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Council tax - discounts and council tax support



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The amount of council tax you have to pay depends on:

- the valuation band in which your property has been placed
- the number of people aged 18 or over living in your property (when we calculate your council tax we assume that two people, aged 18 or over, live in most properties).
- if you are on a low income you may be entitled to council tax support.

Council Tax Support

You may be entitled to council tax support. This depends on your income, family circumstances and the amount of council tax you have to pay. As a general rule the lower your family income and the higher your council tax is, the more likely you will be to qualify for some help.

For more information or to make a claim please see [Making a claim for Housing-Benefit or Council Tax Support](#).

Council Tax Discounts

Single person discount

If only one person, aged 18 or over, lives in your property, we can give you a single person discount of 25% (one quarter).

[Download an application form](#). (PDF, 35kb)

We may need to decide where your main home is for council tax purposes. For example, if you work away from home or if you have more than one home.

Second home discount

Council tax bill for a second home can be reduced by 10%. [Apply for a Second Home Discount](#).

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Disability

Your bill may be reduced if a permanently disabled person, adult or child, lives in the property. Your property must have certain features which are essential, or of major importance, to the well-being of the disabled person.

These features must include at least one of the following:

- a room (but not a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) which is used mainly by the disabled person: for example, an extension used for storing dialysis equipment, or a bedroom provided downstairs in a property with two or more storeys.
- an additional (i.e. a second) bathroom or kitchen in the property for the use of the disabled person.
- extra space inside the property for the use of a wheelchair.

When considering whether a reduction should apply, we have to decide whether the person with the disability would find it impossible, or extremely difficult, to live in the property; or whether their health would suffer, or the disability become more severe, if the extra feature were not available.

To qualify for a reduction, the extra room need not be specially-built, but can be an existing room used specifically for the person with the disability.

If your home is eligible, your bill will be reduced to that of a property in the valuation band immediately below the band shown on the valuation list. For example, if your home is in band D, your bill will be reduced to that for a band C home. This will not, however, affect the value of your home or its banding on the valuation list. In this example, it would still be shown as band D on the valuation list. If your home is in band A (the lowest council tax band), a reduction of 1/9 of the band D council tax would apply.

Contact us on 020 8207 7407 or email revenues@hertsmere.gov.uk to apply.

Council tax - occupied annexes

There is a discount of 50% for annexes which are:

1. occupied by a relative of the person liable to

- pay the council tax of the main dwelling; or
2. 'unoccupied' as the person living in the main dwelling is using the annexe as part of their main home.

Please note you may already be able to claim an exemption if the annexe is:

1. occupied by a dependant relative; or
2. unoccupied and cannot be let separately from the main dwelling without a breach of planning control.

Please contact revenues@hertsmere.gov.uk or call the helpline 020 8207 7407 for further information and to apply.

Other discounts

You may receive a council tax discount if someone in your home is:

- a carer
- a non-British husband/wife/dependant of a student, who is prevented by the terms of her / his leave to enter or remain in the UK, from working or claiming benefit
- a student, student nurse, apprentice or youth training trainee
- under 20 and still at school or has just left school
- living in hospital
- living in a care home
- a member of a religious community
- a member (or dependant) of international headquarters and a defence organisation
- a member (or dependant) of a visiting force
- a person who still has child benefit paid for them
- a person who is a foreign language assistant
- a person who is severely mentally impaired
- in prison or held somewhere else by the authorities
- a person who lives in a hostel for the homeless or a night shelter
- a person with diplomatic immunity or privileges.

We can reduce your bill by 25% or 50%, depending on how many people we count.

If we count only one person as living in your property we can give you a discount of 25%.

If we disregard all residents within the property we can give you a discount of 50%.

Contact us on 020 8207 7407 or email revenues@hertsmere.gov.uk for further information and details of how to apply.

Uninhabitable and Long-term empty property discounts

- From 01/04/2013 to 31/03/2019 the council applied a 50% additional levy (called an Empty Homes Premium) on properties which had been unoccupied for longer than two years.
- **From 01/04/2019 we will apply 100% additional levy (the full charge plus 100%) until reoccupied.**

We resolved to:

- Award a discretionary discount of 50% for up to 12 months for a property which requires, or is undergoing, major structural repair or alteration to render it habitable (Council Tax Exemption Class A prior to 1 April 2013).
- Award a discretionary discount of 100% for up to two months after a property becomes unoccupied and unfurnished. Six week occupancy / furnished periods are ignored. (Council Tax Exemption Class C prior to 1 April 2013).
- From 01/04/2013 to 31/03/2019 apply the 50% additional levy to properties which have been unoccupied for longer than two years.
- From 01/04/2019 this levy was increased to 100%.

We made these changes for the following reasons:

- To encourage owners to bring under-occupied properties back into use in view of the housing shortage both in the borough and across the country.
- To discourage owners from leaving properties unoccupied for any length of time in view of the housing shortage and cost to the local economy.
- To spread the costs of council services over a wider tax base so council tax can be lower for residents.



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