



Your Council Tax in 2010-11



See inside for information about your bill, exemptions, discounts and benefits.

Introduction



Dear Resident,

Runnymede's portion of the Council Tax is too low to support our present level of services. That's a difficult message to get across when it is increasing by 3%. But at £2.63 a week for a Band D property (or £136.89 a year) that still makes it by far the lowest tax in Surrey in 2010/11. Last year our tax of £132.93 was the sixth lowest in England and £60 below the national average.

This helps to pay for refuse collection, street cleaning, meals on wheels, parks, planning and all the other services you can see listed in this booklet. But our low tax does not raise enough money to continue paying for the Council's present level of expenditure. So we have already made large reductions in our budgets and are planning further cuts of £2.2 million.

One reason why we are in this position is because Government grant, which helps to pay for our services, is less than it was in the mid-1990s. The Government has prevented the Council from raising the Council Tax further to compensate for the loss of grant. You may think that this is good for taxpayers but it means that we can no longer afford our budget. There will be tough choices as we review the level of service that we provide and whether we provide some services at all. This is likely to affect services after 2010 and I intend to offer residents the opportunity to comment on our plans once we have completed our review of the choices available to us.

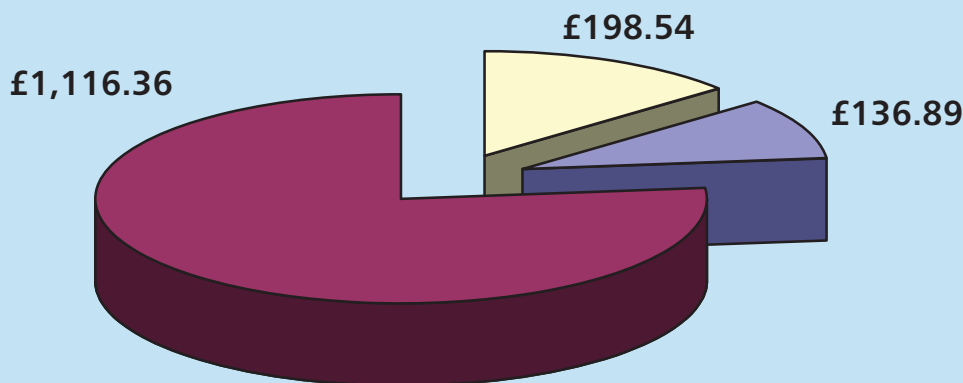
I am determined to maintain the high standards that residents rightly demand of the Council. The Audit Commission continues to give us high marks for our use of resources and I believe we are well placed to respond to the financial challenges. In this booklet you will find information about your Council Tax and the local services that this helps to finance. You can read about our work to increase recycling in the borough and our continued investment in housing. These are just examples of the services that our residents tell us they want. By listening to what you have to say, I believe the Council will continue to deliver what the community wants over the coming years. If you want to find out more about what the Council is doing, I urge you to visit our web-site at www.runnymede.gov.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Furey'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Councillor John Furey
Leader of Runnymede Borough Council

Your Council Tax in 2010-11

Council Tax for Runnymede residents is £1,451.79 for a band D property. This pays for services provided by ■ Surrey County Council (£1,116.36 ■ Surrey Police (£198.54) and ■ Runnymede Borough Council (£136.89).



The charge for each band is based on the open market value of your property at 1 April 1991. The Council Tax charge for each band in 2010-11 is:

Properties valued between	A £0 to £40,000 £	B £40,001 to £52,000 £	C £52,001 to £68,000 £	D £68,001 to £88,000 £	E £88,001 to £120,000 £	F £120,001 to £160,000 £	G £160,001 to £320,000 £	H Over £320,000 £
Runnymede Borough Council	91.26	106.47	121.68	136.89	167.31	197.73	228.15	273.78
Surrey County Council	744.24	868.28	992.32	1,116.36	1,364.44	1,612.52	1,860.60	2,232.72
Surrey Police Authority	132.36	154.42	176.48	198.54	242.66	286.78	330.90	397.08
	967.86	1,129.17	1,290.48	1,451.79	1,774.41	2,097.03	2,419.65	2,903.58

You can find out more about Runnymede Borough Council's part of your bill on the following pages. There are separate leaflets enclosed with your bill that detail the tax decisions of Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority.

