

Council Tax Information Leaflet 2019/20

Rossendale
BOROUGH COUNCIL



This leaflet Forms part of Your Council Tax Bill



**Message from
Councillor
Alyson Barnes,
Leader of
Rossendale
Borough
Council**

This leaflet explains everything you need to know about your Council Tax and how it is spent.

As you'll know in the last few years, setting our Council's budget plans has been extremely difficult and tough decisions on where best to put our resources have had to be made. It's no secret that this Council has been hit by huge cuts to its core government funding.

This year has been no different. Government has not given us any extra funding to deal with the very real issues our residents face. Despite the challenges, we had managed to keep Council Tax down for several years but like nearly all local authorities across the country, we have had no choice but to increase it. Not increasing Council Tax was no longer an option.

It's not a decision we take lightly. But even with the rise, the borough council share of the Council Tax you pay equates to an average of £3.29 per week per household.

This pays for things like collecting bins, tackling fly tipping, maintaining and making our parks better, improving housing, developing the economy, planning, public protection and working with community groups and others to make a real difference to the borough.

The Council is also still investing in major projects such as redeveloping the borough's town centres, developing the economy and improving its cultural and leisure facilities.

The vast majority of your Council Tax - 86% funds County Council and Police and Fire Services in Lancashire.

Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made an offer to adult social care authorities. ("Adult social care authorities" are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.)

The offer is the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional "precept" on its council tax for financial years from the financial year beginning in 2016 without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting expenditure on adult social care. Subject to the annual approval of the House of Commons, the Secretary of State intends to offer the option of charging this "precept" at an appropriate level in each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019-20.

2019/20 About your Council Tax Bill

The following information is intended as guidance only and is not a full statement of the law.

If you need more information on any of the subjects mentioned below, please phone 01706 217777 (Option 1) or check: www.rossendale.gov.uk

Council Tax is charged on most homes, whether owned or rented.

The amount of Council Tax you pay depends on:

- the valuation band your home falls into;
- the area you live in; and
- whether you are entitled to any benefits or reductions.

Council Tax valuation bands for each property were decided by the Valuation Office Agency in 1991. For more information see, www.voa.gov.uk

There are eight bands, from A to H. Properties are still banded on their 1991 values. New properties are placed in a band according to the open market value they would have had in 1991.

Band A	Up to £40,000
Band B	£40,000 - £52,000
Band C	£52,000 - £68,000
Band D	£68,000 - £88,000
Band E	£88,000 - £120,000
Band F	£120,000 - £160,000
Band G	£160,000 - £320,000
Band H	More than £320,000



From every pound in council tax:

71p - Lancashire County Council

14p - Rossendale BC

11p - Police & Crime Commissioner

4p - Combined Fire Authority

You can appeal against your valuation band if you have moved into your home in the last six months, the building has been altered since the 1991 valuation; or the area where you live has changed in a way which could affect the value of your home.

There is no charge for making an appeal. If you choose to employ a company to appeal on your behalf, you should take great care that you understand their fees and charges. (Please note that bandings can go up as well as down).

You should continue to pay your council tax bill whilst awaiting the outcome of any appeal.

Rossendale BC collects Council Tax on behalf of a number of charging bodies (preceptors). The tax is then divided as a contribution towards the budgets of each preceptor. Full budget information is also available on the Council's website (including Lancashire County Council, Fire and Police) by following the links on the back of your bill.

Exemptions from Council Tax

Some properties can be exempt from paying Council Tax. They are empty properties that are exempt:

Class B	Owned by a Charity (exempt up to 6 months)
Class D	Taxpayer has gone to prison
Class E	Taxpayer has moved into residential care
Class F	Taxpayer is deceased (for up to 6 months after grant of probate)
Class G	Occupation is prohibited by Law
Class H	Awaiting occupation by a Minister of Religion
Class I	Left empty by taxpayer now receiving care elsewhere
Class J	Left empty by taxpayer now providing care elsewhere
Class K	Owned and last occupied by a student
Class L	Empty having been repossessed
Class Q	Liable person is a trustee in bankruptcy
Class R	Empty boat mooring or caravan pitch
Class T	Empty annexe or 'granny flat'

Occupied properties that are exempt

Class M	Student halls of residence
Class N	All occupiers are students
Class O	Held available for use by armed forces
Class P	At least one occupier is a member of a visiting force
Class S	All residents are under 18 years of Age
Class U	All residents are severely mentally impaired, or a combination of those severely mentally impaired and students
Class V	At least one occupier is a visiting foreign diplomat
Class W	Annexe ('granny flat') occupied by a dependent relative

Budget Information

Payments

You are required to pay your Council Tax on time as shown on your bill. If you fail to pay an instalment, you will receive a reminder. If you bring your account up to date and then miss a further instalment, you will receive a second reminder. If you bring your account up to date again, any further missed instalments will result in us asking you to pay the full balance for the year at once. If you do not, we may take legal action against you and you will also have to pay court costs. For methods of payment visit the below website: www.rossendale.gov.uk/payyourcounciltax

You can use any of the following:

Direct Debit

(on the 1st, 8th, 15th or 22nd of the month)

Online

via the Council's website: www.rossendale.gov.uk

Telephone

01706 217777 (Option 2)

In cash at post offices and other outlets
(you will need the barcode on your bill)

You can request to pay Council Tax in 12 instalments, instead of the normal 10, by writing to the Council Tax Office before April 15th. You can still request extra instalments after April 15th, and we will spread the charge over the maximum number of months still available.

ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Rossendale BOROUGH COUNCIL



Council Tax Discounts

Single person's discount

If you are the only adult in your home (aged 18 or over), we will reduce your bill by 25%. Unless you tell us differently, your Council Tax bill will assume that there are two or more adults aged 18 or over living in your home. However, when considering the number of adults living in a property, we do not include:

- » full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees;
- » 18 and 19-year-olds who are at school or have just left school;
- » people who have severe mental health issues/illness;
- » people staying in hospitals, care homes, prison or certain hostels or night shelters;
- » care workers working for low pay (usually for charities);
- » people caring for someone with a disability who is not their partner or child under 18;
- » members of visiting forces and some international institutions; and
- » members of religious communities (monks and nuns).

Empty Property Discount & Premium

A discount is granted for the first 6 months that a property is unoccupied and unfurnished; 100% discount for the first month, followed by 50% discount for the next 5 months.

After 6 months a vacant property will be subject to a full charge. Where a property remains continuously vacant for more than 2 years a 50% premium will be applied i.e. a charge of one and a half times the normal rate of council tax will apply.

When a property is vacant due to major repairs or structural alteration, then a 50% discount can apply for up to 12 months.

For annexes occupied by a non-dependent relative, 50% discount applies.

If you are awarded a discount we will issue a notice to you to confirm it. In the case of time limited discounts, you will receive a further notice shortly before the expiry of the discount to explain what the charges will be.

Disability Banding Reduction

If you, or someone who lives with you, has a disability and need an extra bathroom or kitchen, or extra space in your property, we may reduce your Council Tax by the equivalent of one valuation band.

Council Tax Support

If you are on a low income, you may be able to claim Council Tax Support (a reduction in your bill). The amount we will take off your bill depends on:

- » your income and savings;
- » your personal circumstances;
- » how much Council Tax you pay
- » the circumstances of the people living with you.

To claim Council Tax Support, you will need to fill in a form and provide proof of your identity, income and savings, and details of anyone who lives with you. For working age claimants, the maximum level of support is 80% of the council tax. Those of pension age can receive up to 100%.

Universal Credit Claims do not include Council Tax support and a separate claim must be completed. Information is available on our website.

Alternative Maximum Council Tax Support

If you share your home with another adult who is not your partner and who is on a low income, you may be able to claim Second Adult Rebate. This discount is based on the income of the other adult, not on your income. It provides a reduction of up to 25% on your Council Tax bill.

For further details phone 01706 217777 or email benefits@rossendalebc.gov.uk

We can also consider making a reduction in council tax if you have been affected by unusual or exceptional circumstances and do not qualify for other discounts exemptions or support schemes. Any such request must be made in writing.

Change in Circumstance

You are required to let us know about any changes in your home circumstances within 21 days. This is particularly important if you are claiming Council Tax Support, discounts or exemption for your property. If you do not, or the information you provide is not correct, you will have to pay us the difference between the amount of Council Tax you have paid and the amount you should have paid following the change in circumstances. You may also have to pay an additional penalty of either £70 or £280.

Fraud prevention

Rossendale Borough Council is committed to protecting public money. It employs a team dedicated to tackling fraud, which includes investigating Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Exemption & Business Rates related frauds. The Council may issue a financial penalty or take prosecution action against those found to be committing/assisting others to commit fraud. The Council uses the data it holds to prevent and detect fraud and error by taking part in data matching exercises. This includes the National Fraud Initiative [NFI] which matches our records with other Local Authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions and other organisations, any matches identified are investigated.

Appeals

You can appeal against your Council Tax liability, for example if you believe you should be entitled to a discount or exemption or that you should not be the person responsible for the tax. If you decide to appeal, you must continue paying your Council Tax. If you do not pay in these circumstances, the council may take action to enforce payment. There is no right in law to withhold payment and the Courts will not accept an outstanding appeal as a valid defence against recovery action. We will adjust your future payments or refund any amounts you have overpaid if your appeal is successful.

**citizens
advice**

**Rossendale
& Hyndburn**

Citizens Advice can help you if you are having money worries, or need help with claiming Universal Credit.

We can also help with many other problems such as benefits, housing and employment. You can find lots of helpful information on the Citizens Advice website

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

How to contact Citizens Advice Rossendale

Complete the online contact form on our website www.carh.org.uk and we will call you back

**Contact our Adviceline
Monday – Thursday 10am – 3pm**

Make life easier Check out our online services

- **Set up a new direct debit instruction**
- **Make a payment**
- **Tell us when you have moved**
- **Make a claim for council tax support**
- **Complete a Discount form**
- **Find council tax bands & charges**
- **Find council tax information**



www.rossendale.gov.uk/counciltax