Council Tax Bills 2018/19 – Frequently Asked Questions

The council will shortly be sending out the council tax and business rates bills for the forthcoming financial year and to help our customers we have compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions.

1. I want to set up a Direct Debit to pay my council tax / business rates.

Please call customer services on 01858 828282 who will arrange this without the need to complete any paperwork. Alternatively go to www.harborough.gov.uk to set up a direct debit online.

2. My bill states I pay by Direct Debit do I need to do anything?

No - the payments will automatically be taken from your account on the dates shown on your bill.

3. I have received a council tax bill and I don’t understand why the amounts have changed?

There may be various reasons why the amounts have changed, for example your entitlement to a discount or benefits may be different or the amounts levied by the County Council, the Fire Authority, the Police or Parish Councils may have increased. If it is not clear from your bill please contact customer services on 01858 828282.

See full list of preceptor 2018/19 increases below:

Harborough District Council including Special Expenses (set by us):

- Increase: 1.5

Leicestershire County Council:

- Increase: 5.99% - contact: 0116 305 7831 (3% Adult Social Care, 2.99% core element)

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority:

- Increase: 2.98% - contact: 0116 287 2241

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire:

- Increase: 6.41% - contact: 0116 248 2691

Parish Councils:

Each parish has a different percentage increase or decrease. This will be shown on the front of the customer’s bill.
4. My bill says I'm in a special expense area. What does that mean?

Special expenses are paid to the district council for maintaining parks, play areas, allotments, burial grounds, grass verges and any other open spaces owned by the council.

If you live in an area which requires these services your bill will contain a charge for special expenses.

In some areas the parish council will undertake this work, however, when the parish council doesn’t provide these services, the district council will do this on their behalf. Hence some areas will have both a parish charge and a special expense charge.

5. I want to let you know about a change of address / change in occupancy.

Please visit www.harborough.gov.uk to tell us about your change of circumstances, or call customer services on 01858 828282.

6. My bill has a 50% premium on it. What is the reason for this?

Following consultation with affected residents in 2017, the Council decided to implement an additional 50% premium on the council tax charged in respect of properties that are empty and unfurnished for more than two years.

This means that 50% of the full council tax due on 1st April 2018 will be added to the charge.

The aim of this change of council policy is to encourage owners to bring long term empty properties back into use.

7. My property is unoccupied because it is in need of, or undergoing, major repair, I was granted a reduction in my council tax for up to 12 months but is been cancelled from 1st April 2018. Why is this?

Following consultation with affected residents in 2017, the Council decided to implement the change to properties that are classed as undergoing major and/or substantial repairs and in receipt of a 50% discount.

This means that the 50% discount that was applied has been removed from 1st April 2018. Full council tax is now due and payable.

If you are ‘prohibited by law’, i.e. by a legal order from a public authority, from occupying the property due to it’s uninhabitable state, the Council can consider the situation and advise if an exemption from council tax is applicable. Please contact customer services for more information.

8. I own a second home and have always had a 10% reduction in my council tax. This discount is not showing on my 2018/19 bill. Why is this?

Following consultation with affected residents in 2017, the Council decided to implement a change to properties that are classed as second homes and are in receipt of a 10% discount.
This means that 10% discount that was applied has been removed from 1st April 2018. Full council tax is now due and payable.

In March 2018, you will receive your 2018/19 council tax notice it will now no longer include the discount mentioned above. In essence this means that full council tax will be due and payable.

9. I'm struggling to pay my rent / council tax and wonder if I can get any help towards it.

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit towards your rent and / or Council Tax Support to reduce your council tax. You may also be able to apply for a council tax discretionary discount to further reduce your council tax and/or a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to cover all or part of any shortfall in your rent. Please contact customer services on 01858 828282 or go to www.harborough.gov.uk for more information.

10. What is an ‘applicable amount’?

This is a weekly figure set by the Government and represents the basic living needs of the customer and family. All authorities will use this amount when calculating entitlement to benefit.

11. I have received my award letter and the amount of savings (capital) quoted is different to the amount I now have in my account(s).

The figures used in the calculation will be based upon the amount of savings you had when you last applied. If you are of working age, any savings you have that are below £6,000 will not be taken into account when assessing entitlement. This figure is £10,000 in for pensioners.

12. The state retirement pension/welfare benefit amount shown on my award is not quite what I receive.

Most DWP benefits are increased by a certain percentage each year which we work out for the new financial year. If your figure is not accurate please bring in your pension / benefit award letter so we can adjust it if required.