Reasons for the change in your Council Tax

The Runnymede Borough Council part of your Council Tax has increased by 2.98% this year. At band D tax this is an extra £3.96 a year, or about 8p a week. We use band D in our calculations because the legislation for Council Tax requires us to treat this as the basic amount of tax. About 32% of households in Runnymede are in band D. The table below shows the reasons for the changes in Runnymede's budgets and the impact on the band D Council Tax.

	Cost at band D £	Budget £000
The council tax for 2009/10 is:	132.93	4,389
Inflation	1.16	51
Service growth and cost increases	13.13	577
Lower income from investments	10.02	440
Lower income - recession	10.06	442
Extra income from grants, fees and charges	(11.93)	(524)
Savings and cost reductions	(15.34)	(674)
General government grant	(3.14)	(138)
The council tax for 2010/11 is:	136.89	4,563

Our future plans

The budget for 2010/11 is based on using £1,751,000 of reserves to support services while keeping council tax increases to a minimum. If we did not have these reserves we would have to add a further £53 to the band D Council Tax.

The government has told all councils to limit their increases in Council Tax and threatens to "cap" councils that set excessive increases. The amount of money we raise from Council Tax is not sufficient to pay for the services we currently provide. We cannot keep using reserves - they will run out in time. Therefore, we plan to continue to make further savings.

Our plans are debated by councillors in committee and council meetings that are open to the press and public. Our financial plan (called the financial forecast) for the next five years is available on our web site at www.runnymede.gov.uk.

How we use your personal data

Personal information gathered by Runnymede Borough Council for processing Council Tax, Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit (including Local Housing Allowance) for local residents, is held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only be used in compliance with its principles.

The Council is required to collect and use certain types of information to meet legal obligations and to prevent and detect crime. The information may be shared with other officers of the Council and with Government Departments and agencies. Information is also gathered to allow the Council to conduct surveys and research, to provide you with information about activities and events involving the Council and to give you information from which you can benefit.

The Council respects your privacy rights and is committed to ensuring that your personal information is protected. Personal information collected for Council Tax, Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit uses will NOT be disclosed to third parties for marketing purposes. However, you should note that your property address and Council Tax band are publicly available information.

Our priorities



Efficiency Savings

The Government has told all local authorities to report on the 'Efficiency Savings' they have made since April 2008. Under the Government's test, an efficiency saving happens when the Council cuts the cost of what it does without reducing effectiveness. This table shows the efficiency savings achieved by the end of March 2009 and the amount that each authority forecasts it will have made by 31 March 2010:

Authority	Cumulative efficiency savings by March 2009	Cumulative efficiency savings by March 2010
Runnymede Borough Council	£640,000	£1,006,000
Surrey County Council excluding Fire and Rescue	£17,314,000	£29,365,000
Surrey County Council Fire and Rescue Service	£1,324,000	£2,429,000
Surrey Police Authority	£13,966,000	£19,697,000

For an average house (Band D) this means the following saving in Council Tax, compared to the national average:

Authority	Saving Per Band D Dwelling	National Average for Similar Authorities
Runnymede Borough Council	£30	£41
Surrey County Council excluding Fire and Rescue	£60	£98
Surrey County Council Fire and Rescue Service	£5	£4
Surrey Police Authority	£40	£54

In 2009/10 Runnymede's Band D Council Tax was the sixth lowest in England and £60 less than the national average for similar councils. Part of the reason this Council was able to keep the tax so low was the efficiency savings it had made in the past.

The Audit Commission assesses councils every year on their 'use of resources' and gives them a rating ranging from 4 ('performing strongly') to 1 ('inadequate performance'). In January 2009 Runnymede Borough Council scored 4.

Your services, your council



- **Access to affordable and decent housing** - providing affordable housing to those in greatest need
- **Access and transport** - identifying solutions to the borough's congestion
- **Community safety** - reducing the fear of crime by ensuring that residents feel safe and secure in their local community
- **Sustainable community** - protecting the environment, minimising waste and encouraging recycling
- **Economic prosperity** - creating an environment where businesses can prosper
- **Opportunities for young people** - addressing issues important to young people
- **Promoting leisure and culture** - promoting existing leisure and cultural activities and facilities supporting new developments
- **Healthy and vibrant community** - encouraging independence for vulnerable people, and promoting healthy lifestyles

■ Affordable housing

We continue to invest in affordable housing in the borough. Since December 2006 we have worked with Registered Social Landlords to provide 255 affordable homes. All proposed housing developments of 15 or more units are asked to provide 40% affordable housing.

