



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Council Tax Support
Scheme Consultation
2023

Final Report

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Introduction

Background

Manchester City Council operates a Council Tax Support scheme which requires all working age residents to pay a minimum of 17.5% of their council tax bill themselves. Pension age residents receive up to 100% of their bill in Council Tax Support which cannot be changed.

The Council recently delivered a consultation to seek views and feedback on its proposals to increase the maximum amount of Council Tax Support for working age residents, from a maximum of 82.5% to 85%, and to extend the backdating period from six months to 12 months.

Enventure Research was commissioned to conduct independent analysis and reporting of the findings from this consultation.

Methodology

A questionnaire was designed by Manchester City Council which sought residents' views on the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme and included questions to establish respondents' demographics and certain characteristics. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the **Appendices**.

The consultation was managed and delivered by Manchester City Council. Residents could take part via an online survey or by completing a paper copy of the questionnaire which was mailed to households. All returned paper copies were then processed by Manchester City Council. Prior to being shared with Enventure Research, all data was anonymised by Manchester City Council.

Overall, 4,737 responses were received to the consultation. This includes 1,881 received online (40%) and a 2,856 paper copies (60%).

Interpretation of the findings

This report contains tables and charts. In some instances, the responses may not add up to 100%. There are several reasons why this might happen:

- The question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer
- Only the most common responses may be shown in the table or chart
- Individual percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number so the total may come to 99% or 101%
- A response of less than 0.5% will be shown as 0%

Subgroup analysis has been undertaken to explore results provided by subgroups such as whether they currently receive Council Tax Support, age, disability, sex, whether their gender is the same as assigned at birth, whether they have caring responsibilities, whether they have served in the UK Armed Forces, and whether they have contacted a local authority because of homelessness or being at risk of being homeless. This analysis has only been carried out where the sample size is seen to be sufficient for comment, and only those differences that are statistically significant have been commented on within this report.



Survey Findings

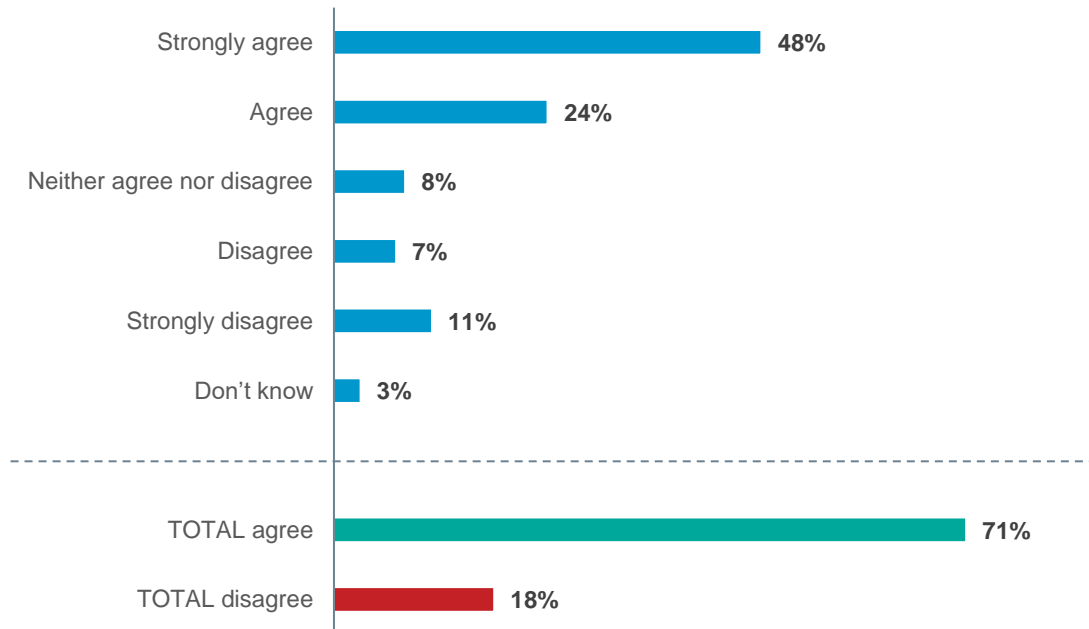
Increase of minimum award

Working age residents in Manchester can currently receive support of up to 82.5% of their council tax bill, which Manchester City Council is proposing to increase up to a maximum of 85% (an increase of 2.5%).

Respondents were first asked if they agreed or disagreed that the Council should increase the maximum Council Tax Support to 85% for working age residents. Seven in ten respondents (71%) agreed with this overall, including 48% who *strongly agreed* and 24% who *agreed*. Almost a fifth of respondents (18%) disagreed overall, including 7% who *disagreed* and 11% who *strongly disagreed*. Small proportions of respondents said they *neither agree nor disagree* (8%) or *don't know* (3%).

Figure 1 – Do you agree or disagree that we should increase the maximum Council Tax Support from 82.5% to 85% for working age residents?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,669)



Subgroup analysis

Subgroups more likely to **agree** (71% overall) include:

- Those who are currently receiving Council Tax Support (83%) vs those who are not (66%)
- Those aged 35-54 (77%) vs those aged 55+ (73%)
- Those who have a disability or long-term health issue (76%) vs those who do not (71%)
- Those whose gender is the same as it was assigned at birth (73%) vs those whose gender is not (58%)
- Those who have not served in the UK Armed Forces (74%) vs those who have (65%)
- Those who have contacted a local authority due to homelessness (82%) vs those who have not (72%)



Subgroup analysis continued

Subgroups more likely to **disagree** (18% overall) include:

- Those who are not currently receiving Council Tax Support (24%) vs those who are (7%)
- Those aged 35-54 (16%) vs those aged 55+ (14%)
- Those who do not have a disability or long-term health issue (19%) vs those who do (13%)
- Male respondents (18%) vs female respondents (14%)
- Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces (22%) vs those who have not (15%)



Banding for Universal Credit cases

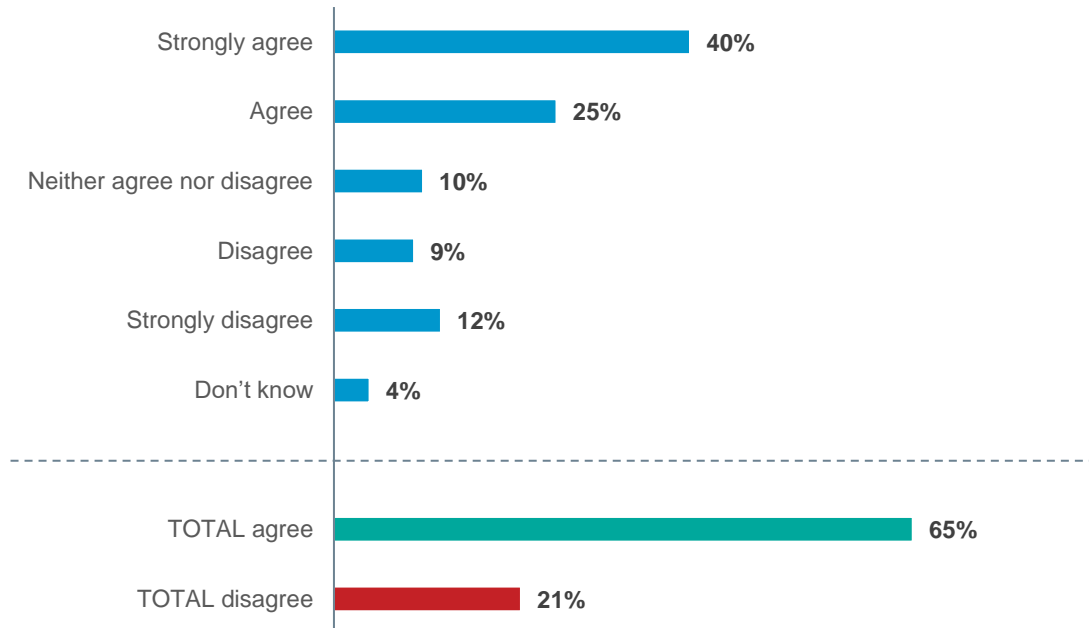
Manchester City Council currently has a banded scheme for residents who are on Universal Credit. The banded scheme means that small changes in Universal Credit do not always change the amount of Council Tax Support. The Council is proposing to increase the bands of support by 2.5% so that residents on Universal Credit also receive an increase in support. The current bands and new proposed bands of Council Tax Support are shown in the table below.

