For the fastest, simplest way to contact the council just click online anytime...

Visit: birmingham.gov.uk

Requesting the service you want couldn’t be easier and here’s a taste of what you can do:

**Report:**
- Council Tax
- Changes in circumstances
- Council House Repairs
- Missed Rubbish Collection
- Dumped Rubbish / Fly Tipping
- Abandoned / Unwanted Vehicle
- Street Cleaning

**Request:**
- Potholes in the road
- Faulty street lighting
- Rats and vermin
- Animal welfare issues
- Bulky Waste Collection
- Graffiti Removal
- Clinical Waste Collection
- Rubbish Bags & Recycling Containers
- Sports Bookings
- Central Library Computer Bookings
- Parks school visits

**Apply:**
- Leisure Card
- Library Card
- Planning Applications

**Pay:**
- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Parking Tickets
- Council Housing Rent

birmingham.gov.uk...pay council tax...make planning applications...report council house repairs...report vermin...
Message from the Leader of the Council 4
Message from the Deputy Leader of the Council 5
Budget and Council objectives 6-8
How budgets are put together 9
Spending and council tax 10
Detailed council tax figures 11
Environment Agency Midlands Region 12
Council tax – help and information 13-14
Help and information for visually impaired people 14
Neighbourhood Offices 15
Council tax bands 16
Council tax reductions 17
Exemptions 18
Council tax benefit 19-20
How to pay 21
Don’t fall into the debt trap 22
Useful contact details 23
A message from the Leader...

Birmingham is a successful, vibrant, growing city that celebrates its cultural diversity. A city of culture, sport, enterprise, business and opportunity. A great place to live, learn, work and visit: A global city with a local heart.

This year we have had to set a budget for Birmingham in very difficult circumstances – as we know that the council must, broadly, reduce its expenditure by over £300 million over the next three to four years, as our contribution to reducing the national deficit.

We have had to be bold and imaginative when it comes to service delivery; reviewing income and expenditure and finding new and more cost-effective ways of working. Our priority remains protecting critical outcomes for the people who rely on us, and providing quality services at a price that’s fair.

As part of this year’s budget, we have acknowledged that these are difficult financial times for everyone. Birmingham already has the lowest level of council tax of any major city, and our average 1.9% increase over the last five years is the lowest of any metropolitan authority. This year to ease the tax burden on households and support those on low and fixed incomes – the council’s element of council tax in 2011/12 will stay at the same level as in the previous year*.

Despite a contraction in budgets we are still spending over £3.5 billion on public services – and will be continuing with the major projects to help transform our city. The Library of Birmingham is on track and on budget – due for completion in 2013; and the major New St. Station project is going from strength to strength and will be finished by 2015. Through projects like these, we will work hard to ensure private sector growth is nurtured, and jobs created for Birmingham.

Whilst these are challenging times, therefore, I am confident Birmingham has a bright future.

Councillor Mike Whitby, Leader of the Council

* Some council tax bands have changed by 1p due to roundings
A message from the Deputy Leader...

Our ambitions remain the same: to ensure that the people of Birmingham enjoy a high quality of life in a culturally diverse, vibrant and creative city.

We will continue to foster expertise and skills to ensure that Birmingham residents can compete and succeed economically in challenging times, while remaining safe and healthy in clean neighbourhoods.

In 2010 our strengthened planning process gave us the opportunity to review our priorities. This refocused and tightened our commitment to deliver against our ambitions, while protecting vulnerable people, helping people into work and improving education and skills. The city already has a formidable track record in developments and interventions, but in light of increased challenges, we need to ensure that they continue to be as aligned as possible to ensure we deliver on our promises to the people of Birmingham.

Birmingham is one of the safest of the large cities in the UK and continues to lead the way as a green, sustainable city.

