

## **Council Tax- Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Can I register for Council Tax?**
  - Yes, visit the Council Tax section on the EFDC website where you can register online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/report-a-change-of-address/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/report-a-change-of-address/)
  - If you are an existing customer, then you can visit the self-service portal to report this [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/)
  
- **How can I submit a general enquiry?**
  - We now have a general enquiry form where customers can:
    - tell us their bill is wrong
    - ask for a refund
    - ask us to correct wrong information on your bill
    - tell us about a payment that hasn't appeared on their bill
    - make an appeal against their liability or a refused discount
    - ask general questions
  - Please visit [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/)
  
- **I have moved out of my property, what do I need to do?**
  - As an existing customer, please visit the self-service portal.
  - You can also visit the Council Tax section on our website where you can report a change of address. This covers both moves within or outside the district. [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/report-a-change-of-address/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/report-a-change-of-address/)
  
- **Can I set up a Direct Debit?**
  - Yes, you can visit the Council Tax section on the EFDC website and set up a direct debit online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/pay-your-council-tax/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/pay-your-council-tax/)
  - You can also register for the self-service portal where you can manage your payments online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/)
  
- **I'm in arrears with my Council Tax. Can I set up a payment plan?**
  - This depends on what stage of recovery your account. Generally, we would advise that you pay in line with the latest notice.
  - If your circumstances have changed i.e. you have moved, need a discount/exemption etc. then please complete the relevant form on our website or complete a general enquiry form online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/)
  - If you are unable to pay in line with the current notice, you can visit the self-service portal and submit a payment offer/set up your own arrangements up [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/)
  - If you are unable to access our online services please email the Recovery team with a payment offer to be considered [recovery@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:recovery@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

- **What discounts/exemptions are available?**

- Visit the Council Tax section on the EFDC website where you can find all discounts & exemptions available along with details on how to apply.
- Discounts [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/)
- Exemptions [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/exemptions/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/exemptions/)

- **How can I pay my Council Tax?**

- We recommend that your Council Tax is paid by Direct Debit for the new financial year. This can be set up directly here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/pay-your-council-tax/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/pay-your-council-tax/)
- We would also advise you to sign up for the self-service portal where you can manage your payments online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/)
- There are other numerous ways to pay:
  - Online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/pay-your-council-tax/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/pay-your-council-tax/)
  - Call our 24-hour automated telephone payment service on 01992 564600
  - In person at Civic Offices, Debden Broadway or Waltham Abbey library. Please check the website for updates on opening times.
  - Post: Make your cheque payable to Epping Forest District Council and write your Council Tax account number and your address on the back of the cheque. Send your cheque to Council Tax, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, CM16 4BZ. Include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you want us to send you a receipt.
  - Bank transfer: Account name – Epping Forest District Council  
Sort code – 60-07-39  
Account number – 56340001  
You need to include your name, address and Council Tax account number when you pay by bank transfer.

- **Can I check my Council Tax account balance and payments I have made to date online?**

- Yes, sign up for the self-service portal on our website. When you have signed up, you can view bills and manage your account online [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/)

- **Can I have a copy of my bill?**

- Yes, sign up for the self-service portal on our website <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/manage-your-council-tax-online/>
- When you have signed up, you can view bills and manage your account online.
- You can also request a paper copy by completing a general enquiry form [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/). You can also email directly [counciltax@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) You should include your name, address and payment reference number in the email.

- **If I register for Council Tax, am I automatically added to the Electoral Register?**
  - If you register for Council Tax online and select the option for us to inform the electoral department then your details will automatically be passed over.
  - If you haven't registered online then you will need to register to vote directly [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)
  
- **Who is responsible for paying the Council Tax?**
  - Council Tax liability is based on the hierarchy of the property.
  - Usually one person, called the 'liable person', would be billed for the council tax charge.
  - Nobody under the age of 18 can be a liable person.
  - Couples living together will both be 'jointly and severally liable' - this means they are responsible as a couple but also individually. This applies if the couple is married, cohabiting or in a civil partnership.
  
- **I have a partner/friend/family that stays 2 nights a week will I lose my Single Person Discount?**
  - It depends if it's on a temporary (less than 6 weeks) or permanent basis. If it's on a permanent basis then you will lose the discount.
  - Is the person staying at the property registered for Council Tax elsewhere? If so, then it will not affect the single discount. If not, other factors will be taken into account i.e. where are they registered to vote? Doctors? etc. before we can decide on whether the single discount will be affected.
  - Any changes of a permanent nature in the household should be notified via the website/email within 21 days of your circumstances changing.
  
- **How do I appeal my Council Tax band?**
  - The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) are responsible for banding properties and so the Council cannot deal with this.
  - Visit [www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band](http://www.gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band) for more information on appealing a banding.
  
