

Your guide to Council Tax

2024-2025

Important information for people who pay Council Tax.



Message from the Leader of the Council

It's our job as your council to ensure that public money is invested in what is right for our residents.

The services we provide make a real difference to your day-to-day life, from roads and pavements, bin collections, social care and education. Each year, we must raise money to help pay for these services through Council Tax.

These are challenging times. Across the country, many people continue to struggle with the cost of living and the impacts felt in Newcastle are no different – we have seen a rise in demand for our social care and crisis services on top of our regular service delivery.

The Council must set a balanced budget each year, weighing up this increased demand against reduced government funding and our existing priorities and funding commitments.

Government has offered the option to councils to charge an additional 'precept' on Council Tax to meet expenditure on adult social care. We must carefully balance the funding of services for our older or more vulnerable residents by setting levels of tax for our residents in the fairest way possible.

Following a seven-week consultation with feedback from residents, businesses and communities, we have decided to increase council tax in Newcastle by 4.99% to help pay for rising costs of services. This includes a 2% rise in the Adult Social Care Precept – a part of council tax introduced by government to help fund services for our older or more vulnerable residents.

We know that the cost of living is making life harder for many, and we will continue to support you in every way we can. We are proud to invest further in our Council Tax Reduction Scheme to help those who need it most to meet other increasing costs such as food, mortgages and rent. You can find more details on the scheme in this guide.

We continue to call on central government to provide long-term, fairer funding for councils to provide the services that you, our residents, deserve. We remain committed to eradicating poverty in our city, achieving our net zero ambitions, and making Newcastle an inclusive city that everyone can thrive in.



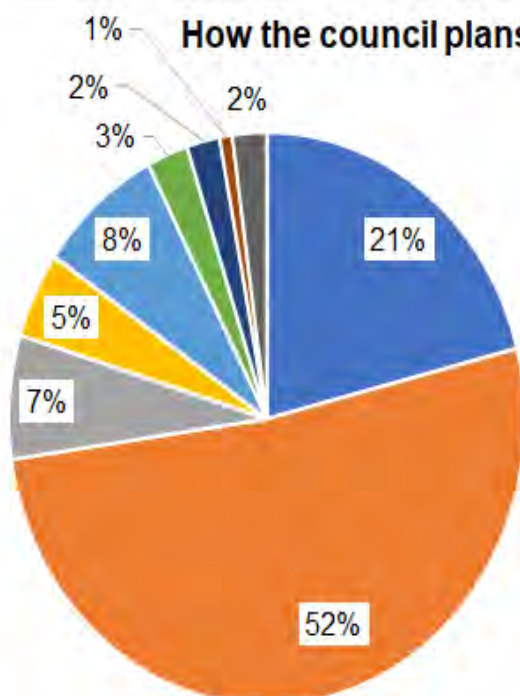
Councillor Nick Kemp
Leader of the Council

