



**Oadby & Wigston Borough Council**

# Council Tax

**2015 - 2016**

***Including information about National Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax Support***

## How to get in touch with us

Please contact us if you need help or advice regarding Council Tax, Business Rates or Council Tax Support.

**By letter:** Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, LE18 2DR

**Telephone:** 0116 288 8961

**Opening hours:**

Mon, Tue and Thu	8:45 to 16:45
Wed	8:45 to 16:00
Fri	8:45 to 16:15

**In person:** Our customer service centre is located at:

**Council offices:** Station Road, Wigston, LE18 2DR

*See our website for details of our opening hours*

**Website:** [www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk](http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk)

**By fax:** 0116 288 7828

**By email:** [revenues@oadby-wigston.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@oadby-wigston.gov.uk)



**Oadby and Wigston Borough Council**

Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR

T: 0116 288 8961 F: 0116 288 7828 [www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk](http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk)

# What is Council Tax?

Council Tax is a locally set charge on all domestic properties. It is based on property values set by the Valuation Office Agency in April 1991.

## Who has to pay Council Tax?

In general, the residents of a property will be liable to pay the Council tax, whether they own or rent the property, provided that they are aged 18 or over.

Everyone with the same legal interest in a property is equally liable. People who live together as a couple (either same or opposite sex) are equally liable, regardless of any legal interest in the property. In some circumstances the owner may be liable instead of any residents.

## What does the Council tax pay for?

Council Tax pays for services provided by:

- Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire Police Authority
- Combined Fire Authority

# Council Tax Valuation Bands

Your property is placed into a valuation band to enable the Council to calculate your Council Tax. Each valuation band has a range of values:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Value of Property at 1st April 1991</b>	<b>Proportion of Band D</b>
A	Not more than £40,000	6/9
B	£40,001 - £52,000	7/9
C	£52,001 - £68,000	8/9
D	£68,001 - £88,000	9/9
E	£88,001 - £120,000	11/9
F	£120,001 - £160,000	13/9
G	£160,001 - £320,000	15/9
H	More than £320,001	18/9

Properties built after April 1991 are valued on a comparable basis as if they had been built at that date. The valuations are undertaken by the **Listing Officer**, whose address is Council Tax East, VOA, Ground Floor, Ferrers House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1AB. Telephone 0300 050 1501 (Local Rate)

# How much is Council Tax?

The Council Tax charge for each valuation bands is calculated below:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Leics County Council</b>	<b>Office of Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>	<b>Leicestershire Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b>	<b>Oadby and Wigston</b>	<b>Total Charge</b>
A	722.77	120.00	40.29	135.07	1018.13
B	843.23	140.00	47.00	157.58	1187.81
C	963.69	160.00	53.72	180.09	1357.50
D	1084.15	180.00	60.43	202.60	1527.18
E	1325.08	219.99	73.86	247.62	1866.55
F	1566.00	259.99	87.29	292.64	2205.92
G	1806.92	299.99	100.72	337.67	2545.30
H	2168.30	360.00	120.86	405.20	3054.36

## Paying too much Council Tax?

### Normal Charge

Council Tax is normally charged at 100% rate; this applies when the home is occupied by two or more adults or when the home is a second home or left unoccupied. There are some special cases when we can exempt properties from the Council Tax (see below)

### Exempt Occupied Properties

Some occupied properties are exempt from Council Tax. These may include those only occupied by:

- Students
- Under 18 year olds
- Severely mentally impaired people
- Elderly or disabled persons living in a self contained annex to a main home occupied by their relatives

### Exempt Empty Properties

Some empty properties are exempt from Council Tax, these include:

- Unfurnished properties (maximum of 28 days)
- Properties owned by charities (maximum of 6 months)
- Properties where the occupier has left to give or receive care, or to live in a care home, prison or hospital
- Properties owned by estate of deceased and awaiting probate
- Properties that have been re-possessed
- Properties that are the responsibility of a trustee in bankruptcy
- Properties where occupation is forbidden by law
- Properties awaiting occupation by a Minister of Religion
- Properties prohibited to be let separately from a main dwelling

### Properties undergoing major structural repairs

These properties can receive a Council Tax discount of 50%. The discount is limited to a 12 month maximum period.