Band of income	Current Council Tax Support	Proposed Council Tax Support for 2024/25
£0.00 over your applicable amount	82.5% of council tax	85%
£0.01 to £25 over	70%	72.5%
£25.01 to £50 over	45%	47.5%
£50.01 to £75 over	30%	32.5%
£75.01 to £80 over	12%	14.5%
£80.01 over	No support	No support

Two thirds of respondents (65%) agreed overall that the Council should increase the bands of Council Tax Support for residents receiving Universal Credit by 2.5%, including 40% who *strongly agreed* and 25% who *agreed*. A fifth disagreed overall (21%), including 9% who *disagreed* and 12% who *strongly disagreed*. Small proportions said they *neither agree nor disagree* (10%) or *don't know* (4%).

Figure 2 – Do you agree or disagree that we should increase the bands of Council Tax Support by 2.5%?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,695)



Subgroup analysis

Subgroups more likely to **agree** (65% overall) include:

- Those who are currently receiving Council Tax Support (77%) vs those who are not (60%)
- Those who have a disability or long-term health issue (69%) vs those who do not (66%)
- Female respondents (69%) vs male respondents (65%)
- Those whose gender is the same as it was assigned at birth (67%) vs those whose gender is not (53%)
- Those who have not served in the UK Armed Forces (68%) vs those who have (61%)
- Those who have contacted a local authority due to homelessness (76%) vs those who have not (66%)

Subgroups more likely to **disagree** (21% overall) include:

- Those who are not currently receiving Council Tax Support (26%) vs those who are (10%)
- Those aged 16-54 (20%) vs those aged 55+ (17%)
- Those who do not have a disability or long-term health issue (22%) vs those who do (16%)
- Male respondents (21%) vs female respondents (17%)
- Those whose gender is not the same as it was assigned at birth (35%) vs those whose gender is (19%)
- Those who indicated that they have caring responsibilities (21%) vs those who did not (18%)
- Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces (23%) vs those who have not (19%)
- Those who have not contacted a local authority due to homelessness (20%) vs those who have (15%)



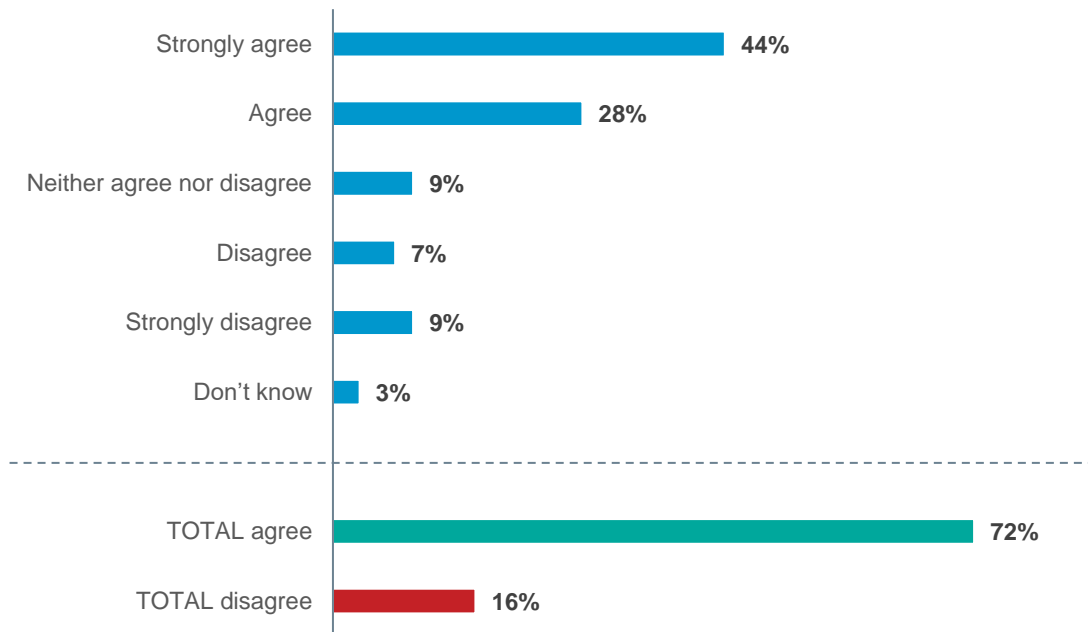
Backdating

Backdating is currently allowed up to six months where the resident has a good reason for not making a claim sooner. Manchester City Council is proposing to extend this period up to one year, and would apply to claims from people who are pension age as well as working age.

Seven in ten respondents (72%) agreed overall that the backdating period should be extended, including 44% who *strongly agreed* and 28% who *agreed*. A much smaller proportion disagreed overall (16%), including 7% who *disagreed* and 9% who *strongly disagreed*. Small proportions said they *neither agree nor disagree* (9%) or *don't know* (3%).

Figure 3 – Do you agree or disagree that we should extend the period of backdating from six months to one year where residents have a good reason for not making a claim sooner?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,683)



Subgroup analysis

Subgroups more likely to **agree** (72% overall) include:

- Those who are currently receiving Council Tax Support (84%) vs those who are not (66%)
- Those who have a disability or long-term health issue (79%) vs those who do not (70%)
- Female respondents (76%) vs male respondents (71%)
- Those who have not served in the UK Armed Forces (75%) vs those who have (67%)
- Those who have contacted a local authority due to homelessness (80%) vs those who have not (73%)

Subgroups more likely to **disagree** (16% overall) include:

- Those who are not currently receiving Council Tax Support (22%) vs those who are (6%)
- Those who do not have a disability or long-term health issue (18%) vs those who do (11%)
- Male respondents (17%) vs female respondents (12%)
- Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces (21%) vs those who have not (13%)



Further comments

Respondents were asked to provide any further views or comments they had about the proposed changes. Their verbatim responses have been thematically coded, grouping similar responses together, and are presented in the table below and overleaf.

The most common theme was that respondents agreed with and supported the proposals, and believed they would have a positive impact (27%). This was followed by 15% who expressed concern about how this additional proposed support would be funded, or felt that the support should not be funded by services being cut or council tax being raised. Another common theme was that the cost of living crisis affects everyone and the belief that everyone should receive support or that it was unfair for tax payers (12%).

Respondents suggested that certain cohorts of residents should receive more financial support, such as residents who work (12%), pension age residents (7%), single person households (4%), disabled and seriously ill residents or their carers (4%), and families with children (1%).

Equal proportions of respondents who provided a comment said they either agreed or disagreed with the backdating period being extended (both at 3%). Reasons for agreeing mostly related to the belief that individuals may have a good reason not to apply such as being unwell, escaping domestic abuse, find the process difficult, or be unaware that they are eligible for support. Reasons for disagreeing mostly related to the opinion that the current six month backdating period is sufficient, and concern that a longer backdating period could be abused and increase costs for the Council.

The full range of themes is shown in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4 – Further views/comments about the proposed changes

Base: Those who provided a response (1,158)

Further views/comments about the proposed changes	Number	%
Agree with/support proposals/would have a positive impact	310	27%
Concern about how additional support will be funded/services should not be cut/council tax should not be increased to fund this support	177	15%
Cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone should receive support/unfair for tax payers	142	12%
More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work	136	12%
Dissatisfied with MCC/council services/council tax too high	98	8%
More financial support/discounts needed for pension age residents	86	7%
Support should only be provided to those in genuine need/enforce eligibility checks/concern about abuse of welfare system	75	6%
More financial support needed/proposals do not go far enough	58	5%
Insufficient information provided to comment/need more detail on proposals and impact	58	5%
No comment/opinion/not relevant	58	5%
More financial support/discounts needed for single person households	52	4%
Would prefer to see money spent elsewhere/to improve services	50	4%
More financial support/discounts needed for disabled/seriously ill residents and carers	47	4%
MCC does a good job/grateful for support received	44	4%
Proposals will disincentivise finding employment/MCC should encourage residents into employment	43	4%
Agree with backdating period being extended	40	3%
Disagree with backdating period being extended	35	3%
MCC could do more to save money/increase income	35	3%
Council tax should be reduced/abolished	33	3%



Further views/comments about the proposed changes	Number	%
Limited awareness of support available/unsure how to access support/should be promoted more	32	3%
Comment about questionnaire/consultation	30	3%
Disagree with/oppose proposals/would have a negative impact	29	3%
Comment unrelated to consultation questions	27	2%
Complaint about council tax system	24	2%
Current level of support is adequate/fair for those covered by scheme	24	2%
Criteria/eligibility for Council Tax Support could be improved/should be means tested	20	2%
MCC should provide alternatives to Council Tax Support (e.g. advice on money management, food vouchers, extension of payment period)	19	2%
Backdating period should only be extended for exceptional circumstances/reasons should be published	17	1%
More support needed from government/criticism of government	16	1%
More financial support/discounts needed for families with children	14	1%
Every resident should pay council tax/contribute to society	10	1%
Council Tax Support should be automatically provided to residents on Universal Credit/all residents on Universal Credit should receive Council Tax Support	5	0%
Other	17	1%

Below are some example verbatim responses for some of the most common themes.