Adopting and integrating technology will enable the city to meet its challenging targets. With our partners, we will continue to protect vulnerable people within the city, reduce violent crime, reduce antisocial behaviour, reduce litter and graffiti and increase recycling. We want to ensure that Birmingham continues to be a vibrant city for our residents and visitors.

Councillor Paul Tilsley,
Deputy Leader of the Council
The Economic Challenge

The government believes that to provide economic stability and growth for the nation, it is essential that the £150 billion annual national additional borrowing must be reduced. Local authorities are being asked to contribute to this national effort and so on average council grants will reduce by 28% in real terms over four years and a large chunk of these savings need to be made in the next year. So that we can meet this challenge Birmingham has to make estimated savings of over £300 million – this means saving £300,000 every working day over four years. As part of the review the government also prioritised spending in some areas such as the NHS and schools. As a result there is now less funding available for other local government services.

Council Tax

Birmingham has the lowest level of council tax of all major cities outside London. In the last five years Birmingham City Council has sought to minimise increases in council tax and we will take advantage of the availability of additional government grant so that the council’s element of council tax in 2011/12 will stay at the same level as in the previous year*.

Meeting the Challenge – Priorities and Principles

The Council Business Plan for 2011 has three priorities (see below) and we’ve focused on these when looking at how to meet the financial challenge:

- A clean, safe city
- Protecting vulnerable people
- Helping people into work and improving education and skills

The way we hope to deliver savings is also based on principles set out by council leader Cllr Mike Whitby in 2010:

- Transforming our efficiency
- Preventing problems to avoid big costs later
- Reducing dependency and enabling self-sufficiency
- Collaborating between service areas and other public agencies
- Personalising services, for example, by giving users direct control over money spent on them
- Maximising income streams
- Levering in funds from the private sector

* Some council tax bands have changed by 1p due to roundings
Budget and Council Objectives

Proposed Changes to Services

The Spending Review sets out a change in the role of the government and the state. Individuals and communities are being encouraged to help themselves and each other and we’ve taken this on board by looking at ways that local people can become more self-sufficient.

So our proposals for the redesign of services represent a new way for the city council to support the people of Birmingham.

Key to this is a focus on prevention and early intervention. This means that we want to support people at the first sign of problems so that families can stay together and so that we can keep people out of care and help them to stay in their own homes.

Below are some of the other key proposals across our services.

- Redesigning the way we deliver, manage and support museums, parks and community and play
- Redesigning Fleet and Waste Management Services to drive down waste, increase recycling, reduce landfill tax costs and help to keep the city clean and green
- Providing even more opportunities for volunteers to support our community and major events
- Remodelling youth services, education welfare services and family support services
- Providing services that enable the majority of people to use their own resources and skills to care for themselves
- Providing a more joined up service with colleagues working in health
- Prioritising developments which help grow Birmingham’s economy and global competitiveness
- Creating flexible and multi-disciplinary teams to respond to the needs of developers and investors
- Creating council linked companies to generate income
- Modernising neighbourhood offices
- Where efficiencies and cost effectiveness can be improved we will outsource work to the voluntary and/or private sector

Full details of service changes will be published online at www.birmingham.gov.uk

Birmingham City Council is always trying to find the most cost-effective way to deliver services and we are already four years into our ten year Business Transformation programme which will bring huge savings; however, we are proposing a further 30% saving in our support services. We are also working with all our suppliers to make sure that we get value for money at all times.
Budget and Council Objectives

How We Have Consulted
Birmingham City Council has carried out widespread consultation on the plans to meet the financial challenge. The full proposals were published in November 2010 on the council’s website and a special edition of our Forward newspaper was included in local newspapers and copies were available in more than 200 venues in the city.

We’ve used all council publications – both printed and electronic – to encourage people to have their say on our proposals. We have also consulted through our Birmingham People’s Panel and annual opinion survey of 8,000 residents.

The council’s different service areas have also been talking to customers directly to make sure that the proposed changes will minimise the impact on services.

