Review of financial means test applied to adoption and Special Guardianship allowances

Questionnaire

Please have a look at the Consultation Document, which outlines how we currently calculate the financial support for adoption and special guardian allowances, and outlines the changes we are proposing. It also gives more information about why we are proposing to make these changes.

Once you have read the information provided, please take some time to complete the attached questionnaire.

Please respond to our consultation by 26th September 2016 by accessing www.kent.gov.uk/childrensallowance or filling in this questionnaire and returning it to the following address:

Children’s Allowance Review Team
South Kent Children and Young Person’s Service
West Church House
Godfrey Walk,
Ashford,
Kent,
TN23 7XJ

Alternative formats

If you require this document in any other format or language, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 421553 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number is monitored during office hours, and there is an answering machine at other times.

Data Protection

Kent County Council collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. Kent County Council respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
Q1: To help us understand who is responding to our consultation, please tell us your postcode:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Q2. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:

*Please select one option*

☐ Yourself (as an individual)

☐ Yourself as a member of Kent County Council staff

☐ A District/Town/Parish Council

☐ A Business

☐ A Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation (VCS)

Other, please specify: ________________________

Q2a. If you are responding on behalf of a Council / Business / VCS, please tell us the name of the organisation:

______________________________

Q3: Are you currently in receipt of adoption and Special Guardianship allowances?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know

Q4: Are you a carer?

*A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem, or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. Both adults and children can be carers.*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don’t know

Q5: Which of the following types of income do you or anyone in your household receive?

☐ Disability Living Allowance (DLA) ☐ Carers’ Allowance

☐ Income from Dividends and/or Investments ☐ Income from a Pension

☐ Income from Self Employment ☐ Child Benefit

Q6: Which of the following expenses does your household currently have?

☐ Mortgages and/or Secured Loans ☐ Car Loans and/or Unsecured Loans
Disregard of 20% of Earned Income

On page 7 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently disregard 20% of earned income when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q7: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I don’t know

Q8: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes?

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

On page 8 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take DLA into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q9: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I don’t know

Q10: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes?
**Carers’ Allowances**

On page 9 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Carers’ Allowances into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

**Q11: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I don’t know

**Q12: Do you have any comments about our proposals relating to Carers’ Allowance?**


**Child Benefit**

On page 10 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Child Benefit into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

**Q13: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I don’t know

**Q14: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to how we use child benefit in our calculations?**


Pensions

On page 11 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Pensions into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q15: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?

☐ Yes        ☐ No        ☐ I don’t know

Q16: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to how we use Pensions in our calculations?

Self-Employment

On page 12 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Self-Employment into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q17: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?

☐ Yes        ☐ No        ☐ I don’t know

Q18: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to how we use income from self-employment in our calculations?

Dividends and investments

On page 12 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Dividends and Investments into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q19: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ I don’t know

Q20: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to how we use income from dividends and investments in our calculations?

Mortgages (and Secured Loans)

On pages 13 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Mortgages (and secured loans) into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q21: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ I don’t know

Q22: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to how we use expenditure on mortgages and secured loans in our calculations?
Car Loans & Unsecured Loans

On page 14 within the consultation document, we have explained how we currently take Car Loans and Unsecured Loans into account when calculating Adoption and Special Guardianship allowances, and the changes we are proposing. Please answer the following questions:

Q23: Do you agree with the changes we are proposing?
☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ I don’t know

Q24: Do you have any comments about the proposed changes to how we use expenditure on mortgages and secured loans in our calculations?
Equality Impact Assessment

Q25: We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on our proposals, and we welcome your feedback on the assumptions we have made.
(To view the document, go to kent.gov.uk/childrensallowance or contact us using the details at the front of this document for a printed copy).

Please write your comments on our EqIA here:
About You…
If you are responding as an individual, please answer the following questions.

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That’s why we’re asking you these questions.

We won’t share the information you give us with anyone else. We’ll use it only to help us make decisions, and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don’t have to.

Q26: Are you….? Please select one box.

☑ Male  ☐ Female  ☐ I prefer not to say

Q27. Which of these age groups applies to you? Please select one box.

☐ 0 - 15  ☐ 25 - 34  ☐ 50 – 59  ☐ 65 - 74  ☐ 85 + over

☐ 16 - 24  ☐ 35 - 49  ☐ 60 – 64  ☐ 75 – 84  ☐ I prefer not to say

Q28. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? (Source: 2011 census)

Please select one box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian or Asian British</th>
<th>Black or Black British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>White &amp; Black Caribbean</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>White &amp; Black African</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>White &amp; Asian</td>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>Other*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish</td>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>I prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy/Roma</td>
<td>*If your ethnic group is not specified in the list, please describe it here:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Traveller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q29. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Please select one box.

☑ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ I prefer not to say
Q30. If you answered Yes to Q29, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you. You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select Other, and give brief details of the impairment you have.

- [ ] Physical impairment
- [ ] Mental health condition
- [ ] Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)
- [ ] Learning disability
- [ ] Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy.
- [ ] Other*
- [ ] I prefer not to say

*If Other, please specify:

Q31. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief? Please select one box.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I prefer not to say

Q31a. If you answered Yes to Q31, which of the following applies to you? Please select one box.

- [ ] Christian
- [ ] Hindu
- [ ] Muslim
- [ ] Buddhist
- [ ] Jewish
- [ ] Sikh

Any other religion, please specify:

Q32. Are you? Please select one box.

- [ ] Heterosexual/Straight
- [ ] Gay woman/Lesbian
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Bi/Bisexual
- [ ] Gay man
- [ ] I prefer not to say
Q33. If you would like to receive updates about the development of our proposal to and future engagement activities, please provide your contact details below.

Our preferred method of communication is by email, however if you do not have an email address then please provide your postal address.

Full Name

Email Address

Postal Address

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questions within this document. You can return it to us using the following address

**Children’s Allowance Review Team**
South Kent Children and Young Person’s Service
West Church House
Godfrey Walk,
Ashford,
Kent,
TN23 7XJ

*Please ensure you have paid the correct postage as we are unable to accept post where a surcharge is requested.*

You can also hand deliver the document to the postal address above

You can also return by email to SCAccountsReviewTeam@kent.gov.uk *(you will need to scan the completed questionnaire and send it as an attachment)*