Where our income comes from



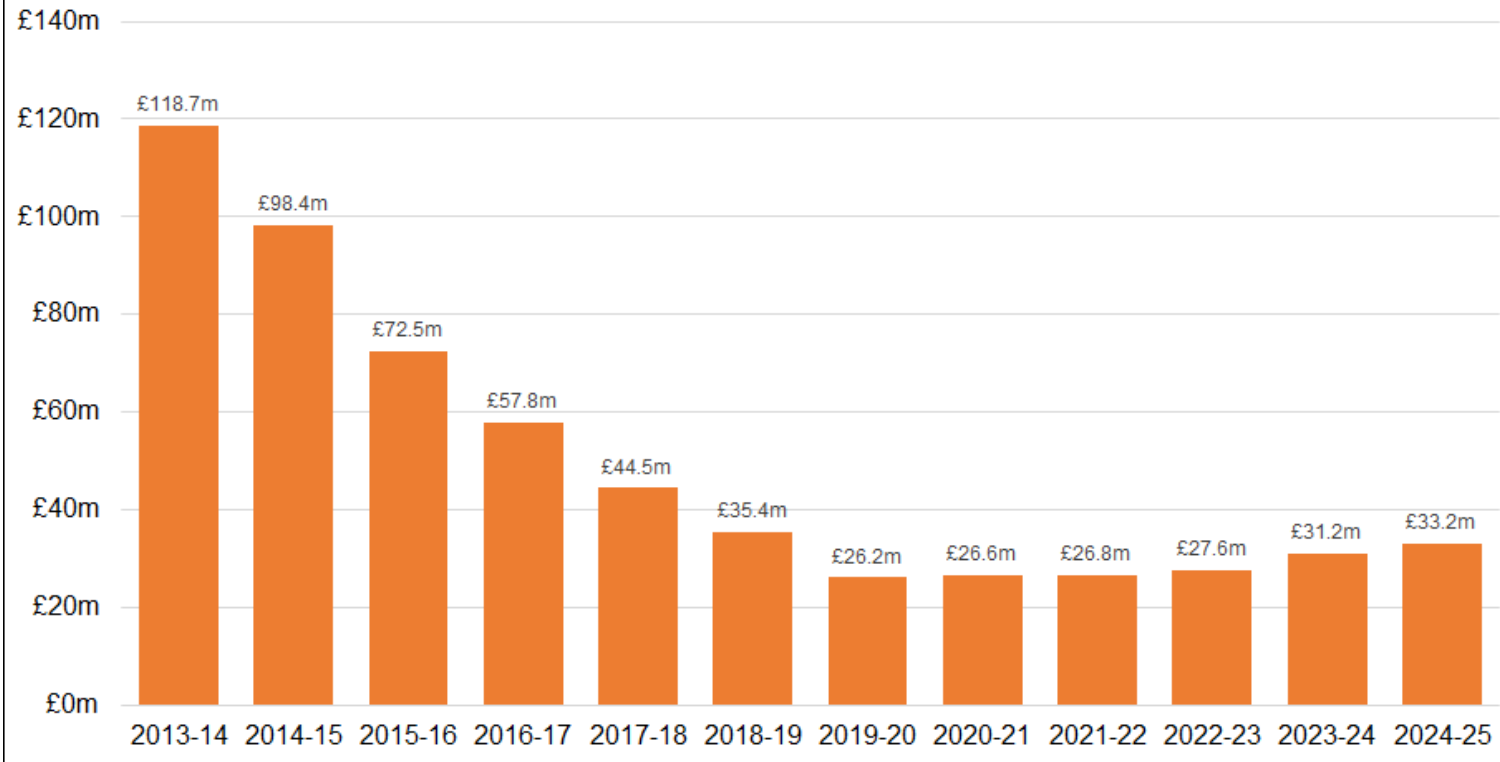
- Council Tax (£140.5m, 20.5%)
- Sales, fees & charges (£121.8m, 17.8%)
- Government Grants (£168.8m, 24.7%)
- Business rates (£107.5m, 15.7%)
- Recharges to schools, Housing Revenue Account and capital projects (£74.8m, 10.9%)
- Contributions from third parties (£70.4m, 10.3%)

How the council plans to spend your money



- Education
- Social Care
- Public Health
- Highways & Transport
- Environmental & Regulatory Services
- Housing Services
- Cultural & Related Services
- Planning & Development Services
- Central & Other Services

Government grant from 2013 to 2025



How much you will pay

Your council tax bill is based on the value of your home and how many adults live there. Your home has been put into one of eight valuation bands, depending on its market value as at 1 April 1991. Our Council Tax levels for 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 are shown below. If you are the new Council Tax payer of a property, you could be affected by improvements made to your property by the previous owner. When ownership changes the band can be increased if your property has been extended or improved since 1993.

