

Council Tax Support Scheme Information Sheet

Background Information

The Government has abolished Council Tax Benefit with effect from 1 April 2013, and local authorities have to administer a local scheme of Council Tax Support. The funding for the local scheme has been reduced by 10% which is a shortfall of over £11m for Birmingham.

Consultation on the draft Council Tax Support Scheme ran for three months from September 2013. After taking into account public feedback, the final scheme was approved by the City Council on the 8 January 2013.

Protected Groups

The Council Tax Support Scheme will provide protection where the Claimant or their partner :

- is a pensioner.
- is entitled to a disability premium, severe disability premium, enhanced disability premium or disabled child premium
- is entitled to Employment Support Allowance and receives a qualifying disability related benefit
- qualifies for a carer's premium
- receives a war disablement pension, war widows pension or war widower's pension
- has a dependant child under 6

The protected groups will still have council tax support worked out using 100% of their council tax liability. – **See *Glossary of Terms attached.***

Working Age Claimants

If claimants or their partners are not in one of the protected groups above and they submit a claim for council tax support, the minimum amount they will pay towards their Council Tax bill will be set at 20%. The amount each householder pays is dependent on their individual circumstances.

Conversion of Council Tax Benefit Claims

If claimants already get Council Tax Benefit as at 31 March 2013 this will automatically be converted to Council Tax Support on 01 April 2013, claimants do not need to make a new claim. The Council Tax Support will be taken off their 2013 /14 Council Tax bill.

Limit on backdating claims

The limit for backdating Council Tax Support claims will be one month.

Council Tax Discretionary Fund

The Discretionary fund will be made available to assist those people who will experience financial difficulty as a result of the new Council Tax Support scheme.

For further information

Please visit our website www.birmingham.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

Glossary of Terms – Council Tax Support

Backdated Award – In some cases we have been able to pay people Council Tax Benefit for a period of up to six months before they made a claim if they demonstrated a good reason for not making a claim sooner than they did. Backdated awards will now be limited to a maximum of one month.

Carers – For the purpose of Council Tax Support carers are defined for this purpose as a claimant or their partner who is entitled to receive carer's allowance and as a result qualifies for the carers' premium within the current Council Tax benefit system / new Council Tax support scheme.

Council Tax – A local tax based on the property valuation. It is used to fund public services.

Council Tax Benefit – This is the current system to help someone on a low income or no income to pay their Council Tax.

Council Tax Support – This is the new scheme to help someone on low income or no income to pay their Council Tax

Council Tax Liability – The amount of Council Tax that a person is liable to pay after any discounts / exemptions have been applied but before any Council Tax Benefit or Council Tax Support is deducted.

Dependant – A child (under 16) or young person up to the age of 20 who lives with the claimant and for who the claimant or their partner receives Child Benefit in respect of.

Disabled – For the purpose of Council Tax Support people with a disability are defined for as a claimant or their partner who is entitled to the disability premium, severe disability premium or enhanced disability premium within the current Council Tax benefit system / new Council Tax support scheme.

This includes for example claimants or their partners who are registered blind, have been off sick for 52 weeks or more or are getting benefits such as Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence payment, an Armed Forces Independence payment, the disability element or severe disability element of Working Tax Credit, mobility supplement, long term Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance.

This definition also includes a claimant or their partner who are entitled to the disabled child premium for a dependant child who is registered blind or is getting Disability Living Allowance or a Personal Independence payment.

Employment Support Allowance with a qualifying disability related benefit – For the purpose of Council Tax Support people with a disability are also defined as a claimant or their partner who is in receipt of Employment Support Allowance and a qualifying disability related benefit.

A qualifying disability related benefit is defined by the disability premium, severe disability premium or enhanced disability premium within the current Council Tax benefit system / new Council Tax support scheme as detailed above.

Pensioner – We will follow the definition of a pensioner in line with the Government's statutory guidance. On the 01 April 2013 this will be someone who was born before 06 October 1951.

War Pension - For the purpose of Council Tax Support someone who is in receipt of a war pension includes War Disablement Pension, a War Widows Pension or War Widower's Pension.

Working Age - We will follow the definition of working age in line with the Government's statutory guidance. On the 01 April 2013 this will be someone who was born on or after 06 October 1951.