

Consultation for Local Council Tax Support

Your questions answered

What is Council Tax Benefit?

It helps those people on a low income to pay their Council Tax. At present the Government gives the Council all of the money needed to fund Council Tax Benefit.

The Government sets the rules regarding who can claim Council Tax Benefit. If somebody meets the criteria they will receive benefit towards their Council Tax bill. It is paid directly into their Council Tax account.

In Greenwich last year last year (April 2011 to March 2012) approximately £23million was paid out in Council Tax Benefit.

How many people in Greenwich receive Council Tax Benefit?

There are approximately 27,500 residents currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Of these, approximately 9,000 are of state pension age and will be protected from the changes.

The remaining 18,500 are working age who would potentially be affected by the changes and will have to pay something towards their Council Tax bill. Thirteen thousand of these residents currently get all of their Council Tax paid from benefit.

What's changing and when?

Under planned welfare reform, Council Tax Benefit will be abolished from April 2013; instead all Councils must develop a Council Tax Support scheme.

The Government will be giving us less money to provide this new scheme. The requirements for the new scheme are currently going through the Parliamentary process. The Council will be expected to have a scheme in place by 31 January 2013 to enable it to become operational from 1 April 2013.

The Government have advised Councils that they must provide a new scheme to replace Council Tax Benefit. They have also said that any new scheme should include the following:

- No change to the amount of help pensioners currently receive.
- Consideration of the impact on the most vulnerable.
- Encouragement for people to take up work and in particular not act as a disincentive to working.

Who counts as a pensioner?

A person is counted as a pensioner when they reach the age for claiming pension credit. A person born before 6th October 1951 will have reached the age for claiming Pension Credit when the new scheme comes in on 1st April 2013. There are a few exceptions to this rule.

Are you consulting with residents before setting up a new scheme?

Yes. We are carrying out a consultation exercise concerning a new scheme which needs to be adopted by 31 January 2013. It will come into force on 1 April 2013.

Who should take part in the consultation?

It is important that the Council receives the views of Greenwich residents whether or not they are claiming benefits.

How do I know if I will be affected?

The Government has said that:

- anyone over state pension age who is entitled to Council Tax Benefit must be protected from the changes and will have their council tax support calculated in the same way as it is now ;
- the impact on the most vulnerable should be considered when councils design their new schemes;
- The new scheme should encourage people to work and in particular should not act as a disincentive to working. This means that if you are of state pension age or not currently entitled to Council Tax Benefit you will not be affected.

Anyone else who receives Council Tax Benefit might be affected. The changes may affect how much support you can claim or whether you receive any support at all, and therefore how much Council Tax you are expected to pay.

What are you consulting on?

The consultation asks for your opinions on a new draft scheme or an increase in Council Tax.

You can find the draft scheme, other supporting documents, and have your say on the proposals by going to www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

When does the consultation start and finish?

The consultation starts on 19th November 2012 and finishes on 10th January 2013.

How can I take part in the consultation?

You can complete our online questionnaire. You can find this on our website by clicking on this link or you can complete a paper questionnaire and return it to **Revenues & Benefits Service,
Local Council Tax Support Consultation,
35 Wellington Street, London SE18 6HQ.**

How will Council tax support work?

Once the consultation closes we will consider all the feedback. A report will then be developed which will be presented to a full Council meeting (involving all Local Councillors) on January 30th 2013, where the final decision on what the scheme will look like will be made. The new scheme will then come into force on 1 April 2013.

Will I have to re-apply when changes are made in April 2013?

We anticipate that the new Government regulations will not require people to re-apply under the new scheme.

I still have some more questions, what should I do?

We hope this Question and Answer section provides you with a good overview of the proposed changes. The main consultation document provides more detail on the options we have considered together with case study examples.

If you need further information

If you need further information about the new proposals before completing the consultation questionnaire, our contact details are given below.

You can contact us about the proposals in the following way:

Web: www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/haveyoursay

Write: Revenues & Benefits Service,
Local Council Tax Consultation,
35 Wellington Street,
London SE18 6HQ.

