

Question: CQ20.01

Cabinet – 1 September 2020

Re: Agenda item 20 - Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Process

Question submitted by: Cllr Clive Stevens

I welcome your decision to move away from the old risk based system which banded claimants into three different groups to define the level of evidence they needed to provide to get their entitlements. A system like that rings alarm bells, your paper describes: "Categorisation of risk is by algorithms that are confidential to the supplier so local authorities do not know why cases are categorised as they are".

We have just seen with A Levels how prejudice can creep into algorithms. Thank goodness you are moving away from that approach.

I am wondering how widespread algorithms are within BCC's systems to help define priorities, for example are they used in Homechoice, Highways maintenance or school appeals; just three quick thoughts.

Q. My question is therefore, how many other systems do BCC use that are based on algorithms and profiling that help define priorities?