

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL  
REPORT**

<b>TO:</b> Social Work Committee	<b>Subject:</b>  Council Tax: Carer's Discount and Disability Reduction Scheme
<b>FROM:</b> Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
<b>DATE OF COMMITTEE:</b> 25 August 1998	
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b> Peter Barry	
<b>REF:</b> GMCI/PB/SH	

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of the Committee about the potential to increase the weekly income of families with carers in North Lanarkshire by launching a Council Tax Carer's Discount campaign, and a Council Tax Disability Reduction Campaign.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Council Tax Carer's Discount is a scheme to reduce Council Tax for households that include severely disabled adults and their carers. It amounts to a reduction of 25%, or in certain cases 50%, of the overall bill.
- 2.2 A recent survey by Mencap has identified significant underclaiming of the Council Tax Carer's Discount throughout local authorities in Britain.
- 2.3 To qualify for the Council Tax Carer's Discount
- ◆ The disabled person must be over 18 and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (Care Component) or Attendance Allowance at the higher rate.
  - ◆ The carer must provide care for at least 35 hours per week. If there is a second carer in the household who also provides care for at least 35 hours per week an additional Carer's Discount may be awarded.
  - ◆ The carer and disabled person will not qualify if they are married or cohabiting.

2.4 Council Tax Disability Reduction Scheme is designed to reduce the Council Tax bill for households that include a substantially and permanently disabled person. When a household qualifies, the Council Tax bill is reduced to the amount payable for a dwelling in the valuation band below its current valuation. For example if the home is in band E, the bill will be reduced to the amount for band D.

2.5 To qualify for a Council Tax Disability Reduction a member of the household, adult or child, must be substantially and permanently disabled. In addition they must meet one of the following conditions:

- ◆ There is a second bathroom or kitchen needed by the disabled person  
*or*
- ◆ There is a room (other than bathroom or kitchen) needed by and predominantly used by that person  
*or*
- ◆ There is enough space in the home for the disabled person to use a wheelchair which he or she needs indoors.

2.6 Households with severely disabled people and their carers can benefit from the disability reduction scheme and the Carer's Discount scheme at the same time.

### **3 PROPOSALS**

3.1 It is considered that there is significant potential in North Lanarkshire to launch a campaign to highlight the Council Tax Carer's Discount and Council Tax Disability Reduction Scheme.

3.2 The proposed campaign would be initiated in the following ways:

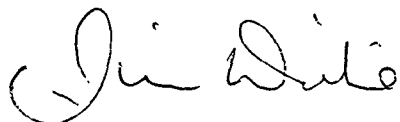
- (i) Collaborative work between the Housing, Finance and Social Work Departments using existing information technology to identify potential claimants who will be written to enclosing a claim form, and offered help from the local social work office.
- (ii) High profile publicity in the local press.
- (iii) A poster campaign in libraries, medical centres, day centres and other community centres.
- (iv) Training and advice for Council staff to prepare for referrals.

3.3 In the course of the campaign officers will monitor the initiative to identify any potential policy implications for the Council in regard to issues concerned.

#### 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.1 Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the content of this report;
- (ii) approve in principle a campaign for this vulnerable group within the community;
- (iii) remit the report to Finance and Housing Committees for their interest and consideration.
- (iv) To consider a further report on the completion of the campaign in the event of any policy implications for the Council being identified.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**29 July 1998**

*For further information on this report please contact . George McNally, Principal Officer ( Strategy) (TEL: 01698 332063)*