

Benefits series

Council Tax Support

Date: April 2024

Council Tax

Council tax is a domestic property-based tax for England Scotland and Wales. It is paid to your local authority for the services that it provides. In Northern Ireland domestic rates are payable.

Reduction Scheme England and Wales

This is means-tested help for people on low incomes which reduces council tax liability.

Each local authority operates its own scheme. Some will allow a certain percentage off the total bill and others will allow the full amount. If you have capital over £16,000, you would not qualify for help in this way.

For details of Council Tax Support/Reduction in your area, contact your local council.

Scotland has a scheme like housing benefit.

Disability Reduction scheme

You may qualify for this reduction if you have a resident member who is '*substantially and permanently disabled*'. This can be a child, or an adult and you must have either;

- an additional bathroom or kitchen needed by that person
- you have made room to use a wheelchair; or
- you have a room other than the toilet, bathroom or kitchen that is needed by and predominantly used by that person.

For details, contact your local council.

Council Tax Discount Scheme – reduced Council Tax when your child reaches 18

Council Tax is based on two people aged 18 or over living in a dwelling. You normally get a discount if there are less than two adults' resident in your household. If there is one adult, discount is 25%. If no one counts as resident in your household, the discount is 50%.

Some people are disregarded for council tax purposes. So even if two or more adults live in your household, it is still possible that you may be eligible for a discount.

People who are disregarded:

- People who are "severely mentally impaired".
Most people who have Down's syndrome will count as "severely mentally impaired". You will need a certificate from a doctor confirming that your child has a "severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning which appears to be permanent". And they must receive the middle or highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, or either rate of the Personal Independence Payment daily living component, Employment and Support Allowance or UC which includes a work capability amount.
- Everyone under 17, or 18/19 year olds for whom child benefit is payable
- Full time students

If you live alone with your child who has Down's syndrome, you can continue to get the 25% discount, once they turn 18.

Carers may also be disregarded, if all the following conditions are met:

- Your child gets the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance or either rate of the care component of Personal Independence Payment, and
- You provide at least 35 hours a week or more of support, and
- Your child is over 18.

In these circumstances, you are disregarded for council tax purposes as a "carer". So, both you and your son/daughter can be disregarded and a 50% discount should apply.

Note- you do NOT have to be getting Carer's Allowance to be classed as a carer. If more than one person cares for 35 hours a week or more separately, you can both be "disregarded" as a "carer".

It is therefore possible for both parents/carers of an 18 year old who has Down's syndrome to be disregarded, as well as the young person, as long as the parents/carers both care for 35 hours each a week. If there are no other adults in the household, or they are also disregarded (for example, students), the council tax discount would be 50%.

If you did not know about the Discount Scheme and realise that you should have been getting a discount, you may be able to get full backdating to when you first became eligible. You must ask your local authority to backdate it.

For details, go to your local council.

Contact us

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