Local people’s opinions are important and the suggestions we’ve received have shaped our response to the financial challenge. We are consulting on how savings proposals will be implemented in future years.

You can read more about Birmingham’s budget and how individual services will be changing on the Birmingham City Council website www.birmingham.gov.uk/budgetviews. A summary of the budget consultation responses will also be published on this website in May 2011.

Birmingham’s Bright Future
Although the current financial situation is challenging, Birmingham has a bright future. Several major projects are underway which will change the face of the city centre and transform our local neighbourhoods, providing massive benefits to the people of Birmingham.

The redevelopment of New Street Station will improve the experience of visitors to the city and residents and the new Library of Birmingham will be a cultural centre for local people, as well as attracting visitors from all over the world.

Major local projects include the refurbishment of Aston Hall and the redevelopment of the Alexander Stadium and Harborne Pool. There is also major investment ongoing in Newtown and Edgbaston through the extra care village developments and the first phase of the new Longbridge town centre will see the £66 million Bournville College open. We will also continue to invest in improving our roads across the city.

All of these projects will contribute to our key objective for Birmingham which is to help all residents enjoy a high quality of life whilst succeeding economically; staying safe in clean, green neighbourhoods and being healthy.
How budgets are put together

Revenue expenditure involves spending on the day-to-day running costs of the council, e.g. employees, premises, supplies and services.

Where the money comes from 2011/12 – Total £3,527m (£3,513m)
(2010/11 figures in brackets)

Where the money is spent 2011/12 – Total £3,527m (£3,513m)
(2010/11 figures in brackets)

*b*Other includes: Rents, Reimbursements & Contributions, & Use of Corporate Reserves.

*b*Other Services includes: Central departments/budgets, Housing General Fund, Leisure, Sport & Culture, Local Services & Community Safety & Regulatory Committees.
Spending and council tax

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'10/'11</th>
<th>'11/'12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total spending</strong></td>
<td>3,513.4</td>
<td>3,526.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: income</td>
<td>-2,409.9</td>
<td>-2,503.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City Council net expenditure</strong></td>
<td>1,103.5</td>
<td>1,023.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: formula grant</td>
<td>-769.5</td>
<td>-691.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transfer from Collection Fund and other adjustments</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO BE FINANCED BY COUNCIL TAX</strong></td>
<td>332.7</td>
<td>332.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2010/11 figures restated to reflect government technical adjustments in order to allow comparisons to be made on a like-for-like basis

HOW SPENDING HAS CHANGED FROM 2010/11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITY COUNCIL ADJUSTED BUDGET 2010/11:</td>
<td>1,103.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget pressures and policy choices</td>
<td>+90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in specific govt grants (not already included in pressures)</td>
<td>+47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>-212.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate adjustments including use of reserves</td>
<td>-4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CITY COUNCIL BUDGET 2011/12 IS:</strong></td>
<td>1,023.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'10/'11</th>
<th>'11/'12</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charge to council taxpayers</td>
<td>£332.663m</td>
<td>£332.198m</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided by the taxbase (Band D property equivalents)</td>
<td>298,709</td>
<td>298,292</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax for City Council services (Band D)</td>
<td>£1,113.67</td>
<td>£1,113.67</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and Rescue Authority precept</td>
<td>£47.83</td>
<td>£47.83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Authority precept</td>
<td>£99.45</td>
<td>£99.45</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gives a total council tax (Band D)</strong></td>
<td>£1,260.95</td>
<td>£1,260.95</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council is levying a precept for 2011/12. Its charge will be made only to council taxpayers in the parish and amounts to £88,720, equivalent to £42.57 per property in Band D.
### Detailed council tax figures