## Single Person Discounts

If only one adult lives in the property then a 25% sole resident discount can be claimed.

## Other types of Discount

Also, some classes of resident are disregarded when we work out the Council Tax bill, this means that a discount can be claimed on the number of occupiers we count is less than two. Disregarded people include:

- Students, apprentices and YTS trainees
- Patients resident in hospital, care homes and hostels
- Residents who are severely mentally impaired
- Recent school leavers
- Some carers and care workers
- People detained in prison (except for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine) or a mental hospital
- Resident members of religious communities
- Annexe Discount (50%) when occupied by relative of main property

## Disabled Person's Reduction

If you, or someone who lives in your home, needs a room, or a second bathroom or kitchen, or space to use a wheelchair indoors to accommodate a disability that appears permanent, you may be entitled to a reduction of one band value, or 1/9th of the Band D value if your property is already in Band A.

## Long Term Empty Properties

If the property is no one's main home then normally a full charge will apply. If the property has been empty and unfurnished for more than two years then a premium of 50% will be added to the bill.

## Appeals

You can appeal to the Listing Officer regarding the Council Tax band of your property in the following circumstances:

- There has been a material increase in the value of the dwelling (band will only be changed after a relevant transaction for example, sale of the property)
- There has been a material reduction in the value of the property (band can be amended at time of change)
- The Listing Officer has amended the band without a proposal being made by the Council Tax payer
- Within 6 months of a new owner purchasing the property provided that a similar appeal has not been determined in the past

**You should address your appeal to:** Listing Officer, Council Tax East, VOA, Ground Floor, Ferrers House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham, NG2 1AB.  
Telephone 0300 050 1501 (Local Rate)

You can also appeal to the Council in the following circumstances:

- You do not think that you are the person liable to pay the Council Tax
- A discount or exemption should be granted
- The Council has incorrectly calculated your Council Tax bill

You can appeal by writing to the Council and we will then reconsider the circumstances, and advise you of your further rights of appeal if we do not change our decision.

**You must continue to pay your Council Tax until any appeal is decided. Any overpayment will be refunded to you.**

If you are granted a reduction to your Council Tax bill you must tell the Council of any change in circumstances within 21 days of the change otherwise you may have to pay a penalty.

## How can we help you?

We hope to achieve a high level of service delivery for all our customers. Details of our standards are set out in our Customer Charter (see our website). However, we recognise that some customers need extra help and to meet their needs we have implemented a scheme called Customer Care Plus.

### Customer Care Plus

Available for those aged over 65, and for those of any age with a physical or mental disability, contact us for more information.

The extra help provided by the scheme includes:

- **Large Print** - We will send out bills and documents in large print.
- **Braille** - We will send out bills and documents in Braille.
- **Text Phone (Minicom)** - We can be contacted on and reply by textphone.
- **Home Visits** - If you suffer from a disability that prevents you from contacting the Council either by telephone or in person we can arrange for a Council Officer to visit you at home.
- **Third Party Representatives** - If you would like a friend, relative or advisor to deal with your Council Tax, Business Rates or Benefit on your behalf we can arrange to send documentation to them. We will need your written authorisation before we can do this.
- **Arrears Reminders** - If your Council Tax payments are not up to date we will telephone you, or your nominated representative, before issuing a reminder notice.

### Other Languages

We can provide a summary of this leaflet in other languages.

## How can you help us?

Help us to make sure your Council Tax, Business Rates or Council Tax Support is correct.

- Tell us straight away if you move home or business, or if there is any change in your circumstances, especially if you are receiving Housing / Council Tax benefit, discount, exemption or business rate relief.
- Put your account reference number on all correspondence sent to us.
- Answer our requests for information, or to contact us, as soon as possible.
- Tell us straight away if you are having difficulty paying.

## **Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions**

We always try to get it right first time, but know that sometimes mistakes can happen. If you want to complain or give us feedback or suggestions about any issues concerning Council Tax, Business Rates or Benefit then please contact:

**Leicester (0116) 288 8961**

## **How and where to pay**

Full details of how and where to pay your Council Tax and Business Rates are shown on your annual bill. To avoid having to remember payment dates, writing and posting a cheque or queuing, why not pay by Direct Debit, the convenient way to pay.

