

# Consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also known as the Council Tax Support Scheme) for 2017/18

## Have your say on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18

1. Before proceeding with this questionnaire, please confirm that you have read the background information ([here](#)) and watched our short 3 minute video ([here](#)) that accompanies this consultation.

Yes

No

2. Should the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 be exactly the same as our 2016/17 scheme? (Our current scheme can be found [here](#))

Yes

No

Don't know

3. If Yes, please give your reasons for wanting to protect the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from any cuts.

## Options to change the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

As explained in the background information, in order to address potential shortfalls in funding due to the continued reduction in Central Government grants, we are consulting on 9 proposals that would potentially change the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2017.

The options, with full details in the background information document [here](#), are set out below and we would like to know your views on these proposals.

**Option 1**

**Reduce the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction for working-age applicants from 81.5% of their Council Tax liability to 80%**

**4. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**If you have any comments to make on Option 1, please give them below.**

**Option 2**

**Remove the Family Premium for all new working age applicants**

**5. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**If you have any comments to make on Option 2, please give them below.**

**Option 3**

**Reduce the backdating provision from 6 months to 1 month**

**6. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 3, please give them below.

#### Option 4

Introduce a 'Minimum Income Floor' for self-employed claimants after their first year of trading

7. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 4, please give them below.

#### Option 5

Reduce the period for which a person can be absent from Great Britain and still receive Council Tax Reduction from 13 weeks to 4 weeks

8. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?

Yes

No

Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 5, please give them below.

**Option 6**

**Remove the Work Related Activity Component (WRAC) in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction for new claims from working-age claimants who are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance**

**9. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 6, please give them below.

**Option 7**

**Limit the dependent child addition used in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction to a maximum of two children**

**10. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If you have any comments to make on Option 7, please give them below.

**Option 8**

**Exclude foreign nationals with limited immigration status (Persons from Abroad) from receiving Council Tax Reduction**

**11. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**If you have any comments to make on Option 8, please give them below.**

**Option 9**

**Introduce a scheme to help claimants suffering exceptional financial hardship**

**12. Do you think this option should be introduced into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18?**

Yes

No

Don't know

**If you have any comments to make on Option 9, please give them below.**

**13. If you have any other comments to make on the proposals detailed above, please give them below.**

**Alternatives to reducing the amount of help provided by the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

If we do not make any changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, savings will need to be found from elsewhere to help meet the expected reduction in Government funding over the next 3 years. Therefore, rather than making changes to our current scheme, do you think we should choose any of the following options?

**Increase the level of Council Tax**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Find savings from cutting other Council services**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Use the Council's reserves (savings)**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Based on your answers above, please rank your order of preference.

**Increase the level of Council Tax**

- 1
- 2
- 3

**Find savings from cutting other Council services**

- 1

2

3

Use the Council's reserves (savings)

1

2

3

14. If you would like us to consider any other options, please give your comments below.

15. If you have any further comments to make regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that you haven't had opportunity to raise elsewhere, please give them below.

Insert equality details/questions

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

We will listen carefully to what everyone tells us and take all responses into consideration before making a final decision on our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18. Following the decision, the full results from this consultation will be available on our website - [www.sevenoaks.gov.uk](http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk)

The new scheme will start on 1 April 2017. However, we will consider the impact of the scheme on an annual basis and we will consult again if we think further changes need to be made.