#### Council tax 2011/12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>City Council</th>
<th>Fire and Rescue Authority</th>
<th>Police Authority</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Parish Precept</th>
<th>Parish Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>742.45</td>
<td>31.89</td>
<td>66.30</td>
<td>840.64</td>
<td>28.38</td>
<td>869.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>866.19</td>
<td>37.20</td>
<td>77.35</td>
<td>980.74</td>
<td>33.11</td>
<td>1,013.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>989.93</td>
<td>42.52</td>
<td>88.40</td>
<td>1,120.85</td>
<td>37.84</td>
<td>1,158.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1,113.67</td>
<td>47.83</td>
<td>99.45</td>
<td>1,260.95</td>
<td>42.57</td>
<td>1,303.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1,361.15</td>
<td>58.46</td>
<td>121.54</td>
<td>1,541.15</td>
<td>52.03</td>
<td>1,593.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1,608.63</td>
<td>69.09</td>
<td>143.64</td>
<td>1,821.36</td>
<td>61.49</td>
<td>1,882.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1,856.11</td>
<td>79.72</td>
<td>165.74</td>
<td>2,101.57</td>
<td>70.96</td>
<td>2,172.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>2,227.34</td>
<td>95.66</td>
<td>198.89</td>
<td>2,521.89</td>
<td>85.14</td>
<td>2,607.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Did you know?

The city council’s six-year council tax increase (2005/06 – 2010/11) was below the rate of inflation and the average rate of other groups of councils.

If we had increased our council tax in line with inflation, or at the average rate of other groups of councils, over those six years then our 2010/11 Band D council tax would have been larger by:

- **Birmingham City Council**
  - Inflation: +£38
  - Major Cities: +£66
  - Metropolitan Councils: +£83
  - English Average: +£101

---

birmingham.gov.uk: report missed rubbish collection...request bulky waste collection...pay business rates...
Environment Agency Midlands Region

The council tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2010.
The Environment Agency is a levying body for its flood defence function under the Water Resources Act 1991. It provides the following information in connection with the requirements of the above regulations.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood defence for 4,682km of main river and along tidal and sea defences, in the area of the Severn Trent Regional Flood Defence Committee. Flood defence money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system. The financial details are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severn Trent Regional Flood Defence Committee</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross expenditure</td>
<td>£63.822m</td>
<td>£51.066m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levies raised</td>
<td>£3.000m</td>
<td>£3.000m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total council tax base (Band D property equivalents)</td>
<td>2,908,000</td>
<td>2,924,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, where there are schemes which do not attract central funding the agency may seek funding from county and metropolitan councils, unitary authorities and London boroughs in the form of a local levy. The local levy is shared on the basis of Band D equivalents between all contributing bodies within the committee area.

Changes in the gross budgeted expenditure between the years reflect the impact of the government spending review and national prioritisation of capital projects.

The total local levy raised has remained the same in 2011/2012 as 2010/2011 at £3,000,000. Birmingham’s share in 2011/12 is £306,000.
Council tax – help and information

If you have any difficulty understanding this part of the leaflet or you want more help with your council tax, you can:

Log on to the council tax website at: www.birmingham.gov.uk/council-tax

You will find information about council tax, along with forms you can use to ask questions about your account, or to tell us about changes in your circumstances. Please quote your account reference number, if you have one.

Telephone: 0121 303 1113

Lines are open from 8.00am to 8.00pm (Monday - Friday)
Our telephones can be busy in the morning. If this is the case, please try calling again later in the day. Calls may be monitored / recorded for training and quality purposes. Translation services are available.

Text phone: 0121 303 1119 (Registered Users Only)

Write to: Birmingham City Council, Resources, (Revenues and Benefits), P.O. Box 5, Birmingham B4 7AB

Go to any Neighbourhood Office (see information on page 15). You may need an appointment. Please telephone: 0121 303 1113

Fair Processing Statement – Customer First

Any personal data held by Birmingham City Council in relation to your council tax or business rates bill will be held in full compliance with the legal obligations as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and in accordance with the council’s Privacy Policy. A copy is available at any council Neighbourhood Office, council library or on the Birmingham City Council website: www.birmingham.gov.uk/privacy

Birmingham City Council will incorporate the names and addresses held in the council tax and business rates systems into Customer Services Systems. This is in line with the Privacy Policy.
Council tax – help and information

Changes in circumstances
You are required by law to inform the council if there is a change that affects your council tax. For example, you receive a discount or exemption and the discount/exemption conditions no longer apply. An example is where you receive a discount for being the only person over 18 years of age living at your property. You should also advise us if you change address, or if a different person should now be liable to pay the bills.