Agree with/support proposals/would have a positive impact (27%)

People who need support should be supported as much as possible – costs are going up, so help should go up too.

Happy to support the council in supporting disadvantaged people in these difficult times.

I think any increase in the support given to people who need it should be welcomed and can only be a good thing.

I agree with an increase as the support I received still left me struggling to pay my monthly council tax, and family helped me with my food shopping.

I have been receiving CTS for some time now. I care about others and this sounds like a good thing that would help those less fortunate than myself.

Concern about how additional support will be funded/services should not be cut/council tax should not be increased to fund this support (15%)

Where is this funding coming from, you already quote issues with having funding to do all we need to, stop making it harder!

I strongly disagree for any proposal to increase council tax, we are extremely struggling with our lives, please don't make us suffer more.

There's not enough money for funding everything now so how are you going to increase these funds without cutting other services or raising council tax including those of us that work and cannot claim benefit?

Cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone should receive support/unfair for tax payers (12%)

Cost of living crisis is impacting everyone so I recommend council to reduce tax bill for every household instead of a select group of residents.



There are many people around this city who cannot claim discounts because they are just above the income limits and they are struggling too. It is unfair to raise the burden of higher council tax on these people to fund others and this does nothing to encourage people to better themselves.

My pay and that of partner has not increased by 2.5% this year or the past 3 years, we have to adapt. This should be the same for everyone, working or not. Why not provide 2.5% relief for all council tax payers rather than just a few.

More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work (12%)

Why just people on benefits, what about the people that are just over the threshold, they really struggle, it seems as though we are forgotten and not included in anything.

I think there should be more support for those who don't meet the criteria for Universal Credit but are still on a lower income.

Maybe do things for workers not just people on benefits. Too many hand outs and us workers get nothing.

Subgroup analysis

Those who are **currently receiving Council Tax Support** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who are not:

- Agree with/support proposals/would have a positive impact (37% vs 23%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for disabled/seriously ill residents and carers (7% vs 3%)
- MCC does a good job/grateful for support (11% vs 2%)

Those who are **not currently receiving Council Tax Support** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who are:

- Concern about how additional support will be funded/services should not be cut/council tax should not be increased to fund this support (19% vs 5%)
- Cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone needs support/unfair for tax payers (14% vs 8%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work (14% vs 5%)
- Dissatisfied with MCC/council services/council tax too high (10% vs 4%)
- Insufficient information provided to comment/need more detail on proposals and impact (6% vs 2%)
- Would prefer to see money spent elsewhere/to improve services (5% vs 2%)
- Proposals will disincentivise finding employment/MCC should encourage residents into employment (5% vs 1%)

Younger respondents were more likely to suggest the following when compared with older respondents aged 55+:

- Cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone needs support/unfair for tax payers (those aged 35-54 at 17% vs 7%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work (those aged 35-54 at 16% vs 9%)
- Dissatisfied with MCC/council services/council tax too high (those aged 35-54 at 11% vs 5%)
- More financial support needed/proposals do not go far enough (those aged 16-54 at 8% vs 3%)
- Would prefer to see money spent elsewhere/to improve services (those aged 16-34 at 8% vs 2%)
- Criteria/eligibility for Council Tax Support could be improved/should be means tested (those aged 16-54 at 3% vs 1%)



Subgroup analysis continued

Older respondents aged 55+ were more likely to suggest the following when compared with younger respondents:

- More financial support/discounts for pension age residents (14% vs those aged 16-54 at 1%)
- Support should only be provided to those in genuine need/enforce eligibility checks/concern about abuse of welfare system (7% vs those aged 16-34 at 2%)

Those who **have a disability or long-term health issue** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who do not:

- More financial support/discounts needed for pension age residents (12% vs 5%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for disabled/seriously ill residents and carers (8% vs 2%)

Female respondents were more likely to suggest the following when compared with male respondents:

- More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work (16% vs 8%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for single person households (6% vs 2%)

There were no significant differences by respondents who indicated that their **gender is not the same as it was assigned at birth**.

Those who indicated that they **have caring responsibilities** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who did not:

- Cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone should receive support/unfair for tax payers (17% vs 9%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work (16% vs 9%)
- Dissatisfied with MCC/council services/council tax too high (11% vs 7%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for disabled/seriously ill residents and carers (6% vs 3%)

Those who have **served in the UK Armed Forces** were more likely to suggest more financial support/discounts needed for pension age residents (14%) when compared with those who have not (6%).

Those who have **contacted a local authority due to homelessness** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who have not:

- Agree with backdating period being extended (7% vs 3%)
- Comment unrelated to consultation questions (6% vs 2%)

Those who **agreed with all three proposals** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who disagreed:

- Agree with/support proposals/would have a positive impact (46% vs 2%)
- More financial support needed/proposals do not go far enough (6% vs 1%)
- No comment/opinion/not relevant (5% vs 1%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for disabled/seriously ill residents and carers (5% vs 1%)
- Council does a good job/grateful for support (6% vs 0 respondents)
- Agree with backdating period being extended
- Limited awareness of support available/unsure how to access support/should be promoted more (4% vs 0 respondents)
- Complaint about council tax system (3% vs 0 respondents)



Subgroup analysis continued

Those who **disagreed with all three proposals** were more likely to suggest the following when compared with those who agreed:

- Concern about how additional support will be funded/services should not be cut/council tax should not be increased to fund this support (36% vs 5%)
- Cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone should receive support/unfair for tax payers (24% vs 8%)
- More financial support/discounts needed for residents who work (15% vs 9%)
- Dissatisfied with MCC/council services/council tax too high (12% vs 6%)
- Support should only be provided to those in genuine need/enforce eligibility checks/concern about abuse of welfare system (13% vs 3%)
- Would prefer to see money spent elsewhere/to improve council services (14% vs 1%)
- Proposals will disincentivise finding employment/MCC should encourage residents into employment (13% vs 0%)
- Disagree with backdating period being extended (4% vs 0%)
- MCC could do more to save money/increase income (6% vs 1%)
- Council tax should be reduced/abolished (5% vs 2%)
- Disagree with/oppose proposals/would have a negative impact (10% vs 1%)
- Current level of support is adequate/fair for those covered by scheme (9% vs 0 respondents)
- MCC should provide alternatives to Council Tax Support (e.g. advice on money management,



Written response from the Royal British Legion

A written response was submitted to Manchester City Council by the Royal British Legion after the consultation had closed. A summary of the feedback relevant to the consultation has been included below:

- When assessing residents for Council Tax Support and other types of support and benefits, Manchester City Council should ask a question to identify whether residents belong to any of the following groups:
 - Former member of HM Armed Forces, Regular and Reserve
 - Spouse or partner of serving or former member of HM Armed Forces
 - Widow(er) of serving or former member of HM Armed Forces
 - Dependent children of serving or former member of HM Armed Forces
 - Recently divorced or separated spouse or partner of serving or former member of HM Armed Forces
- Recommendation for Manchester City Council to ensure relevant staff are trained and aware of the policies and needs specific to the Armed Forces community, as part of the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant
- Recommendation for Manchester City Council to disregard all forms of military compensation as income in assessments for Council Tax Support and other means tested benefits
- No further comments to make, either in support or objection, to other proposed aspects of the new Council Tax Support scheme and the belief that the new proposals will not impact the Armed Forces community disproportionately

The full written response can be found in the **Appendices**.

