

# Equality Analysis Report - Cost of Living Crisis

**Details of proposal: Summary of Support Services available in Sefton to assist residents with the Cost of Living Crisis.**

**Ramifications of Proposal: Support services should be available to all eligible residents in need and should be accessible.**

**Are there any protected characteristics that will be disproportionately affected in comparison to others?**

*The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:*

- *Age*
- *Disability*
- *Gender Reassignment*
- *Marriage and Civil Partnership*
- *Race*
- *Religion or Belief*
- *Sex*
- *Sexual Orientation*
- *Pregnancy and Maternity*

Section one of the report gives detail on the situation in Sefton regarding people on low incomes who will be most impacted by increases in the cost of living.

With regard to the protected characteristics, particular concerns have been identified around the following:

Families with children (para 1.8)  
People with disabilities (para 1.10)  
Older people (para 1.12)

**Consultation:**

No additional consultation has been carried out as part of the preparation of this report or analysis.

**Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?**

*The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:*

1. *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
2. *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
3. *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*

*The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:*

- *Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
- *Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.*
- *Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.*

Section two of the report details the actions that Sefton is taking to support people who are experiencing difficulties during the cost of living crisis.

| <b>Characteristic</b> | <b>Action</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>Positive Impact</b>                | <b>Negative Impact/Risks</b>                                                                       | <b>Mitigation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All                   | Information and advice services via the Council website and Sefton Directory. Sefton Support Hub (online) and social media messaging | Signposts people to available support | Services will be inaccessible to those with limited or no online access or access to social media. | An accessible factsheet will be supplied to all ward members, partners and made available in libraries, One Stop Shop Contact Centre and Family Wellbeing Centres to maximise the accessibility for those with limited or no online access or access to social media. |

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|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                        | Accessibility of information.                                                            | The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| All | <p>ELAS – Emergency Limited Assistance</p> <p>The Council has received 4,308 applications between the 1<sup>st</sup> April and the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022; this is nearly double the amount (1,758) received at the same period last year.</p> | Scheme is aimed at helping people in need with one-off costs.                          | <p>Awareness of scheme and application process.</p> <p>Accessibility of information.</p> | <p>Staff in the One Stop Shop Contact Centre support people with limited or no online access to access the scheme.</p> <p>Staff across the Council and partners are aware of and promote the scheme to eligible local people.</p> <p>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.</p> <p>Accessible Easy Read materials will be produced.</p> |
| All | <p>Council Tax Support - The following are exempt from Council Tax:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full time students and school leavers. Halls of residence not included.</li> <li>• young people aged under 18</li> </ul>         | Scheme provides for Council Tax Reduction and also Exceptional Hardship Fund payments. | <p>Awareness of scheme and application process.</p> <p>Accessibility of information.</p> | <p>Accessible Easy Read materials will be produced and made available in the One Stop and on the Council website.</p> <p>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• severely mentally impaired people.</li> <li>• a foreign diplomat or member of a visiting force who would normally pay council tax</li> <li>• annexes occupied by an elderly or disabled person</li> <li>• up to 100% discount of the Council Tax to care experienced young people aged 18 or over and up to the date of their 25th birthday, who live in Sefton and who are cared for by Sefton Council.</li> </ul> |                                                              |                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| All | Affordable Warmth Scheme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | People living in fuel poverty can seek advice and assistance | Awareness of scheme and application process.<br>Accessibility of information. | <p>This service is actively marketed with community groups and hosts a number of public events e.g. two annual Keep Well events, one in Southport, one in Bootle.</p> <p>The Affordable Warmth Partnership Group provides a networking opportunity to promote this offer.</p> <p>The team receives direct referrals from Social Workers and this can include people with limited or no online access or access to social media.</p> |