■ Yellow School Bus Scheme

500 students a day use this successful home to school transport scheme taking nearly a quarter of a million car journeys off local roads each year.

■ Safer Runnymede

The Safer Runnymede camera system is one of the most extensive in the country. Most public areas of the borough benefit from monitoring and protection 24/7.

■ Recycling waste

The Council's recycling rate is currently just over 26% but this needs to go a lot higher to keep waste from going to landfill. We provide a weekly kerbside collection service for glass bottles and jars, food and drinks cans, empty aerosols, foil, paper and textiles. Banks are provided around the borough for other recyclable materials, such as cardboard, Tetra Pak cartons and plastic bottles. We are seeking to let a new recycling contract for 2011 which will increase the range of materials collected at the kerbside.

■ Garden waste

The Council offers a fortnightly garden waste collection scheme and residents who subscribe have the option of having compostable waste collected in reinforced reusable hessian bags or they can purchase a green wheeled bin and pay to have it emptied every fortnight.

Your services, your council



■ Leisure Centres

The two Leisure Centres in Egham and Addlestone continued to maintain good usage over the last 12 months with fitness memberships standing at 1,171 and 482 respectively. There are a wide range of classes and courses available at the centres and Egham is a very popular venue for Children's parties. In total, there were 278,563 visits to both centres in 2009.

■ Chertsey Museum

The Museum attracted 27,726 visitors in 2009; up 4% on the previous year. The education programme continued to grow with 6,221 children taking part in sessions at local schools.

■ Hythe Park

2009 saw the completion of the new Hythe Park in Egham. Facilities in the park include two play areas, multi use games area and a wet/dry area. Future plans, once funds become available, include the development of allotments on site

■ Play Services

Each year we offer a wide range of summer activities for children and young people aged from 4½ to 16. The summer activities in 2009 included play schemes, a youth festival, Playday event, the Splash scheme for 11 to 16 year olds, multi sports camps and athletics weeks.

■ Community Services

Dial A Ride is a door to door bus service for anyone who has mobility difficulties. The buses can take people shopping, to the doctors or swimming and bring them back again!

The Community Meals team delivers hot meals to homes Monday to Friday and provides people with frozen meals for the weekend. We are proud that when the county virtually ground to a halt in the snow, hot meals were still delivered to residents who needed them.

Our Community Alarm service provides safety and security for people in their own home as help is at hand 24/7 at the touch of a button. Peace of mind for families and reduced feelings of isolation have all been reported by happy Careline customers.

We operate four lively social centres for older people across the borough which provide a range of services and activities for our senior residents. The centres can be used to meet friends, have lunch, join in with a Tai Chi lesson, learn how to use a computer or do them all!

For more information about our services please visit our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk or see the back page for other ways of contacting us.

Our budget for 2009-10 and 2010-11



2009-10 Budgets				2010-11 Budgets		
Expenditure	Income	Net	Service	Expenditure	Income	Net
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
5,593	2,227	3,366	Leisure services	5,548	2,115	3,433
2,825	824	2,001	Community services	2,767	870	1,897
2,689	1,219	1,470	Refuse collection and recycling	2,727	1,295	1,432
4,122	2,174	1,948	Planning and development	4,363	2,194	2,169
1,755	485	1,270	Environmental services	1,772	441	1,331
2,140	797	1,343	Housing services	2,138	871	1,267
750	12	738	Street cleansing	726	5	721
1,122	394	728	Safer Runnymede	979	289	690
962	251	711	Collection of local taxes	943	275	668
1,711	1,284	427	Highways and transportation	1,931	1,383	548
19,156	19,145	11	Housing & Council Tax Benefit awards	22,192	22,183	9
4,884	2,183	2,701	Other services	4,705	2,313	2,392
47,709	30,995	16,714	Total-General Fund services	50,791	34,234	16,557
		(800)	Interest on balances			(360)
		(4,320)	Asset management			(4,250)
		(1,755)	Use of reserves			(1,751)
		9,839	Budget requirement			10,196
Our budget requirement is paid for by government grant and local taxpayers						
55.7%	5,482		General grant from the government	55.1%	5,620	
(0.3%)	(32)		Other items	(0.1%)	(13)	
44.6%	4,389		Council tax payers	44.8%	4,563	
	9,839		Budget requirement		10,196	

