

## COUNCIL TAX FACTSHEET NO. 5

### Students

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**Council Tax is made up of two equal parts. One part relates to the property and the other assumes there are two adults living there. Special rules apply to students, which mean some students will not have to pay Council Tax.**

#### **Which students do not have to pay Council Tax?**

Council Tax bills relate to properties rather than people, so whether or not you pay Council Tax depends on where you live. Two types of student accommodation are exempt from Council Tax. These are halls of residence and houses or flats where the only people living there are full-time students. Empty properties where the person who would normally pay the Council Tax bill is a full-time student are also exempt. For any period after 1 April 1999, any property occupied only by a combination of people who are either severely mentally impaired or students, will also qualify for an exemption.

#### **Who counts as a full-time student?**

To count as a full-time student for Council Tax you must be over 18 and your studies must fall into one of three categories.

- *A full-time course of education at a university or college, which lasts for at least an academic year, takes at least 24 weeks a year and involves at least 21 hours of study each week during term time. This includes students on industrial placements, and student nurses studying academic courses at universities and those on Project 2000.*
- *A course which lasts for more than three months and involves at least 12 hours a week, leading to any qualification up to A level, ONC or OND standard. You must be under 20 years old. (Correspondence courses, evening classes and courses taken in connection with your job, like day-release, are not included).*
- *Students registered as foreign language assistants with the Central Bureau for Education Visas and Exchanges.*

#### **How does the Council know I am a full-time student?**

The Council will need to see a certificate from your university or college with details of your course of study. If you have not sent the Council a student certificate you will need to get one from your university or college. The Council will write to you directly if it needs any more information about your full-time student status.

#### **What if I live with people who are not full-time students?**

If there is someone who is not a full-time student living in the property, the liable person(s) will normally get a Council Tax bill.

It could be that this other person is also not counted for Council Tax and therefore a 50% discount may be given on the Council Tax bill. (See Council Tax Factsheet No. 2 – Discounts and Exemptions for further details).

#### **If I live with non-students could I end up paying the Council Tax?**

Yes, if you rent or own a property jointly with other people then you are all liable for the Council Tax bill. It is up to individual joint tenants how they decide to share out the Council Tax bill.

If you live with someone who charges you rent because they own or rent the whole property they are liable to pay the Council Tax. But there is nothing to stop them charging you for Council Tax. If this happens and you think you have been overcharged for your share of Council Tax then you can challenge the increase through the Rent Officer service.

**If I live in a bedsit do I have to pay Council Tax?**

If your bedsit is a self-contained property for Council Tax, then it will get its own bill. If it is not because you share basic facilities with other people living in the property, then your landlady/landlord is liable for the Council Tax bill for the whole property.

**If I do end up paying Council Tax, can I claim benefit?**

Most students are not eligible for Council Tax Benefit, the exceptions are single parents, disabled students and students with a partner who is not a student.

Some other students can claim what is called a Second Adult Rebate. These are students who are liable to pay a Council Tax bill who share their homes with someone on a low income. The person must be over 18 and must not be paying the student rent. They cannot be married to the student or living with them as if they were married. (See Council Tax Factsheet No. 7 – Council Tax Benefit for further details).

**What about international students?**

Your nationality does not affect your liability to pay Council Tax, or the rules which apply to students. The Council Tax rules apply in the same way to all students, whatever their nationality.

**I am a student, I live with my husband/wife and they are not a British Citizen. Do we have to pay Council Tax?**

If you and your husband/wife are the only occupants in the property and your husband/wife is unable to take up employment or claim benefits due to the terms of their leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom there will be no Council Tax payable. In cases where there are other occupants in the property who are non-students there will be a charge. In these cases all joint tenants or joint owners share responsibility for paying it.

**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](mailto: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.