You should note that if your income has changed and you are claiming, or wish to claim, council tax benefit, you should ring 0121 464 7000. If you wish to visit a Neighbourhood Office, you will need to make an appointment first by calling 0121 303 1113. If you have recently started work after claiming Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance or have recently become unemployed, you need to contact your local Jobcentre Plus. Any claim for council tax benefit will be passed by them to the Benefit Service.

You must inform Revenues and Benefits within 21 days of any change in your circumstances. Failure to do so, without reasonable excuse, could result in a financial penalty.

You can do this by logging on to www.birmingham.gov.uk/changeincircs

Help and information for visually impaired people
Please telephone 0121 303 1113 to register for our large print services. We can provide you with information relating to your council tax bill in large print, audiotape or Braille.
Neighbourhood Offices

You can get help and advice at any of the following Neighbourhood Offices:
Please note that appointments must be arranged in advance by calling 0121 303 1113.

Acocks Green  Acocks Green Library, Shirley Road, Acocks Green  B27 7HX
Bartley Green  Monmouth Road, Bartley Green  B32 3LX
Bromford  Cameronian Croft, off Bromford Drive, Bromford  B36 8UB
Castle Vale  Spitfire House Community Campus, High Street, Castle Vale  B35 7PR
Colttridge  9 Pershore Road South, Colttridge  B30 3EE
Druids Heath  Druids Heath Library, Idmiston Croft, Druids Heath  B14 5NJ
Erdington  Civic House, 101 Sutton New Road, Erdington  B23 6RE
Handsworth  12 Dawson Road, Handsworth  B21 9HS
Kings Heath  38 Silver Street, Kings Heath  B14 7QU
Kingstanding  20 Rough Road, Kingstanding  B44 0UY
Ladywood  Botany Walk, St Vincent Street West, Ladywood  B16 8ED
Newtown  New Aston House, Newtown Shopping Centre  B19 2SW
Northfield  1a Vineyard Road, Northfield  B31 1PG
Perry Common  599 College Road, Kingstanding  B44 0AY
Quinton  Four Dwellings Centre, Quinton Road West, Quinton  B32 2RJ
Saltley  54 Highfield Road, Washwood Heath  B8 3GU
Shard End  Shustoke Road, Shard End  B34 7BB
Small Heath  349 Coventry Road, Small Heath  B10 0SN
Sparkbrook  Mole Street, Sparkbrook,  B11 1XA
Sparkhill  641 Stratford Road, Sparkhill  B11 4DY
Stechford  189 Meadoway, Kents Moat  B33 8NB
Sutton Coldfield  Adjacent to Sutton Coldfield Town Hall, Upper Clifton Road  B73 6AB
Yardley Wood  201 School Road, Yardley Wood  B14 4ER
Council tax bands

Council tax is the way in which the city council receives some of the money it needs to provide local services. The amount you pay is based on the value of your property. There are 8 bands set by the government. Your band is shown on your council tax bill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Property value</th>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Property value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Up to and including £40,000</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>£88,001 – £120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>£40,001 – £52,000</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>£120,001 – £160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>£52,001 – £68,000</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>£160,001 – £320,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>£68,001 – £88,000</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>More than £320,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appeals against banding

You can appeal against the banding of newly occupied properties, or properties which have had a major change in structure, or use of facilities. It is not possible to appeal on the grounds of general changes in the property market, or if an appeal has been made before. The property value is based on 1991 prices.