The cost of council housing is met from rents and the budgets for this service are not shown in this statement. Council housing receives no subsidy from Council Tax. Further details of the budget are published on our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk

Council Tax

This section provides information about the Council Tax and the benefits to which you may be entitled. It should not be regarded as an exhaustive guide. If you would like more information or clarification on any points please contact either the Council Tax Section or the Benefits Section at the Council. Contact details are shown on your bill and on the back page of this booklet.

PAYING YOUR BILL

Who has to pay the bill?

Every household will receive a Council Tax bill. The bill will normally be paid by a resident freeholder, a leaseholder, a tenant, a licensee or any other resident, with this order being the order of responsibility for payment. If there is more than one person with the same level of responsibility, they are jointly responsible for the full amount of the tax. Same sex civil partners are jointly liable to pay Council Tax in the same way as married couples. Where a property is occupied by more than one household and residents pay rent separately, such as in hostels or bed sits, the landlord is responsible for paying the tax. Council Tax for unoccupied properties is the responsibility of the owner – a person who holds the freehold or has a leasehold interest of six months or more.

How can I pay my bill? Direct debit: you can download a direct debit application form from our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk or by calling the number at the top of your bill. If you paid by direct debit last year, we will continue to take direct debit payments unless you advise us that you would like this to change.

By phone or online: you can pay by **debit card** or **credit card** using our 24-hour automated payment line by calling 01932 425030 or 425031 or by paying online at www.runnymede.gov.uk/payments. The transaction fee of 1.65% will be passed on to credit card payers (this may be subject to change). There is no charge for debit card payments.

By post: please do not send cash or post-dated cheques. Cheques must be made payable to Runnymede Borough Council, and posted to: Director of Finance, Runnymede Borough Council, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AH. Please write the Council Tax account number shown on your bill, along with your name and address, on the back of the cheque. The cheque needs to be crossed A/C Payee Only. We will only issue a receipt if you ask for one.

Using banking services: you can make payments by telephone or online banking services offered by your bank or building society or by BACS. Please ensure that you quote your account number, as shown on your bill, along with our bank details as follows:

Bank name: Co-operative Bank
Account name: Runnymede Borough Council
Account number: 61106163
Sort code: 08-90-34

Post Offices and PayPoint outlets: You will be able to take your Council Tax bill into any Post Office or shop offering the PayPoint facility. Your bill is printed with a bar code unique to you. Post Offices will accept cash, cheques and debit cards; PayPoint outlets will only accept cash. There is no fee to the payer for this service. Some PayPoint outlets in Runnymede are listed on the back of your Council Tax bill and all PayPoint sites in the country are listed on www.paypoint.co.uk.

PAYMENT MACHINE: – You can make payments at the Civic Centre by cash, cheque, credit card or debit card using our automated payment kiosk.

Council Tax

E-billing and checking your account balance online:

You can have your Council Tax bill sent to you by email. Your bill will be sent as an attachment with a link to the leaflets that accompany the bill. Register online at www.myaccount.runnymede.gov.uk if you would like to use this service or to check your account balance online. Alternatively, you can call the phone number on your bill for further information.

When does Council Tax have to be paid?

Your instalment plan is shown on the front of your bill and states the amounts payable. A full year's Council Tax is payable over 10 monthly instalments if the bill is issued on or before 30th April. Payments are usually due from 1st April to 1st January and must be paid on or before the first day of each month.

Half yearly payments:

If you wish to pay twice a year, please pay **April to August** instalments on or before **1st April** and **September to January** instalments on or before **1st September**. You may also pay your Council Tax in full on or before **1st April**.

IMPORTANT:

If you wish to pay your instalments on any day other than the first day of each month, you **MUST** pay a month in advance (the first payment should be paid in March) so that payment reaches the council on or before the due date. Please remember that if paying by cheque you should also allow a few days for the cheque to clear.

Late or non-payment:

If your payment is late you may receive a reminder shortly after the due date. Please note that no more than two reminder notices are issued in one year. If you do not bring your instalments up-to-date, or if you continue to make late payments in following months, we may withdraw the instalment facility and demand settlement of the year's Council Tax immediately.

