



COUNCIL TAX FACTSHEET NO. 12

Enforcement

(Important – this note has been provided for guidance only and although it is accurate to the best of our knowledge and belief, it is not intended to be comprehensive or relied upon in the place of independent legal advice).

Action we can take if you do not and will not pay your local taxes

Some Notes to Help You

This leaflet explains what the Council can do to collect the money you owe. We can do this once the Magistrates have granted a Liability Order.

You will have to pay the cost of us issuing a Summons and the granting of a Liability Order, which at present is £55. Further costs could be added if you do not pay straight away and we have to use any of the collection methods described in this leaflet.

We have given you every chance to pay your debt. Please do not incur extra costs or worry to you and your family by not paying.

If you have any questions about the fact you owe us money or need further help please contact the Revenues Services staff on 01273 471600 and ask for 'Council Tax'.

If you have real money problems, talk to us and we will see if we can help or you can contact the local Citizens' Advice Bureau Debt Advice Service on 01273 473082.

Action We Can Take

Under the powers of the Liability Order granted by the Magistrates, we can without giving you further notice take one of the following actions.

Distrain upon Your Belongings

This means that a Bailiff may take your belongings to sell at public auction to raise the money to pay your debt. You will be given 14 days notice before your belongings are taken. We currently employ two bailiff companies, these are:-

Chandlers Limited
Suite 8/9 Market House
12/13 Market Square
Bromley, Kent BR1 1NA
Tel: 0181 290 0866

Stanford & Green
Barker Chambers
Barker Road
Maidstone
Kent ME16 8SF
Tel: 01622 683308

Taking Money from Your Wages

If you are working, we can order your employer to take an amount, set by law, from your wage or salary before you are paid. Your employer can also charge you a small fee for doing this.

Taking Money from Certain of Your Benefits

If you are in receipt of Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance, we can ask the Benefits Agency to take money from your benefit.

Generally the Benefits Agency will only be able to do this if other money is not already being taken.

Making a Charging Order

If you owe at least £1,000 we can apply to the County Court to place a "Charge" on your property. When the property is sold we get the money we are owed before you get any money from the sale of the property. In certain cases we may be able to force your property to be sold.

Being Made Bankrupt

If you owe more than £750 we can ask the County Court to start bankruptcy action.

If you are made bankrupt all your belongs and assets will become the property of the Receiver. You will be unable to get credit and your bankruptcy will be widely known.

Going to Prison

If the Bailiffs are unable to seize belongings to the value of the debt, we may apply to the Court for you to go to prison. You will have to explain to the Magistrates why you have not paid.

If the Magistrates decide that your failure to pay has been due to refusal or neglect, they can send you to prison for up to 3 months. In some cases, this can be suspended if payment is made to the Magistrates' Order. You will get extra costs on your account for this action.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Visiting our offices

You can visit us at **4 Fisher Street**, Lewes any **weekday** between **9am. and 4.45pm** (we close at **4.15pm Friday**).

Or why not give us a ring?

If you would prefer to make your enquiry over the phone please ring us on **01273 471600**. Ask for 'Council Tax' or 'Benefits'.

Writing to us

We are happy to deal with your enquiry in writing. Please write to:

Local Taxation Manager
Lewes District Council
Council Offices
4 Fisher Street
Lewes East Sussex BN7 2DQ

Or email localtax@lewes.gov.uk

Please note: The full details and requirements cannot be completely covered in this factsheet so the information given is for guidance only. If you contact us and discuss your individual circumstances, we can give you more specific information on how the above affects you.