If you have any questions concerning the banding of your property, contact:

The Listing Officer, Valuation Office Agency, Regent Court, 14-17 George Road, Birmingham, B15 1NU Telephone: 0121 410 3700, or visit www.voa.gov.uk

Council tax liability

The person liable to pay council tax is the person who first fits one of the descriptions listed below, starting with 1, and working through to 6. More than one person can be held liable if they are on the same level. Husbands and wives, or partners may also be jointly and severally liable. In some cases, the owner of a property will always be held liable, rather than the residents (e.g. houses in multiple occupation, care homes or nursing homes, etc.).

1. Resident owner
2. Resident leaseholder
3. Resident statutory or secure tenant
4. Resident with a licence to occupy
5. Resident aged 18 or over
6. Owner

Appeals against liability

If you think that you are not the person who should have to pay council tax, see help and information on pages 13 and 14.

You should not withhold payment of your council tax whilst an appeal is being dealt with by the Valuation Office Agency or we are processing your application for council tax benefit.
Council tax reductions

People with disabilities
If your home has special facilities for someone in your household who is disabled, it may be possible to get your bill reduced. You may be able to get a reduction if, for example:
- You have a room needed by the disabled person for a special purpose (e.g. dialysis equipment)
- You have an extra bathroom or kitchen for the disabled person
- There is enough floor space for someone who uses a wheelchair within the home

You will need to complete an application form to receive this reduction. Please call us on 0121 303 1113 for an application form.

Personal discounts
The full bill is only payable if there are at least two adults living in the property. In certain circumstances you may be entitled to a reduction:
- If you are the only adult living in your property you can apply for a 25% discount
- If there are no adults living in the property (e.g. second home or an unoccupied furnished accommodation), you can apply for a 10% discount

Some people are not counted when looking at the number of adults in a property. The main categories are:
- Full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees
- People who are severely mentally impaired
- People caring for someone living in the property who has a disability, and who is not their spouse, partner or child aged under 18 years
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at, or who have just left, school or college
- Patients resident in hospital
- People who are being looked after in care homes
- People in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of council tax or a fine)

For further information, or to make an application please visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/Discounts-and-Exemptions-Form or contact Council Tax Customer Services on 0121 303 1113.
Exemptions

Exempt properties
Some properties are exempt from council tax. For a full list please visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/Exemptions

However, the main categories are:

- an unoccupied, unfurnished property having major alterations or repairs, for a maximum of 12 months
- an unoccupied, unfurnished property, for a maximum of 6 months
- a property left unoccupied by a person detained in custody
- a property left unoccupied by patients now resident in a hospital or care home
- a property left unoccupied because the owner or tenant has died, for a maximum of 6 months after probate has been granted
- a property left empty by people receiving care
- a property left empty by people providing care
- a property left empty by someone who is now a full-time student living elsewhere
- a property occupied solely by full-time students, or by some non-British dependants of students
- a property left empty by a bankrupt
- a vacant caravan pitch or boat mooring
- a property occupied only by people aged under 18 years
- an unoccupied annexe which cannot be let separately without a breach of planning control
- a property occupied only by people who are severely mentally impaired (including the liable person)
- certain properties occupied by diplomats
- an annexe occupied by an elderly or disabled relative

You will need to complete an application form to receive any reduction or exemption.

For further information, or to make an application please visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/Discounts-and-Exemptions-Form or contact Council Tax Customer Services on 0121 303 1113.
Council tax benefit

Council tax benefit is money off your council tax bill. This means that your bill could be reduced. Council tax benefit can be paid in addition to any other reductions in your bill, for example, because you live alone.

You may still qualify for council tax benefit even if:
- You are working
- You have other income such as a works pension or a private pension
- You have savings, unless these are more than £16,000

How much can I get?
The amount of council tax benefit you get depends on your individual circumstances and takes account of any income you (and that of a partner, if you have one) get from working, pensions, benefits and tax credits, any savings over £6,000 and your household circumstances including any other people who live with you.

