



Uttlesford District Council

Council Tax Benefit has changed



**If you are working age you will have to
pay some Council Tax.**

**This leaflet contains important information that may
affect you. It is important you read this information.**



The help you get to pay your Council Tax changed from 1 April 2013. The new scheme is called Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). Under the new scheme you will have to pay towards your Council Tax. From this date, if you qualify for support you will receive LCTS instead of Council Tax Benefit.

LCTS is worked out using a different set of rules. If you are of working age the amount of support you receive will be reduced. If you are of state pension credit age the support is still means tested.

What is Council Tax

Council Tax is a local tax on domestic properties that helps to pay for local services such as refuse collections, social services, education and environmental health. Some of the money also contributes towards Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

The amount you have to pay depends on the property band your home is in; this is based on the value of your property as at 1 April 1991.

Uttlesford District Council is responsible for collecting Council Tax.

Who has to pay Council Tax?

Council Tax is the responsibility of the people who live in the property, or it is the owner's responsibility if the property is unoccupied or house in multiple occupation.

The full tax assumes that there are at least two adults living in the property. If there is only one person living in your home you may be eligible for a discount. If you are on a low income you may be eligible for **Council Tax Benefit (CTB)** up to April 2013 or **Local Council Tax Support** from April 2013, both are means tested to help people pay their Council Tax.

The means testing of LCTS for people of state pension credit age is very similar to CTB rules.

What's different for people of working age?

For people of working age

- Everyone will have to pay a minimum of 8.5 per cent of their Council Tax bill
- Anyone in Uttlesford on a low income and entitled to Disability Living Allowance or Carers Allowance will have some protection
- Second adult rebate claims will no longer be accepted (regardless of the age of the second adult)
- The first £25 per week you earn will not affect your entitlement to benefit
- Minimum weekly award of £2





How much will I have to pay?

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) is still means tested and will be assessed based on your household circumstances, the level of your income and the level of your savings.

If you would like an indication of how much your LCTS is likely to be, please visit our website www.uttlesford.gov.uk/entitledto

What happens if you don't pay?

The Council can ask the Magistrates Court to issue a Liability Order for non payment of Council Tax. This means that you will have to pay the full balance plus court costs. If you ignore this notice the Council can apply to have money deducted from your benefits or salary. The Council could send Bailiffs to your property and extra further statutory costs will be added to your bill. So don't delay - contact us now!

Rights and duties

If you qualify for LCTS and you, or any member of your household, has a relevant change in circumstances, you must let the Council know as soon as possible as it may affect the amount of support you get. You must let us know within 21 days of any change, either online or in writing. If you are late in reporting a change, you could lose support and/or have more Council Tax to pay.

Here are some examples of changes that you must tell us about straightaway:

Changes to the money you get:

- You start or stop getting Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Disability Allowance and/or Carer's Allowance
- You start or stop getting Tax Credits
- The money you or your partner or any non-dependant gets increases or decreases

Changes to your home

- You change your address
- The number of people in your home changes; for example someone has a baby
- A partner comes to live with you
- A partner leaves

Other changes

- You or your partner go into hospital for more than six weeks
- You or your partner become a student or stop being a student
- The amount of savings or capital you have changes
- Any of your children leave school or leave home.

Difficulty paying?

In the first instance - contact us. There are a number of ways we can help you pay your Council Tax:

- Flexible payment arrangements are available, please contact us directly to see which options are available.
- We can check to make sure all available reductions have been applied to your account.
- We can conduct a “means enquiry” in which we look at payment and recovery options available. Appointments are available at Council Offices, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Library.
- In certain circumstances we offer a home visit service. Please call us on 01799 510510 and ask for the Recovery team.
- We can provide contact details of other agencies that can provide help and free budget and debt advice.

How to Contact Us

Telephone 01799 510510

Textphone users 18001

Email: revenues@uttlesford.gov.uk

Website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Get budget and debt advice

Citizens Advice Bureau

To book an appointment in Saffron Walden, Thaxted, Great Dunmow or Stansted phone 0844 4775986 or visit www.adviceguide.org.uk

Stepchange Debt Charity

Phone 0800 1381111 or visit www.stepchange.org

National Debtline

Phone 0808 808 4000 or visit www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Debt Advice Foundation

Phone 0800 0434050 or visit www.debtadvicefoundation.org

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please contact us on 01799 510510.

www.uttlesford.gov.uk