



Council Tax 2023/2024

Explanatory Notes

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Do you have any questions about your new bill?

Take a look at the FAQs by visiting:

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/council-tax-questions

About the Adult Social Care charge

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government made an offer to Adult Social Care authorities to allow them to charge an additional “precept” on its Council Tax from the financial year beginning in 2016 without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting expenditure on Adult Social Care. The Secretary of State offered councils the option of charging this “precept” at an appropriate level in each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019-20. These arrangements were extended to allow authorities to apply an Adult Social Care charge in 2020-21 and any subsequent year thereafter subject to the approval of the House of Commons. For the financial year 2023/24 the threshold is 2%.

Your council tax demand notice shows two percentage changes: one specifically for the adult social care precept, and one for general expenditure.

Can I claim council tax support?

The amount of any reduction depends on the money coming into your home, any savings you have, the number of people living in the property and their income.

If you are of pensionable age you may receive up to 100% reduction in your council tax bill.

People who are severely disabled, have severely disabled children or those who are single and aged under 25 without dependent children will receive a maximum of 88%. Everyone else will receive a maximum of 78%.

You can use our benefit calculator to see if you are entitled.

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/benefits

Charges on empty homes

Full council tax is payable on all property which is unoccupied. The amount you will pay will depend on how long the property has been unoccupied:

- **Unoccupied 2 to 5 years**, the charge is 200% of the normal charge.
- **Unoccupied for more than 5 years**, the charge increased to 300% of the normal charge from 1 April 2020.
- **Unoccupied for 10 years or more**, the charge increased to 400% of the normal charge from 1 April 2021.

There is no discount for properties needing or undergoing major repair.

How much does each household pay?

The amount you have to pay depends on the value of the property you live in, it does not matter whether you rent or own the property. There are 8 bands from A to H covering the cheapest to the dearest homes.

The council does not decide what band your property is placed in. If you have an enquiry about the council tax band of

your property you need to contact the Valuation Office Agency at www.gov.uk/voa/contact

If you have lived in your home for more than six months, you can only appeal against the band if part of your home has been demolished, or the physical state of the area where you live has changed.

I'm disabled; can I get a reduction in my council tax?

You may get a reduction in your council tax if you or someone living with you is disabled, and your home contains one of the following:

- A room which provides special facilities for the disabled person and which is mainly used by them.
- A second bathroom or kitchen provided for the disabled person.
- Enough floor space for the disabled person to use their wheelchair indoors.

Where a property is in band A, the reduction is one sixth of the full band A charge. Where the property is in any other band, the amount of council tax payable is reduced to the next lowest council tax band.

Can I get a discount?

If you are the only adult living in a property you are entitled to 25% discount.

In most cases the full council tax is due if there are two or more people living in your home, but some people are not counted when deciding if your bill can be reduced.

These people include:

- Children under 18.
- Children over 18 for whom child benefit is still paid.
- School leavers who are between 'A' level exams and going to university or full time college (excluding those on a gap year).
- Certain youth training scheme trainees and apprentices.
- Foreign language students and their husband, wife or partner.
- People living permanently in a nursing home or hospital.

- People providing care to another person who is not their husband, wife, partner or child under 18.
- Persons with severe mental impairment as confirmed by a doctor and receiving certain state benefits.
- People in prison or detained in hospital under a court order, the Mental Health Act or the Armed Forces Act.
- People living in a bail or probation hostel, or a hostel for people with no settled way of life.
- Young people who were in the care of City of Wolverhampton Council (including those young people who received care outside the city but have since returned to live in Wolverhampton) and are aged over 18 but under 25.

Annexes - You may be able to claim 50% discount if you live in an annex and your relatives live in the main property. **Please contact us for further information.**

Is my property exempt?

Your property may be exempt from council tax if it is:

- Unoccupied because the occupier is permanently resident in a nursing home or hospital.
- Unoccupied because the previous occupier has moved to provide or receive care due to illness or old age.
- Empty property which cannot be occupied by law.
- Unoccupied after the occupier has died, and where probate was not granted more than 6 months ago.
- Repossessed by the bank or building society.
- Occupied solely by full time students and/or mentally impaired people.

