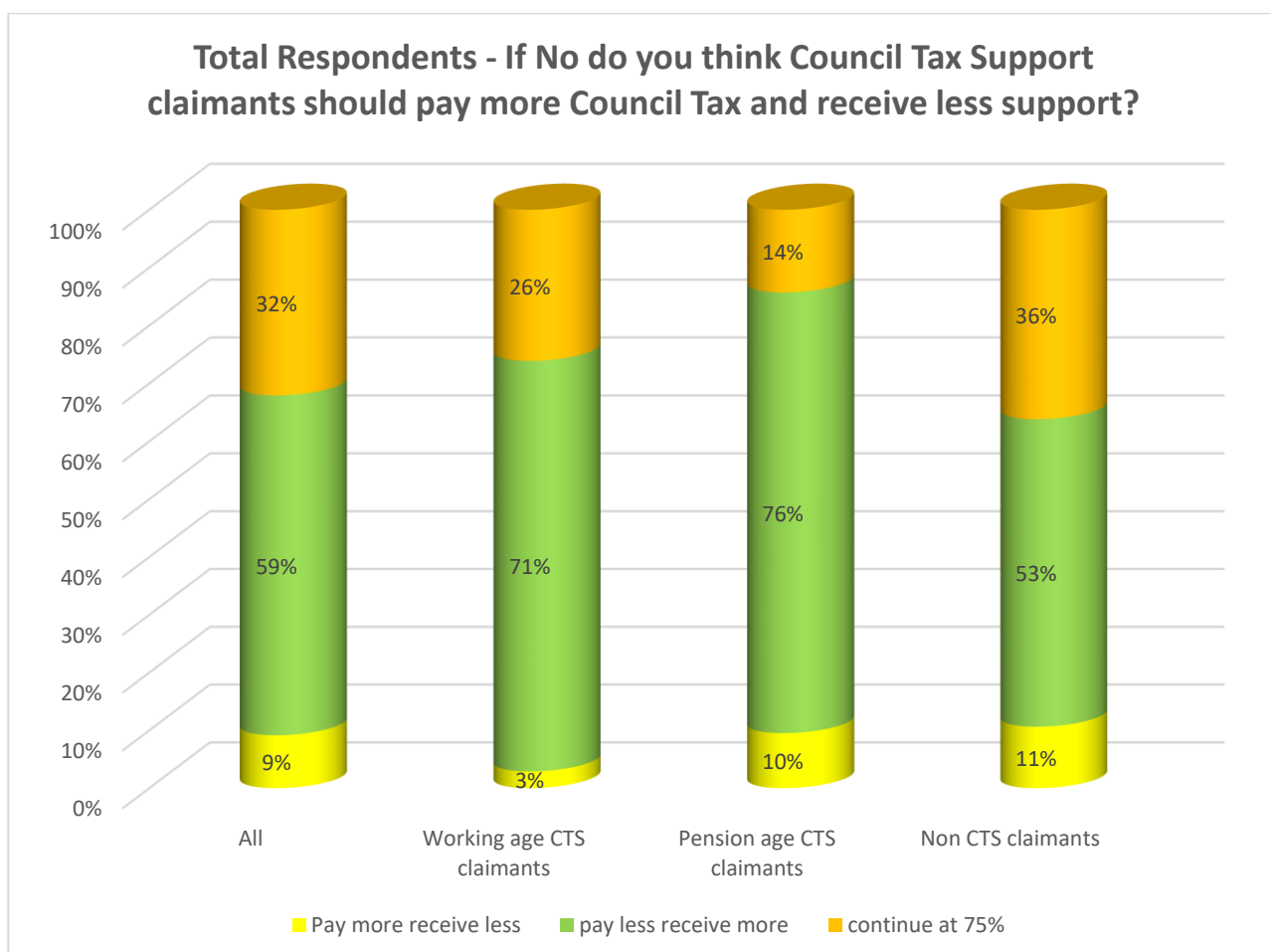
For the Non-verified results, only 21% agreed with setting the assistance level to 70%. The only respondents to agree to set the level of assistance to 70% were the respondents not in receipt of Council Tax Support.



Question 2- b,c and d

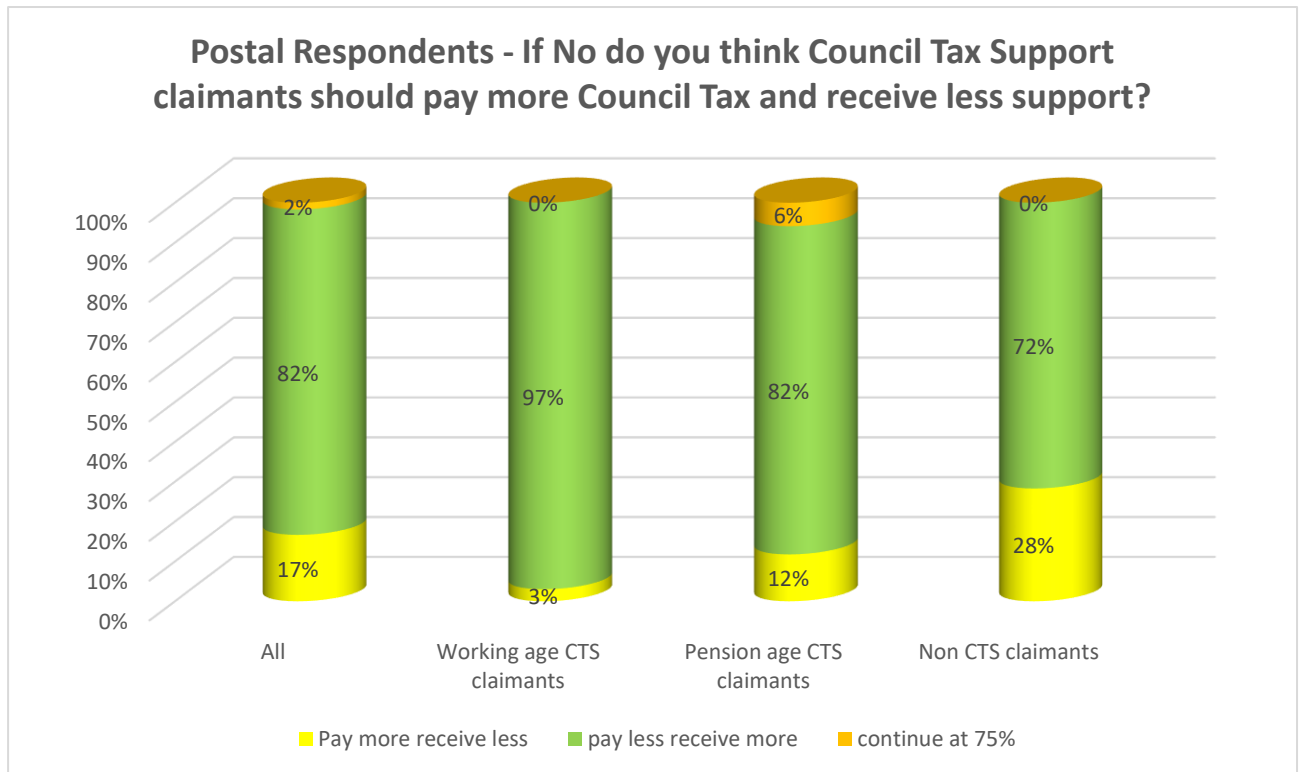
	Yes	No
Please confirm whether you:		
a. Agree with setting assistance level at 70%?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. If NO do you think Council Tax Support claimants should; <i>Pay more Council Tax</i> and receive less support?		
c. <i>Pay less Council Tax</i> and receive more support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. <i>Continue at 75%</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Of those that answered parts b c and d of part 2 the most positive response was to pay less Council Tax and receive more support, at 59%, with continuing at 75% being the second most common result after this at 32%. The remaining 9% were in favour of paying more Council Tax and receiving less support.