Recovery action:

In fairness to the majority of payers who do pay on time, we will not hesitate to take legal proceedings against those who don't pay on time. If we do take action, we will make an application for a Liability Order at Woking Magistrates Court for which you will be charged costs. The Liability Order will entitle the Council to:

- instruct a bailiff to recover the debt;
- order an employer to make deductions from earnings;
- apply for part of any income support, employment support allowance, job seekers allowance or direct pension credits, to be paid direct to the council; and
- begin bankruptcy proceedings against the debtor or make a charge upon the debtor's home (if he/she owns it).

We may also apply for the debtor to be committed to prison for up to three months if the reason for non-payment is wilful refusal or due to culpable neglect.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

If you, or someone who lives with you, need a room or an extra bathroom or kitchen or extra space in your property to meet special needs arising from a disability, for example for the use of a wheelchair, you may be entitled to a reduction in your Council Tax bill. The disabled person may be a child. The bill will be reduced to that of a property in the band immediately below the band your property is in, or by one-ninth if your home is in band A.

The reduction ensures that disabled people do not pay more tax on account of space needed because of a disability. If you want further information, please contact us on the number shown at the top of your Council Tax bill.

EXEMPT PROPERTIES

Some properties are exempt from Council Tax if they fall into one or more of the following classes:

- A** unoccupied and unfurnished properties which require or are undergoing structural alteration or major repairs are exempt for up to six months after completion of works, for a maximum of 12 months, from the date the exemption was first applied;
- B** properties unoccupied and owned by a charity are exempt for up to six months, after which full Council Tax is payable;
- C** unoccupied and unfurnished properties are exempt for up to six months. The exemption is applicable to the property and not to individual accounts;
- D** properties left unoccupied by someone who has gone to prison or another place of detention;
- E** properties left unoccupied by someone who has moved to receive personal care in a hospital or home;
- F** unoccupied properties awaiting probate or letters of administration to be granted are exempt for up to six months after grant of probate;
- G** unoccupied properties where occupation is prohibited by law, because of action taken by a public body;
- H** unoccupied properties kept empty for future occupation by a minister of religion;
- I** properties left unoccupied by a person who has gone to live elsewhere (not a hospital or care home) to receive care because of old age, disability, illness, drug or alcohol dependency;
- J** properties left unoccupied by a person who has moved to provide personal care to another person;
- K** property left unoccupied by a student who owns the property;
- L** unoccupied property that has been repossessed by the mortgagee;
- M** student halls of residence;
- N** properties occupied solely by full time students or by the partners who are not British citizens and who by law are not permitted to work or claim benefits;
- O** armed forces' accommodation and married quarters (contribution to the cost of local services are received through a special arrangement);
- P** properties occupied by members and dependents of visiting forces;
- Q** property left unoccupied by a person who is bankrupt and is the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee;
- R** a caravan pitch or mooring not occupied by a caravan or boat;
- S** properties lived in only by people under the age of 18;
- T** unoccupied annexe forming part of another property which cannot be let separately, without a breach of planning restrictions;
- U** properties occupied solely by those who are severely mentally impaired;
- V** properties occupied by diplomats as their main UK residence;
- W** separate annexes (often called 'granny flats') lived in by a person who is related to the people living in the rest of the property and is 65 or over, or severely mentally impaired or permanently disabled.

Council Tax

DISCOUNTS

The full Council Tax bill assumes that there are two or more adults (that is, people aged 18 or over) living in a property.

Single occupancy discount: if only one adult lives in a property (as their main home) the Council Tax bill will be reduced by 25%.

Properties that have remained unfurnished and unoccupied for a period exceeding six months: if a property is no-one's main home and it remains unoccupied after the period of exemption has expired under exempt classes A and C (see the previous section) full Council Tax will be payable.

Unoccupied furnished accommodation: for properties that remain unoccupied and furnished and are not used as a second home (see below), full Council Tax will be payable. This also applies to properties that remain furnished but unoccupied between tenancies (including student-let accommodation).

Second home discount: if a property is occupied as a second home, the bill will be reduced by 10%. The Council will confirm that Council Tax is being paid for a main residence elsewhere (or within the borough).

