



COUNCIL TAX FACTSHEET NO. 7

Council Tax Benefit

People on Income Support or low incomes who have to pay Council Tax bills can get help through Council Tax Benefit. This is a social security benefit run by Lewes District Council to pay all or some of your Council Tax.

Who can claim Council Tax Benefit ?

Anyone who is liable to pay a Council Tax bill can apply for Council Tax Benefit. Even if you do not get any other social security benefits, you may still get Council Tax Benefit. Students are not eligible for Council Tax Benefit unless they are a single parent, disabled or live with a partner who is not a student.

What about couples?

If you are married, or living with someone as if you were married, civil partners or living with someone as if you are a civil partner, then you will be assessed jointly for Council Tax Benefit. Couples should make only one claim for Council Tax Benefit. You can choose which one of you makes the claim.

If I get Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance will I get Council Tax Benefit?

Yes, provided you are liable to pay Council Tax and you make a claim. A Council Tax form is enclosed with your Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance claim pack, you should complete this form at the same time as you claim Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance.

If you are on Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit you will normally get the maximum amount of Council Tax Benefit. However, if you have another adult living in your household who is not your partner or dependant your benefit will be reduced.

What if I am on a low income but don't get any benefit?

If you do not get any other benefits, but think you might qualify for Council Tax Benefit because you are on a low income, then you should fill in a claim form. Even if you are not sure whether your income is low enough to get Council Tax Benefit, you should claim anyway.

How much benefit will I get?

The rules for working out Council Tax Benefit have been set by Parliament. The amount of benefit you get will depend on your income, your savings, your personal circumstances and the size of your Council Tax bill.

The more money you have coming in, the less Council Tax Benefit you will receive. The maximum Council Tax Benefit you can receive is 100%. You will normally get this if you are on Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit.

How will my savings affect Council Tax Benefit?

Your savings are taken into account in the same way whether you are a single person or part of a couple assessed jointly. The amount of savings you can have is not doubled for couples.

If your savings are less than £6000 then they are ignored when working out your Council Tax Benefit. If your savings are between £6000 and £16,000 then the Council will assume you get an income from your savings when we work out how much benefit you get. If your savings are more than £16,000 then you will not get any Council Tax Benefit (unless you receive Guaranteed Pension Credit).

How do my personal circumstances affect Council Tax Benefit?

If you are elderly or have a disability then you will get more benefit. Extra benefit is available for parents bringing up children. The form you fill in to claim Council Tax Benefit will cover all the special needs taken into account when working out how much benefit you can get.

What if full-time students also live in my home?

Full-time students in the household are ignored when your Council Tax is calculated. This means that your benefit is worked out on the full charge.

Can I claim benefit for someone else living in my home?

You may be able to get Council Tax Benefit if you are liable to pay the Council Tax bill and share your home with someone who is on a low income. The person must be over 18 and must not be paying you rent. You cannot be married to the person or living with them as if you were married or civil partners or living with someone as if you are a civil partner.

This kind of Council Tax Benefit is called a Second Adult Rebate. If you claim a second adult rebate your own income and savings are not taken into account. To claim a second adult rebate you fill in a normal Council Tax Benefit form.

When should I claim Council Tax Benefit?

You should claim Council Tax Benefit as soon as possible because your claim cannot normally be backdated. As soon as you think you might qualify for Council Tax Benefit then you should fill in a claim form.

What if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change so that you might qualify for Council Tax Benefit then you should make a claim straight away. If you know in advance that your circumstances are going to change, such as moving home or leaving your job, then you can make a claim up to 13 weeks before the change actually takes place. If your circumstances change while you are claiming benefit you should tell the office straight away.

How will my Council Tax Benefit be paid?

Council Tax Benefit is paid as an adjustment to your Council Tax bill. This means that the amount of benefit you get shows as a reduction on this bill.

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
PO Box 128
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.