



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**Number: WG43849**

Welsh Government  
Consultation – summary of responses

## Council Tax

Removal of joint and several liability for eligible care leavers for the payment of council tax

March 2022

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

## **Overview**

This document provides a summary of the responses to the consultation to remove the joint and several liability for eligible care leavers for the payment of council tax.

## **Action Required**

This document is for information only.

## **Further information and related documents**

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

## **Contact details**

For further information:  
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## **Additional copies**

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation:

[Removal of eligible care leavers liability for payment of council tax | GOV.WALES](#)

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## Introduction

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting care leavers, including supporting their transition into adulthood and independent living.

The consultation [Removal of eligible care leavers liability for payment of council tax](#) sought views on:

- the proposal to remove the risk to eligible care leavers of being liable for the payment of council tax where another person (who is not exempt) in the household fails to pay their council tax;
- a proposal to amend legislation to provide an exemption from this liability for eligible care leavers from 1 April 2022.

## The Consultation

Views were invited as part of a 12-week consultation period which began on 20 August 2021 and ended on 12 November. The consultation contained questions relating to the policy intention and legislation, along with standard questions on the Welsh language. The consultation was published on the consultation pages of the Welsh Government's website. Respondents were able to submit their views and comments on paper, by email or online, and in Welsh or English. The consultation applied to Wales only. The link to the consultation was emailed to a range of stakeholders, including representative bodies, professional bodies, sector organisations, local authorities and debt management agencies.

## Who responded to the consultation?

A total of 26 responses were received, including some received after the deadline. All the responses have been considered and analysed. The respondents represented a range of interest groups. The following table shows a breakdown of respondents by type.

Type	Number
Representative bodies, professional bodies or associations	12
Local authorities	7
Private individuals	6
Foster carer	1

A list of respondents other than those who requested anonymity is at Annex A. Where respondents have asked for their details to be withheld, they are identified as 'Anonymous' to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

## Summary of Responses

This document is a summary of the responses received. It does not aim to capture every point raised by respondents. The consultation document asked five questions and the responses to each are summarised below. Not all respondents replied to every question. Some respondents gave a general response rather than answering specific questions. Where this is the case, the response has been included under the most appropriate question or included in the summary of responses to Question 5.

### **Question 1**

**Do you agree with the policy intent to remove care leavers from joint and several liability for council tax? Please give your reasons.**

All 26 respondents replied to this question. Of these, 25 agreed with the proposal. Common themes were:

- the additional vulnerability experienced by care leavers;
- care leavers' lack of financial education and budgeting skills.

Responses included:

- Care leavers should be given the support they need to thrive in adulthood and this policy would be a step towards equality of outcomes with their peers.
- Young people transitioning from care should not be liable for council tax where others fail to pay.
- Care leavers often also face significant financial challenges. Legislating to protect care leavers from council tax is one way in which these financial challenges can be mitigated.

### **Question 2**

**We have proposed changes be made to the relevant legislation to remove care leavers from joint or several liability for council tax. Do you agree with this approach or can you suggest an alternative?**

All 26 respondents replied to this question and agreed with the proposal. No alternative approaches were suggested. A few respondents commented that the Welsh Government should raise awareness of the legislation.

Responses included:

- Legislating to provide this protection would ensure there is no doubt that care leavers should be exempt from council tax...and provide certainty that care leavers need to manage their finances and begin building their lives independently.
- Changes to legislation would provide the necessary consistency across all local authorities in Wales and the necessary protection through law for all care leavers.
- Amending the relevant legislation would be the correct approach to removing care experienced young people from joint or several liability for council tax. Doing so would ensure consistency across the 22 local authority areas...local authorities must ensure that information about the removal of the liability is accessible on their websites and is communicated clearly.

### **Question 3**

**We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed policy would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?**

There were 16 responses for this question. The majority did not consider the proposal would have a negative impact on the Welsh language or its use.

Responses included:

- This a technical change affecting a relatively small number of people. There would be no negative effects on the Welsh language and there should be no reason why it would treat the Welsh language less favourably than English.
- Any opportunity to increase the use of Welsh language is welcome, to enable policy matters to receive equal status and response, and confirm commitment towards the language.

#### Question 4

**Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**

There were 13 responses for this question. No concerns were raised that the Welsh language would be adversely affected by the proposals in this consultation. One respondent did not consider the question relevant to the consultation.

Responses included:

- Increased positive effects could be achieved by ensuring young person-friendly summaries of the new policy are available in the Welsh language alongside other languages.
- The proposal needs to be seen in the context of a Welsh Government initiative and the use of Welsh and English should be regarded with parity of esteem and value.

#### Question 5

**We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related points which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to record them.**

Question 5 provided an opportunity to raise any related issues not addressed by the other questions. There were ten responses to this question. Respondents commented on the need for more support to be available for care leavers. The need to make care leavers aware of the provision was also highlighted.

Responses included:

- An overall analysis should reflect this proposal as a further step, as a demonstrable practical measure in national and local government's commitment to children leaving care, acknowledging the economic and psychological challenges for care leavers and presenting one less challenge to be faced.
- Amending the Regulations would ensure that all care leavers, including those who might be held jointly and severally liable for council tax, are fully supported to manage the social and financial transition from care to independent living.
- In addition to the changes to be made to remove care leavers from liability for council tax, more work is needed on financial support for young people in Wales who have experienced care.

## **Welsh Government Response**

Your views are important in informing decisions about council tax in Wales. The Welsh Government is grateful to everyone who has participated in this consultation, particularly people who submitted a response. As a summary document, not all the points made in the responses may have been reflected fully. Each response has been considered and the absence of issues or suggestions does not mean they have been disregarded. Many issues may remain relevant to our wider programme of work being undertaken to make council tax fairer and more progressive.

The views support the proposal to remove eligible care leavers up to, and including, the age of 24 from joint and several liability for the payment of council tax.

The views also support changes to relevant legislation.

## **Next Steps**

The Minister for Finance and Local Government will issue a Written Statement alongside this summary of responses and will bring forward relevant legislation.

## **Annex A: List of Respondents**

Responses were received from:

Barnardo's Cymru  
Children in Wales  
Children's Commissioner for Wales  
The Children's Society  
Citizens Advice Swansea Neath Port Talbot  
FABRIC: The Care Leavers' Community  
Flintshire County Council  
Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation  
NYAS Cymru (National Youth Advocacy Service)  
Torfaen County Borough Council  
Wales Safer Communities Network  
Foster carer  
Private individual  
Anonymous x 13