



South Hams  
District Council

# Council tax

reductions because of  
**ill health**

Revenue & Benefits





**This leaflet outlines how Council Tax bills may be reduced where one or more of the occupiers of a property suffers from health problems. None of the reductions listed are means tested and in most cases the reduction can be awarded just by completing and returning a simple form.**

In addition to the reductions shown on this leaflet, there is also a scheme which assesses how much you have to pay based on your income.

If you have a limited income and less than £16,000 capital (or more than £16,000 but you receive Pension Credit Guarantee) you could pay less Council Tax. Complete an application form and we will work out how much you have to pay.

Further discounts and exemptions are also available to other groups of people – please ask for a copy of our ‘Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions’ leaflet.

Unfortunately, the law covering these issues is very complicated and the information in this leaflet cannot cover every detail. But if you think you might be paying too much please don't be afraid to ask! We don't want you to pay any more than you have to.

For application forms, or further information about any of these reductions, please contact Steve Henstock on Totnes (01803) 861470 or e-mail him at [steve.henstock@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:steve.henstock@southhams.gov.uk). Let Steve help you to pay less!

If you would prefer independent advice why not contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau? Telephone them on Totnes (01803) 862392; they will be only too pleased to help you. Their advice lines are open from 10.00a.m. to 1.00p.m. Monday to Friday, and also from 1.00p.m. to 4.00p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. They may also be able to visit you at your own home.

## Discounts

A full Council Tax bill assumes that two adults live in your home. But you can get a discount of 25% if you live alone (or 50% under some circumstances).

Even if you don't live alone you may still be entitled to a discount because we don't count some adult residents when we calculate discounts (we 'disregard' them). They include:

1. A carer who looks after someone (other than their spouse, partner or child) for at least 35 hours a week, and providing the person they are caring for is in receipt of one of the following allowances;
  - Higher rate of attendance allowance
  - Highest rate of care component for disability living allowance

- An increase in the rate of their disablement pension
- An increase in a constant attendance allowance.

It's quite possible for there to be more than one carer in a household and for them both to be disregarded for Council Tax purposes. For example where both parents care for an adult son or daughter – provided the above conditions are met.

2. People who need substantial health care and whose home is now effectively a hospital or care home. (If the property is left unoccupied as a result there will be nothing at all to pay – see 'exemptions')
3. Someone living with you who suffers from enduring mental health problems. Their impairment must appear to be permanent and they must be in receipt of one of the following allowances:
  - Incapacity Benefit
  - Attendance Allowance
  - Severe Disablement Allowance
  - The care component of a Disability Living Allowance (payable at either the highest or middle rate)
  - An increase in the rate of Disablement Pension (increase where constant attendance is needed)
  - Disability Working Allowance
  - Unemployability Supplement
  - Constant Attendance Allowance.

Their doctor will also need to complete part of the form.

**If all the people in a property are disregarded under one or other of these categories – the discount will be 50%.**

## Exemptions from Council Tax

You will not have to pay any Council Tax at all under some circumstances:

- Where all the occupiers suffer from enduring mental health problems (for details see the notes under 'discounts').
- On a separately assessed annexe (such as a 'Granny Flat') where the occupier is a dependant relative of the people living in the main part of the property.
- Where the only occupier has moved to receive personal care elsewhere
- The property is left empty by someone who has moved out in order to provide personal care for another person.

## Reduction for Disabilities Scheme

This scheme ensures that if you need additional space in your property, because one of the residents has a disability, you are not penalised by having to pay additional Council Tax. This could happen because the additional space you need might increase the value of your property. Normally the reduction is the equivalent of one band i.e. if your property is valued in band D you pay the equivalent of band C etc.. If your property is in band A, the charge is reduced by one sixth.

### To qualify:

1. A person with a disability must live in your home. They do not have to be the Council Tax payer – for example it could be a relative who lives with you.
2. There must be at least one of the following features in the property:
  - A room other than a kitchen, bathroom or toilet used predominantly by and for meeting the needs of the disabled person. e.g. a room set aside for storage of dialysis equipment
  - An additional bathroom or kitchen used predominantly by and for meeting the needs of the disabled person
  - Additional space inside the dwelling to allow the use of a wheelchair.

You will also need to show that this feature is essential, or of major importance, to the well being of the disabled person. You must be able to show that the room or space is needed because of the person's disability and that they would not need it but for the fact they are disabled. In this sense the room or space must be 'extra'. However, you do not need to have specially adapted a room or to have built a new room - but at least one of the conditions listed under number 2 above must be met.

If you would like any further help or information about anything contained in this leaflet, please contact us at:

Revenue & Benefits Section  
Follaton House  
Plymouth Road  
Totnes TQ9 5NE

Or tel 01803 861234 and ask for the Revenue & Benefits Section.

**All our publications are available in alternative formats,  
tel 01803 861123 or e-mail [enquiries@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southhams.gov.uk)**