Valuation band	Your property's value at 1 April 1991	Council Tax 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024
A	Up to £40,000	£1,528.03
B	£40,001 to £52,000	£1,782.69
C	£52,001 to £68,000	£2,037.37
D	£68,001 to £88,000	£2,292.04
E	£88,001 to £120,000	£2,801.39
F	£120,001 to £160,000	£3,310.72
G	£160,001 to £320,000	£3,820.07
H	£320,001 or more	£4,584.08

How is the council tax built up

	Net expenditure £000	Equivalent Band D Council Tax £	Expenditure Per Head £
Total Spending by the City	281,194	4,033.59	919.72
Less:			
Revenue Support Grant	(33,243)	(476.85)	(108.73)
Contribution from Business Rates (including top up)	(107,473)	(1,541.65)	(351.52)
Council Requirement	140,478	2,015.09	459.47
Plus Joint Board Precepts:			
Police & Crime Commissioner for Northumbria	12,677	181.84	41.46
Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority	6,630	95.11	21.69
Amount to be raised from Council Tax	<u>159,785</u>	<u>2,292.04</u>	<u>522.62</u>

Charges per band

Band	City	Adult Social Care Precept	Police	Fire	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
A	1,147.41	195.98	121.23	63.41	1,528.03
B	1,338.65	228.64	141.43	73.97	1,782.69
C	1,529.88	261.31	161.64	84.54	2,037.37
D	1,721.12	293.97	181.84	95.11	2,292.04
E	2,103.59	359.30	222.25	116.25	2,801.39
F	2,486.06	424.62	262.66	137.38	3,310.72
G	2,868.53	489.95	303.07	158.52	3,820.07
H	3,442.24	587.94	363.68	190.22	4,584.08

Parish charges

Band	Brunswick	Dinnington	Hazlerigg	N.Fenham & Blakelaw	North Gosforth	Woolsington
	£	£	£	£	£	£
A	6.56	10.12	26.39	19.81	5.72	5.17
B	7.65	11.81	30.78	23.11	6.67	6.04
C	8.75	13.49	35.18	26.41	7.63	6.90
D	9.84	15.18	39.58	29.71	8.58	7.76
E	12.03	18.55	48.38	36.31	10.49	9.48
F	14.21	21.93	57.17	42.91	12.39	11.21
G	16.40	25.30	65.97	49.52	14.30	12.93
H	19.68	30.36	79.16	59.42	17.16	15.52

What will the council spend in 2024-2025 on the provision of its services?

2023-2024

2024-2025

Change between years

Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	On Services	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
194,948	(90,716)	104,232	Adult Social Care and Integrated Services including Adult Social Care, Commissioning, Inclusion & Prevention	216,162	(102,342)	113,821	9,589
2,560	(1,056)	1,504	Assistant Chief Executive including Communication Services, Communities, Policy & Performance	3,295	(1,301)	1,993	489
236,331	(181,081)	55,250	Children, Education and Skills including Children's Social Care, Education Services, Early Help & Family Support, Strategy & Commissioning	252,870	(187,242)	65,628	10,378
11,930	(6,995)	4,935	Finance including Audit Risk & Insurance, Exchequer Services, Finance, Procurement, Revenues & Benefits	12,279	(6,540)	5,739	804
166,959	(134,724)	32,235	Operations & Regulatory Services including Business Management, Democratic Services, Facility Services, ICT, Legal Services, Local Services, Operations, Parking, Public Safety Regulations, Repairs & Construction Services	173,514	(139,184)	34,330	2,095
64,881	(54,233)	10,648	Place including Commercial Development & Property, Development Management, Economic Development, Fairer Housing, Major Projects, Museums, Arts & Culture, Transport	66,129	(53,474)	12,656	2,008
23,458	(22,605)	853	Workforce & Inclusion including Health & Safety, Operational HR, Organisational Development, Training Schemes, Public Health	23,941	(22,535)	1,406	553
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE				748,191	(512,619)	235,572	25,915
PLUS: PROVISIONS							
		38,218	Corporate Provisions			30,511	
		(3,926)	Contribution to/from Reserves			(4,076)	
PLUS: LEVIES							
		237	Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Levy			249	
		17,964	North East Combined Authority Levy			18,937	
		262,151	TOTAL SPENDING BY THE CITY			281,194	

Adult Social Care Precept

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 2016-2017. It was originally made in respect of the financial years up to and including 2019-2020. 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. For the year 2024-2025, the maximum permitted increase in the adult social care precept is set at 2%. For adult social care authorities, Council Tax demand notices show two percentage increases; one for the part of the overall change attributable to the adult social care precept, and one for the part attributable to general expenditure. The Adult Social Care precept will contribute £2.7 million to help reduce the funding gap in the adult social care budget.

