

## Summary of Proposed Council Tax Support Scheme 2019-20

The proposed council tax support scheme from 1 April 2019 for working age people will be based on Income bands.

The scheme will apply to working age people only who currently receive council tax support or apply in the future for help to have their council tax discounted. There will be no protection for working age people and the new scheme will apply without exception from 1 April 2019.

It is important to note that changes to the council tax support scheme will not affect pensioners. These people are protected and their council tax support will continue to be awarded on the basis of the scheme prescribed by Central Government.

The following income bands will apply and the percentage of council tax support awarded will be 100%, 80%, 60%, 40% or 20% of the maximum eligible council tax.

There are different bands for single claimants, lone parents, couples and for people with children as illustrated below.

Income Band	Single person	Couple	Lone parent with children	Couple with children	Maximum percentage entitlement
	Income £				
Band 1	000.00 to 075	000.00 to 115	000.00 to 150	000.00 to 200	100%
Band 2	075.01 to 100	115.01 to 150	150.01 to 175	200.01 to 250	80%
Band 3	100.01 to 125	150.01 to 200	175.01 to 225	250.01 to 300	60%
Band 4	125.01 to 150	200.01 to 250	225.01 to 275	300.01 to 350	40%
Band 5	150.01 to 175	250.01 to 300	275.01 to 325	350.01 to 400	20%

Claimants who receive Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance (Income Based) or Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) will fall into band 1 and will be entitled to up to 100% council tax support.

The income will be calculated, net of any allowable disregards and the if the income calculated falls into one of the following income bands, council tax support will be payable. If the net income exceeds the maximum income in band 5 then no council tax support will be payable.

Under the current council tax support scheme if a person has an income change of more than 5p a week their entitlement to support will change by just 1p per week. With the proposed scheme, if the income change results in the income remaining within a band, then no recalculation of the council tax support will take place.

For example, if a single person reports that their weekly income has increased from £112 to £123 per week, they will remain in Band 3 and the discount they will continue to receive is 60%.

### Qualifying for Council tax support

A person must have a council tax liability to be able to claim council tax support and the property must be occupied by the tax payer. Council tax support is a council tax discount

and if awarded it will reduce a person's council tax payments. The level of discount awarded is based on the income and capital the claimant and partner has, whether they have dependent children or other grown ups living in the household, referred to as non dependants. Other factors such as certain expenses to assist with childcare payments, disabilities and whether a person falls into a group considered to require more support will also be taken into consideration.

### **Eligible Council Tax**

The eligible council tax used in the calculation of council tax support will be the net amount payable, taking into account discounts already awarded, for a dwelling that is occupied.

The only exception to this is if the tax payer lives in a property that has an F, G or H banding. For people claiming council tax support, their maximum eligible council tax will be restricted to a band E and the maximum council tax support they can receive is 100% of the band E charge.

### **Capital limit**

If a single person or couple claiming council tax support have over £6,000 in combined capital there will be no entitlement to council tax support and the full amount of council tax will be payable. There are no exceptions to this rule. An assumed income from savings will not be applied to capital less than £6,000.

### **Non dependant deductions**

A non dependant is a person living in the council tax support claimant's home but they are not stated as a liable person on the council tax bill. They are normally a grown up child or an elderly relative living with the claimant. Deductions will normally be made from the eligible council tax for each non dependant living in the household. The deductions are based on the non dependant's gross income and whether they are working. The deductions and earnings bands are increased from 1 April each year.

A non dependant deduction will not be made if the claimant or their partner receives one of the following incomes:

- Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance
- The daily living component of Personal Independence Payment
- The care component of Disability Living Allowance
- An armed forces independence payment

Or if the claimant or partner is severely sight impaired, blind or has recently regained sight.

### **Earned income disregards**

A maximum weekly disregard of £10 will apply to the combined earnings of the claimant and partner. If both a claimant and their partner are working the earnings disregard will be £10 in total and will not be awarded per person.

### **Income disregards – child benefit**

Child benefit for all children will be disregarded in full and will not be used in the income calculation.

### **Income disregards – maintenance in respect of a child**

Maintenance payments received in respect of a child or children will be disregarded in full and will not be used in the income calculation, subject to qualifying conditions.

### **Income disregards - Housing Element (Universal Credit)**

The housing costs element of a person's Universal Credit award will be disregarded in full. This is the exception and all other elements of Universal Credit will be taken fully into account as income.

### **Income disregards – other income**

Under this scheme, as part of our ongoing commitment to support disabled people, the following incomes will continue to be disregarded and will not be used as income in the calculation of council tax support:

- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- War Disablement Pension
- War Widow's Pension
- Christmas bonus paid by DWP

### **Other disregards - childcare**

To support incentives to work for those working over 16 hours, a weekly childcare disregard will be applied to earnings of up to a maximum of £175, where child care is paid for one child, or up to a maximum of £300 where childcare is paid for more than one child, subject to further qualifying conditions.

### **Other disregards - disabled child or children**

An additional income disregard of £65 per week will be applied to household income for each child who:

- Is severely sight impaired, blind or has recently regained their sight, or
- Receives Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance

### **Second Adult Rebate**

Second adult rebate was based on the income of other adults living in the property and not that of the claimant. All second adult rebate entitlement will end on 31 March 2019 and this will no longer be able to be claimed from 1 April 2019. The claimant will still be able to receive council tax support but this will be based on their personal income and any award may be subject to non dependant deductions.

**Absences abroad for up to four weeks**

Council tax support will be paid during a temporary absence abroad providing that the period of the absence does not exceed four weeks. If the planned period of absence is greater than four weeks the claim for council tax support will end from the date of departure and the claimant will have to claim again following the return to their home address.

**Backdating claims**

A claim for council tax support can be backdated for a maximum period of six months from the date of the claim if the claimant can demonstrate a good reason for not having claimed sooner. The claimant must provide a written request for backdated council tax support and provide full reasons for the delay in claiming.

**Discretionary Hardship Scheme**

The scheme may result in some claimants being adversely affected which may lead to hardship. As there is a need to protect the most vulnerable households, the Discretionary Hardship Scheme which falls within the local council tax support scheme, is designed to provide additional financial support to those tax payers who are facing either exceptional hardship or extraordinary circumstances. Subject to conditions a tax payer could be awarded a payment under the Council's Discretionary Hardship Scheme. An application will need to be made and it will be considered in accordance with the Council's policy.