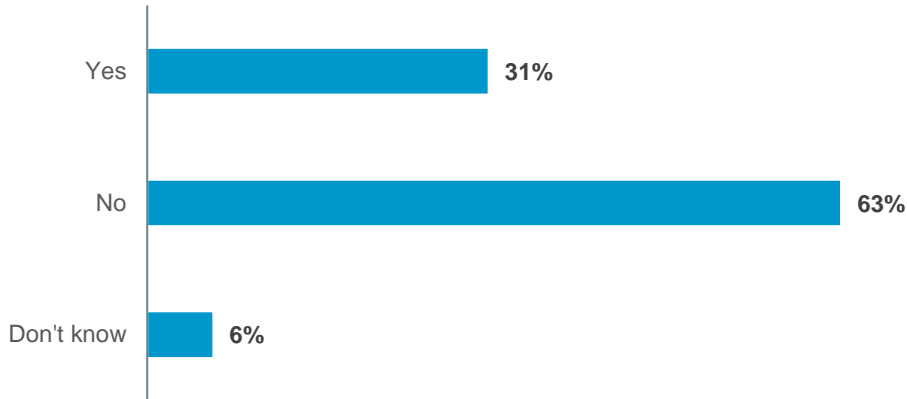


Respondent profile

Figures 5 to 19 show the breakdown of respondent profile based on the demographic and characteristic questions included in the consultation survey. Please note that the findings by area and ethnicity are not included within this report due to data sharing limitations and to preserve respondents' anonymity.

Figure 5 – Do you, or a member of your household, currently receive Council Tax Support?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,644)



Respondents were asked to provide their date of birth but this was not included in the data sent to Enventure Research. To preserve anonymity, Manchester City Council calculated respondents' age which has been displayed in the chart below.

Figure 6 – Age (from date of birth)

Base: Those who provided a response (3,997)

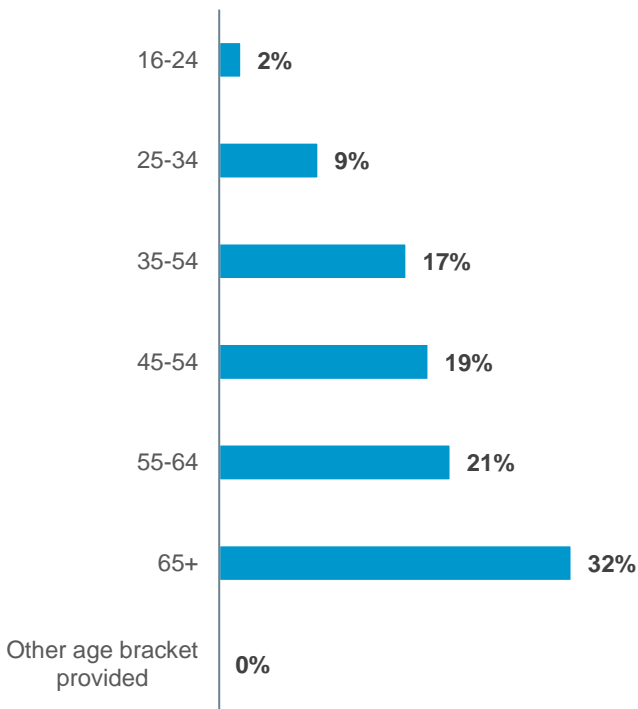


Figure 7 – Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,499)

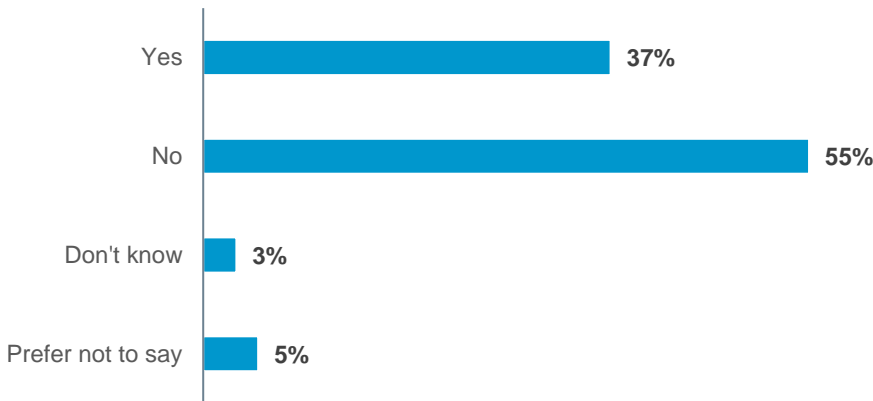


Figure 8 – What is your sex?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,512)

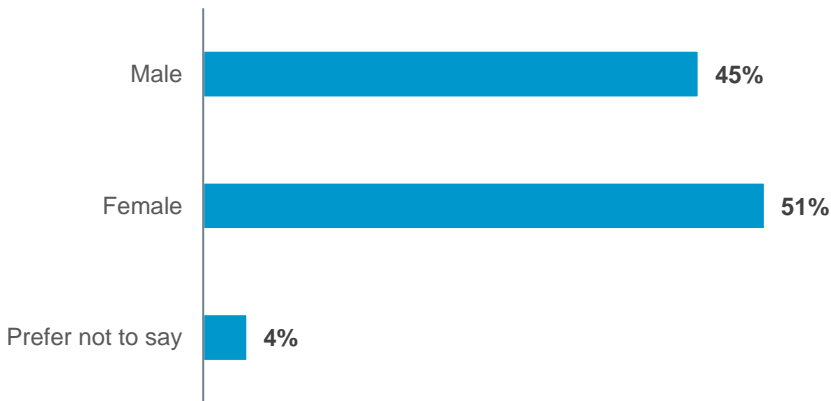


Figure 9 – Is your gender the same as the one you were assigned at birth?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,486)



Figure 10 – Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,319)



Figure 11 – Which of the following best describes your religion or belief?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,471)

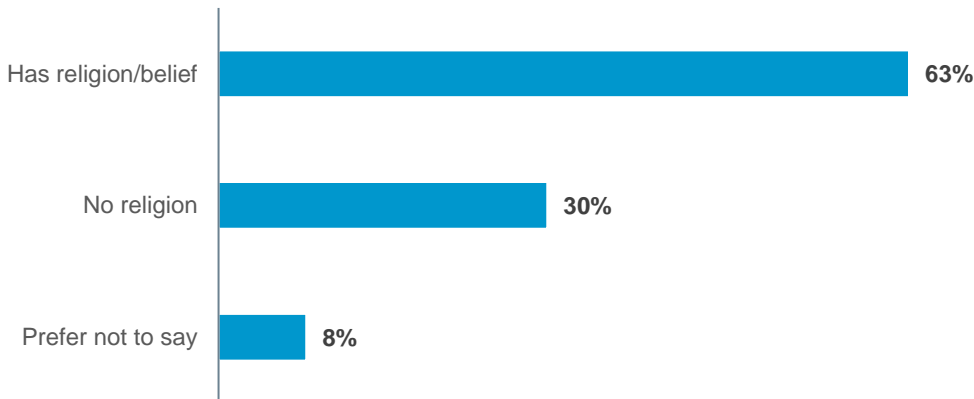
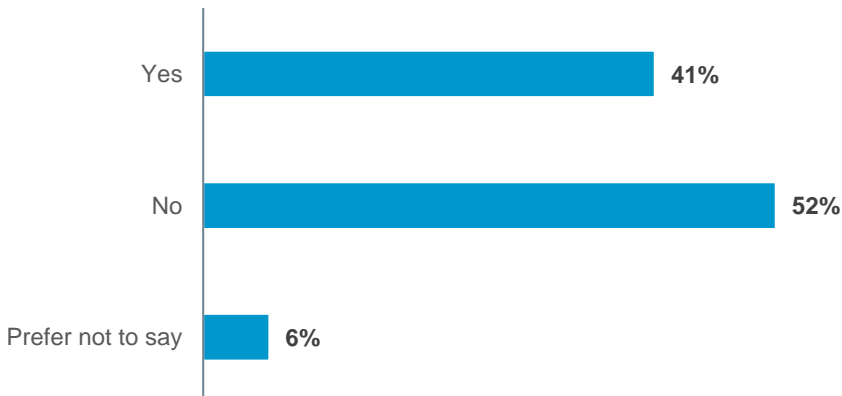


Figure 12 – Are you currently married or in a civil partnership?