We often receive queries regarding the calculation of how the Adult Social Care precept is calculated and presented on the bill. The increase is calculated across the whole charge and not just the individual precept.

The overall increase for City Council including the Adult Social Care precept is calculated at 4.99%, an increase of 2.99% for City Council budget and 2.0% for the Adult Social Care Precept for 2024-2025. These percentage increases will be shown on the bill as 3% and 2% due to rounding.

The following example shows the calculation for increasing the charge for a Band D property:

- For 2023-2024 the Adult Social Care precept was £255.58 and the City Council precept was £1,663.74 which was a total of £1,919.32
- For 2024-2025 the Adult Social Care precept is £293.97 and the City Council precept is £1,721.12 which is a total of £2,015.09

When comparing precepts across financial years it may appear that the % increase to each precept is higher (15.02% for the Adult Social Care Precept and 3.45% for the City Council), this is because the % increase is applied to the whole charge for the previous year rather than individual precepts.

In summary the 2024-2025 charge is $£1,919.32 + 4.99\% = £2,015.09$

The Police have increased their band D precept by the maximum amount available which was £13 per Band D which is shown on the bill at 7.7% and the Fire Service have increased by 2.99% per Band D and therefore this is shown on the bill as 3%

Environment Agency North East Region

The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 1642 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee	2023-2024 £000	2024-2025 £000
Gross Expenditure	23,895	35,667
Levies Raised	2,619	2,750
Total Council Tax Base	759	769

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 5.0%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £2,619,185 in 2023-2024 to £2,750,144 for 2024-2025.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority was established under Section 26 of the Local Government Act 1985, and comprises members from each of the five districts of Tyne and Wear County.

Additional Information - Council Tax Demand Note

Equivalent Band 'D' Charge per dwelling £95.11

Equivalent charge on other bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£63.41	£73.97	£84.54	£95.11	£116.25	£137.38	£158.52	£190.22

		£000
Loans Outstanding at	31/03/2023	9,932
Estimated Loans Outstanding at	31/03/2024	9,518
Forecast Capital Expenditure	2024-2025	10,890
Estimated General Fund Balances	31/03/2024	4,072
	31/03/2025	<u>4,072</u>
Variation		<u>0</u>
Council Tax Requirement	2023-2024	27,505
Council Tax Requirement (equivalent)	2024-2025	<u>28,720</u>
Increase in Council Tax Requirement		<u>1,215</u>
Numbers of staff - FTE's	2023-2024	878
	2024-2025	875

In 2024-2025 Council Tax represents 40.6% of gross revenue expenditure (2023-2024 43.3%)

Amount per head based on total projected population of 1,127,200	£
Budget Requirement	56.22
Revenue Support Grant	(11.95)
Top Up Grant	(11.28)
Business Rate Local Share	(3.29)
Business Rates Under-Indexation Grant	(2.85)
Service Delivery Grant	(0.10)
Funding Guarantee Grant	(0.61)
Collection Fund Net (Surplus)/Deficit	(0.66)

COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT

25.48

Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland	
54,041	69,713	64,471	39,257	74,484	301,966

