

# COUNCIL TAX FACT SHEET



## What is Council Tax?

Council Tax is a tax charged by local authorities to raise money for local services such as education, libraries, refuse collection, highways and care for the elderly. Uttlesford District Council collect your Council Tax and share it with Essex County Council, the Police, and Fire & Crime Commissioner for Essex and the town and parish councils. Almost every household has to pay Council Tax whether your home is a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, annexe, mobile home or houseboat. The amount you pay will depend on your Council Tax band which can be found on your bill. There are eight valuation Council Tax bands (A to H). The band is set by the Valuation Office Agency and is based on what the property might have been worth on 1 April 1991.

Further information can be found on the website at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/counciltax) or by contacting the council.

## Payments

You can choose pay your Council Tax over 12 months rather than 10. If you would like to make this change you must write to us by 16 April 2020. If you want to keep paying over 10 months you don't need to do anything.

## People with disabilities

You may be entitled to pay less Council Tax if you or someone who lives with you has either a room set aside for use by the disabled person in connection with their disability, or an extra bathroom or kitchen, or uses a wheelchair indoors, to meet special needs relating to a disability. You need only meet one of these criteria. If you would like to apply for a reduction, please get in touch for an application form. We will need a letter from your GP or a similar healthcare professional to confirm that the additional room or space for the use of a wheelchair indoors is of significant importance to the wellbeing of the disabled person.

## Unoccupied properties: Discounts and premium charges

If your property is empty and unfurnished, we can award a 50% discount for a period of up to six months. If your property is in need of, or is undergoing, major repairs or structural alterations as well as being unoccupied and unfurnished, we can award a 50% discount for a period of up to 12 months. Properties which remain empty at the end of a discount period will be listed as long-term empty and a 100% charge will apply. If you live in job-related accommodation because your contract of employment specifically requires you to reside elsewhere, you may qualify for a 50% discount on your other unoccupied home. Furnished and unoccupied properties have a 0% discount.

Properties which have been empty for more than two years will have an additional 100% premium charge applied to their Council Tax bill. The premium charge does not apply to annexes or properties owned by service personnel.

**Please be advised that for the purposes of discounts and premiums, the unoccupied period starts from the date the property becomes empty and not from the date the ownership changes.**

## Council Tax Exemptions

You don't have to pay Council Tax on some properties. These are known as 'exempt properties' and include properties lived in only by full-time students, people who have a severe mental impairment, and people aged under 18. Forces barracks are also exempt, and the people who live there contribute to the cost of local services through a special arrangement with us. Some properties owned by a charity can be exempt for up to six months if they were last occupied in connection with the charitable aims of the charity.

## Discounts

When issuing a Council Tax bill, we assume that two adults are living in the property. If you are the only adult living there (as your main home), we will reduce your bill by 25%, this is called a Single Person Discount. However when we look at the number of adults living in a property certain occupants are ignored (disregarded) and are not counted, and therefore if once these occupants are disregarded less than 2 people are counted in the property, you may still qualify for a reduction in your Council Tax liability e.g. students, carers, people in prison.

**Please get in touch with us by email at [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk) or on 01799 510510, or visit the website at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/counciltax) for full details on all Council Tax discounts, exemptions and reliefs.**

## Exceptional Hardship Fund

Our Exceptional Hardship Fund has been set up to support our most vulnerable residents. This includes people who have either seen a reduction in the government support they receive to help pay for Council Tax, or those who are suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances. These support payments can provide short-term relief but should not be seen as a long-term solution to debt problems. Applicants will need to ensure they have taken all reasonable steps to resolve their own situation prior to application. Contact us or visit [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ehf](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ehf)

## Fraud

Help us protect local services by reporting Council Tax fraud. Fraudsters cost all of us money so if you know someone who may be claiming a Council Tax discount that they're not entitled to, please contact our fraud team on 01799 510366/397. Alternatively, you can email us at [fraud@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:fraud@uttlesford.gov.uk). All calls are treated in the strictest confidence.

## Financial Information

Your Council Tax is shared between Uttlesford District Council, Essex County Council, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, and your town/parish council. About three quarters of the Council Tax collected in the district goes to the county council and the rest is shared between the other organisations listed above.

Information about the district council's 2020/21 budget can be found at [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/budget](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/budget). You will also find links to the 2020/21 budgets of Essex County Council, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, and town councils with budgets over £140,000. A paper copy of this financial information can be obtained on request from the relevant organisation. Your Council Tax bill will show the amount of increase or decrease in Council Tax payable to each relevant body for the 2020/21 year.

## Adult Social Care Precept - Essex County Council

The Secretary of State 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 was the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional "precept" on its council tax without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting its expenditure on adult social care from the financial year 2016-17. It was originally made in respect of the financial years up to and including 2019-20. If the Secretary of State chooses to renew this offer in respect of a particular financial year, this is subject to the approval of the house of commons."

**More information visit: [www.essex.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.essex.gov.uk/counciltax)**