

### Local Council Tax Support Data Analysis – Question 3

Of the completed questionnaires received by 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012, 546 had responded to Q3 in such a way that their responses could be analysed.

Each response has been analysed and key “themes” identified from these responses. Of those analysed so far the most frequently occurring themes are:-

#### **General**

52 respondents stated that they supported the new scheme in some way. Only one formally opposed the scheme, whilst a further six believed the existing scheme should be retained. One saw little difference between the current and proposed schemes. Two expressed concern at collection implications of the new scheme.

Three respondents took the opportunity to state that council tax bills should be cut; one stated it should be scrapped altogether.

#### **Savings**

One of the most common responses (50) was that savings should be excluded altogether. The general consensus amongst these people was that it was unfair for those who had saved to be ‘punished’ by the scheme. At the same time, however, another 11 people were keen for savings to be included. The savings threshold has also divided opinion. 8 people commented that it was too low, three that it was too high, whilst four made the suggestion that should be tiered, or altered according to interest rates and/or the cost of living. Three people felt that those over retirement age should have a higher savings threshold, or that their savings should be protected altogether.

#### **Unemployment**

A further key theme was the issue of the unemployed and encouraging people back into work. 15 respondents felt that the unemployed should not contribute, and five explicitly suggested that they should. 26 felt it the scheme should help or encourage people back into work. However, 22 felt that there were not enough jobs. One person expressed both opinions. Three felt that encouraging people to work should be separate from the scheme altogether. One respondent felt the new scheme punished the unemployed, and two felt that those who have never worked or are unwilling to do so should not receive support.

#### **Low incomes / fraud**

38 people felt that those on low incomes should not have to pay and/or should receive support. However, there were also some respondents (four) who felt that those on low incomes should still contribute. Some respondents (seven) also felt that ‘low incomes’ should be investigated first, whilst 16 suggested that it should not benefit those who are fraudulent.

#### **Who should pay and who should receive support?**

The most common theme throughout the responses (69) was that everyone should contribute where possible. Some were more specific. 51 felt that working age people should contribute, whilst 36 felt that everyone who was *actually working* should contribute. Six felt it should be based on those of working age but means tested. In terms of those who should receive support in paying council tax, 52 respondents fell into a broad category stating that those who were ‘vulnerable’ or ‘deserving’ should receive support. 24 people were more specific in stating that the disabled should receive support, whilst 15 felt pensioners should receive support or not pay at all.

#### **Households / Poll Tax**

18 respondents felt that the current scheme resembled a poll tax. Exactly half of these people felt that this was a bad thing, whilst the other half did not express an opinion. Another six people, however, did say that they felt a poll tax (or similar) should be implemented.<sup>22</sup>

respondents felt that those who were 18+ but living with their parents should not have to contribute. This suggests that these people interpret the scheme as suggesting that everyone has to pay (poll tax), but this cannot be confirmed. 15 emphasised that council tax should be based on the household, not per person, which again suggests they see the scheme as some sort of poll tax. Six people suggested it should be based on income, not household.

### **Support for single householders**

11 people made it clear that they felt that support for single householders should be maintained. Another two felt it should be higher. However another two felt single people may not need support.

### **Single parents**

Four respondents stated that the scheme should help single parents, whilst one expressed concern that single parents appeared to benefit from the new scheme less than low income couples. A small number of respondents (2), however, felt single parents should have less support.

### **Other Welfare Reforms**

Three people took the opportunity to express their concern over the changes to housing benefit relating to size criteria for social sector tenants.