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| WRITTEN STATEMENT BYTHE WELSH GOVERNMENT |

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| **TITLE**  | Understanding the impact of Council Tax Interventions in Wales |
| **DATE**  | **08 March 2023** |
| **BY**  | **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government**  |

Today, a series of research reports by Policy in Practice, [‘Understanding the impact of Council Tax Interventions in Wales’](https://www.gov.wales/understanding-impact-council-tax-interventions-wales-exemption-council-tax-care-leavers) have been published on the Welsh Government’s website.

Over the Fifth Senedd Term, the Welsh Government introduced a number of measures to mitigate the impact of council tax liabilities on vulnerable people and households and to improve the management of council tax collection. These measures included:

* the introduction of the Council Tax Protocol for Wales,
* the exemption from council tax for care leavers,
* the removal of the sanction of imprisonment for non-payment of council tax, and
* the standardisation of the exemption for severe mental impairment.

In March 2022, I commissioned research by Policy and Practice to undertake a review and evaluation of these measures and of the Welsh Government and local authority actions taken to alleviate pressure on vulnerable people in relation to council tax. This research sought to give a clearer picture of how effective the measures have been in achieving our policy goals and whether the changes have had an impact on collection levels. It also sought to gauge the impact on individuals and households, particularly vulnerable households and those in arrears.

It is encouraging to see how some of our most vulnerable citizens have been supported by the interventions but we must continue our work with local authorities to remove any barriers to accessibility and reduce disparities across Wales.

The reports confirms the effectiveness and general support for the Council Tax Protocol, which sets out a good practice approach for local authorities and debt advice agencies to ensure any action taken is proportionate, fair and consistent. It also highlights the legislation governing collection and enforcement of council tax.

I have already committed to consider what changes might be made to the legal framework to assist councils in managing the collection of council tax in ways which better recognise the circumstances of households struggling to pay their bills. This will include looking at the current enforcement process and considering what amounts households are liable for at various points in the collection process.

The Welsh Government is committed to making council tax fairer and we will continue to work in partnership with local government and stakeholders to consider the findings and recommendations in the reports. The findings will also be useful for local authorities, enabling them to share some of the excellent best practice examples highlighted in the reports.

This research is one strand of work within our broader programme examining options for reforming council tax and making it fairer. In December, I published the [summary of responses](https://www.gov.wales/fairer-council-tax) to the consultation on our ambitious package as the latest step in our journey towards a fairer and more progressive system.