The people who live with you other than your partner are called non-dependants. For every non-dependant that lives with you there could be a reduction in the overall amount of council tax benefit that you are awarded. These reductions will increase by a significant amount from April 2011, and your council tax benefit might go down as a result, meaning you will have a higher bill next year. You can find further information about this on www.birmingham.gov.uk/counciltaxbenefit

Single people, couples and families can get council tax benefit. There is no minimum amount of council tax benefit. Even if you are only entitled to £1 per week that still means over £50 coming off your bill.

For example:
- A pensioner living alone with a council tax bill for £750 might still get some help where their weekly income is as much as £209 per week
- A pensioner couple with a £1,000 bill could be getting as much as £305 per week and still qualify
- A couple with 3 children who are working could also get help if their income (including tax credits) is £385 per week

Remember: These are only examples. You could get more if your council tax bill is more than £1,000 or someone in your household is sick or disabled, so check it out now, even if you think you will not be entitled.

If your income is too high to qualify but you are a single person living with another adult who is not your partner and who is on a low income, you might still get some help. This is called a second adult rebate and is worked out based on the income of the person who is living with you.

birmingham.gov.uk...apply for a library card...pay council housing rent...report potholes...pay business rates...
Council tax benefit

£ Millions of council tax benefit goes unclaimed each year

Every year thousands of people in Birmingham who are entitled to council tax benefit do not claim. This means that all of these people are paying more council tax than they should.

Getting help and advice

Some people might not know how to claim, others might think it is too complicated.

If you have not claimed council tax benefit, but would like to know if you are entitled, ring us today on 0121 464 7000. We can complete a claim or take information from you in relation to a change in circumstances over the telephone.

You can also make a claim or report a change in circumstances at a Neighbourhood Office by making an appointment. To find your nearest Neighbourhood Office or to make an appointment you need to call 0121 303 1113.

If you already get council tax benefit, you do not need to make a new claim, your benefit has already been taken off your bill. If your circumstances change you must tell us straightaway as this could affect your council tax benefit.

In and out of work

If you have recently started work after claiming Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance, you now only need to contact your local Jobcentre Plus. They will take the details from you in relation to your housing benefit and council tax benefit and pass these to the Benefit Service.

If you are no longer in employment, you only need to visit your local Jobcentre Plus. They will take your details from you and pass them to the Benefit Service. These will be used to calculate your housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Benefit Fraud – Help us stamp it out

Do you know anyone committing Benefit Fraud or any other type of fraud against the council? Anyone wishing to report a suspected benefit fraud should call, in confidence, the Local Authority Fraud Hotline on 0800 328 6340 (0800 328 6341 Textphone), or write to P.O. Box 9990 Birmingham B1 2YS, or email fraudhotline@birmingham.gov.uk
How to pay

Please note that your payment date is the 1st of the month, commencing in April, unless you pay by direct debit when you will have a choice of payment dates. Direct debit payers have the choice of paying on 8, 15, 21 or 28 of the month.

Direct debit is the easiest way to pay, and you are protected by the direct debit guarantee. This method is available for monthly instalments only.

If you would like to pay your council tax by direct debit, it could not be simpler. Just call us on 0121 303 1113, advise us of your chosen payment date and provide us with your relevant details. We will do the rest.

Online – Visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/council-tax where you can make payment by debit or credit card.

By Telephone using debit / credit card – Call 0121 464 2001 to make payment on the 24 hour Automated Payment System or 0121 303 1113 Monday – Friday 8.00am – 8.00pm, (except Bank Holidays) and your payment can be taken.

If you pay by any of the following methods, you must allow 5 days for your payment to reach us.