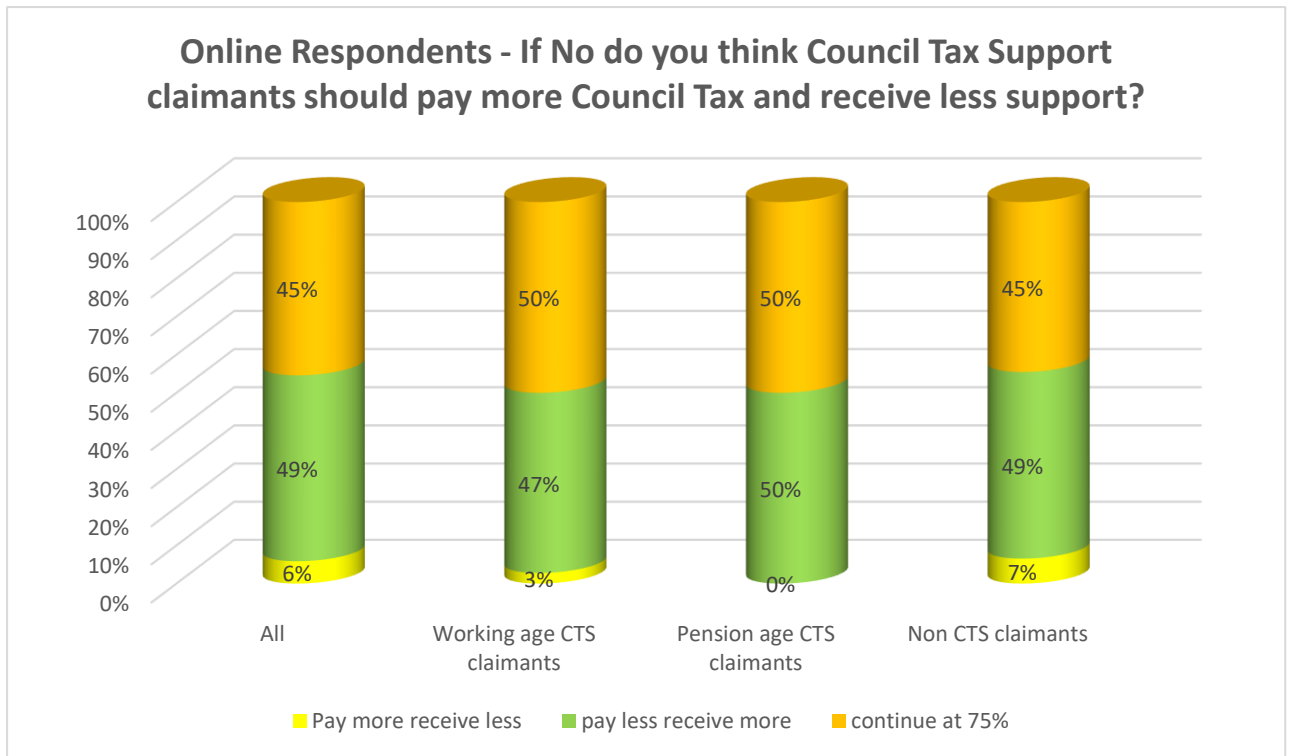


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

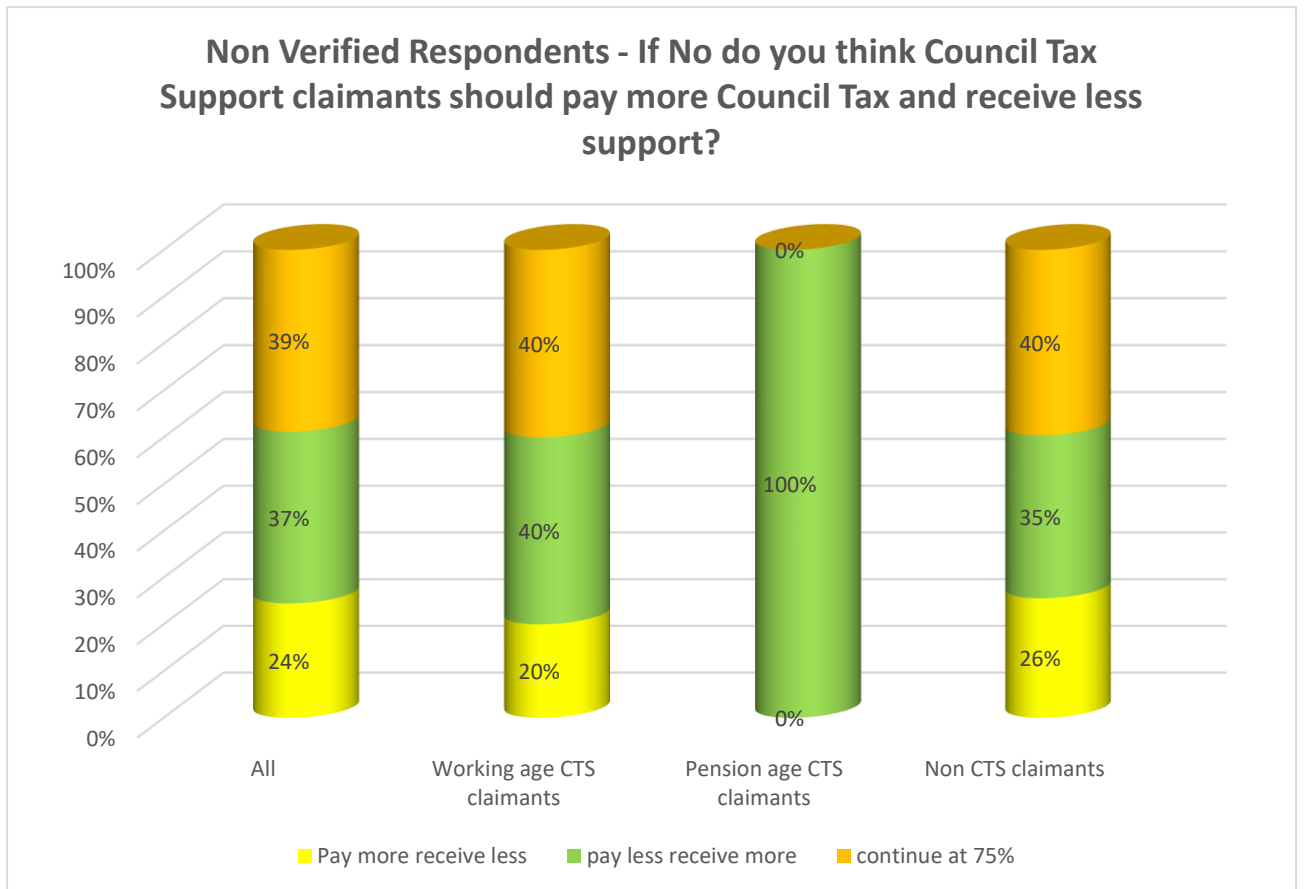
For the postal respondents, the majority stated that they would prefer the option of pay less receive more at 82%, with pay more receive less following at 17%. For the working age people claiming CTS there was an overwhelming majority of people showing that they would like to pay less and receive more with 97% of the respondents selecting this option.



For the online respondents, there was a more even divide in the results with the overall result being the same of pay less receive more getting the 49% majority. This is closely followed at 45% by continue at 75% level support.



Lastly for the non-verified results, the results were more evenly spread between the three options, with continue at 75% level of support at 39% of the results followed by pay less receive more at 37% of the results followed by pay less receive more at 37% of the answers.



Question 3

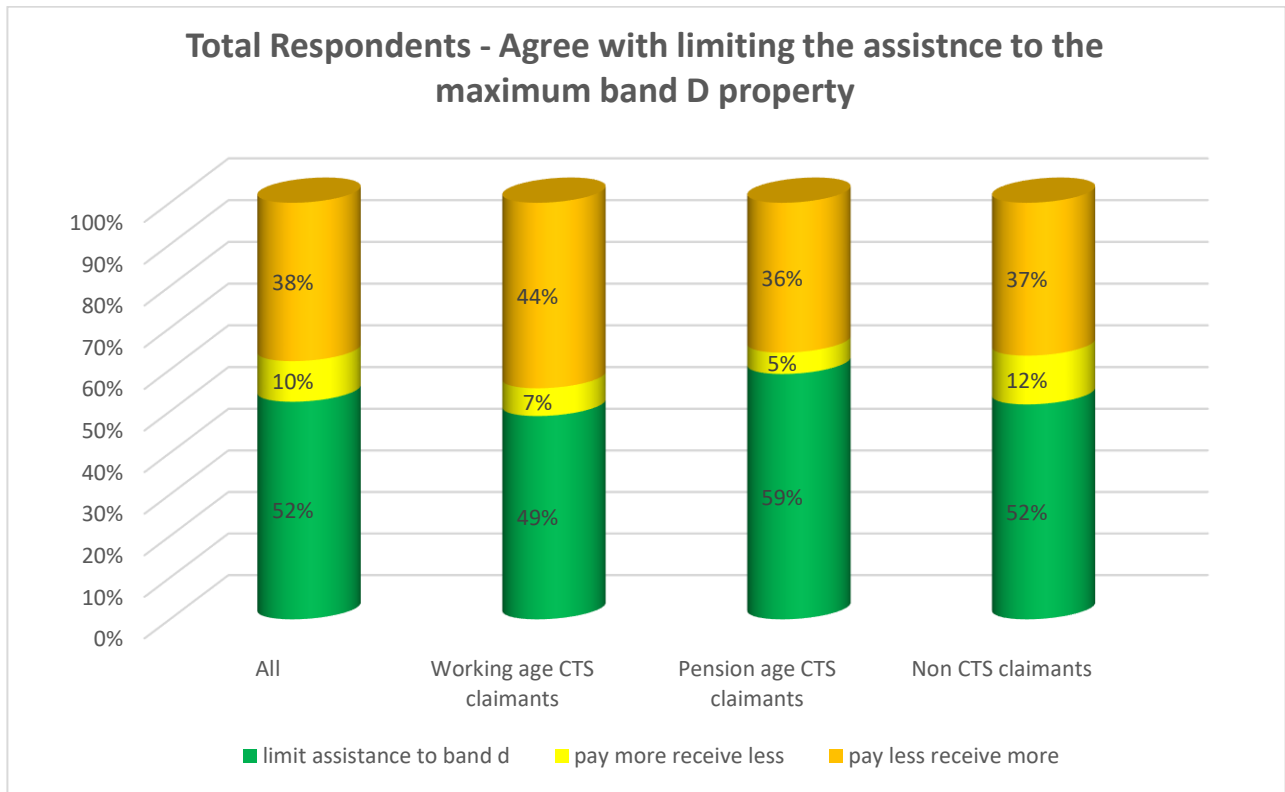
Q3 The Council, in addition to setting the minimum contribution at 30%, are also seeking your view as to whether the maximum band to be used when calculating entitlement should be restricted to Band D for working-age residents. This would mean that residents in Bands E-H will have their maximum award calculated as if they were occupying a Band D property.

The financial implication of a Band D restriction, based on 2022/23 Council Tax levels, is shown in the table below:

Band	Full Annual Charge	Maximum eligibility at 75% (current scheme)	Maximum eligibility at 70% (proposed scheme)	Maximum eligibility with Band D restriction	Annual minimum contribution	Annual minimum contribution Increase	Weekly minimum contribution increase
A	1157.82	£868.37	£810.47	£810.47	£347.35	£57.89	£1.11
B	1350.78	£1,013.09	£945.55	£945.55	£405.23	£67.54	£1.30
C	1543.76	£1,157.82	£1,080.63	£1,080.63	£463.13	£77.19	£1.48
D	1736.72	£1,302.54	£1,215.70	£1,215.70	£521.02	£86.84	£1.67
E	2122.66	£1,592.00	£1,485.86	£1,215.70	£906.96	£376.29	£7.24
F	2508.59	£1,881.44	£1,756.01	£1,215.70	£1,292.89	£665.74	£12.80
G	2894.54	£2,170.91	£2,026.18	£1,215.70	£1,678.84	£955.20	£18.37
H	3473.44	£2,605.08	£2,431.41	£1,215.70	£2,257.74	£1,389.38	£26.72

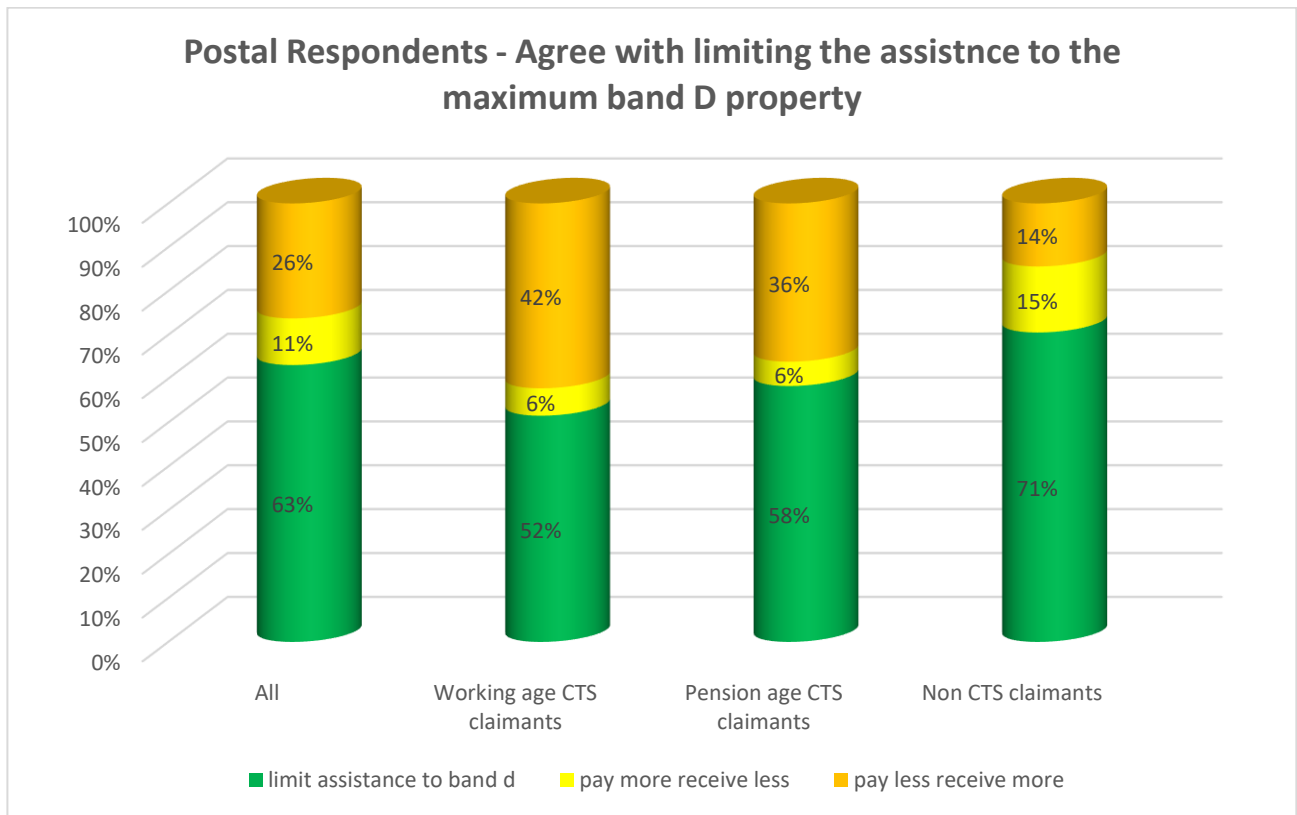
	Yes	No
Please confirm whether you:		
a. Agree with limiting assistance to the maximum of a Band D liability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. If <i>NO</i> do you think Council Tax Support claimants should; <i>Pay more Council Tax</i> and receive less support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. <i>Pay less Council Tax</i> and receive more support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The overall response for question 3 shows that the majority of people – 52% agree that the assistance should be limited to a maximum band D property with pay less receive more being at 38% of the results.