- **I am a student; do I have to pay Council Tax?**
  - A property is 'exempt' from council tax for the time period on the student certificate if it's only occupied by full-time university or college students.
  - If the property isn't exempt, some people, including full-time students, are 'disregarded'. This means the council tax is calculated as if they don't live there. This might mean that whoever does have to pay the council tax can get a discount.
  - If you want to report that you are a full time student, you can do so on the website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/exemptions/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/exemptions/)
  - You would need to provide a Council Tax exemption student certificate which you can obtain from their college/university.

- **What is the Long-Term Empty Premium?**
  - An additional amount of Council Tax known as a long-term empty premium is charged on properties that have been empty for more than 2 years.
  - There is currently a national housing shortage and this premium is designed to encourage the owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use. The premium has been in place since April 2013 and has been increased each year since April 2018.
  - From April 2020, the premium is 100% Council Tax for properties that are empty and unfurnished for more than two years but less than five which doubles the amount of Council Tax payable.
  - For properties that are empty for more than 5 years, a 200% premium is applied which trebles the amount of Council Tax payable.
  - If a property remains empty for over 10 years, then it could attract a premium of 300% which quadruples the amount of Council Tax payable.
  
- **I have an annexe in the grounds of my property, is the full Council Tax payable on the annexe?**
  - **T Class:** A dwelling which forms part of another dwelling which may not be let separately from that other dwelling without a breach of planning controls. An unoccupied annexe is exempt whether it is furnished or unfurnished. Class T applies as long as no one is living in the annexe. This can be applied for here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/exemptions/unoccupied-annexe-to-an-unoccupied-property/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/exemptions/unoccupied-annexe-to-an-unoccupied-property/)
  - **W Class:** A dwelling which forms part of another dwelling which is occupied by a person over the age of 65 years and is their sole and main residence. They would need to be dependent on the relative of the main property. Supporting documents of their age and relationship to the occupier in the main residence will be required. This can be applied for here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/discount-for-occupied-annexe/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/discount-for-occupied-annexe/)
  - **Local Family Annexe Discount:** A dwelling which forms part of another dwelling which may not be let separately from that other dwelling without a breach of planning controls. If the property becomes occupied by a relative (under the age of 65 years) then there can be a discount awarded under local taxation discounts. Details of relationship and supporting documents would need to be provided showing the relationship to the person in the main residence. The discount doesn't apply if a non-family member occupies the annexe. This can be applied for here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/discount-for-occupied-annexe/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/discount-for-occupied-annexe/)

- **My property is undergoing major repair and renovation, can I get a discount?**
  - You can apply for a 50% Council Tax discount for up to 1 year if your property is vacant and unfurnished and requires or is undergoing major repair works or structural alteration (this doesn't include refurbishment) to render it habitable. This comes under a D Class discount.
  - You must continue to pay Council Tax in accordance with your bill until the discount has been granted. Without the full information and all supporting documents, we will not be able to award the discount.
  - You can apply here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/uninhabitable-property/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/uninhabitable-property/)
  
- **I have a disabled person living with me; can I get a reduction in my Council Tax?**
  - You may be entitled to a disabled relief discount if you are disabled or have a disabled person living with you who needs:
    - An extra room
    - An extra bathroom or kitchen
    - Extra space to use a wheelchair
  - You can apply here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/disabled-relief-discount/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts/disabled-relief-discount/)
  
- **My property is empty, can I get a discount?**
  - An empty discount is based on the property and not a person and as such, if the discount has already been used at the property, it may not be available.
  - If the property is empty and unfurnished, then a 100% discount can be given up to a maximum of 4 weeks.
  - If the property is unoccupied and furnished (classed as a 2<sup>nd</sup> home) then a 5% discount can be considered (no time limit on a 2<sup>nd</sup> home discount) You would need to have a sole/main residence elsewhere for this to be considered.
  - If you wish to report their property is empty they can report it on a general enquiry form here [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/)
  
- **I am on a low income; can I get any help with payment of my Council Tax?**
  - You can apply for Local Council Tax Support directly on our website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/local-council-tax-support/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/local-council-tax-support/)
  - You may also wish to apply for Universal Credit if you are on a low income [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit)

- **Can I add someone to my liability?**

- Please complete a general enquiry form to request this [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/council-tax/general-enquiry-form/)
- You can also email directly [counciltax@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) You should include your name, address and payment reference number in the email along with the details of who you want added to the liability and why.
- The additional person would need to be a long-term partner or have an interest in the property. Unlike electoral services, we don't need a list of occupiers at the property and not all occupiers will be liable.