Houseboats and caravans: for second homes that consist of a pitch occupied by a caravan, or a mooring occupied by a boat, there will be a 50% discount.

PEOPLE DISREGARDED FOR DISCOUNT PURPOSES

People in the following groups do not count towards the number of adults resident in a property. This means that if all but one of the residents in a property falls into one of the groups below, the Council Tax will be reduced by 25%.

- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees;
- people staying in certain hostels or shelters;
- patients permanently resident in hospital;
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at or have left school and will be taking up a university type course;
- people who are being looked after in care homes;
- care workers working for low pay, usually for charities;
- people who are severely mentally impaired;
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or a child under 18 years;
- members of visiting forces and certain international institutions;
- people in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine);
- members of religious communities (monks and nuns); or
- diplomats.

If your bill indicates that a discount or exemption has been allowed, you must inform the Council Tax Section of any changes of circumstances that may affect your entitlement. If you fail to do so you may have to pay a penalty.

All bills issued with a discount or exemption will assume the circumstances will remain the same throughout the whole financial year. If the discount or exemption is only applicable for a period of time (e.g. Class C exemption is only applicable for up to six months) a revised bill will be issued once the discount or exemption ceases.

For further information on any of the above discounts or exemptions, and an application form, visit our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk. You can also contact the Council Tax Section directly on the telephone number shown at the top of your Council Tax bill.

APPEALS

Appeals to the Valuation Office Agency

Property bandings are based on property values as at 1 April 1991. Where a property has been built or converted after this date, its value for banding purposes has been determined by reference to comparable properties in your area. The price paid for a property listed after 1 April 1991 may not necessarily reflect its value at that date. This applies throughout the Valuation List. Accordingly, recent purchase prices may not be the best evidence if you feel that the banding for your property is incorrect.

If you want to appeal against the band your property has been placed in, you should write to the Listing Officer, Valuation Agency, West Block, Westbrook Mills, Borough Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2SG. Telephone number 01483 702900.

The grounds for appeals regarding bandings are restricted to the following cases:

- where you believe that the banding should be changed because there has been a material increase or material reduction in the dwelling's value;
- where you start or stop using part of your dwelling to carry out a business, or the balance between domestic and business use changes;
- where the Listing Officer has altered a list without a proposal having been made by a taxpayer; or
- where you become the taxpayer in respect of a dwelling for the first time. (Your appeal must be made within six months, but if the same appeal has already been considered and determined by a Valuation Tribunal it cannot be made again.)

A material increase in value may result from building, engineering or other work carried out on the property. In these cases revaluation does not take place until after a sale, so the person appealing would usually be the new owner or resident.

A material decrease in value may result from the demolition of any part of the property, any change in the physical state of the local area, or an adaptation to make the property suitable for use by someone with a physical disability. In these cases revaluation should take place as soon as possible.

Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of tax in the meantime. If your appeal is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid tax.

You can also appeal if:

- you consider that you are not liable to pay Council Tax, for example, because you are not the resident or owner;
- you believe your property to be exempt and no exemption has been granted;
- you have claimed a discount and this has not been granted; or
- the Council has made a mistake in calculating your bill.

If you wish to make an appeal on any of the above grounds, you must first write to the Council Tax Section, and give details of your appeal. If the matter cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, or you do not get a reply within two months, you may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.

Again, making an appeal does not entitle you to withhold payment of Council Tax pending an appeal.

For further information on appeals and bandings, visit the Valuation Office website at www.voa.gov.uk

Benefits

Council Tax Benefit is available for people on low incomes. Entitlement is based on household income and savings/capital. You will not be able to claim Council Tax Benefit if you and/or your partner have combined savings or capital assets worth more than £16,000; this does not include the value of your home. If you receive Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance (income based), Employment Support Allowance (Income Related) or Pension Credit Guarantee, you should be entitled to full Council Tax Benefit. There are some exceptions. Similar rules apply to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance.

If you would like to claim Council Tax Benefit, you will need to complete an application form. You can download the form from our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefits or you can contact us on 01932 425388 or email benefits@runnymede.gov.uk and we will send you one. Alternatively you can get one at the Civic Centre. You will need to send the form back to us as soon as possible as the benefit will usually start from the Monday after we receive the completed form.

Had a change in your circumstances?