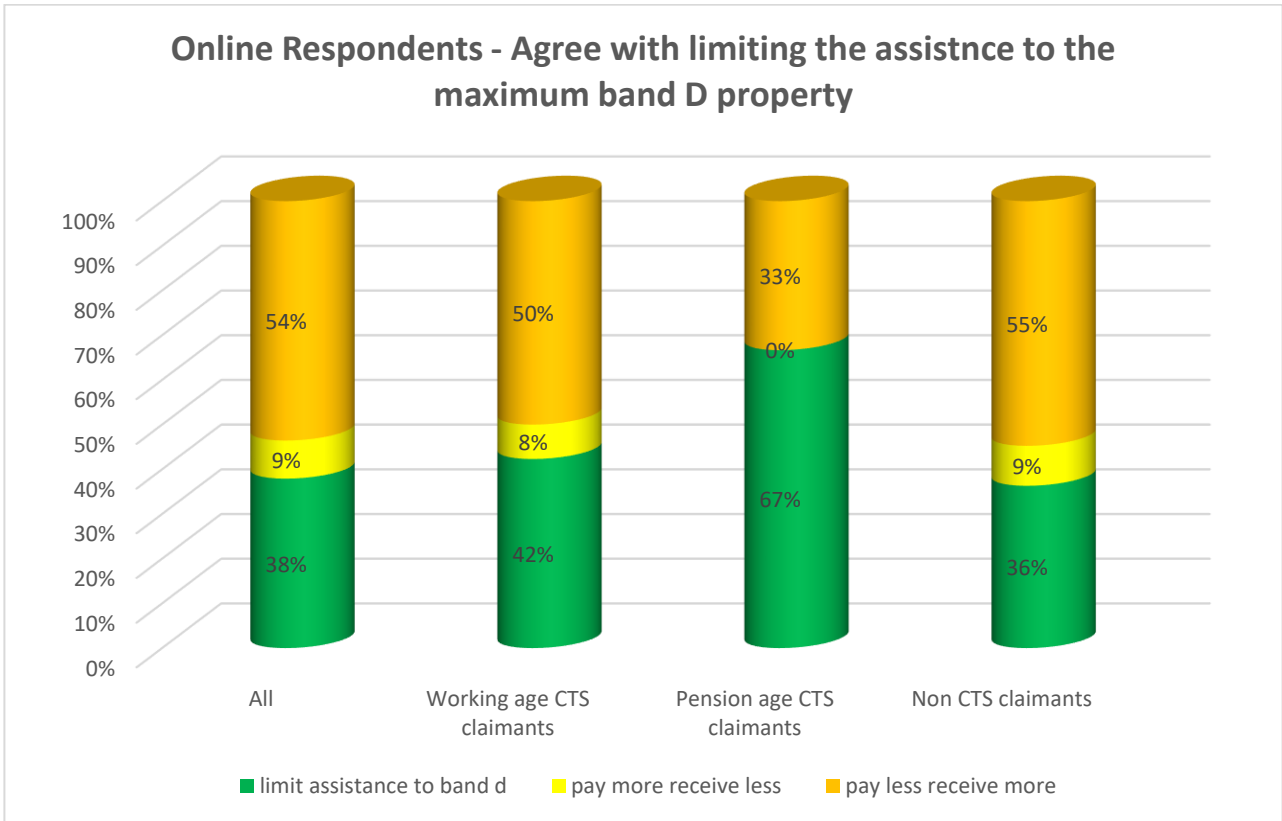


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

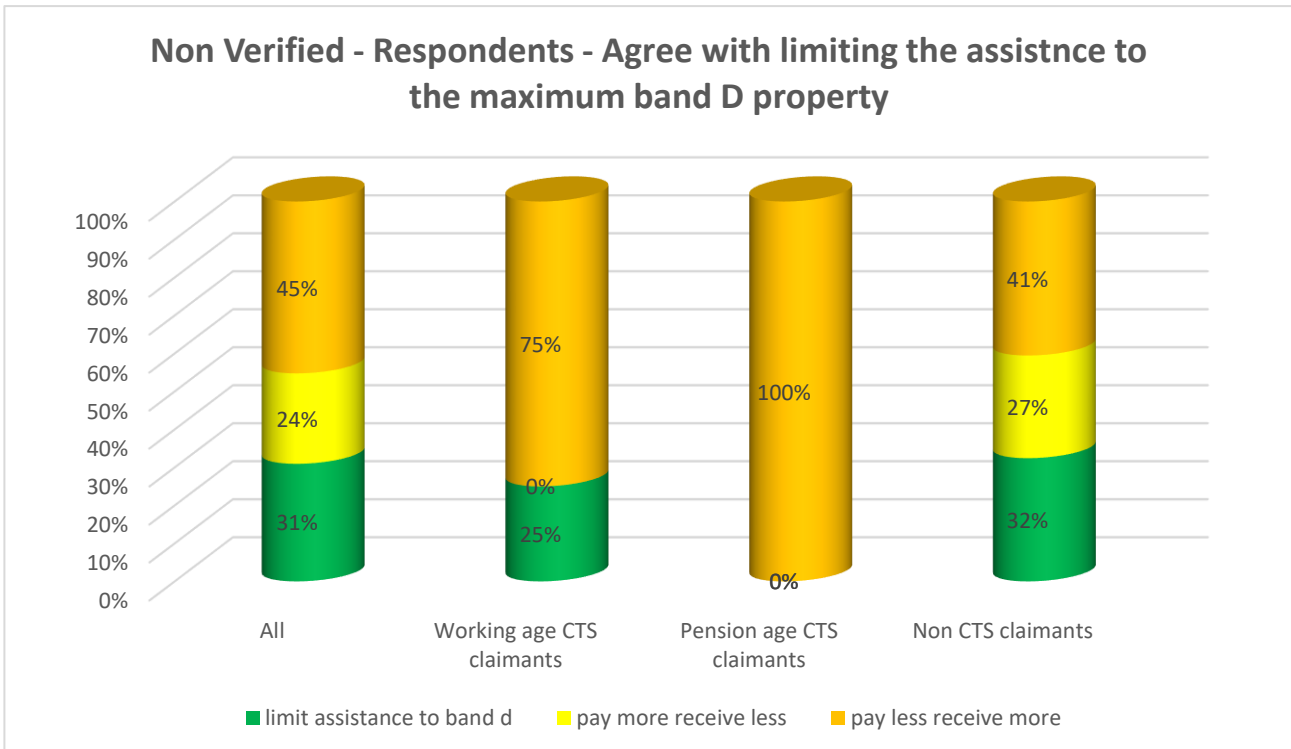
Of those who completed the postal survey, most people agreed that the assistance should be limited to band D with 63% of the answers. The majority is for limiting support to band D regardless of being in receipt of Council Tax Support or not.



Of those who completed the on-line survey 54% confirmed that they felt that they should be expected to pay less and receive more, followed by 38% stating that they feel assistance should be limited to Band D properties.



Lastly, for the non-verified results, they were more evenly distributed with 45% opting for pay less receive more, followed by 31% opting for limited to band D properties.



Question 4.

Q4 If you think that the Council should increase the level of Council Tax Support for working-age people, how do you think this should be funded?

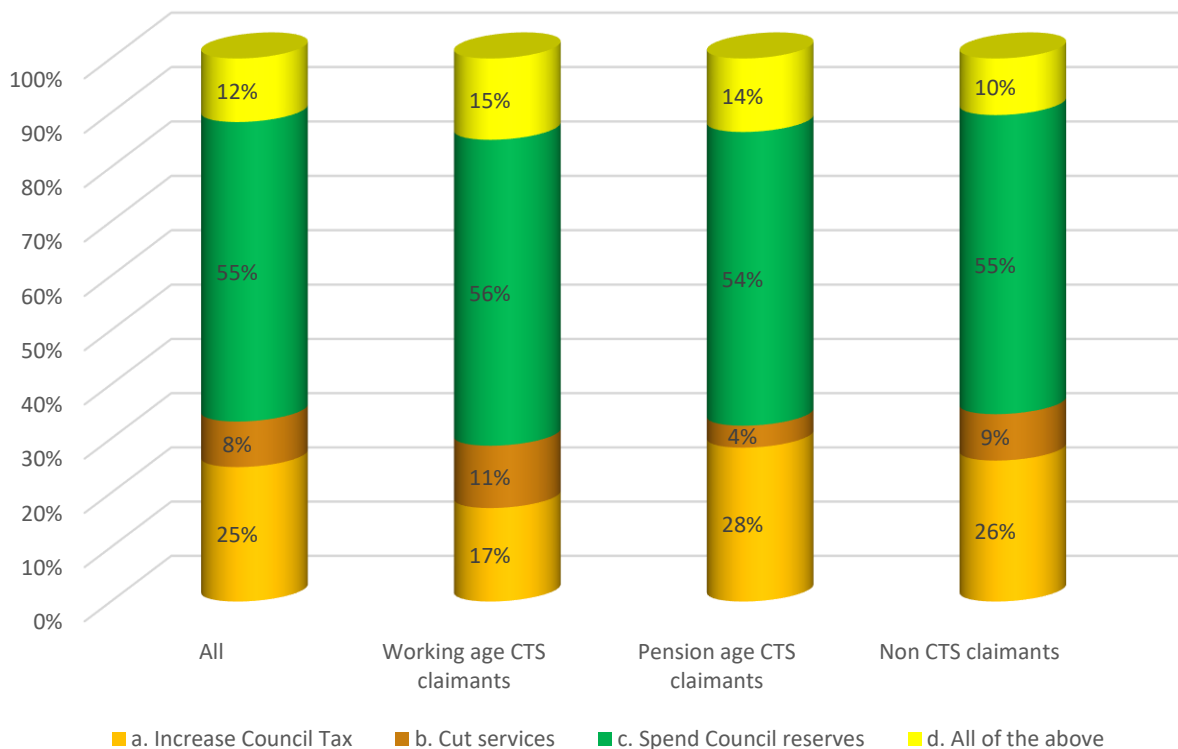
Please choose any of these that apply:

- a. Increase Council Tax
- b. Cut services
- c. Spend Council reserves
- d. All of the above

Overall response

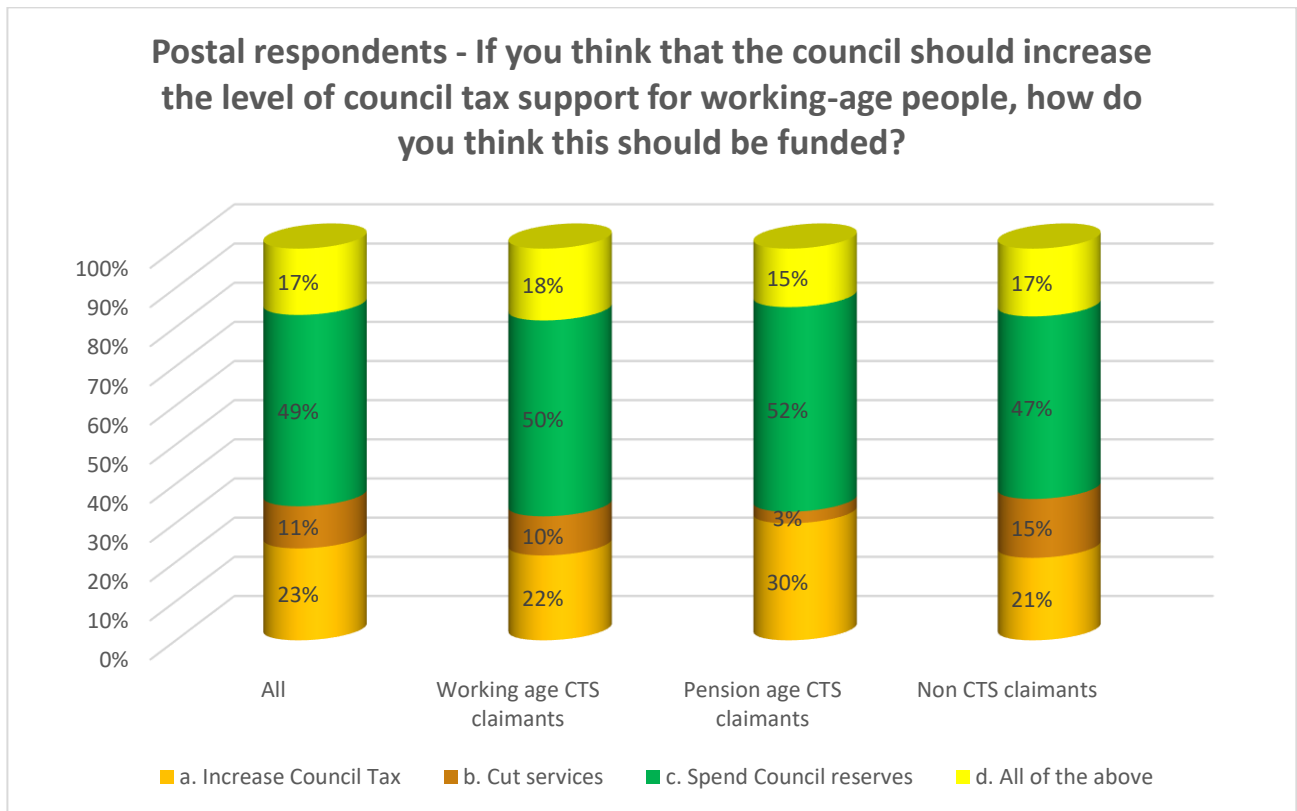
The overall response to this question was that the Council should spend the reserves to fund the increase in Council Tax Support, with the result getting 55% of the overall answers. This figure remains fairly consistent whether in receipt of Council Tax Support or not.

Total respondents - If you think that the council should increase the level of council tax support for working-age people, how do you think this should be funded?

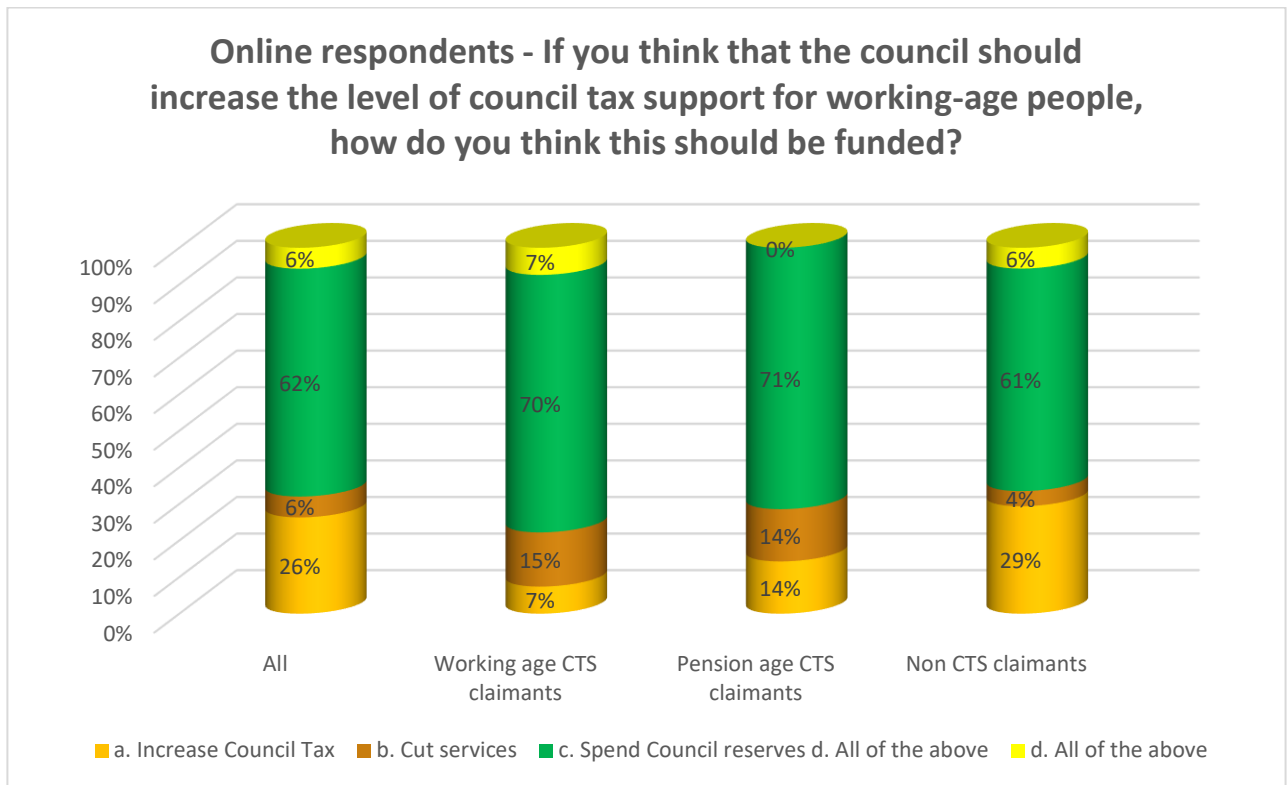


Analysis of Respondents by Survey Type.

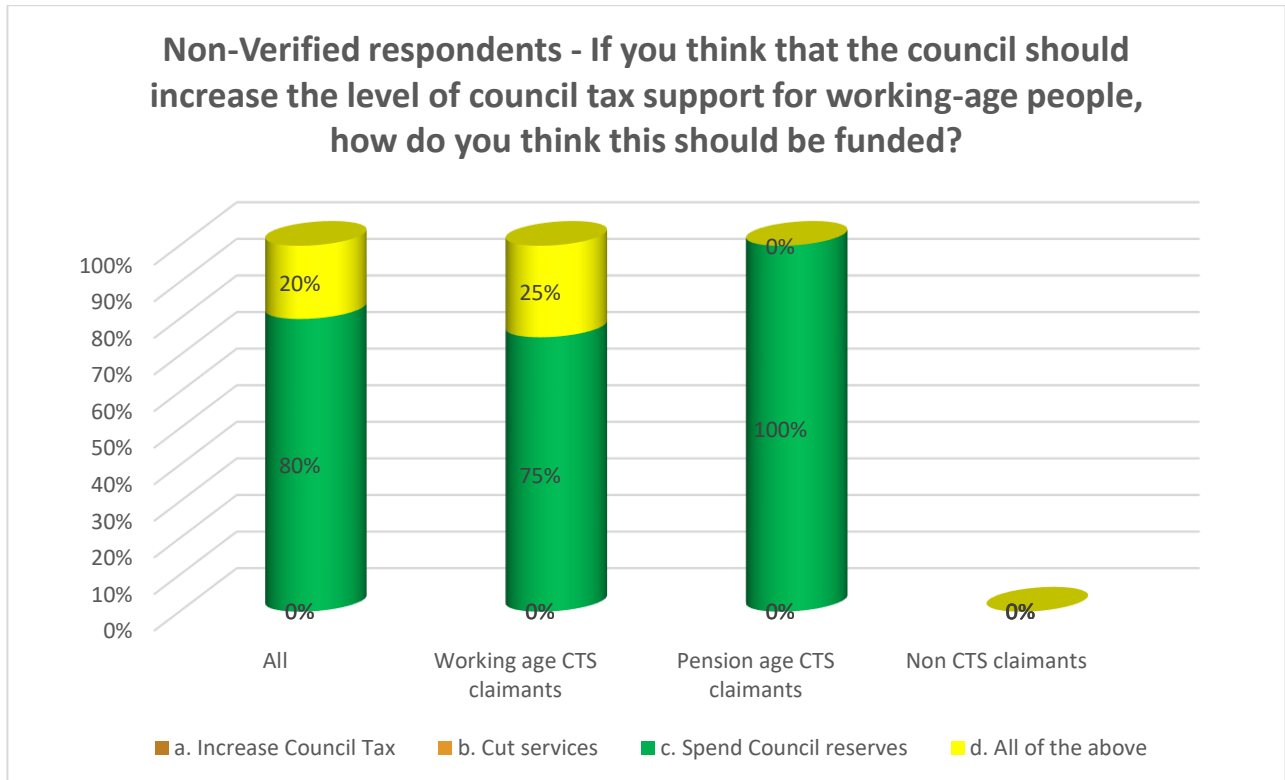
Of those who completed the postal survey 49% of the people that answered stated that they felt that the Council should spend the reserves. Nearly a quarter of the results were for increasing Council Tax.



Of those who completed the on-line survey 62% confirmed that they felt the council should spend the reserves, this was the most common result regardless of age or whether in receipt of Council Tax Support.



Of the non-verified results, spend the council reserves had 80% of the votes as shown below.



Question 5 provided the respondents with the opportunity to raise anything else which they believed should alter in respect of the CTR scheme.

Q5 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme 2023/24 or any further comments you would like to make regarding the scheme?