If you have two homes, one of which is occupied in connection with your employment, the job-related dwelling will receive a 50% discount.

Appeals against council tax liability

You have the right to appeal against decisions by the council such as:

- Where you think you should not be liable to pay.
- Where you have not been awarded a personal discount or exemption that you think you are entitled to.

If you wish to appeal, you should write to the council tax office, stating the grounds for your appeal and enclosing any supporting evidence you have.

You should continue to pay council tax whilst your appeal is being decided. If you win your appeal any council tax overpaid will be refunded to you.

Can I appeal against my property's valuation band?

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) values domestic properties for council tax. This valuation is used to set your council tax band. You might need to contact the VOA if you think your council tax band is wrong.

You can find out more about when you can challenge your band and what you need to do at [gov.uk/ challenge-council-tax-band](https://www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band). If you challenge your band, you must continue to pay council tax at your current band until your appeal is decided.

You can contact the VOA at [gov.uk/contact-voa](https://www.gov.uk/contact-voa). If you are unable to use the online service you can also contact the VOA on **03000 501 501**.

What happens if I am struggling to pay or don't pay?

If you are struggling to pay your council tax then please talk to us and we will see what we can do to help. Don't wait until things become unmanageable, if you speak to our advisors now they will be able to see if you're entitled to a discount/reduction or they might be able to reschedule your payments over a longer period.

Please call **01902 551166** or visit www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/council-tax if you need help.

If you don't pay enough or if you miss a payment the Council will send you a reminder. If you don't bring your payments up to date and keep them up to date, you will get a summons to go to the Magistrates' Court. When a summons is issued, extra costs are added to the amount you owe. If you don't pay the full amount on the summons, the Council will apply for a liability order through the Magistrates' Court with extra costs added.

If you still don't pay, the Council can:

- Send the debt to an Enforcement Agent who will charge you extra costs to collect the debt and may take your possessions or company assets to sell to pay your debt. As soon as the Enforcement Agent receives the debt to collect they will send you a notice and you will have to pay at least £75 fees. If the Enforcement Agent visits your property to collect the debt you will have to pay at least a further £235 fees.
- Have the money taken out of your wages, income support, job seekers allowance, employment support allowance, universal credit or pension credit.
- Apply for you to be made bankrupt.
- Apply for a charging order on your property.
- Take action to commit you to prison.

Data Protection and Data Matching

The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you provide for the recovery of amounts due, and the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

For more information visit Privacy and Cookies available at

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk

How to contact us

Online: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk

E-mail: council.tax@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Council tax enquiries: **01902 551166**

Letter: **PO Box 250, Wolverhampton WV2 1AX**

Payments: 24 hour card payments can be made by

Telephone: **0800 180 4464**

or Online at:

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/make-payment

Information on how your council tax is spent along with leaflets from West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service and TfWM are available at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/how-your-council-tax-is-spent

are you getting all the help available to you?

The **cost of living crisis** means everyone is experiencing higher prices for everything from energy, transport to food and housing. If you are finding it hard to cope, then please talk to us as we're here to help.

Get help with this bill

If you will find it difficult to pay your council tax, then let us know as soon as you can. We can help you understand any discounts, schemes or benefits you might be able to access.

You can also use the benefits calculator on our website to see if you might be eligible for extra help at wolverhampton.entitledto.co.uk

Remember that any change in your circumstances will affect what you can claim so always use the benefits calculator to check. Changes include any differences to what you earn, a new baby, people moving in or out of your home or increases in rent.

Increase your financial confidence

If you need some help to feel more confident and improve your financial wellbeing, why not do our free short course called Multiply to help you improve your skills and save money. Call **01902 558180** for details or go to aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk/

Free school meals

Are you claiming free school meals? You can check and apply at wolverhampton.gov.uk/education-and-schools/free-school-meals

If you're eligible, don't forget you can also access lots of free activities for the children over the Easter Holidays so check out yowolves.co.uk to find what's available near you.