If you receive Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance, you must tell us immediately about any changes in your financial or household circumstances, as they may affect your benefit entitlement. Lengthy delays in informing us of any changes in your circumstances can be considered an offence and could lead to prosecution.

If you are entitled to increased benefit, a delay in telling us might mean that you miss out on some of your entitlement. Normally, your benefit can only be backdated if you tell us your change in circumstances within one month of the change.

If the change means that you should receive less benefit it may mean that you need to pay some money back to us. Any delay in telling us could mean that you will have to pay back a larger amount.

Examples of changes in circumstances are if:

- your Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Income Support stops (don't assume that we already know);
- you move out of your property;
- you are no longer responsible for the payment of Council Tax for the property;
- there is a change in your household income, savings, rent or the number of people in your household;
- you are awarded pension or tax credits;
- you receive backdated income or state benefits, such as a pay rise or pension; or
- you start or stop working.

This list gives only examples of changes that will affect your benefit and is not exhaustive. Please contact us if you are unsure about the effect a change in circumstances could have on your benefit entitlement.

Annual renewal of benefit claims

If you receive Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance, we are required to check that the information on your application form has not changed. We select a number of claims to check each year. If your claim is one of those selected, you will be sent a short form to confirm your details or a council officer will arrange to see you in your home. If you do not complete and return the form to us, or agree to the visit, your benefit will be stopped.

Benefit fraud

Our aim is to deliver benefits to only those that are entitled and to detect false claims made by those who are not. We have a Fraud Prosecution Policy for our worst offenders. If you suspect that someone is making a false claim for benefit, please call our free 24-hour **Benefit Fraud Hotline on 08000 130814**, email fraud@runnymede.gov.uk, or use the 'REPORT A SUSPECTED FRAUD' form on our website, www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefits.

Anything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence and you are under no obligation to leave your contact details.

বাঙলা

আপনি যদি ইংরেজি পড়তে বা বলতে না পারেন, ও এই লেখাটি পড়তে যদি আপনার কোনও সাহায্য লাগে তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01483 750548 নাম্বারে উইটস্ লিঙ্কলাইন (WITS Linkline)-এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন ও আপনার নিজের ভাষায় একটা মেসেজ রাখুন।

Italiano

Qualora non siate in grado di leggere o di parlare l'inglese, e necessitate assistenza che vi permetta di capire il presente documento, siete pregati di contattare la WITS Linkline allo 01483 750548 e lasciare un messaggio nella vostra lingua.

Polski

Jeżeli nie potrafisz czytać lub mówić po angielsku i potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tego dokumentu, proszę skontaktować się z Linją Telefoniczną WITS pod numerem 01483 750548, zostawiając wiadomość w języku ojczystym.

简体中文

如果您无法阅读或说英语，需要协助以明白此文件，请与和景翻译服务处之语言专线联络 01483 750548，并用您的母语留下讯息。

اردو

اگر آپ انگریزی زبان پڑھ اور بول نہیں سکتے ہیں اور آپ کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے میں دقت پیش آتی ہے، تو برائے مہربانی سے وٹس لنک لائن کو اس نمبر 01483 750548 پر رابطہ کریں اور اپنی زبان میں اپنا پیغام چھوڑیں۔

Español

Si no puede leer o hablar ingles, y necesita ayuda para entender este documento, por favor contacte a WITS Linkline al 01483 750548 y deje un recado en su idioma.

If you need help reading this document please contact the Council Tax office on 01932 838383 to provide a reading service, a large print version or another format.

Contact us

You can contact us by visiting the Civic Centre in person, in writing, by telephone, by fax or by email. You can also find further information about our services by visiting our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk

For general enquiries

Call our switchboard on 01932 838383

Fax: 01932 838384

Email: generalenquiries@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about your Council Tax

Call the number on your bill or for general enquiries about your Council Tax call 01932 838383

Email: counciltax@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance

Call 01932 425388

Email: benefits@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about our finances

Call 01932 425336

Email: finance@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about your recycling service

Call 0800 052 0067

Email: recycling@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about your refuse service

Call 0800 096 2028

Email: refuse@runnymede.gov.uk

Civic Centre opening hours

Normal opening hours are Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm and Saturday 9.00am to 1.00pm.

Our address is: Runnymede Borough Council, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AH

The content of this booklet is correct at the time of going to print.

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