Please write your answer here:

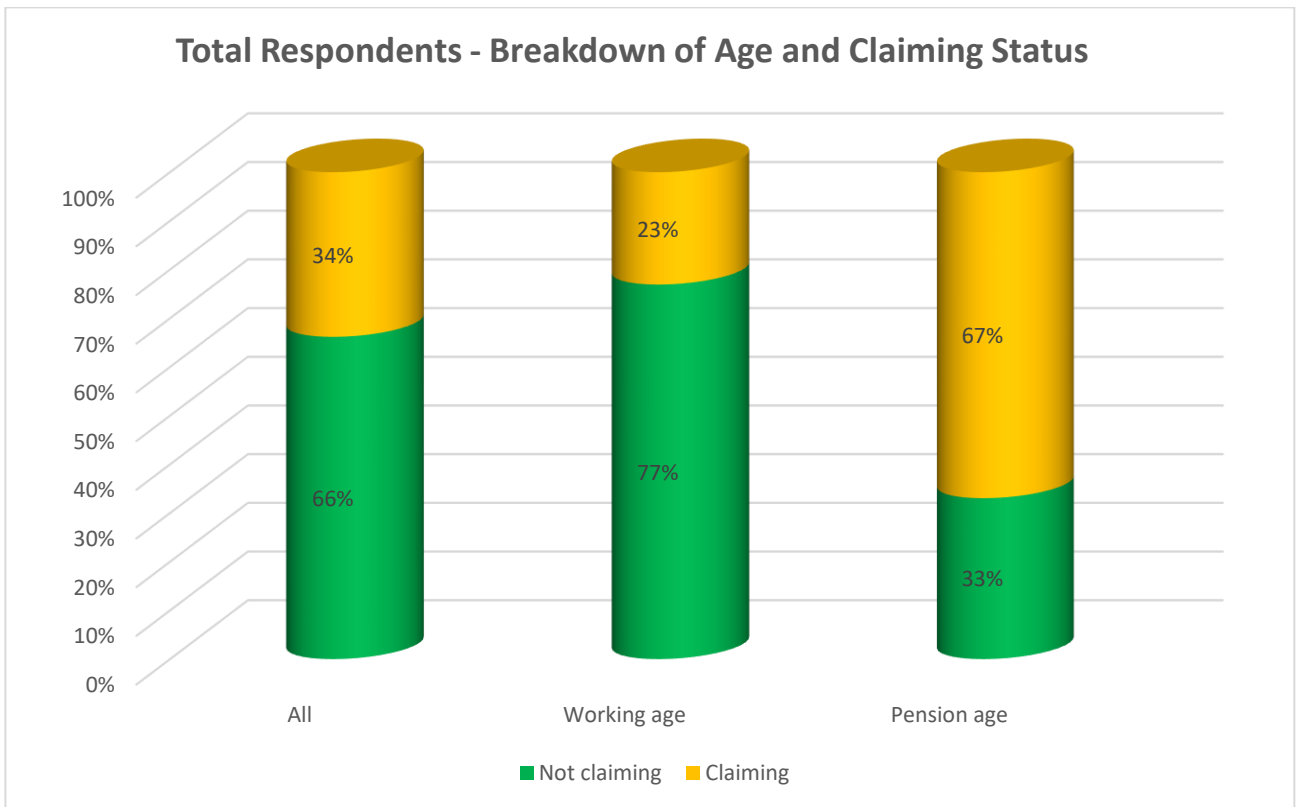
Where respondents did suggest changes, responses here fell into a number of broad categories with many suggesting the following:

- They felt that given the cost of living crisis more support should be awarded
- Reduce the amount the council spends on support to invest for the future
- Assist the vulnerable more

Details of all the narrative responses, to this question and others, have been included at Appendix 1.

Q6	Please choose any of these that apply:	Yes	No
	a. Are you currently in receipt of Council Tax Support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If you answered yes to (6a) please tick one of the following:		
	b. Are you a pensioner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Are you of working age?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

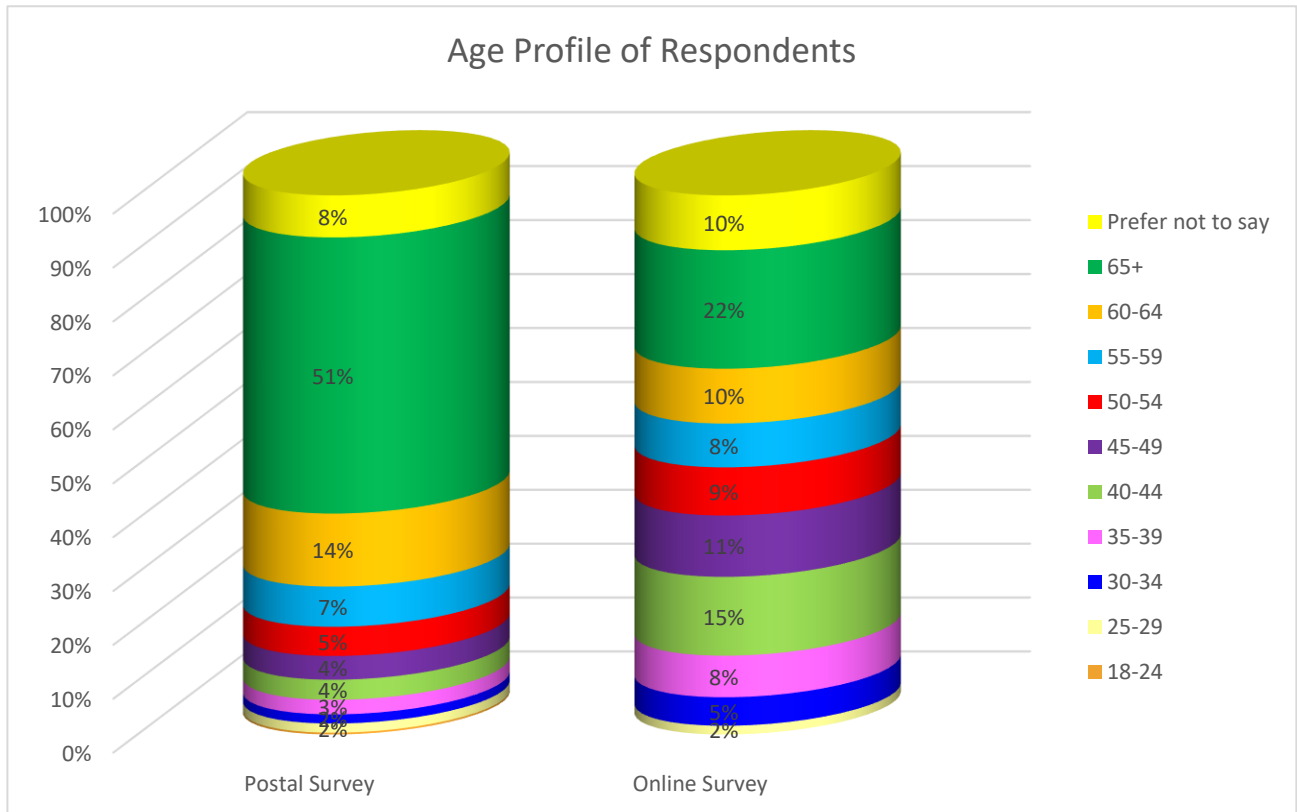
The overall breakdown of respondent's show that most of the people that have completed the survey are not claiming CTS with the result being 66% not claiming and 34 % claiming.



Equality and Diversity.

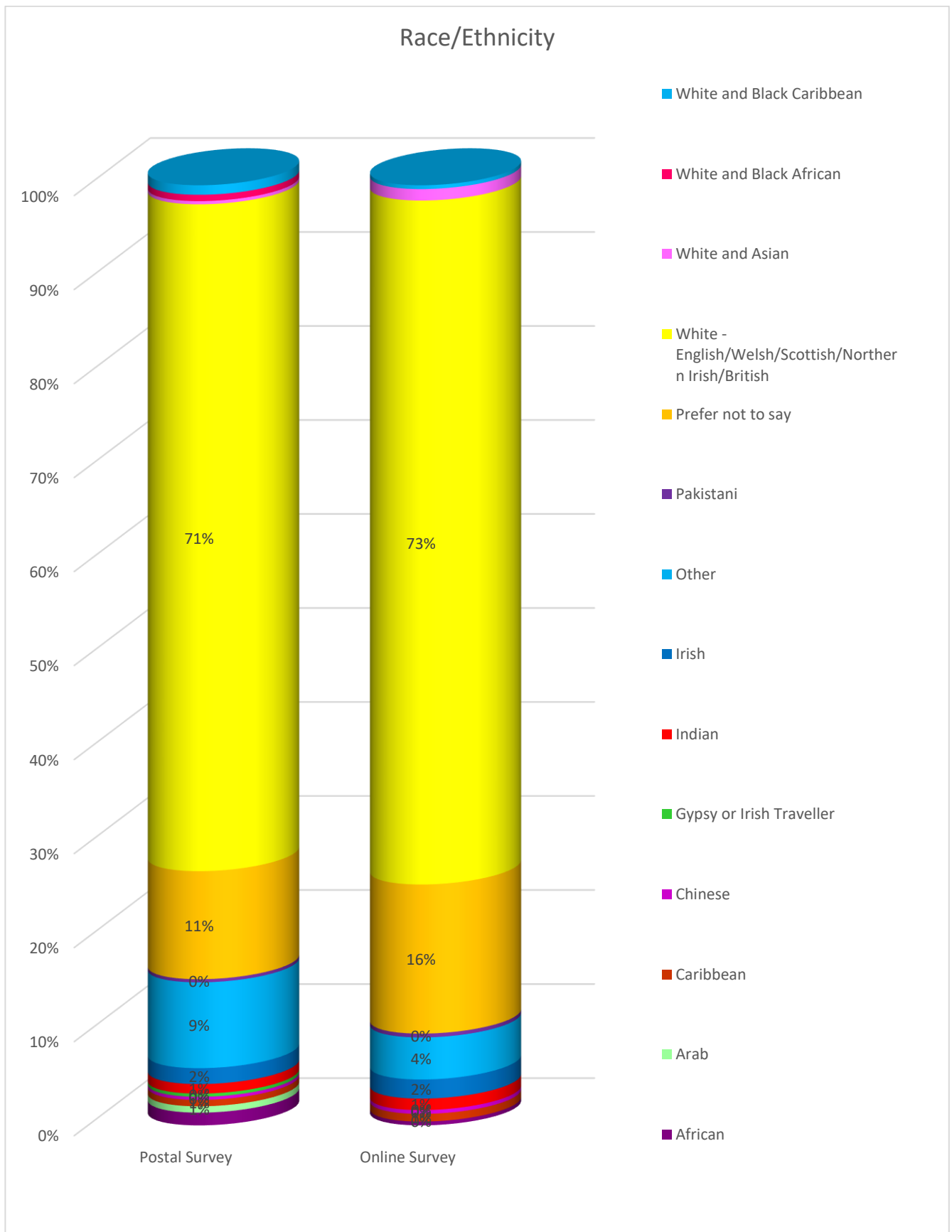
Standard questions relating to Equality and Diversity were included on the survey but it was made clear that answering these was not compulsory.

Overall 541 people (including those unverified) confirmed their age with the highest volumes of respondents being from those aged over 65 years of age – 151 in the postal survey and 54 on the online survey.



