

## **How is council tax spent?**

The council tax helps pay for services such as schools, social care, community centres, street lighting, youth and sports centres, libraries and swimming pools.

Your council tax also pays towards police, fire, public transport and collection and disposal of domestic waste.

There are no reductions for people who do not use these services. You can view more information [here](#).

## **What do I do if I don't receive my council tax bill?**

Council tax bills will be posted in March 2020.

If you have not received your bill by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 please contact us or [log into your online account](#) to view the instalments due from April 2020.

Please note if you are signed up for e-billing you will get an email confirming when your bill is available to view online.

If you would like to sign up for e-billing please click [here](#).

## **My bill includes an amount brought forward that I've either paid or don't owe?**

Because we have to print, envelope and dispatch thousands of council tax and business rate bills, our records were closed down as at 29 February 2020 so any payment or change to your account after that date won't show on your bill but it will be reflected on your account.

By signing up to our [self-service facility](#) you can check your account at any time.

## **I pay by direct debit – do I need to do anything?**

If you are already paying your council tax by direct debit you do not have to contact us or your bank to continue paying this way. When you receive your annual bill, it will detail direct debit as the payment method. If it doesn't, then you can [sign up to pay by direct debit online](#).

Please note, if you pay by standing order you must notify your bank of the new instalments. Failure to do so, could result in recovery action.

## **I have received a letter advising my council tax support is paid until 31.03.2020 – what happens after this?**

This letter is an end of year benefits notification letter, your new award will be detailed in a separate letter from the Benefits department.

## **Can I pay my bill over 12 instalments?**

Yes, if we receive your written request (letter or email) we will spread your bill over the remaining monthly instalments. Please note our timescale for correspondence is 15 working days, and we will give 14 days' notice before the next payment is due on

any adjusted bill, therefore if you are requesting this after 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020 you will need to pay the instalments as originally billed until you receive an adjustment notice from us outlining the additional instalments.

### **I don't understand how the percentage increase for the Adult Social Care precept is calculated on my bill?**

The Adult Social Care Precept will still be shown as a separate line on the council tax bill as prescribed by the Government in the council tax (demand notices) (England) Regulations 2011 as amended in 2017. For more information and the calculation for council tax is shown on the council website [here](#).

### **Why am I being charged 200% or 300% for my empty property?**

Dwellings that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for at least two years and are not subject to a statutory exemption (listed on website – [click here](#)), will have an additional premium of 100 per cent applied to them (200 per cent charge).

This two year period will include any period where an empty dwelling discount has been awarded and will come into effect even if you haven't owned the property for that long.

Where a property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than five years, the additional premium is 200% which gives a charge of 300%.

This is to help offset the impact of the required council tax benefit cut being introduced from April 2013 as well as being in line with the policy of encouraging empty homes to be brought into use as quickly as possible and also to more closely reflect the true cost of providing services to empty properties.

### **Under what powers have these changes been made?**

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 gave councils new discretionary powers to raise additional income by reducing the level of council tax discount on certain types of empty dwellings and applying surcharges against long-term empty dwellings in certain circumstances.

### **I wish to dispute the banding of my property – how do I do this?**

The council is not responsible for the banding of properties for council tax and if you wish to dispute the banding of your property you can do directly with the Valuation office agency (an executive agency of HM Revenue and Customs).

If the Valuation office agency do agree to change your banding this could result in the banding either going up or down. You are required to maintain your payments in accordance with your bill whilst any appeal is outstanding.

More information can be found on the page <https://www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band>

**I'm moving out part way through the year – do I need to pay the full bill?**

You will need to pay the instalments as shown on your bill as we will not be able to amend your account more than 30 days in advance of your completion or tenancy end date.

Please report your change of address [online](#) within 30 days of your move and we will send you an updated bill confirming your closing balance.