

**The Discretionary Elements**

There are five distinct areas of discretion within the new Regulations and Flintshire County Council proposes to exercise these as follows;

1. Not to increase the “extended reduction period” to more than four weeks when an applicant starts work. This rule currently acts as a good work incentive measure under CTB, and it makes sense to maintain it in line with the Housing Benefit (HB) Extended Payment, which will continue at four weeks. FCC paid Council Tax Benefit (CTB) Extended Payments to the value of £19, 223 in 2011/2012
2. To continue to disregard all War Disablement and War Widows Pensions as income. This measure resulted in £30,297 of CTB expenditure in 2011/2012 and to continue this discretion would follow a long precedent and maintain the link with the Authority’s treatment of this income for HB purposes
3. Not to “designate” non Local Authority offices for the receipt of CTRS forms, as it is thought that this would not improve the service with regard to the security and speed of processing and it may prove difficult to guarantee Welsh language assistance to applicants
4. To maintain the current, extensive provision of information contained in notifications of awards
5. To maintain the standard three month backdating provisions for pensioners (in line with current CTB and HB arrangements) and to use the discretion to increase the period for which working age peoples claims can be backdated from 3 to 6 months when a good reason for failing to claim is shown. This reflects the current position with regard to CTB and HB, and in 2011/2012 FCC awarded backdated CTB claims to the value of £33, 078.