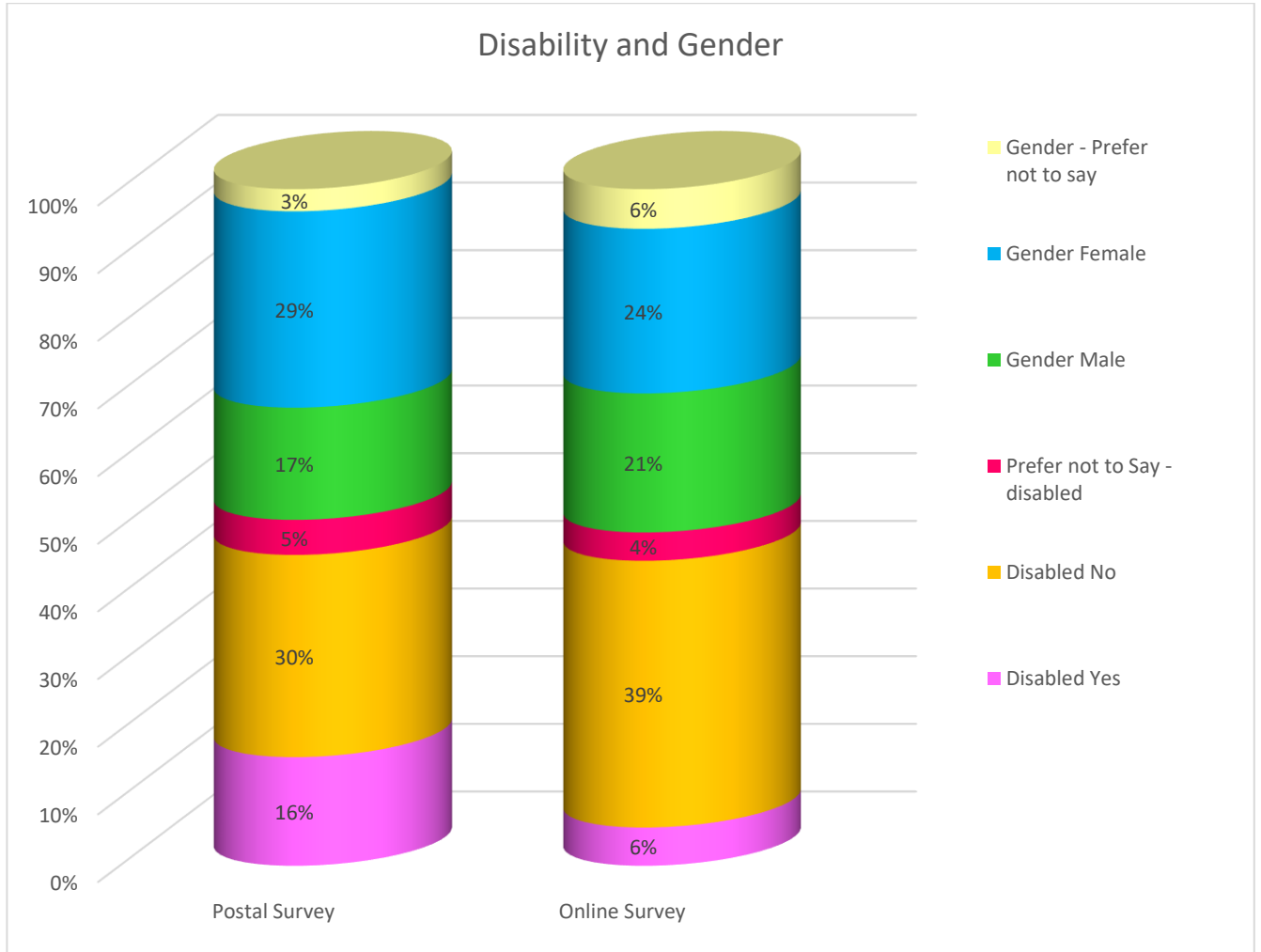
Ethnic Background.

542 respondents (including unverified people) confirmed their ethnic background with the majority of respondents, 71%, stating that they were from a white background.



Disability and Gender.

546 respondents were happy to confirm whether they were disabled or not. 264 confirmed their gender of which 59% were female and 34% were male respondents. The analysis is shown below.



8. Responses from the Greater London Authority

To Be Provided under separate Cover

9. Timetable for Implementation

The new scheme will commence on 1st April 2023 and will continue unless changed after future consultation.

10. Appendix 1 – Narrative responses.

While narrative responses have been reproduced here for completeness, those respondents who simply stated “yes”, “no” or “don’t know” have been removed as these have been included in the analysis undertaken of the results above.

Q5 Are there any other changes you would like to see to the Council Tax Support scheme from 2023/24 or any further comments you would like to make regarding the scheme?

Comments from verified responders

100% council tax support for those on UC and sick benefits

Unfair to base people in higher bands payments capped as though they were in band D. should be based on the actual band you are in,

Is the new fund sufficient? How has the number of people who may qualify been assessed
This questionnaire is either divisive or incompetent its difficult to know which. The covering letter is similarly try finding the faults in paragraphs 2 and 7 either way this presents LBB very poorly.
Why does the council need a hardship fund does the government not support this already?

I would like to see more affordable clubs for kids, park paths with more lighting and play areas for children.

People receiving the support shall only qualify if they dont take drugs and provide samples to prove it.

The minimum contribution should be 50% or higher.

I still want to keep the current level of maximum eligibility at 75%

If my wife is named on our council tax bill. We contribute equally to the payment. My opinion is not necessarily hers. A questionnaire should be sent for her opinion as an equal. No explanation is given for choosing band D the 30% discount is sufficient as the maximum

There are slight changes to our circumstances both my wife and I have contracted covid twice over the last few years, also I have been given an IBS diagnosis and my wife has post cancer treatment
Lymphedema swelling of the left arm
More access service for Deaf people

I am a stage 4 cancer patient & carer for my disabled brother. Money doesn't grow on trees. Neither of us can work but now I'm unable and need as much support as possible financial council tax is very high at the moment everyone should be eligible for support based on income or no on not a select group of people also those receiving support their households should be thoroughly checked especially are receiving support they are not entitled to by lying on their applications increase the fund so as to ensure no one needs other support such as foodbanks.

Relief from hardship should not be the responsibility of the voluntary sector there has to be an incentive to work, if most things are paid for you then these is none We need more support and help from housing, we cant keep paying the amount of money and it going up

As a full-time wheelchair user, I used to be exempt from any council tax payments the current/proposed charges just mean that my benefit payments which I completely rely on are in effect being cut as DWP benefits do not rise comparatively.

Maintain or reduce level of cts, do not increase rather than have a hardship fund, increase council tax support to 100% for vulnerable residents (disabled/leaving care)
I'm 76 November iv a mobility problem cannot climb unsteady on my feet

I think the local council should employ their own staff to maintain small repairs to roads, rather than paying over the top contractors. I believe this would save money and could be other services to be considered
A much fairer system should be a per head contribution (poll tax) unbelievable how people that have work all their lives still end up paying for the work shy. The council tax is probably one of the unfairer taxes ever imposed. How can it be morally right that 2 retired people have to pay the same as a household of 5 working people? (for example)
I myself is disabled with cost of living going, no matter what everybody going to suffer whatever the charge
Use resources more wisely & increase work on things like pot holes.

Provide support for working people as detailed here
Only make available to people of working age who temporarily are deemed by DWP as unfit for work no changes to above but please have police doing job paid to do i.e Foot patrols sort out speeding in Chislehurst petts wood
This is the first time i have heard of this fund, my daughter who live with me as my carer, and only gets Â£70 a week, also as not heard of the fund, as I paid the council tax in full every year and should be paid to carers and disabled people
A hardship fund is fine as long as properly managed, and people pay something. Too many people are awarded benefits that are not deserved, and they live life without any financial responsibility for themselves with a sense of entitlement with other people's hard earned money. Services must never be reduced or council tax increased just to subsidise those who choose not to work/ abuse benefit system, and how much of our council tax funds are being used to support 'refugees' which we can't afford

cant work on sick

70% is too much should be around 60-65% living in a band higher than band D does not mean the council tax is affordable may pensioners, disabled etc.

How about reducing some services - road sweeping, main bin collections, library's (out dotted) ask those that can pay more to do so. Raise the level of council tax by 100% for those business (shop cafes and & restaurants) to make good the advantage they get by setting there own taxation levels (low) Yes, I feel that too much monies are paid out for Christmas lights and additional Christmas extravagant in Bromley. Therefore not being a 'Humbug' people now rely on foodbanks ect due to the cost of living & energy prices. The scheme needs to be more realistic regarding payment to monthly council tax which will put decent people in debt
Bromley is an borough properties in bands E,F,G & H should be paying a much higher tax

SNR Staff paid far too much reduce cut anyone one Principal officer PO4 or above by at least 10%.

Don't pay councilor's - just pay expenses

Make staff pay a premium for using Glades car park

Higher business Rates

No overtime payments

Reduce light & heating bills in council offices

If I got enough pension I would willing pay as it is my husband. I get between us with top up of Â£30 credit pension under Â£260 per week now if you could manage on that please let me know

I should like to see more support for all services but especially mental health and the environment simplify it

Notify wither you need to reapply or is the automatically renewed

As a council tax payee I would like to know this the council (Bromley) moves sure that those who benefit are those who really need it.

Wider publicity about the availability of the council tax support scheme. I am a volunteer with Age UK and I help vulnerable people claim disability benefits.

I THINK THE OLDER RATE SCHEME WAS FAIRER THE GIGGER THE PROPERTY THE MORE RATES YOU PAID. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE THE RECYCLING INCREASED.

I feel if you receive benefits for low income, you already struggle or live and to be expected to pay CT is an extra worry & struggle for those who have low incomes

Cut wastage within the council

more council tax bands beyond H assistance should not be restricted to maximum band D

Greater clarity on elgibility

more service should be provided to the residence keeping parks clean to enjoy. improving high streets upkeep

We should decrease the level of finding in council tax support scheme and use the money to invest in future generations

Council Tax will increase so it will be a double whammy if you raise to 30%. benefits are being targeted by the gov and will not rise with inflation. It is your duty as a council to support your constituents not target the poorest and most vulnerable

surely climate should get the same level of support reflected for what they pay - if subsidised make it up to 100% then they should get the full service

The council should be working with refuse collectors to ensure those receiving benefit as/or support recycle appropriate amounts for the number of residents in a property to help control council spending on landfill.

It appears to me the pensioners should not be excluded from this initiative pensioners in owner occupied accommodation should not be given benefits that others don't have it is a bias that deserts society (Please note i am a pensioner)

should not raise council tax for anyone in a cost of living crisis

Issue parking fines for people who take disabled bays without displaying a badge

I do not know if the council is making sufficient investments for the 'rainy day' if not this is the right time to invest for the future. Investing in social housing is one sure way to reduce the councils costs

Please continue with the 25% reduction for single person household

I think it is important to maintain or improve services to residents not reduce them. Thus I would be in favour of increasing council tax & reducing support if necessary to pay for filling potholes provision of library weekly refuse collection etc

YES. WHY DONT YOU OPENLY PUBLISH THE FACT THAT HARDSHIPS CURRENTLY ANTICIPATED ARE A RESULT OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY CUTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT THIS PAST TWELVE YEARS?

REPRESENTING:

MIDDLE ENGLAND GROUP FED UP BEING GOVERNED BY INCOMPETENTS AND CHANCERS CURRENTLY RESIDING IN DOWING STREET.