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|     |                                          |                                                                |                                                                                          | <p>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.</p> <p>Accessible Easy Read materials will be produced.</p>                                                                         |
| All | Discretionary Housing Payments           | People in certain circumstances can obtain support paying rent | <p>Awareness of scheme and application process.</p> <p>Accessibility of information.</p> | <p>Accessible Easy Read materials will be produced. and made available in the One Stop and on the Council website.</p> <p>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.</p>          |
| All | Sefton@Work – Job search and recruitment | Assisting people to find jobs or higher earnings               | <p>Awareness of scheme.</p> <p>Accessibility of information.</p>                         | <p>Staff across the Council promote this offer and support people with limited or no online access to access Sefton@Work. .</p> <p>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.</p> |
| All | 'Cost of Living' webpage                 | Signpost those struggling with the cost of living              | Service will be inaccessible to those with limited or no online access or access         | An accessible factsheet will be supplied to all ward members, partners and made available in libraries, One Stop Shop Contact Centre and Family Wellbeing Centres to maximise the accessibility for                                                                                                                                  |

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|                                    |                                           |                                                                               | to social media.                                                                  | those with limited or no online access or access to social media.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Age – Families with young children | Free School Meals                         | Eligible families can apply for free school meals                             | Awareness of scheme and application process.<br><br>Accessibility of information. | Staff across the Council and schools promote this offer and support people with limited or no online access to access the scheme.<br><br>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.<br><br>Accessible Easy Read materials will be produced. |
| Age – Families with young children | Summer Food Scheme                        | Eligible families can receive packed lunches during the school holiday period | Awareness of scheme and application process.<br><br>Accessibility of information. | Articles have been shared in printed press to increase awareness of the scheme.<br><br>Staff across the Council promote this offer and support people with limited or no online access to access the scheme.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Age – Families with young children | Debt advice from Family Wellbeing Centres | FWC will run debt advice sessions for eligible families                       | Awareness of scheme.<br><br>Accessibility of information.                         | Staff in the Family Wellbeing Centres support people with limited or no online access through direct advice.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Age – Families with young children | Mayor's Toy Appeal                        | Toys for children from eligible families at Christmas                         | Awareness of scheme and application process.<br><br>Accessibility of              | This longstanding scheme is promoted by Council staff partners and local businesses.<br><br>Articles have been shared in printed press to increase awareness of the scheme.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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| Age – Families with young children | Household Support Fund                                                                                                                                    | Government funding to support residents, 1/3 of which is to be spent on families with young children                                                                                                                                     | Awareness of schemes and application processes.<br><br>Accessibility of information. | Commissioned activity is shared by partners through community groups.<br><br>Staff across the Council promote this offer.<br><br>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.       |
| Age – Older people                 | Household Support Fund                                                                                                                                    | Government funding to support residents, 1/3 of which is to be spent on households containing pensioners                                                                                                                                 | Awareness of schemes and application processes.<br><br>Accessibility of information. | Commissioned activity is shared by partners through community groups.<br><br>Staff across the Council promote this offer.<br><br>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.       |
| Disability                         | Under the Council Tax Regulations, a dwelling in which a disabled person lives may qualify for a reduction in the amount of Council Tax actually payable. | The person liable to pay the Council Tax is eligible for such a reduction if the dwelling concerned meets certain conditions.<br><br>People with disabilities may be assisted by the general support available to all eligible residents | Awareness of schemes and application processes.<br><br>Accessibility of information. | Easy Read materials will be available in the One Stop and on the Council website.<br><br>The Council website and the Sefton Directory use Recite Me software so that our residents with accessibility needs and or language preferences can customise our website to meet their needs.<br><br>Accessible Easy Read materials will be |

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|  |  |  |  | produced. |
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**What actions will follow if proposal accepted by Cabinet?**

Section four of the report outlines a number of steps that the Council will be taking, including developing a Child Poverty Strategy and working with partners to develop additional proposals to assist residents.

Easy read documents will be produced and shared with ward members, staff and partners where required.

A fact sheet will be produced and shared with ward members, staff and partners.

Where possible take up of the schemes will be monitored.