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

2023-2024

2024-2025

Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure		Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
59,305	5,757	53,548	Fire Service	69,175	6,119	63,056
4,266	0	4,266	Contingency - Provision	1,528	0	1,528
0	613	(613)	Interest on Balances	0	1,211	(1,211)
63,571	6,370	57,200	Budget Requirement	70,703	7,330	63,373
0	12,162	(12,162)	Revenue Support Grant	0	13,471	(13,471)
0	10,203	(10,203)	Top Up Grant	0	12,713	(12,713)
0	3,415	(3,415)	Business Rate Local Share	0	3,711	(3,711)
0	2,747	(2,747)	Business Rates Under-Indexation Grant	0	3,217	(3,217)
0	629	(629)	Service Delivery Grant	0	109	(109)
0	0	0	Funding Guarantee Grant	0	689	(689)
0	385	(385)	Council Tax Collection Fund Net Surplus/Deficit	0	528	(528)
0	155	(155)	Business Rates Collection Fund Net Surplus/Deficit	0	216	(216)
63,571	36,066	27,505	Council Tax Requirement	70,703	41,983	28,720

Message from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

On considering the right precept proposal for 2024/25 I was mindful that Northumbria Police has the lowest precept in the country and is as a result very reliant upon central government funding, over which I have no control. Northumbria Police is committed to fighting crime but does so against a backdrop of increasing financial pressures. As Police and Crime Commissioner it is my job to set the budget for the force on behalf of our communities and ensure police officers and staff have what they need to keep us safe. I firmly believe Government should step-up and fully fund our police force. The Home Office has repeatedly turned down these requests and wants the cost of policing passed to local residents. People in the North East repeatedly tell me they want more police officers out on the streets and over the last four years I have delivered on that. I want to continue to invest in frontline policing and have plans for more investigators, expanding our specialist motorbike ASB units, and following trials I'd like to review all stations and look to reopen some of those that were closed under Government austerity.

To deliver this, we need more funding. To address the challenges facing Northumbria Police I have approved an increase of 108p per month for a Band D property. For the majority of households in Northumbria, those in a Band A property, the increase is 72p per month. The increase in the precept will provide over £5m in extra funds for 2024/25 which will help deliver on those further investment plans for frontline policing and provide essential funding to deliver the Police and Crime Plan.

The Band D council tax precept for Northumbria will increase from £168.84 to £181.84 for the year. This remains, by far, the lowest precept of any Police and Crime Commissioner in England and Wales. You can find more information on the OPCC website- www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk

2023 - 2024			2024 - 2025			
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure		Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£000	£000	£000	Service	£000	£000	£000
388,145	40,617	347,528	Northumbria Police	420,562	42,643	377,919
		347,528	Budget Requirement			377,919
			LESS			
		266,147	Formula Grant			281,983
		3,423	Special Pension Grant			11,168
		6,867	Council Tax Support Grant			6,867
		1,301	Legacy Council Tax Freeze Grants			1,301
		905	Constituent Authorities' Net Surplus/Deficit			1,290
		68,885	Council Tax Requirement			75,310
		£11,594m	Charge on Newcastle			£12,677m
		£168.84	Band "D" Equivalent Charge			£181.84
Change in Council Tax Requirement between years is attributable to:						£000s
Pay Awards,Inflation, recruitment, budget pressures and other budget adjustments						38,879
Budget reductions and efficiencies						(8,488)
Increase in government Formula Grant						(15,836)
Increase in Special Pension Grant						(7,745)
Increase in Council Tax Net Surplus						(385)
						6,425

On 2 November 2018, the boundaries of NECA were changed by the Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland Combined Authority (Establishment and Functions) Order 2018. As a result of these governance changes the boundaries of NECA now cover the Local Authorities of Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. NECA and the Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland Combined Authority will work together on a number of areas to support the region, including Transport. The North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) has been established to exercise the functions of the two Transport Authorities, including the setting of levies and budgets for transport activity.