Maybe a increase of council tax after a increase of income for the contributors

Not sure I understand correctly but properties E & H for people on the support scheme will be charged as band D Which means they pay 1/3 less - not sure I agree with that if they can afford to have a band it property. maybe I did not understand the proposal

Get people to pay only for services they use and receive

I get no help at all except council tax I don't even know what's available. I worked all my life from age 14 and I never asked anyone for anything I just worked for it

The council should stop assisting working people living on their own e.g reduce their council tax.

that no funds are given outside of the bromley area and that what the council tax reserve funds support are reduced

Claimants of council tax support may live in a band E/F/G/H but not have much income. They may have lived in the same home for some years not be cash poor. So, I don't feel the support should be limited up to D band level at all

Ensure that the council are 100% certain that they are paying the support to the person actually living in the property rather than the owner/legal tenant

be less worry about things. Help people with more housing and promise people also vulnerable by developing services

People/Families in extreme poverty should be exempt from paying council tax. Council tax rates could be raised in the band G and H bands to pay for this. This government is looking after the rich please can Bromley council look after the poor

Given the economic turmoil caused by the imposition of an incompetent prime minister and deranged chancellor these changes seem to be 'small beer' at present however any support provided to the economically disadvantaged is to be welcome

I like that we can reduce the council tax for the whole band

I would like to see care leavers exempted from paying council tax

make the calculation of entitlement easier for claimants to understand

Save money by bringing services in house, introduce better traffic calming measures and penalise offenders. Don't pay other councils to house our needy. Don't waste millions on poor property investments.

Council tax needs a full blown reform. It's totally outdated and clearly not providing council with funding it needs

No more increases! After last year and all the other costs we are facing, we can't possibly afford it again. You're literally pricing people out of their own homes.

The threshold should increase, so those on lower incomes who are not currently eligible should become eligible.

I think the system could do with a shake up with regards to what is seen as essential funding and services. Make support for the disabled and elderly who are reliant on benefits a priority, along with the poorest families before any borough events or decorations etc. We all desperately need help, not to have our bills increase when most of us can't heat our homes or keep our life saving equipment running.

It is unfair and unreasonable to expect people on very low incomes and in receipt of benefits to increase their contribution towards Council tax when their income is falling in real terms.

Bromley is a wealthy council and Borough.

I am not at all clear why support for council tax should be provided in addition to all the other social security benefits available.

Cash first initiatives for the hardship fund should be available as well as clear information on how to obtain support when needed.

Free school breakfasts for all primary and secondary children. Free local bus travel for all on minimum wage

I gave up work to be a full time carer to my daughter with mental health problems. All my income support goes on bills and my carers allowance goes on food, petrol and non direct debit bills. If I got less support on the council tax support it would put me into severe financial hardship to the point I'd have to choose bills over food.

Review again in 2 yrs. Financial crisis is likely to deepen before it improves.

Struggling a lot due to cost of living, please need help to recover

Good, honest, people are finding themselves in a perilous financial situation through absolutely no fault of their own. It's essential that the council assists them through this (hopefully) limited, short term, financial squeeze.

Some people do not need large homes - eg. A single person in a band E property with excess bedrooms. However, I have 3 children in a band E property and no excess bedrooms. 2 children with disabilities, they cannot share a room.

I think that council tax support for those in band E properties and above, should be calculated at the same rate (E,F ect) , if there are children or elderly living in the home. I.e. The bedrooms are occupied on a permanent basis. Also it should be calculated at the correct rate if there are people in receipt of PIP, DLA.

I could apply to the proposed hardship fund for help with the 5% increase however, I believe a lot of time and paper could be saved if the council could eliminate those in properties at band E and above, who are single occupiers.

You've presented this as a focus on savings for the Council, but have provided no information about how these changes will affect people (eg what would be the impact on those who are being

supported under the current arrangements?). Without this information people should not be supporting proposals to cut support from those in need.
Stop giving contracts to shitty companies that charge a lot and don't do their job.

Stop wasting our money.

Households where a child has a cancer diagnosis should be included. It should not only be means tested. Thankfully there are not many households with children with cancer but we absolutely need the financial support. As a Mother of a child with cancer I had to quit my full time wage to look after my child, children with cancer become incredibly unwell and need a parent at their side constantly. For working all my life I only receive Â£69 per week carers allowance in return for having to give up my full time wage to put my child's survival first. Even with a DLA payment for the child, that is a HUGE reduction in our household income and we still have a mortgage and council tax to pay. Because my Husband works full time we are not entitled to any other financial help and will be left to go bankrupt as far as govt help is concerned. Childhood cancer cannot be faked, yet benefit scroungers get everything paid for them. Childhood cancer is a devastating time where one parent always has to give up work to care for their child and there should be more financial support for this situation. Many are shocked to find there is not. You are probably reading this thinking there is other help we are entitled to. We are not. We are forgotten about with all these thresholds.. Our mortgage threshold doesn't change, we still have the same bills coming out but only one wage coming in and a barely worth it token of Â£69 carers allowance. Where is the safety net for children with cancer? Surely help with council tax should be included when a child in the household has cancer and the parent is receiving carers allowance.

Increase council tax, not just to fund this, but also properly fund the contacts for other council services such as parks, street cleaning and waste collection.

Increasing council tax costs on a group already identified to be in need during a time of rapid inflation seems cruel. I am in favour of closing any budget gap but given Bromley Council tax is very low, I think this could reasonably be closed by an increase in general council rates, which would be less regressive.

Support for people in band E-G not only A-D where council tax is already much lower in comparison.

Instead of making cuts to services, support etc every year demand more money from the government, where our taxes and national insurance is going.

I'm not convinced that all claimants are legitimate and would like to see an increase in the resources for investigation.

Ensure that council tax goes to areas of need - Pennington is the area of Bromley that seems to be forgotten about.

I think using the reserves would be a last resort

You should make it as easy as possible to claim and should be reviewing council tax and rent enforcement policies alongside this. You should also be actively seeking out people who do not pay by dd, or who have received hardship grants previously to ensure that they receive support.

At this current economic situation there should be as much support provided to those in society and in the Borough who cannot afford to meet the full Charge of Council Tax. This is not a situation which will exist for more than 2 years or so. The vulnerable and marginalised should always be supported by those who can afford it. This makes for a fair and equitable society and not one skewed in favour of the most advantageous.

Making cuts in in-house expenditures and limiting salary increases especially to CEO and top management

Hello, I didn't even know this scheme existed. I think people should prioritise their own money instead of expecting others to bail them out all of the time. I work hard and save to ensure that I can

cover my expenditure. I think Bromley are doing the right thing by removing some of the handouts but still supporting where genuine support is needed. There will come a time when I stop working as all I seem to be doing is going to work to pay for others, it isn't fair or a situation that can be sustained. People need to be encouraged to work and gain promotions so they can afford things. Good for Bromley for tackling what is going to be seen as a negative for all those on this hand out scheme. Lobby government for increased funding to support local council budgets and those in need of council tax support through increased taxation of high earners and corporations including multinationals and large international digital companies

Support should be funded from current reserves as it's at its highest level this year. At times of massive inflation such as this, councils should resist urge to add to this.

If an increase is necessary, wealthier people - or residents in more expensive bands - should be expected to foot the bill first

I do not think that support should be limited to Band D as the higher Bands are generally not fair & the system is way out of date.

As LBB have funds invested overseas I find it abhorrent that you are even considering raising council tax for vulnerable Bromley residents. You should be spending from your investments rather than greedily watch the bank balance grow. The poor are not here to fund overseas investments. You should invest in the people you're meant to serve not lining the pockets of investments. Make it easier to contact them, especially for people with disabilities and or no internet. Have a freephone number as well

I think the most vulnerable residents in Bromley deserve more support with their council tax. Think the scheme should be 50% reduction not 70% of the full tax due. The people who claim are highly likely to be high users of all the services provided by the council, and whilst I appreciate they may be financially stretched 70% is a very high percentage for others to make up the difference. While the financial numbers look fairly small with the proposed changes, for the people who receive council tax support, any increase in costs hurts and puts them in an even weaker position.

Could we get some kind of discount on transport when we need to work in central London.

I think that people's contributions should be means tested - if I can't afford my bills I need to rethink and change my outgoings e.g. I moved to a smaller home to manage my mortgage and outgoings.

I also think that support, unless in exceptional circumstances, should be time limited.

Get rid of a lot of management dead wood and invented jobs they give themselves

You make no mention of cutting out waste to improve services and focus solely on increasing resident payments or cutting services. What is the council doing to ensure we the taxpayer get the best value for our money that is currently spent?

Make every department justify its budget on a zero basis NOT incremental - challenge increases and look at automation and digitization of services payback - I could add - but I normally charge for advice. Help those in genuine need regardless of council tax band

Whilst I understand we are all going through the current economic crisis, it is important that we do not make cuts to important services that would impact communities.

We need to support fellow citizens who are facing hard times in difficult circumstances when many people can afford to pay extra.

It would be useful, in combination with this survey, if you published a link explaining the policy as it currently exists and why it exists in that manner.

The terminology is quite confusing so explain it clearly and think of someone who doesn't know what you are talking about and how it applies and try to make it clear to such a person.
Rigorous application of the criteria please for this help

None of the above. Bromley council are NOT transparent with their accounts. Too many meetings are held or sections of meetings held in private. This survey give NO other alternatives. Eg: get rid of the Mayor's car! Councillors use more public transportation. (Freedom pass is free travel!) Bromley Council is NOT a modern council. It is NOT imaginative. It does not engage or interact well with its residents. Many of those effected by this 'consultation' will never see or be aware of it as they may not have IT skills, equipment, and awareness to respond. The questions are loaded. Siloed. Even the executive has commented in the past on how bad the council is at effective communication. Seems no lessons learnt here! Stop this now. Look at the big picture! Be accountable and effective. Open and Honest. There are many recent examples where the council has been weak.
Reducing the level of support by even the small percentage proposed will be challenging for those in receipt of support in light of everything else that is going up in cost. This is not the time to reduce the council tax support.

I think the people eligible to relief often need an advocate to help complete forms and apply for assistance. Larger families need larger properties and have difficulty paying everything. Limited funds will mean problems will be seen and Foodbank use will increase if proposed changes go through . Should be 80% support these people can hardly afford to eat now, cut the salaries of top management would be better

In view of the rapidly rising cost of living nationally I believe Bromley Borough should dip into its considerable contingency funds to bridge the funding gap. As a volunteer with Bromley Foodbank it is clear that many residents are already in huge difficulty in affording food for their families. Bromley Borough could assist, for instance, by paying the rental charge on our warehouse? But this is unlikely! So why should we support you trying to collect more cash from hard-pressed residents?!

I am concerned that the very people that need to participate in this survey may not see it. Could the Council therefore email these people so that they can have their say on the proposed changes?

As we are in a cost of living crisis with these proposed changes people who are maybe already struggling could then be getting into debt.

As this Council has invested vast sums already it is mystifying that there now could be a potential budget gap? Has there been a mismanagement of funds/
Save money by applying savings caps to all ages. It is ridiculous that rich pensioners should be getting free bus fares and reduced council tax. Stop cutting services for children. Start investing in the future.

Several of these are also fraudulently claiming benefits.

We are in a critical time, spend our reserve now please, that is what it is for, Otherwise, people will suffer and it will be a disaster, people will lose their homes, and poverty will increase. If we use the reserve now it will get us through this CRISIS for now.

toughen up on those who do not work and could

the council should not cut council tax benefit for people on low incomes. The council should raise any extra money by implementing the empty homes premium on properties that are empty for longer than 2 years. For more details see <http://getcommonholddone.co.uk/empty-property/2021/06/04/fire-at-18-year-old-empty-property-shows-that-bromley-council-is-too-soft-on-empty-property-owners/>

The council should publish an equality act impact assessment before taking any formal decision on this issue.

