**Council Tax Bills 2025/26 – Frequently Asked Questions**

The council will shortly be sending out the council tax and business rates bill for the forthcoming financial year and to help our customers we have compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions.

1. I want to set up a Direct Debit to pay my council tax / business rates.

Please call customer services on 01530 454 545 who will arrange this without the need to complete any paperwork. Alternatively go to <https://www.nwleics.gov.uk> to set up a direct debit online.

2. My bill states I pay by Direct Debit do I need to do anything?

No - the payments will automatically be taken from your account on the dates shown on your bill.

3. I have received a council tax bill and I don’t understand why the amounts have changed?

There may be various reasons why the amounts have changed, for example your entitlement to a discount or council tax support may be different or the amounts levied by the County Council, the Fire Authority, the Police or Parish Councils may have increased. If it is not clear from your bill. Details of the splits and % increases can be found on the bottom left of the bill and there are links to information and the website on the reverse of the bills.

4. How much has the council tax gone up?

North West Leicestershire District Council has increased it’s part of your council tax bill by 2.5% Additionally Leicestershire Police have increased their precept by 4.9% and Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority have each increased their element of the charge by 6.1% Leicestershire County Council has increased their charge by 5%.

In addition, your entitlement to a discount or council tax support may have changed, which will affect the amount payable.

5. My bill says I’m in a special expense area. What does that mean?

Special expenses are paid to the district council for maintaining parks, play areas, allotments, burial grounds, grass verges and any other open spaces owned by the council.

If you live in an area which requires these services your bill will contain a charge for special expenses.

In some areas the Parish Council will undertake this work, however, when the Parish doesn’t provide these services, the district council will do this on their behalf. Hence some areas will have both a parish charge and a special expense charge.

6. I want to let you know about a change of address / change in occupancy.

Please visit www.nwleics.gov.uk to tell us about your change of circumstances, alternatively see link below or again click on the QR codes on the back of the bill.

North west Leicestershire – [https://nwleics-self.achieveservice.com](https://nwleics-self.achieveservice.com/)- E-billing account registration.

7. I’m struggling to pay my rent / council tax and wonder if I can get any help towards it.

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit towards your rent and / or Council Tax Support to reduce your council tax. You may also be able to apply for a council tax discretionary discount to further reduce your council tax. There is a claim form on our website, linked by a QR code or go to www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk for more information.

8. What is an ‘applicable amount'?

This is a weekly figure set by the Government and represents the basic living needs of the customer and family. All authorities will use this amount when calculating entitlement to benefit.

9. I have received my award letter and the amount of savings (capital) quoted is different to the amount I now have in my account(s).

The figures used in the calculation will be based upon the amount of savings you had when you last applied. If you are of working age, any savings you have that are below £6,000 will not be taken into account when assessing entitlement. This figure is £10,000 for pensioners.

10. The state retirement pension/welfare benefit amount shown on my award is not quite what I receive.

Most DWP benefits are increased by a certain percentage each year which we work out for the new financial year. If your figure is not accurate, please bring in your pension / benefit award letter so we can adjust it if required.

**Quick reminder:**

What is a long-term empty? -  Long term empty is when a property has been empty, unoccupied and unfurnished (all 3) for longer than 6 months.

Below are the long-term premium charges. For example if a property is empty for more than 1 years, the property will incur 100% premium charge; totally 200% council tax to pay.

**Long term premium charges with effect 01.04.2025**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EMPTY YEARS**  | **CHARGES**  |
| 1-5 years  | 100% Council Tax  |
| 5-10 years  | 200% Council Tax  |
| 10+ years  | 300% Council Tax  |

**Exceptions to the premium charges**

 A long-term empty property premium will not be applied where a specific exemption applies, or where the dwelling:

* is the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services who is absent as a result of such service.
* forms part of a single property which is being treated by a resident of that property as part of the main dwelling, for example an annex.
* is actively marketed for sale/let
* which fall under exempt F and probate has recently been granted
* is requiring major works

**How does the customer apply?**

* The customer needs to apply for the premium exceptions via writing, this could be by letter / email to the Council Tax department.
* They need to specify what exception they are applying for and provide evidence
* As customer service officers we need to advise customers from phone calls if we find out they are looking to sell their property/ rent it out – we need to advise them of the premiums that could apply and also the exceptions they could be eligible for, as long as the correct steps are taken by the customer

**Homes undergoing major repair work or structural alteration**

If a property is unoccupied and unfurnished in need of, or undergoing, major repair work or structural alteration which is not cosmetic, there is no discount available with effect 01.04.2025.