	2023-24 JTC Transport Budget £000	2024-25 JTC Transport Budget £000
Gross Transport Expenditure		
Tyne Tunnel	36,553	39,183
Transport co-ordination and former ITA	4,504	8,206
Nexus (Grant from JTC*, & External Grants - net of commercial income)	106,206	102,545
Durham (Grant from JTC*)	16,902	16,895
Northumberland (Grant from JTC*)	6,448	6,552
	<u>170,613</u>	<u>173,381</u>
Income		
Tyne Tunnels	<u>(36,141)</u>	<u>(39,183)</u>
	<u>(36,141)</u>	<u>(39,183)</u>
	134,472	134,198
Net Transport Expenditure:		
Contribution from Tyne Tunnel Reserves	(412)	(0)
Contribution from Tyne and Wear Transport Reserves	(1,108)	(1,322)
Contribution from Nexus Reserves	(7,992)	(4,820)
Expenditure Requirement	<u>124,960</u>	<u>128,056</u>
Funded by:		
Tyne and Wear Transport Levy Durham	(67,800)	(70,300)
Transport Levy Northumberland Transport Levy	(16,912)	(16,905)
	(6,458)	(6,562)
Rail Grants and Miscellaneous Grants	(33,790)	(34,289)
Funding agreed by Authority	<u>(124,960)</u>	<u>(128,056)</u>

* The JTC agrees an annual grant to the Tyne & Wear Integrated Transport Executive (Nexus), Durham County Council and Northumberland County Council in respect of revenue support and concessionary travel.

A comparison with previous NECA Transport budget:

	£000
Inflation and other cost pressures	2,768
Increased income	(3,042)
Budget Restriction	(0)
Movement on contribution from reserves	3,370
	<u>3,096</u>

Please note: the Tyne Tunnels expenditure requirement is met fully from Tunnels reserves and tolls income, with no levy funding.

How to pay

Pay by Direct Debit

If you set up a Direct Debit you can pay monthly, any date between 1st and 28th, weekly on a Monday or a Friday or fortnightly on a Monday or a Friday. To set up a Direct Debit or change an existing one go to **www.newcastle.gov.uk/directdebit**

Pay online at **www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltax**

Pay by phone on 0191 278 7878 and ask for payments.

What happens if you don't pay?

Please pay on time as council tax is a priority debt and must be paid on or before the due date.

- If you miss a payment a reminder will be sent
- If you ignore this we will apply to the Magistrate's Court for a summons
- If payment is not made the court will issue a liability order allowing us to enforce collection

Additional costs will be incurred for a summons and liability order and you will be required to pay them.

After a liability order is issued the following methods may be used to collect the council tax debt. These will incur further costs and you will be required to pay them.

- attachment of earnings or benefit
- instructing an enforcement agent
- issuing a bankruptcy petition
- applying for a charging order against your property
- committal to prison.

If you are struggling to pay please contact us as soon as possible so we can help you.

- Phone 0191 278 7878 and ask for council tax.

Your bill

The full council tax bill assumes that two adults (aged 18 and over) live in a property.

There are many discounts and exemptions available which can reduce the amount you pay.

Are you paying too much?

Discounts may reduce your council tax. You may be entitled to a discount of:

- 25% if you are the sole occupant over the age of 18.
- 25% or 50% if one or all adults living in your home are disregarded (see next page).

‘Disregarded’ adults are adults who are not counted for council tax purposes, these include:

- people living in certain hostels
- students, certain apprentices, student nurses and youth training trainees
- school leavers under 20 who left school or college after 30 April. They are discounted until 1 November of that year
- diplomats and members of international institutions and defence organisations
- members of religious communities
- carers
- people who are permanently and severely mentally impaired
- 18-20 year olds who someone gets Child Benefit for
- people living in hospital, nursing or care homes
- people in prison (except those who are in prison for not paying their council tax).

Disabled relief helps if your household includes someone with a disability. To qualify, your home must be lived in by someone who is permanently and severely disabled and it must have been adapted in one of the following ways to meet this person’s special needs: An additional kitchen/bathroom fitted to meet the needs of the disabled person, change of use of a room to meet the needs of the disabled person or space has been adapted for wheelchair use for the disabled person inside the home. If you qualify for this, your council tax band will be reduced.

Exemptions may reduce your council tax, however specific criteria must be met. Examples of when an exemption can be awarded include:

Occupied properties that are:

- lived in by full time students only
- lived in by people under 18 only
- lived in by severely mentally impaired people only.