Payment card – If you have a payment card, you can take this to any post office. If you pay by cheque at the post office you must make it payable to ‘Post Office Ltd’. You can also pay at any shop displaying the PayPoint or PayZone logo – only cash is accepted at these outlets.

By Post – to Birmingham City Council, Resources Department (Revenues & Benefits), P.O. Box 5, Birmingham B4 7AB. Cheques / Postal Orders should be made payable to Birmingham City Council – writing your payment reference number on the reverse. Please do not send your payment card, if you have been issued with one. Cash must not be sent in the post and do not staple, pin or fold cheques. Receipts will only be issued if a stamped self-addressed envelope is provided.

If the front of this bill shows that you will be paying by payment card, you should continue to use the card you used last year.

Whether you choose the post office, Paypoint or Payzone please take your payment card with you.
Don’t fall into the debt trap

All payments must be received by the due dates shown on your bill, or you will receive a Reminder Notice. If payments are not made on time, you may be subject to enforcement action. This can involve bailiff action, deductions from your income, bankruptcy proceedings, Charging Order or an application to commit you to prison. Substantial costs are involved – which you will have to pay.

If you have difficulties paying your council tax, please contact us on 0121 303 1113. To pay by direct debit and avoid missing your payments, please visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/directdebit or call us on 0121 303 1113.

Paying by direct debit ensures you do not miss payments
For information on all council services visit our website at www.birmingham.gov.uk

Service improvement

The council has tracing software which enables us to identify and recover outstanding council tax from people who leave their property without paying.

Comments / compliments / complaints – your views
We are committed to providing our customers with a good level of service and support the city council’s Your Views policy.

If you would like to raise anything about the service you have received, whether it is a comment, compliment or complaint, please let us know by visiting www.birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews or contact us using the details available in the help and information section of this booklet.

To keep up to date with what’s happening in the city why not subscribe to Birmingham Bulletin – Birmingham City Council’s electronic newsletter.
Sign up at www.birmingham.gov.uk/bulletin
Useful contact details

Council Tax Customer Services 0121 303 1113
www.birmingham.gov.uk/council-tax

The Benefit Service 0121 464 7000
www.birmingham.gov.uk/benefits

Valuation Office Agency 0121 410 3700
www.voa.gov.uk

Refuse Collection 0121 303 1112
www.birmingham.gov.uk/refusecollection

Adult and Communities (Out of Hours) 0121 675 4806
Home Care Services (Out of Hours) 0121 464 5001
Homelessness 0121 303 7410
www.birmingham.gov.uk/homeless

Trading Standards 0121 303 6031
www.birmingham.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Benefit Fraud 0800 328 6340
e-mail fraudhotline@birmingham.gov.uk

This leaflet explains council tax and the council’s budget. If you cannot understand it, please go to your Neighbourhood Office (you must make an appointment) or telephone 0121 303 1113 and you will be given help.

Birmingham’s world-class museums are at the cultural heart of the city

Find out what’s on in museums and discover more about the city’s history

visit bmag.org.uk

- Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery is home to the world’s finest art collections including Pre-Raphaelite art and the famous Anglo Saxon Gold Hoard.
- Award winning Museum of the Jewellery Quarter
- Soho House former home of 18th century entrepreneur Matthew Boulton
- Aston Hall, Blakesley Hall, Sarehole Mill and Weoley Castle Ruins

birmingham.gov.uk...apply for a library card...pay council housing rent...report potholes...pay business rates...
Get Up Close and Personal with the Council – Open Your Own Account Today

Personal Accounts are free, simple to open and enable you to get the most out of the council online.

Enjoy quick, easy access to services 24/7 from a PC, laptop or smart phone from just about anywhere.

View and change your service requests and bookings and check their status online.

We even offer automatic email or text reminders, so you don’t miss anything.

Check out what’s available online and open your own Personal Account today at: birmingham.gov.uk

birmingham.gov.uk...pay council tax...make planning applications...report council house repairs...report vermin...