

# DON'T WASTE TIME, REGISTER ONLINE



It's easy to make payments, see your bill, sign up to Direct Debit, register for FREE SMS reminders and more at [www.blackpool.gov.uk/CouncilTax](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/CouncilTax)

## COUNCIL TAX INFORMATION SHEET

### About your council tax

There is one bill per dwelling and each dwelling is allocated one of eight bands according to its open market capital value at 1st April 1991.

Your band is shown on your bill. There are strict time limits regarding appeals against your banding. Normally an appeal must be made within six months of you becoming liable for the council tax on your property. The Listing Officer will give you further details. You can appeal against your banding by writing to: Valuation Office Agency, 7th Floor, 53 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3LD. Telephone: 03000 501 501 or visit: [www.gov.uk/voa/contact](http://www.gov.uk/voa/contact)

If you wish to appeal on other grounds about your bill you should write to Blackpool Council, P.O. Box 50, Town Hall, Blackpool FY1 1NF.

Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of the tax due. You must pay as shown on your bill and a refund of overpaid tax will be made if your appeal is successful. Where adult members of the same household have an identical interest (i.e. freeholders, leaseholders etc.) in their dwelling, they can be jointly and individually liable to pay the whole council tax bill for the property.

### Payment by 12 monthly instalments

You may now choose to pay your council tax in 12 monthly instalments instead of 10. If you wish to do this you must contact the Council on 01253 478741 by 13th April 2018 to allow us to amend your bill.

### Instalment dates

There are several different instalment dates available. If you would like to change the date that has been allocated to you please contact an advisor on 01253 478741 to discuss your account.

### Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Council Tax Reduction (CTR) provides assistance to people on a low income to help pay their council tax. If you receive CTR the amount you get will be shown on this bill. Details of the scheme can be found on the Council's website, where you can apply online or report a change of circumstances.

If you receive CTR you have a duty to tell us immediately about any change to your circumstances. Failing to comply with that duty could mean you repaying any amount you were not entitled to and you could face prosecution. Examples of changes we need to be told about include any change to your income, to your household, your Universal Credit award, or if you move address. If in doubt, tell us of the change.

If you think any decision we have made about your CTR is wrong you must tell us within one month of this notice or we may not be able to help. You can ask for an explanation of our decision, ask us to look at it again, or appeal (in writing) against it.

### Adult Social Care funding

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made an offer to adult social care authorities. ("Adult social care authorities" are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.) The offer is the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional "precept" on its council tax for financial years from the financial year beginning in 2016 without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting expenditure on adult social care. Subject to the annual approval of the House of Commons, the Secretary of State intends to offer the option of charging this "precept" at an appropriate level in each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019-20.

### Disabled relief

This is awarded where special adaptations have been made to your home to accommodate a disabled resident. If you qualify you can get a reduction equivalent to one band on your bill. An initial inspection of your home will need to be made prior to the award of this relief, and a new application is required each year.

### Discounts and exemptions

In certain circumstances discounts are available.

*Single Occupier Discount.* If a 25% discount has been applied to your bill it is because you have previously declared that you are the only adult resident at the address. If your circumstances have changed and this is no longer the case – maybe another adult has moved into this address or a child has become 18 – you must inform the Council immediately so that your bill can be adjusted. Please note that the Council will be undertaking checks to verify whether the information you have supplied is correct and this may involve cross checking data with external bodies.

In certain circumstances discounts are available to the following groups of people:

- Single person households
- Patients of residential care homes
- People who are severely mentally impaired
- 18 year olds for whom child benefit is payable
- 18 and 19 year olds in full time education
- Students and student nurses
- Youth training trainees
- Apprentices
- Long stay hospital patients
- Persons detained in custody
- Care workers
- People staying in night shelters or dormitory type hostels
- Members of religious communities
- People with diplomatic immunity

### Other discounts are also available

Properties that are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished may qualify for a **discount of 100% up to a maximum of 3 months.**

Properties that are undergoing or require major structural alterations and are unoccupied and uninhabitable may qualify for a **discount of 50% for up to a maximum of 12 months**.

A 50% reduction applies where certain criteria are met in relation to annexes occupied by a relative of the occupier of the main dwelling, or for people with annexes which are unoccupied. If you think we've made a mistake with your Council Tax, or you think you may be able to get a discount, exemption or relief, please contact us in writing and we will look at it again.

Some properties are exempt from council tax, which means you do not have to pay council tax for them.

#### These are the different classes of exemption –

- B. An unoccupied property owned and previously used by a charity. **The maximum exemption period for a property is 6 months**
- D. An unoccupied property that was the home of someone detained in custody
- E. An unoccupied property that was the home of someone who has moved permanently into a residential home or hospital to receive care
- F. An unoccupied property that is waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted. **The maximum exemption is for 6 months after probate or letters of administration have been granted**
- G. A property that is unoccupied because the law forbids occupation
- H. An unoccupied property that is reserved for a minister of religion
- I. An unoccupied property that was the home of someone who has permanently moved into another residence (not a residential home or hospital) to receive personal care
- J. An unoccupied property that was the home of someone who has permanently moved away to provide personal care to another person
- K. An unoccupied property where the owner is a student, and the property was last occupied as their main home
- L. An unoccupied property where a mortgage lender is in possession
- M. Student halls of residence
- N. A property occupied only by students
- O. An armed forces barracks
- P. Accommodation for visiting forces and dependants
- Q. An unoccupied property where the person who would normally pay the council tax is bankrupt
- R. A vacant caravan pitch or boat mooring
- S. A property occupied only by people aged under 18 years
- T. An unoccupied annexe that may not be let separately without a breach of planning control
- U. An occupied property where all of the residents, including the person who would normally pay the council tax, are severely mentally impaired
- V. A property occupied by a foreign diplomat
- W. An annexe occupied by a dependant elderly or disabled relative

#### Changes in circumstances

Any change in your circumstances must be notified to the Revenues Division within 21 days. Failure to do so may result in a penalty of £70.

If you suspect anyone of committing fraud in respect of Housing Benefit or the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, please call the Free and Confidential Hotline on **0800 328 6340**.

#### Premium charge

Properties left empty for over two years will be subject to a council tax premium. This means that for these properties council tax will be 150% of the normal charge.

#### Universal Credit

If you make a claim for Universal Credit please contact the Council immediately if you wish to claim council tax reduction as this cannot be backdated at a later date. You can contact a Customer Service Agent on 01253 478847.

#### Financial information

Your council tax is distributed and helps pay for services provided by Blackpool Council, The Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority. More information can be obtained from the websites listed on your paper bill.

If you would like to receive a paper copy of the financial information relating to the above, free of charge, your request should initially be made in writing to the address on your Council Tax bill.

#### Data Protection

Blackpool Council will be processing the information you have provided in accordance with the current Data Protection Act. The information will only be held and processed for the purpose of the assessment and collection of taxes and revenues and other compatible purposes such as corporate information systems and the prevention and detection of fraud or crime.

The Council is obliged to comply with the requirements of the National Fraud Initiative. Further information can be obtained from our website. As an individual, you have a number of rights under the current Data Protection Act and information on these rights is available on the Council's web site ([www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk)) or from the Information Commissioner's Office or web site ([www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)).

#### Registering to vote

Don't forget to move your vote when you move address - please visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

Please note that date of birth and National Insurance number are now needed to register. If you don't have access to the internet please telephone 01253 477490 or 477161 and we will assist you with your registration.

This information leaflet forms part of the demand notice.

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## Blackpool Council