

SSA EQUALITY IMPACT AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

Directorate	Resources
Service Area	Revenues
Service/policy/function being assessed	Wandsworth Energy Rebate Discretionary Payments
Which borough (s) does the service/policy apply to	Wandsworth
Staff involved	Graham Russell, Gaven Downton and Anna Fung
Date approved by Directorate Equality Group (if applicable)	
Date approved by Policy and Review Manager All EINAs must be signed off by the Policy and Review Manager	
Date submitted to Directors’ Board	N/A

SUMMARY

Paper 22-XXX sets out how the Government announced that all households in Band A – D properties (or Band E with disabled band reduction) would be eligible for a £150 non-repayable payment known as the Council Tax Energy Rebate. In addition, they set aside a further £144m for local authorities to support households in need of help with their energy bills which were not eligible for the mandatory Council Tax Energy Rebate. Wandsworth’s allocation for the Discretionary Scheme is £1,205,100, equivalent to 8,034 £150 payments.

As per Government guidance, “Councils can determine locally how best to make use of this funding to support those suffering financial hardship as a result of the rising cost of living. This could include households living in property valued in bands E to H that are on income related benefits or those where the energy bills payers are not liable for council tax. Where councils consider it the best means of supporting those in financial difficulty, they can use the discretionary fund to offer carefully targeted ‘top-up’ payments to the most vulnerable households in bands A to D (for example, those on means tested benefits), or to offer discretionary support exceeding £150 per household.”

Based on these factors, and the desire not to exclude people with energy bills but no Council Tax liability, officers have developed the following proposal:

One resident per property in following categories will be eligible for the scheme subject to meeting the criteria set out below:

- a. Band A-D properties (or Band E and in receipt of a disabled band reduction), where no resident holds any Council Tax liability e.g. House in Multiple Occupation (where legally the landlord has to be made liable for the Council Tax) or rented accommodation where the landlord has voluntarily made themselves liable to pay the Council Tax on behalf of the occupying tenants, subject to proof of responsibility for energy bills.

- b. Band E-H properties, where no resident holds any Council Tax liability e.g. House in Multiple Occupation (where legally the landlord has to be made liable for the Council Tax) or rented accommodation where the landlord has voluntarily made themselves liable to pay the Council Tax on behalf of the occupying tenants and the person responsible for the energy bills is in receipt of Housing Benefit or the Housing element of Universal Credit (UC).
- c. Band E-H properties where the liable party for Council Tax is a recipient of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and/or Housing Benefit (HB) or the Housing element of Universal Credit.
- d. Band E-H properties which are exempt from Council Tax as they are occupied only by students; occupied only by severely mentally impaired (SMI); occupied only by persons under the age of 18; or an annex occupied by a dependant relative.

Applications will be via an online portal, with no upload of documents required initially, as the portal includes an automatic identity and bank verification. If further information and/or evidence is required, the claimant will be contacted by e-mail via the portal. For those without online access and/or a bank account, help and advice will be available over the telephone via the Contact Centre.

These proposals will have a positive impact on all residents of the Borough as there are no specific protected groups that are excluded from any of the proposed criteria.

1. Analysis of need and impact

Protected group	Findings																					
Age	<p>The 2011 Census data for Wandsworth provides the following breakdown by age:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="459 1422 965 1713"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>Count</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-17</td> <td>55,627</td> <td>18.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-24</td> <td>29,240</td> <td>9.52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-59</td> <td>184,559</td> <td>60.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-64</td> <td>10,658</td> <td>3.47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65-74</td> <td>14,455</td> <td>4.71</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75 and over</td> <td>12,456</td> <td>4.06</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age	Count	%	0-17	55,627	18.12	18-24	29,240	9.52	25-59	184,559	60.12	60-64	10,658	3.47	65-74	14,455	4.71	75 and over	12,456	4.06
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Disability	<p>According to the 2011 Census, 10.7% of Wandsworth residents had their day-to-day activities limited by a long-term health problem or disability. 12.4% of the working age population meets the definition of disabled under the Equality Act, and a further 9.8% have a work-limiting disability.</p>																					
Gender (Sex)	<p>The 2011 Census data for Wandsworth provides the following breakdown by gender:</p>																					

	<p><u>Gender</u> Male 48.42% Female 51.58%</p>																				
Gender reassignment	There is little data about the number of transgender people in Wandsworth, however the Government Equalities estimates that there are between 200,000 and 500,000 trans people in the UK.																				
Marriage and civil partnership	No local data available.																				
Pregnancy and maternity	No local data available.																				
Race/ethnicity	<p>The 2011 Census data for Wandsworth provides the following breakdown by race / ethnicity:</p> <p><u>Race/ethnicity</u> White 71.41% Black 10.67% Asian 10.86% Other ethnic group 7.06%</p>																				
Religion and belief, including non-belief	<p>According to the 2011 Census, Wandsworth’s religious belief breakdown including non-belief was as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Belief</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Christian</td> <td>53</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No religion</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>8.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion not stated</td> <td>7.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hindu</td> <td>2.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buddhist</td> <td>0.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jewish</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other religion</td> <td>0.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sikh</td> <td>0.3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Belief	%	Christian	53	No religion	27	Muslim	8.2	Religion not stated	7.9	Hindu	2.1	Buddhist	0.8	Jewish	0.5	Other religion	0.4	Sikh	0.3
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Sexual orientation	<p>The national census does not collect data on sexual orientation and there is no reliable data on sexual orientation that applies to Wandsworth. The ONS (Office of National Statistics) annual population survey 2017 stated that approximately 2% of the national population identified as LGBT. There is no evidence to suggest that the profile of this Equality and Inclusion target group is any different from the population in general.</p>																				
Across groups i.e., older LGBT service users or Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic young men.	No specific data for impact across groups.																				

Data gaps.

Data gap(s)	How will this be addressed?
Equalities monitoring data is not available from previous Discretionary Energy Rebate schemes.	N/A

2. Impact

The Energy Rebate Discretionary Fund will be open to the full range of Council Tax property bands A-H within the Borough, with the proposals put forward covering both income means-tested and non-income means tested groups, thus providing an opportunity for a diverse range of residents to apply who were not already supported by the mandatory Energy Rebate scheme.

The Energy rebate discretionary applications will be assessed to ensure that funding is open to as many residents as possible, within the fund limit, and that they do not exclude anyone with vulnerable characteristics.

Protected group	Positive	Negative
Age	<p>Parts a-c of the proposed scheme focuses on those who are either not liable for council tax and live in lower banded properties or live in higher banded properties and are in receipt of CTR and/or HB (or Housing element of UC).</p> <p>This will cover mostly tenants, but also some homeowners of higher banded properties, of all ages who will therefore be able to apply for a grant, if they can show responsibility for Energy bills.</p> <p>The working age `rental sector` will be covered, as will the poorest elderly who own a property but are struggling financially with the rising costs of living.</p> <p>The exemptions covered in part d of the proposed</p>	<p>There is a possibility that some of the elderly residents may find it harder to apply online for the Energy Rebate Grant or have no online access at all.</p> <p>To help with this, it will be possible to telephone the Contact Centre or visit Council offices, where a member of staff will be able to complete the application on the customer’s behalf.</p> <p>It is also possible some elderly residents are more likely not to have a bank account to pay into, in which case Post Office (PO) vouchers will be available that can be cashed at all PO outlets.</p>

	scheme cover all age groups from under 18s, to students, through the years requiring mental health support and up to the age of a dependant relative.	
Disability	Any one of the Borough's residents could be part of the estimated cohort that have their day-to-day activities limited by a long-term health problem or disability. Therefore the provision of an Energy Rebate grant could very easily reach those affected by a disability, helping them to cope with the rise in the cost of living.	There is a possibility that those affected by a disability may find it harder to apply online for the Energy Rebate Grant. To aid with this, it will be possible to telephone the Contact Centre or visit Council offices, where a member of staff will be able to complete the application on the customer's behalf.
Sex	No data suggesting impact specific to sex.	No data suggesting impact specific to sex.
Gender reassignment	No data suggesting impact specific to gender re-assignment	No data suggesting impact specific to gender re-assignment
Marriage and civil partnership	No data suggesting impact specific to marriage and civil partnerships	No data suggesting impact specific to marriage and civil partnerships
Pregnancy and maternity	Help with Energy bills would be particularly helpful to those at home with pregnancy or on maternity/paternity leave from work, due to higher energy usage.	No negative impacts identified
Race/ethnicity	No data suggesting impact specific to Race/ethnicity.	No data suggesting impact specific to race/ethnicity.
Religion and belief, including non-belief	No data suggesting impact specific to Religion and belief, including non-belief.	No data suggesting impact specific to religion and belief.
Sexual orientation	No data suggesting impact specific to Sexual orientation.	No data suggesting negative impact specific to sexual orientation.

3. Actions

Action	Lead Officer	Deadline
We will ensure that the telephone number for the Contact Centre is well publicised on the Council's website, along with the access to the online application form.	GD	July 2022

Official

Resources to be reviewed regularly to ensure assistance is available to all who need it.	GD	July 2022

GD – Gaven Downton, Head of Council Tax, NNDR and HB Recovery