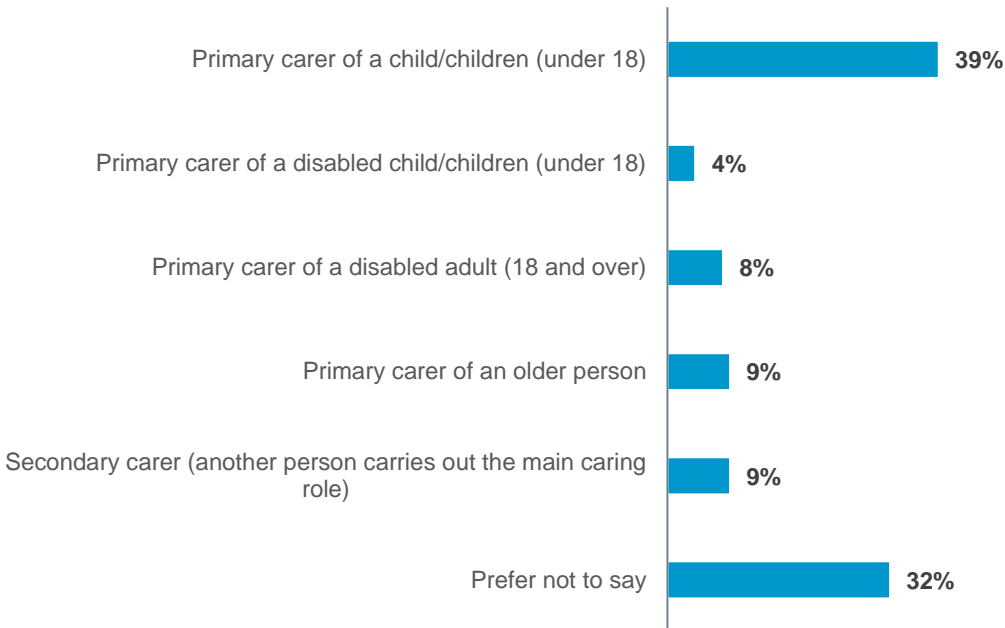
Base: Those who provided a response (4,399)



It should be noted that respondents could only select one response instead of multiple responses when asked whether they have any caring responsibilities.

Figure 13 – Do you have any caring responsibilities?

Base: Those who provided a response (2,212)



All respondents could provide an answer for the question below, even if they had not indicated that they have any caring responsibilities. For this report, the findings have been filtered to only show the responses of those who had previously indicated that they do have any caring responsibilities.

Figure 14 – Is any of the care you provide paid?

Base: Those who said they have caring responsibilities and provided a response (1,466)



Figure 15 – Have you ever been looked after in local authority care as a child?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,084)



Respondents could provide an answer for the questions below, even if they had not indicated that they have ever been looked after in local authority care as a child. For this report, the findings for **Figures 16** and **17** have been filtered to only show the responses of those who had previously indicated that they were looked after in local authority care as a child.

Figure 16 – If yes, was this in Manchester?

Base: Those who said they were looked after in local authority care as a child and provided a response (114)

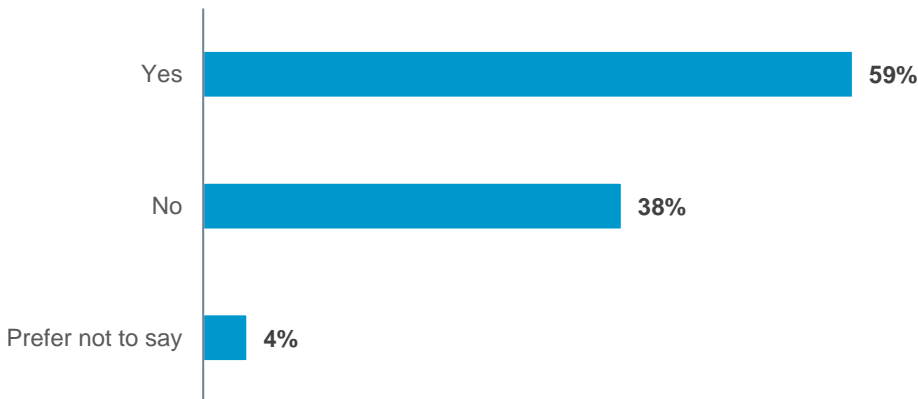


Figure 17 – Are you still receiving support from Leaving Care or a Looked After team in Manchester?

Base: Those who said they were looked after in local authority care in Manchester as a child and provided a response (65)



Figure 18 – Have you or a close family member previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,246)

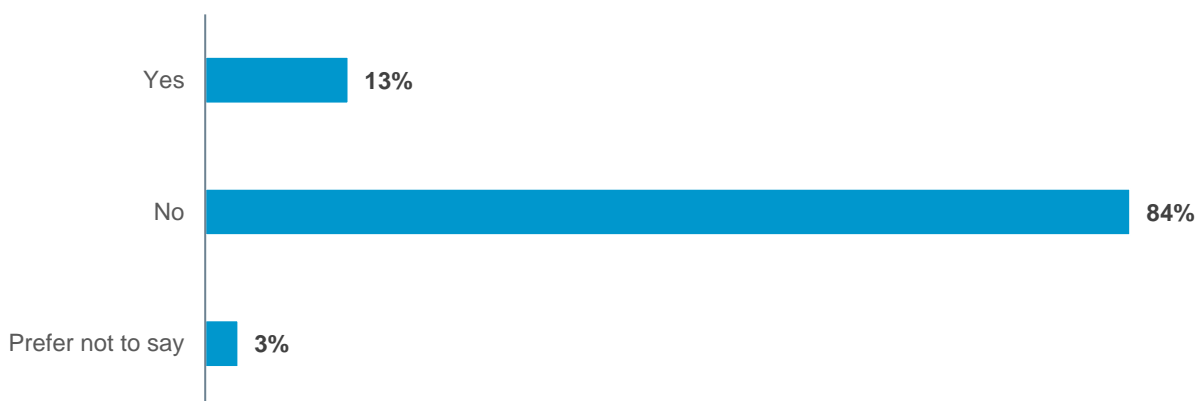


Figure 19 – Have you ever contacted a local authority because you were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

Base: Those who provided a response (4,312)



Key Findings

The key findings from the consultation have been summarised below by Enventure Research, an independent research agency:

- **4,737** respondents took part in the consultation, including 1,881 who completed the online survey and a further 2,856 who completed a paper copy of the consultation questionnaire
- 31% of respondents indicated that they or a member of their household were **currently receiving Council Tax Support**
- The **majority of respondents agreed** with all of the Council's proposals in relation to the Council Tax Support scheme
 - 71% agreed that the Council should increase the maximum Council Tax Support to 85% for working age residents, 18% disagreed
 - 65% agreed that the Council should increase the bands of Council Tax Support by 2.5% for residents on Universal Credit, 21% disagreed
 - 72% agreed that the Council should extend the period of backdating from six months to one year where residents have a good reason for not making a claim sooner, 16% disagreed
- Subgroups more likely to **agree** with all three proposals include:
 - Those who are currently receiving Council Tax Support
 - Those who have a disability or long-term health issue
 - Those who have not served in the UK Armed Forces
 - Those who have contacted a local authority due to homelessness
- Subgroups more likely to **disagree** with all three proposals include:
 - Those who are not currently receiving Council Tax Support
 - Those who do not have a disability or long-term health issue
 - Male respondents
 - Those who have served in the UK Armed Forces
- The most common theme amongst those who provided a further comment about the proposals was **agree with/support proposals/would have a positive impact** (27%), followed by **concern about how additional support will be funded/services should not be cut/council tax should not be increased to fund this support** (15%). Both themes were more likely to be suggested by the following subgroups:
 - Those who are currently receiving Council Tax Support
 - Those who agreed with all three proposals
- 12% of further comments related to **cost of living crisis affects everyone/everyone should receive support/unfair for tax payers** and was more likely to be suggested by the following subgroups:
 - Those who are not currently receiving Council Tax Support
 - Those aged 35-54
 - Those who indicated that they have caring responsibilities
 - Those who disagreed with all three proposals
- Another 12% of comments related to the suggestion **more financial support/discounts needed for residents who work** and was more likely to be suggested by the following subgroups:
 - Those who are not currently receiving Council Tax Support
 - Those aged 35-54
 - Female respondents
 - Those who indicated that they have caring responsibilities
 - Those who disagreed with all three proposals



Appendix A

Questionnaire

Council Tax Support Scheme

Have your say on proposed changes



We're proposing some changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme to provide more support for Manchester residents.



We know some residents are struggling due to cost-of-living pressures, and we have introduced a range of measures to help people access food, advice and welfare support. We are proposing to provide further support for some of the poorest households in Manchester as part of the Council's wider response to the challenges facing people in the city.

The Council's present Council Tax Support Scheme pays up to 100% of the council tax bill for pension-age people and up to 82.5% of the council tax bill for working-age people.

We want to increase the level of support we provide for working-age residents to up to 85% of the council tax bill.

We are also looking at extending the backdating period for working and pension-age households to one year.

These proposals would change the Council Tax Support Scheme from 1 April 2024.

We estimate these changes will cost the Council around £770,000.

We'd like your views before we decide

We want your views on proposals for changes to the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme, which helps about a fifth of our residents to pay some of their council tax.

How to have your say

You can have your say on these proposals by completing the consultation survey online at www.manchester.gov.uk/counciltaxsupportchanges or by filling in this paper copy and returning it to us at the Freepost address.

You can also find further information about these proposed changes, including examples of how they could affect those currently receiving support, on the Council's website.

The consultation will close on 12 November 2023.

We'll respect your confidentiality and treat your information in line with data-protection rules. We'll separate any personal details from your answers and store them separately, but we might need to contact you or others if you disclose that someone is at risk of harm.

Consultation questions

Increase of maximum award

Currently, working-age residents can receive support of up to 82.5% of their council tax bill. We want to increase the amount of support that working-age residents can receive. The scheme would provide support up to a maximum of 85% of the council tax bill.

Question 1

Do you agree or disagree that we should increase the maximum Council Tax Support from 82.5% to 85% for working-age residents?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Banding for Universal Credit cases

We currently have a banded scheme for residents who are on Universal Credit. The banded scheme means that small changes in Universal Credit don't always change the amount of Council Tax Support. We want to increase the bands of support by 2.5% so that people on Universal Credit also receive an increase in support.

Below are the current bands of Council Tax Support and the new bands we are proposing.

Band of income	Current Council Tax Support	Proposed Council Tax Support for 2024/25
£0.00 over your applicable amount	82.5% of council tax	85%
£0.01 to £25 over	70%	72.5%
£25.01 to £50 over	45%	47.5%
£50.01 to £75 over	30%	32.5%
£75.01 to £80 over	12%	14.5%
£80.01 over	No support	No support



Question 2

Do you agree or disagree that we should increase the bands of Council Tax Support by 2.5%?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Backdating

We currently allow backdating of up to six months where the resident has a good reason for not making a claim sooner. We would like to extend this so that we can backdate for up to one year. This change would apply to claims from people who are pension age as well as working age.

Question 3

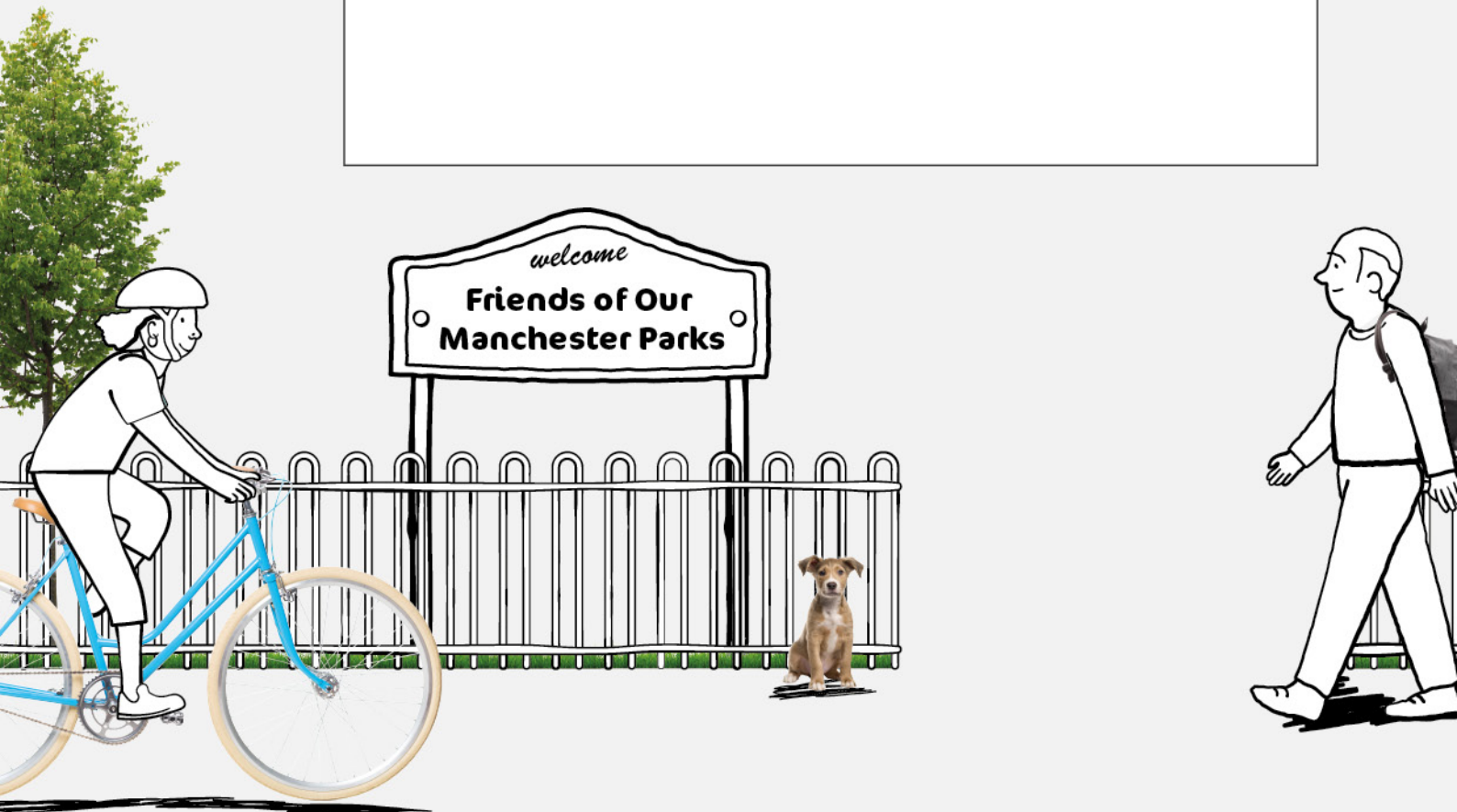
Do you agree or disagree that we should extend the period of backdating from six months to one year where residents have a good reason for not making a claim sooner?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know



Question 4

If you want to give us any views or comments about the proposed changes, please use this space.



What is your postcode?

Do you, or a member of your household, currently receive Council Tax Support?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

About you

We would like to ask some questions about you. These questions are optional. You do not have to answer them, but in doing so you will be helping Manchester City Council ensure that the views collected through the consultation represent the views of Manchester residents.

All responses will remain confidential.

Question 1

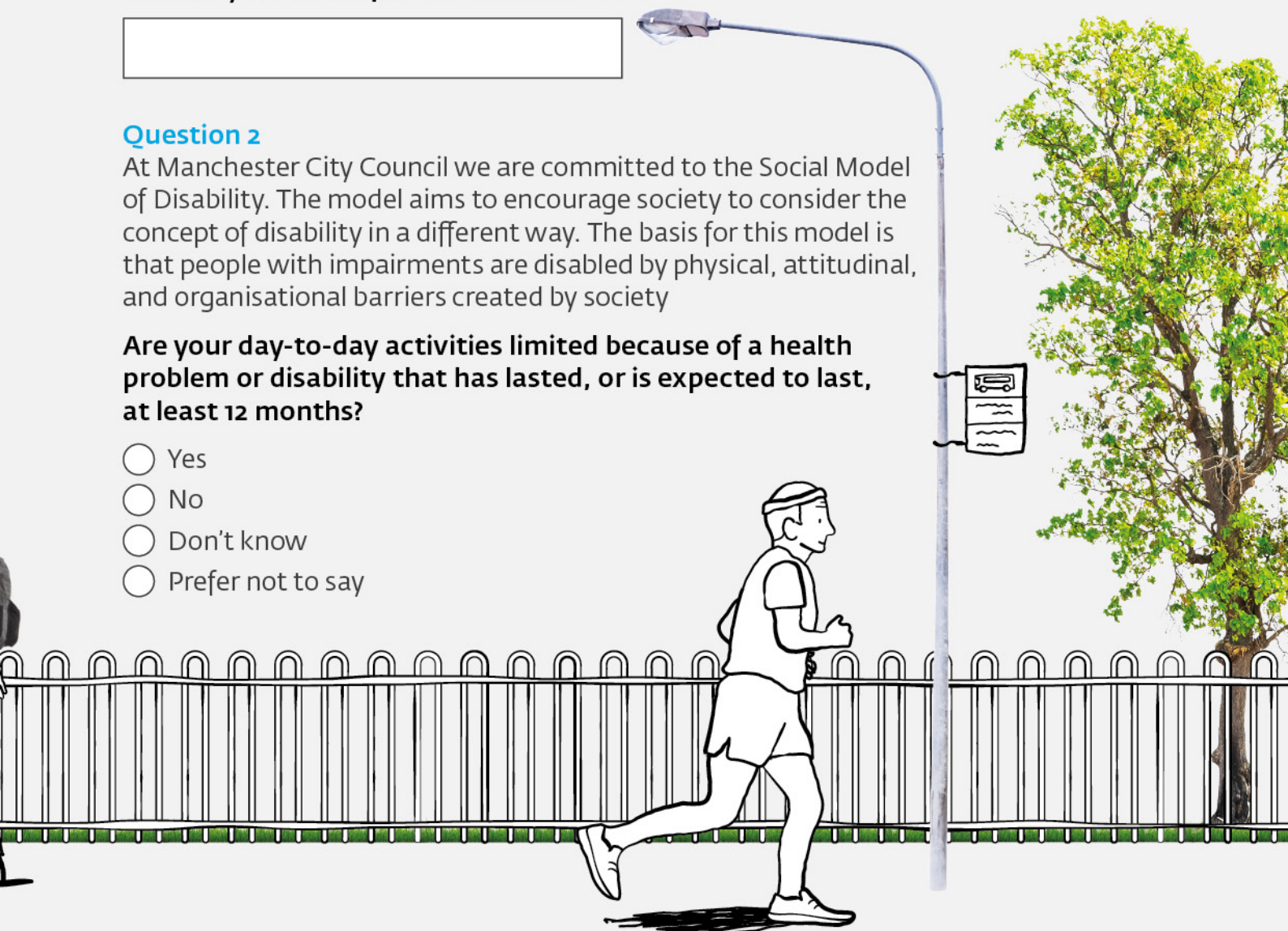
What is your date of birth? DD/MM/YYYY

Question 2

At Manchester City Council we are committed to the Social Model of Disability. The model aims to encourage society to consider the concept of disability in a different way. The basis for this model is that people with impairments are disabled by physical, attitudinal, and organisational barriers created by society

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say



Question 3

Which ethnic group do you identify with?

Asian

- English/Welsh/Scottish
- Northern Irish/British
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Kashmiri

Black

- English/Welsh/Scottish
- Northern Irish/British
- African
- Caribbean

Mixed

- White and Black British
- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Asian British
- White and Asian (continent)

Other ethnic group

- (please specify)

White

- English/Welsh/Scottish
- Northern Irish/British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma

- Prefer not to say



Question 4

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

Question 5

In the Equality Act, gender reassignment means proposing to undergo, undergoing, or having undergone a process to reassign your sex. To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, you do not need to have undergone any medical treatment or surgery to change from your birth sex to your preferred gender.

Is your gender the same as the one you were assigned at birth?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Question 6

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Straight or heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Queer
- Other

Question 7

Which of the following best describes your religion or belief?

- Has religion
 - Christian
 - Buddhist
 - Hindu
 - Jewish
 - Muslim
 - Sikh
 - Other religion
- No religion
- Prefer not to say



Question 8

Are you currently married or in a civil partnership?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Question 9a

Do you have caring responsibilities? If yes, please tick all that apply:

- Primary carer of a child/children (under 18)
- Primary carer of a disabled child/children
- Primary carer of a disabled adult (18 and over)
- Primary carer of older person
- Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)
- Prefer not to say

Question 9b

Is any of the care you provide paid?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Question 10a

Have you ever been looked after in local authority care as a child?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



Question 10b

If yes, was this in Manchester?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Question 10c

Are you still receiving support from Leaving Care or a Looked After team in Manchester?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Question 11

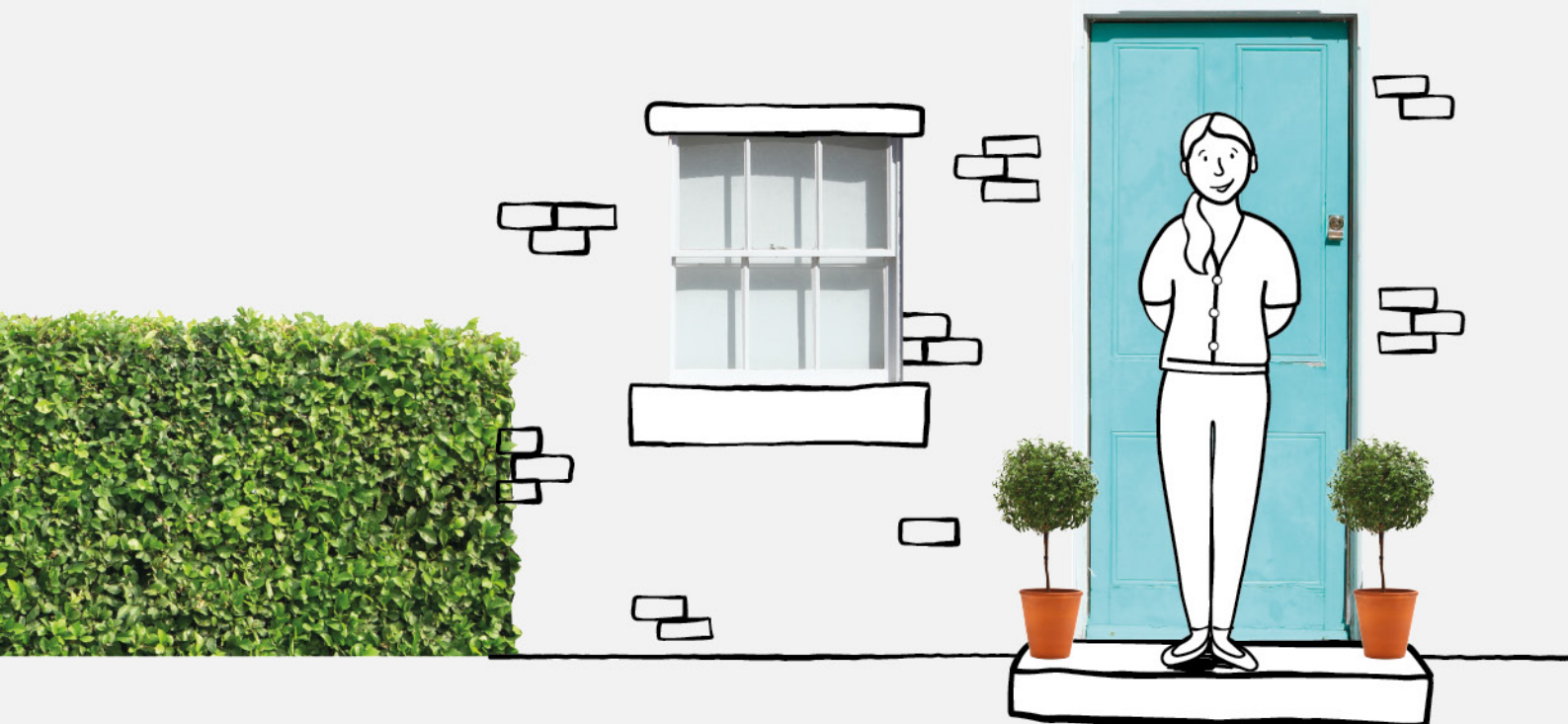
Have you or a close family member previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Question 12

Have you ever contacted a local authority because you were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



Data protection and confidentiality

We comply with all legislation governing the protection of personal information, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any personal information you supply will remain strictly confidential and anonymous and will be held and used in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We will only use your personal information for the purpose for which it has been given.