Demand more money from central government.

Charge second home owners much more.

People are struggling to live and heat there homes. Any increase at the moment is unacceptable. I know these are hard times for everyone, but I cannot comprehend why you think increasing charges for the poorest residents, most in need of support, is the right option? Surely it is those of us on higher incomes who should be putting a bit more into the pot at this time? I think this is a ridiculous questionnaire, what a time to ask people in the community to get less help from the council however small it maybe!!

I would strongly continue with the 75% between bands B-D but those with larger properties will and can access funds to pay for the additional council tax as a responsible council. Failing that, go to Liz Trust and ask her for more funding from the government you represent.

Don't expect the community to pay any more due to the financial crises this government has put in place as her mini budget. If needs must then use the slush fund you have to help those people that just can't afford their council tax but don't remove money that they really need. Final note, I hope that Bromley council is a compassionate and removes this survey and continues the support required. It is an outrageous request and is completely wrong at this present time. Let's hope the press don't get wind of this proposal?

People dont have this money to pay right now not enoug to aford for food income not increasing for people council need support all people I think people should pay 30%, I don't think I services should be cut or the rest of the residents support those who are on benefits by increasing council tax. Cost of living is already squeezing everyone else out of extra pennies which will impact businesses and footfall at shopping places Typical Tory response to a Tory created problem. Froze council tax this year to try and save some seats.

Cuts from central Govt. Call a national and local election. Provide council tax support for those who work part time! Even at 75% CTS support it is too much for many low income households to afford. With the council's intention to increase council tax for years 22/23 the financial burden placed on low income households will increase. Couple this with the horrendous cost of living crisis there will be many, many households that are unable to pay and would find themselves chased by bailiffs, which is simply devastating both financially (including credit reports) and mentally, particularly for those households who are considered vulnerable. pay less council tax without any cut

Restricting to band D when calculating entitlement to Council tax support is unfair, the jump in minimum weekly contributions for bands E - H is too great.

Strong communication is needed to ensure that all residents know the support available to them with their council tax payments if they are indeed financially vulnerable (particularly those that lack access to the internet).

This is a bad time for everyone especially the less well off. The council should use its savings until there is some respite or target the higher council tax bands

There is plenty of money in reserve, use it

Look at possible ways of allowing those receiving Council Tax support to work on a voluntary basis in return for paying less Council Tax.

This is a wealthy borough, with resources to support those in poverty, especially during these hard times. If it were possible, I would be happy to pay an extraordinary hardship levy to support those who don't have the capacity to cope during these extraordinary times of inflation in everything everywhere

If the council had not wasted large amounts of money on unwise property investment, there would be plenty of money to support the most vulnerable.

The additional revenue to the Council from this proposal is miniscule in the scale of Council spending.

It would be far better to stop bragging about Bromley having the lowest council tax in London and collect more from all, except Support Scheme claimants, to properly fund council services.

The eligible bands should be increased

Cutting services is entirely wrong headed

If council tax has to go up, it should only increase for the more expensive bands as they are more able to help share the burden

More support for those that need it most during this cost of living crisis

Bromley has large reserves and they should spend them on their residents instead of hoarding them (and should also direct spending to poorer areas of the borough as a priority)

Bromley has areas of extreme wealth, maybe tax them more to help pay for those that are most in need

Higher tax on second/ multiple properties

Support for the most vulnerable and those most impacted but cost of living crisis need to be supported more right now. Not have support schemes or public services cut.

Support those who need it. Charge those who can afford to pay more.

Tell your Westminster friends to stop cutting local government funding.

Why not go back to all working adults contributing?

I wonder how the equity issue of sharing this consultation has been addressed to ensure appropriate feedback. I have only seen it advertised online

Restricting the support to band d levels is sensible and is consistent with the governments first energy assistance in the summer of 2022

Be useful for people without partners

My son been on camhs waiting list for 3 years with still no help they are useless i call every day and i receive no reply. His anxiety is so bad he has also been a school refuser for 3 years. I get no support for him from local services and because hes listed as a camhs patient we cant get any other support.

No can i get luch funding uniform funding or pupil premium wwn though i myself am disabled and on benefits, all because there are no specialist schools in this borough that have a space 2 schools that is all for the biggest borough London. We have falled through the cracks and there is nothing anyone is doing to help us.

Im just disgusted to say i live in the Bromley borough with a special needs child.

We should not have to subsidise and support Sadiq Khan's & other boroughs' reckless spending and vanity projects.

There are lots of people in Bromley, myself included, who would rather pay more Council Tax to support the less fortunate in our Borough. Perhaps you could introduce a voluntary scheme for those wishing to preserve vital services for those in need such as elderly care, youth services, etc. This would help make Bromley a better place for everyone.

I would like to see more people paying their way. The answer shouldn't always be to make hard working people pay more to support those that don't work.

I was surprised to find that one of the key documents linked with 'Apply for council tax support' amounted to 238 pages of complex language and explanation. I was, therefore, grateful to be sent more accessible information.

In the council's impact statement there is already reference to 68.34% of applicants being women and the need to monitor this. However and if my arithmetic is correct, of 3598 single parents with children 3439 are women. It is recognised that women with child care responsibilities are often paid less; hence any reduction in financial help at a time when the cost of living is rising will be felt by this group in particular.

Limiting the assistance to the council tax paid by Band D residents ignores the fact that poverty and family breakdown is not only experienced by Bromley residents in properties of lower value. Whilst it may be easy to suggest that people should move, account should be taken of the cost of doing so and the loss of local support, schooling etc

If a sanction/ deduction of earnings is placed on a individual this should be subject to appeal. Residents in bands E to H should pay significantly more council tax.

Bromley council should look into how much service charge housing associations charge as every year I have to have my service charge revised because they charge for services not provided. Therefore anyone one on housing benefit is overcharged and therefore the LBB is paying for services not provided.

Bromley must continue to support all vulnerable people in the borough.

Are there more assets that Bromley could sell in order to support those in need of support? Sell them If Bromley council didn't have to pay for immigrants and asylum seekers there would be millions for available for British people. Do not provide services for immigrants or asylum seekers, and if its a legal requirement that the council is required to provide these services - campaign to end such a legal requirement, by pointing out to council tax support payers how much money is tipped down the drain on these services.

Comments from unverified responders

In the current cost of living crisis, it is essential that our vulnerable clients (at Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich Mind) are aware of their full entitlement to possible benefits. I would therefore ask that consideration be given to promoting the various exemptions that may be available to vulnerable people, such as the 'severe mental impairment' exemption and possible eligibility for 'severe disability premium' when it still applies. Also, that vulnerable clients with 'non dependents' living in their household do not have deductions applied when they are exempt (due to receiving a qualifying benefit, such as PIP). In addition to this, I would ask that the Council Tax Discretionary Payment Scheme is promoted to vulnerable clients.

There is still a very unfortunate and unfair state for those living on so called fleecehold estates. Where residents are charged full amount of council tax and have to pay additional uncapped fees for the upkeep of publicly accessible streets that council refuses to adopt. Due to the inflation it's only going to get worse. It's unclear why the residents should be charged full amount of the tax if they don't get any maintenance services from the council on the estate. If the council refuses adopt those estates, they should reduce the tax.

The fact that there are reserves means that there should be no need to decrease or change the amount of council tax support. People in the private rental sector very often have no choice but to rent properties in higher council tax bands. Penalising such tenants for something they cannot control is beyond unfair.

Make them pay more, everyone is feeling the increase and those not eligible are not seeing reductions!

Get rid of it

Carers of disabled children/adults need more help

I believe the current proposals to reduce assistance to those on low incomes amount to an increase in council tax on only the lowest earners in the borough. Raising funds to continue to deliver council services should be done in an equitable manner, not by targeting those who are already most at risk from the cost of living crisis.

Choice 1/ Build some housing and bring down the cost of rents - then you won't be paying out so much in housing benefits and also people can afford to get a job. Choice 2/ Don't. = terminal

decadent decline.

If people are living on their own in a big house then claiming hardship they should sell the house and downside.

Try to look for the waste - its really not hard as an outsider and you are not really efficient - the debt level flatters you

You have hundreds of millions of pounds in reserves. This is the time to use of of this,

Changes seem reasonable and proportionate. It is, however, questionable whether people living in houses in Bands E or above should receive any council tax support for more than say 6 months as clearly they have a very valuable asset which should be considered.

There are residents in the borough that I know who are claiming 25% reduction in council tax claiming they are single residents when they are cohabiting. The council fraud department should track them down and ensure they pay the full council tax.

Increase the highest 2 levels of council tax to make a larger contribution rather than taking the money from the poorest in our community.

I agree that there should be a certain level of support to help who is most in need, however I believe that a 75%-70% is excessive, especially if it means that people paying 100% the amount for council tax bills, will face an increase. This will be hard for people on low income and not benefitting from such supports.

Times are tough for everyone. We all need to contribute.

I think more support for families need to be given. Working or not.

I don't believe enough consideration has been given to vulnerable residents with complex needs. Bromley is the only borough in the whole of London proposing such a drastic change due its deficit budget. There is a cost of living crisis and you want to target those who are on low income and is not able to already manage. There needs to be more push to central government for support and you may want to re visit your contract with liberata and see how much this is costing you to administer. There is a lot of outsourcing and systems that's costing the council a lot of

money. Discretionary support is in itself self explanatory- "discretionary". It is ultimately up to the decision maker whether this will be awarded or not. So it's no real good of this amount being increased as it gives no guarantee to those who would be entitled to apply to be turned down as it's "discretionary". Review your budgets and look at other means you can close the deficit gap with. There is lack of support in the borough as it is.

I feel residents living in a street of uniform housing who have afforded to hugely extend their properties should have their council tax banding increased. These people are wealthy but are cleverly escaping the correct banding.

Reducing support for the poorest people during inflation and cost of living and energy crises is deeply unfair. The council should use it's reserves for this the purpose of making people's lives better.

Band E-H are likely to be owned by older people who have in most cases have throughout their lives already benefited hugely from rising property values. if council tax must increase, start the increase in council tax for larger land owners and those with higher value properties- those with capital and sizeable assets such as these have the broadest shoulders and should pay more. Landowners sitting on undeveloped assets should be taxed even more (even if they have friends in the council). People with non-domicile status but who also own property in the UK should not be in receipt of any council tax deductions. Wealthy pensioners should not be able to claim council tax benefit. The council no doubt uses many third party contracts and / or consultancy firms. I would expect the council to attempt to renegotiate better terms to save money before they focus policy making efforts to take more money from poorer people and those with children in school age.

Make better provisions for private renters who are in universal credit as they spend a large proportion of their money on housing costs. Council tenants have more disposable income than private renters and are losing out on a weekly basis

The status quo is not acceptable because of the councils challenging financial position

Bromley council should get a share share of the London Boroughs reallocation process. We pay a substantial amount of money to the London Assembly and are net losers when it come to their spending prioritises.

Further investigation should be required if the department has no information regarding the claimant. Further support offered for liability orders should be flexible to over turn if

circumstantial evidence van be provided.