

Removal of the sanction of imprisonment for non-payment of council tax, September 2018

Tenovus Cancer Care is Wales' leading cancer charity. Our aims are simple. We want to help prevent, treat and find a cure for cancer.

We do this by offering support, advice and treatment to cancer patients and their loved ones. We also promote healthy lifestyles and fund cancer research to find new ways to prevent it, diagnose it, and treat it.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this important consultation.

Q1: Do you agree that the sanction of imprisonment for non-payment of Council Tax should be removed?

Agree.

The impact of a cancer diagnosis can be life-changing – it takes a toll physically, emotionally and financially.

Those diagnosed with cancer might feel too ill to go to work, or need time off for treatment while family or friends might need time off work to help provide care and support.

The sudden and unexpected loss of income, coupled with hidden costs, the worry, and the stress of financial pressure can place a huge burden on people. Tenovus Cancer Care recognises this; that's why our qualified Cancer Support Advisors are on hand to tell people affected by cancer if there's any money they might be entitled to. So when cancer patients or their loved ones have money on their mind, they have someone to talk to.

The impacts of stress upon the immune system are well documented (Reiche, et al., 2004) (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004). For cancer patients, many of whom have a suppressed immune system due to their treatment, the removal of the additional stress from the threat of imprisonment is to be welcomed.

We aim to help relieve the financial burden of cancer - making that one less thing to worry about. Therefore Tenovus Cancer Care supports the proposed removal of the sanction of imprisonment for non-payment of Council Tax and would encourage the Welsh Government to consider additional sympathetic amendments to dealing with the issue of indebtedness, particularly as a result of a cancer diagnosis.

References

Reiche, E., Nunes, S. & Morimoto, H., 2004. Stress, depression, the immune system, and cancer. *The Lancet Oncology*, 5(10), pp. 617-625.

Segerstrom, S. & Miller, G., 2004. Psychological Stress and the Human Immune System: A Meta-Analytic Study of 30 Years of Inquiry.. *Psychological bulletin.*, 4(130), pp. 601-630.