Unoccupied properties (no time limit) where:

- the occupant has gone into prison, hospital or a care home
- the occupant has moved to provide care elsewhere
- the occupant has moved to receive care elsewhere
- the property has been repossessed by a mortgagee
- the occupation of the property is prohibited by law
- the property is held for a Minister of Religion
- the owner has died and no Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration have been obtained

Unoccupied (up to six months) where:

- the owner has died and Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration have been obtained
- the property is owned by a charity and was last occupied in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

Care Leavers

If you are a care leaver aged under 25 and paying council tax or living with someone who pays council tax, we may be able to reduce the amount you pay.

Empty Property Premium

If your property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than one year a minimum 100% premium will be charged. This premium increases to 200% if your property remains empty and unfurnished for five years and 300% for ten years and over.

Hardship

Hardship relief can be granted under section 13A Local Government Finance Act 1992 in certain circumstances.

For more information and how to apply for a council tax discount, relief, exemption or reduction go to:

www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltax

Notifying us of Changes in Circumstances

You must notify us of any changes in your circumstances that may affect your Council Tax liability, (eg. people moving in and out, changes to eligibility for a reduction in your bill) or your ability to pay. The quickest way to let us know any changes is by going to: **www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltax**

Statement of assumptions

If your account has an exemption, discount, reduction or premium awarded, the bill assumes that the circumstances for this will remain the same for the whole financial year.

If you believe that the amount of council tax you pay should not be subject to an exemption, discount, reduction or premium, or that it should be subject to an exemption, a discount, reduction or premium of a smaller or larger amount, you **must** tell us within **21 days**. Please also remember that you must tell the council of all changes of circumstances that occur during the year that affect the amount of exemption, discount, reduction or premium within **21 days** of the change. If you fail to do this the council will impose a penalty of £70. If you fail to tell us on more than one occasion the penalty may be increased to £280. You may also be liable for prosecution. Types of changes that you must tell us about include (but are not limited to)

- Moving home, people moving into or out of your home, changes to income/savings/type of benefit received by you or other members of your household, applying for or ending a discount or exemption, tenancy changes.

The quickest way to let us know of your changes is by going to: **www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltax**

Appeals

You can make an appeal against your council tax if you think:

- you are not responsible for the council tax
- council tax should not be charged for your home
- your council tax bill is wrong.

If you wish to appeal, you must write and ask us to review the decision. You must set out the reasons why you believe your bill is wrong. **You cannot appeal against legislation.**

We will write to you with the outcome of our review. For appeals concerning your bill, if after our review you are still unhappy, or we fail to respond to your request for a review within two months, you may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal at **www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk** or phone **0303 445 8100**.

Finding out more about your council tax band

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) maintains the Council Tax Valuation List. This includes placing new properties within a council tax band and changing bands for properties when necessary.

To understand why your property is in a certain band, please go to GOV.UK and search: **‘How domestic properties are assessed for council tax bands’**.

Can I appeal against my property’s valuation band?

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) values domestic properties for council tax. This valuation is used to set your council tax band. You might need to contact the VOA if you think your council tax band is wrong.

You can find out more about when you can challenge your band and what you need to do at www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band. If you challenge your band, you must continue to pay council tax at your current band until your appeal is decided.

You can contact the VOA at **www.gov.uk/contact-voa** If you are unable to use the online service you can also contact the VOA on 0300 050 1501.

Changes to our Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/2025

Following public consultation we are making some changes to our scheme.

- Applications will be online and assessed by risk
- Awards will be instant for low and medium risk applications, evidence may be required for higher risk applications
- Awards are a percentage discount from council tax depending on your weekly income and household composition as follows:

Single people & couples without children				
Band	Discount	Passported	Single Person Weekly Income	Couples Joint Weekly Income
1	100%	Relevant Benefit	Up to £100.00	Up to £150.00
2	90%		£100.01 to £150.00	£150.01 to £205.00
3	85%		£150.01 to £200.00	£205.01 to £260.00
4	50%		£200.01 to £305.00	£260.01 to £355.00
5	25%		£305.01 to £395.00	£355.01 to £455.00
Families with children				
Band	Discount	Passported	Families: One Child Weekly Income	Families: Two or More Children Weekly Income
1	100%	Relevant Benefit	Up to £240.00	Up to £325.00
2	90%		£240.01 to £280.00	£325.01 to £345.00
3	85%		£280.01 to £355.00	£345.01 to £395.00
4	50%		£355.01 to £435.00	£395.01 to £480.00
5	25%		£435.01 to £530.00	£480.01 to £590.00

- Income from Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Armed Forces Independence Payments, Child Benefit, Child Maintenance, War Disablement Benefits and Energy Bill Rebate are ignored.
- Universal Credit is treated as earned income when the award contains an element of wages. Deductions taken from Universal Credit by the DWP will not be removed. The housing cost element of Universal Credit will be ignored
- If you have savings of £6,000 or more you will not qualify
- Self Employed income is assessed by using the National Minimum Wage multiplied by the hours you work
- Applications from joint tenants are assessed on their proportion of the household

For more information visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

Data Protection

The information held on your account by the council's Revenues and Benefits Service will be used for administering and collecting council tax, business rates and for processing housing benefit claims. Revenues and Benefits may share your information with other Newcastle City Council departments to make sure you are receiving all the reductions, discounts, reliefs and exemptions to which you are entitled. If you are a Your Homes Newcastle tenant we also obtain information collected by them and provide both council tax and benefit information to them.

For further information on Data Protection please phone 0191 211 6500 or email dataprotection@newcastle.gov.uk

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1 January 2005. This gives you the right to see any information that we hold about the council's business, subject to certain exemptions. For further information on Freedom of Information please phone 0191 211 6500 or email freedomofinformation@newcastle.gov.uk

Reporting Fraud

Fraud costs all taxpayers, if you suspect someone of fraud you can report it (anonymously if you prefer) to the council at www.newcastle.gov.uk/fraud

Council tax fraud could be, lying about who lives in a property and/or their circumstances in order to get discounts or reductions, for example, a single person discount, a student exemption or a claim for the Council Tax Support Scheme.

National Fraud Initiative

This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers and to this end may use the information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other external bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

Help and advice on debt

If you have a problem with debt it is important not to panic but don't ignore it either - it won't go away. Every year in Newcastle hundreds of people work with a debt adviser to deal with their debts. If you have debt, you need to take action or you could end up losing out financially or getting yourself deeper into debt. There may be a risk of further enforcement action being taken, for example by the court and Enforcement Agents.

Citizens Advice Newcastle and the council's Council Tax, Welfare Rights and Money Matters teams are working together to help people manage their council tax payments and other debt.

We really want to help you through these difficult times. If you contact any of the following teams they will be able to provide independent advice.

We can help by arranging suitable payment plans, helping to maximise your income through benefits and help to resolve other debt problems. Please visit any of the websites below to find out more information.

Key Contact Details

Payment by phone 0191 278 7878 and ask for Payments. You will need your reference number found on your bill.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

www.newcastle.gov.uk/benefits or 0191 278 7878 and ask for benefits

Freedom of Information / Data Protection enquiries

freedomofinformation@newcastle.gov.uk or dataprotection@newcastle.gov.uk

Valuation Office Agency

www.gov.uk/contact-voa or 0300 050 1501

Citizens Advice Newcastle

0808 278 7823

Money Matters

www.newcastle.gov.uk/moneyadvice or 0800 170 7008 or email moneymatters@newcastle.gov.uk

Welfare Rights Service

0191 277 2627

City Emergency Helpline

0191 278 7878 and ask for Envirocall

How to get in touch about your council tax

Online: www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltax

Our online forms help you with general enquiries, changes in circumstances, applying for discounts, exemptions or council tax reduction, as well as providing us with documents and evidence.

Using our online forms helps us direct your query to the correct team so it can be dealt with quicker.

Phone: 0191 278 7878 (We are closed on a Wednesday)

Contacting by phone can mean a longer wait

Write: Revenues and Benefits, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH