

LCTS Officer
Kettering Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
Northants
NN15 7QX

13 November 2017

Dear LCTS Officer

Re: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/2019

We are aware that the above consultation is in process and would like to comment on the consultation process and options.

Kettering Mind is deeply involved in the care and support of many borough council tax payers who are unable to work full-time due to mental health difficulties and rely on welfare benefits to survive. There is a wealth of evidence that financial problems have a significantly adverse effect on the mental health of the population and, particularly for those with existing mental ill-health, financial pressures have been associated with higher rates of suicide.

In some local authorities low-income households continue to be exempt from paying Council Tax whilst in Kettering they are required to pay the highest minimum payment level of 45% of their bill.

This consultation for council tax support 2018/2019 doesn't appear to be a consultation in the 'true sense' as there is not a space available for comments / views, or an option 3 'other' which will offer the opportunity to contribute an alternative. It therefore does not allow people's views to be recorded, and calls the credibility of this consultation in to question.

With this in mind, Kettering Mind is asking that the current LCTS consultation be withdrawn and the options / questions of this consultation be reconsidered, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to take part, contribute and be listened to.

For further evidence supporting our suggestion, may I refer you to the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) 2014 findings which demonstrated overwhelming links between mental illness, suicide and socioeconomic context.

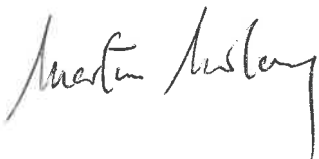
People in receipt of benefits had higher rates of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts and self-harm than those who did not receive these benefits. Any suicide is a tragedy and we all have a duty to protect the most vulnerable in society and preserve life.

The current level of 45% has already negatively impacted disabled people's quality of life, as mental health and socio economic status are intrinsically linked. Where governance is for the benefit of all people, including and maybe especially those who are already struggling, let us not be counter-productive by squeezing the poor even tighter.

Following on from last year, it is alarming that again the consultation does not provide an option for reducing the minimum contribution, which each authority has the power to implement. We are aware that any cuts from Central Government do not have a mandate of where the deficit is to be made up, this is a choice within each council.

Local actions can, and do make a difference.

Yours faithfully



Martin Moloney
Chair of Trustees

Local Council Tax Support Scheme consultation 2018/2019

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.54 per week)

feels like this is for a utility company
The vulnerable are being penalised again

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

Too high, please help us have a life
dont want to rely on church for hot meals.
want to COOK at home, cant afford hot meals
I live on sandwiches

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Too many people are having to struggle.

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please help us not put us in need of foodbanks

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Do you have any comments regarding freezing the council tax bill at 45%? (which equates to approx. £10.64 per week)

Cost of living is becoming increasingly expensive and benefits are being cut. £10.64 is a lot of money to many people and lowering the rate could mean less pressure on food banks in local area.

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£40 a month is a full shop for me, please reduce

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Would seem fairer to bring council tax level down in line with other areas. Would have to pay an extra £40 per month if frozen. This is not something that many people can afford.

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This would greatly effect my finances and I would struggle to find the extra money and would have to look at trying to reduce my energy or food bill even further.

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Its to high

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A DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES IS I'M BARELY
MANAGING, CERTAINLY RELYING ON FAMILY
GIVING ME MONEY FOR FOOD ON A WEEKLY BASIS

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Very dissapointed in KBC, the support they give to the most vulnerable is appalling. I hope they dont fall on hard times, experience a mental illness and need help + support, cause its not there!

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£10.64 PW is a lot of money to a lot of people and would make the difference of someone eating for a few days rather than visiting food banks.

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The cost of living is increasing, but benefits & wages are not. £10.64 can make the difference between someone ~~ex~~ affording food or having to visit a food bank.

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very disappointing to have a council that gives benefits then takes them away through council tax. This system isn't supporting my mental health, it's causing me stress

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My allowance is worked out as a basic. How then am I expected to pay council tax from this?

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PLEASE REDUCE

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option 3 freezing the council tax - then I can budget better. know how much I need to keep aside for the council tax, however a reduced council tax would benefit me loads.

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Please consider reducing

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I'm Having less food each day to cover the cost of council tax as I'm on Benefit.

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REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF WINTER FOOD (POT FOODS MEALS)
AND THE REDUCTION OF OTHER THINGS AND COMMUNITIES

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WORRY OF COUNCIL TAX IS AFFECTING
MY MENTAL HEALTH, CAN'T AFFORD TO
PAY IT, NOW HAVE A COURT SUMMONS

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struggling with paying all my bills

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The individuals / families accessing this type of support are the most vulnerable in society. It is socially irresponsible forcing them into poverty, nobody should be put in a position of choosing between paying their bills or eating.

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To Expensive

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PLEASE REDUCE IT AS IT GETS
DEARER EACH YEAR AS I AM NOW
ON REDUCED BENEFIT.