Find out more at: www.manchester.gov.uk/privacy

The consultation closes on 12 November 2023

Please return this questionnaire before the closing date to:

Freepost MCC (Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation)
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Manchester
M60 2LA

You do not need a stamp.



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Appendix B

Written response from
the Royal British Legion



Manchester Council Tax Support Scheme consultation

The Royal British Legion response, November 2023

1. About Us

- 1.1. The Royal British Legion (RBL) is at the heart of a national network that supports our Armed Forces community through thick and thin – ensuring that their unique contribution is never forgotten. We were created as a unifying force for the military charity sector at the end of the First World War, and remain one of the UK's largest membership organisations. The RBL is the largest welfare provider in the Armed Forces charity sector, helping veterans young and old transition into civilian life. We help with employment, financial issues, respite, and recovery, through to lifelong care and independent living. For further information, please visit www.britishlegion.org.uk
- 1.2. The RBL Benefits Debt and Money Advice (BDMA) Service provides free debt and money advice including advice on bankruptcy and debt relief, benefit checks and income maximisation, as well as benefit claims and challenging decisions up to and including the upper tribunal. The service works through England, Wales and Northern Ireland and has 33 advisers across the UK, 13 of which are based in our Contact Centre in Wales.

2. General Comments

- 2.1. The RBL is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to Manchester City Council's call for comments and feedback on its new Council Tax Support Scheme from 1st April 2024.
- 2.2. We note the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, to which Manchester City Council is a signatory¹ that:

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.²

¹ Manchester City Council, [The Armed Forces Community Covenant](#)

² Ministry of Defence, [Armed Forces Covenant](#), (2011)

- 2.3. As a charity providing welfare and support to the Armed Forces community in the UK, we have restricted our answers to the questions and themes where we can provide expertise and insight.
- 2.4. Manchester is home to 858 recipients of Armed Forces pensions or compensation.³
- 2.5. Serving Armed Forces personnel, ex-serving personnel and their families are also resident in Manchester. The 2021 census records 7,728 individuals residing in Manchester as having previously served in any UK Armed Forces. This is made up of 5,114 individuals who have previously served in the UK regular Armed Forces, 2,303 who previously served in the reserve Armed Forces, and 311 who previously served in both the regular and reserve Armed Forces.⁴

3. Identifying the Armed Forces community

- 3.1. The effective provision of appropriate, specialised advice and support to members of the Armed Forces community is reliant on early identification of ex-Service personnel and their families.
- 3.2. The RBL has long called on all public bodies to ‘ask the question’ at the first point of contact with members of the public. We welcome that the public survey for this consultation invites respondents to state any close association to the Armed Forces. ‘Asking the question’ allows identified veterans and family members to be pointed to specialised routes of support and ensures they are given the most appropriate help in a timely manner. **Manchester City Council should ensure that all residents approaching the Council Tax Support Scheme and other benefit services are asked a question that will identify:**
- **Former members of HM Armed Forces, Regular and Reserve**
 - **Spouse or Partner of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces**
 - **Widow(er)s of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces**
 - **Dependent children of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces**
 - **Recently divorced or separated spouses or partners of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces**
- 3.3. In 2017, research highlighted that more needs to be done to upskill frontline welfare staff in local authorities with regards to the Armed Forces Covenant. Over a third of all councils in England, Wales and Scotland have no mechanism in place for briefing staff on the Armed Forces Covenant (39%). Within the Armed Forces community only 4.5% felt that all councils had a good understanding of their needs.⁵ **We recommend that Manchester City Council assesses all intended staff training processes to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the policies specific to the Armed Forces community and the Council’s commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.**

³ Ministry of Defence (2023), *Supplementary tables: location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients as at 31 March 2023*, Table 3, available at [Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients: 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115444/Location_of_armed_forces_pension_and_compensation_recipients_2023_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

⁴ Office for National Statistics, [UK armed forces veteran data, England and Wales: Census 2021](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/armedforcesandcivilians/briefings/ukarmedforcesveteranandfamilydataenglandandwalescensus2021)

⁵ Shared Intelligence et al, [Our Community - Our Covenant 2nd Edition](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/armedforcesandcivilians/briefings/ourcommunityourcovenant2ndedition) (2017)

4. Credit their Service Campaign

- 4.1. In July 2023, RBL launched a new campaign called Credit their Service⁶, which calls on the Government to end the unfair treatment of military compensation as income in means tests for welfare benefit, which results in veterans and their families missing out on thousands of pounds each year.
- 4.2. In the summer of 2022, RBL undertook an extensive Freedom of Information (Fol) request exercise of all local authorities in Great Britain to understand how each local authority treated military compensation in their means tested benefits, including Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants. Manchester responded to RBL's Fol request with the following information:

**Answers provided are displayed within the square brackets, i.e., []*

1. Does the Local Authority disregard all payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (2005) as income, when assessing eligibility for:

- a. Housing Benefit [Yes]*
- b. Council Tax Support/ Council Tax Support [Yes]*
- c. Discretionary Housing Payments [No]*
- d. Disabled Facilities Grants (England and Wales only) [No]*

(Please answer YES/NO)

2. Does the Local Authority disregard all payments made under the War Pension scheme, as income, when assessing eligibility for:

- a. Housing Benefit [Yes]*
- b. Council Tax Support/ Council Tax Support [Yes]*
- c. Discretionary Housing Payments [No]*
- d. Disabled Facilities Grants (England and Wales only) [No]*

(Please answer YES/NO)

3. Does the Local Authority disregard a Service Invaliding Pension or Service Attributable Pension, paid under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, as income, when assessing eligibility for:

- a. Housing Benefit [Yes]*
- b. Council Tax Support/ Council Tax Support [Yes]*
- c. Discretionary Housing Payments [No]*
- d. Disabled Facilities Grants (England and Wales only) [No]*

(Please answer YES/NO)

- 4.3. We welcome that Manchester City Council is already disregarding as income all payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (2005), the War Pension Scheme,

⁶ Royal British Legion, [Credit their Service Campaign](#)

and Service Invaliding (SIP) and Service Attributable Pensions when assessing eligibility for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit.

- 4.4. RBL recommends that Manchester City Council continues to fully disregard all forms of military compensation as income in assessments for Council Tax Support, and ensure that this is reflected within policy. RBL also recommends that the Council seeks to introduce these same disregards in relation to all other locally administered benefits.**

5. Survey Questions

- 5.1. RBL has no comment to make, either in support or objection, to other proposed aspects of the new Council Tax Support Scheme. We do not consider it will impact our beneficiary group in the Armed Forces community disproportionately to the general population.

6. Summary of Recommendations

- 6.1. Manchester City Council should ensure that all residents approaching the Council Tax Support Scheme and other benefit services are asked a question that will identify:

- Former members of HM Armed Forces, Regular and Reserve
- Spouse or Partner of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces
- Widow(er)s of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces
- Dependent children of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces
- Recently divorced or separated spouses or partners of serving or former members of HM Armed Forces

- 6.2. We recommend that Manchester City Council assesses all intended staff training processes to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the policies specific to the Armed Forces community and the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

- 6.3. RBL recommends that Manchester City Council continues to fully disregard all forms of military compensation as income in assessments for Council Tax Support, and ensure that this is reflected within policy. RBL also recommends that the Council seeks to introduce these same disregards in relation to all other locally administered benefits.

For further information or to discuss, please contact Luke Lancaster, Public Affairs and Campaigns Officer (North) - llancaster@britishlegion.org.uk

November 2023