Email: lcts-consultation@greenwich.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8921 2078

Would any of the following make it easier for you to use our services? Please tick the boxes that apply to you.

- ☐ Home visits ☐ Sign language or interpreters
☐ Minicom ☐ Typetalk

Information provided in other formats

- (please say which) ☐ large print ☐ Braille ☐ audio tape
☐ on disk internet ☐ other please give details.

How old are you?

- ☐ 18 or under ☐ 19 to 25 ☐ 26 to 50
☐ 51 to 65 ☐ 66 to 80 ☐ 80 or over

Can you?

- speak English confidently ☐ Yes ☐ No
• read and write English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have answered 'No' to either of the above questions, please say which language you use for

speaking _____

reading and writing _____

Your name _____

Your telephone number



Send this form to

Revenues & Benefits Service,
Local Council Tax Support Consultation,
35 Wellington Street, London SE18 6HQ

This document contains important information. If you would like a translation of the document in your own language, please tick the box on the right and return this whole page to the address shown below.

English

ਇਸ ਢਿੱਠੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਖਾਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਢਿੱਠੇ ਦੀ ਅਪਣੀ ਥੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸੱਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਜੋ ਥੋਕਸ ਹੈ ਵਿੱਚ ਟਿੱਕ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਵਰਕਾ ਸਹੁੰ ਥੱਲੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਐਡਰੈਸ ਤੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਭੇਜੋ।

Punjabi

Qoraalkan waxaa ku koobaan macluumaad muhiim ah. Haddii aad dooneysid in luqaddaada lagugu tajaumo, fadlan xariiq koobaabinta midigta, booggan oo dhamaa u soo dir ciwaanka hoos ku yaalla.

Somali

Bu belgege öñemni bilgiler içermektedir. Belgeğin kendi dilinizde çevirisini istiyorsanız, lütfen sağdaki kutuyu işaretleyip bu sayfayı aşağıdaki adrese gönderiniz.

Turkish

此文件包含重要的信息内容。如果你需要一份關於你自己的語言的翻譯文本，請在右側的方格內划鉤，並將此頁交到下列地址處。

Chinese

Tài liệu này có chứa những tin tức quan trọng. Nếu bạn muốn bản tài liệu này được dịch ra ngôn ngữ của bạn, xin hãy gạch vào ô ở tay phải và gửi lại cả trang đó đến địa chỉ sau đây.

Vietnamese

এই নথিটিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তথ্য রয়েছে। যদি আপনি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় এটির অনূবাদ করতে চান, তাহলে ডান পাশের বাকটিতে টিক দিচ্ছেন পূর্ন পৃষ্ঠাটি নিচের ঠিকানাতে প্রেরণ করুন।

Bengali

આ દસ્તાવેજમાં મહત્વની માહિતી સમાવેલી છે. જો તમને તમારી ભાષામાં આ દસ્તાવેજનું ભાષાંતર જોઈતું હોય તો, મહેરબાની કરી જમણા બાજુના ખાનામાં ટીક (નિશાની) કરો અને આખું પાનું નીચે આપેલ સરનામે પાછું મોકલો.

Gujarati

يحتوي هذا المستند على معلومات هامة. إن أردتها مترجمة إلى لغتك فالرجاء وضع علامة في الخانة التي في اليمين لارجاع الصفحة بكاملها إلى العنوان المذكور في الأسفل.

Arabic

اس دسآویہ میں ضروری معلومات فراہم کی گئی ہیں تاکہ آپ کو آسانی سے ہر طرف سے پاس میں نشان لگا کر یہ پورا صفحہ درست ذیل سے واپس بھیج سکیں۔

Urdu

Iwe yi kun fun awon akirẹsẹf pàtàkì. Tí e ba fẹ ki a túmò rẹ fun yin, kí e fi àmìn sí inu àpótí kekere tí o wa ní apa otun akirẹsẹf yí, kí e sí fí iwe yí ranse sí wa ní àdírẹsẹ tí n be ní isalẹ yí.

Yoruba