Direct debit is the only payment method that gives you a choice of payment dates, we offer the 1st or 15th of the month. It only takes a few minutes to set up a direct debit instruction over the phone by calling us on (0116) 288 8691 option 3. We will send you written confirmation and all payments are protected by the direct debit guarantee.

## **Housing Benefit**

If you are getting Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, or are living on low wages or a low income, you may qualify for help towards your rent. To find out if you could qualify for help see our website and follow the link to our Benefit Entitlement Calculator.

If you are a Council Tenant your Housing Benefit will be credited to your rent account to reduce the amount that you have to pay. For all other tenants, Housing Benefit is paid by BACS/cheque to yourself or, in special circumstances, to your landlord.

## **Council Tax Support**

If your name appears on the Council Tax bill you can apply for Council Tax Support, which may reduce the amount of Council Tax you need to pay. If you are getting Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, or are living on low wages or a low income then you should apply for help. If you are working-age you will always be expected to contribute a minimum of the first 15% of your Council Tax charge regardless of your circumstances.

### **Special Rules for Pensioners**

There are special rules that provide extra help to pensioners. If you are pension-age then you can claim up to 100% of your Council Tax charge. If you are not on a low income but someone who lives with you is, then you may qualify for 'Second Adult Rebate'. To qualify the second adult must not be your partner or anyone who pays you rent.

# How to claim Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support

You can claim help by completing an application form: To request an application form visit our offices or call us on 0116 288 8961. Do not delay in sending the form back to us (for example while you gather supporting evidence) as you might lose out on help you are entitled to.

## What we need to know about you

So we can work out how much help you might be entitled to we need to know:

- Details of the income, wages, benefits and savings for you, your partner and any dependent children
- Details and income of any other adults resident in the property
- Details of your rent if you are a tenant
- Two documents to prove your identity, (one of which must have your National Insurance number on it).

We always need to see original documents in support of your claim – photocopies cannot be accepted.

## Are you aware of someone committing Benefit Fraud?

Call the Fraud Hotline on 01455 255 683

# Business Rates Relief

## Small Business Rate Relief

Do you occupy either:

- Only one property and this property has a rateable value (RV) of less than £18,000; or
- One main property (with RV less than £18,000) and other additional smaller properties (each having an RV less than £2,600)?

If so, you may be entitled to a reduction in your charges under the Government's Small Business Rate Relief scheme.

For full details and an application form, please contact the Business Rates section on 0116 257 2634.

# Council Budget

**Balances and reserves** - It is estimated that there will be reserves of £0.9m on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 compared to £0.9m on 31 March 2015.

**Outstanding Debt** - Estimated debt outstanding on 31 March 2016 is £24.114m.

**Employees** – The overall budgeted establishment reduced from 188.33 FTE in 2014/15 to 188.33 FTE in 2015/16.

## 2014/15

Committee	Gross Spend £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expend £000
Policy, Finance and Delivery	13,371	10,740	2,631
Service Delivery	5,140	1,902	3,238
Development Control	800	298	502
Children and Young Persons	15	1	14
Licensing and Regulatory	118	85	33
Capital Financing	483	0	483
Contributions from Reserves	0	300	(300)
Less Capital Charges	0	0	0
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue acc	0	0	0
<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>19,927</b>	<b>13,326</b>	<b>6,601</b>
Use of Revenue Balances	0	0	0
General Fund Budget Requirement	19,927	13,326	6,601
Council Housing	5,269	5,160	109
<b>Borough Total</b>	<b>25,196</b>	<b>18,486</b>	<b>6,710</b>

## 2015/16

Committee	Gross Spend £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expend £000
Finance, Policy and Development	13,470	11,144	2,326
Service Delivery	4,650	1,067	3,583
Development Control	803	311	492
Children and Young Persons	16	1	15
Licensing and Regulatory	90	85	5
Capital Financing	306	0	306
Contributions from Reserves	0	258	(258)
Less Capital Charges	0	0	0
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue acc	0	0	0
<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>19,335</b>	<b>12,866</b>	<b>6,469</b>
Use of Revenue Balances	0	0	0
General Fund Budget Requirement	19,335	12,866	6,469
Council Housing	6,627	5,281	1,346
<b>Borough Total</b>	<b>25,962</b>	<b>18,147</b>	<b>7,815</b>



# Expenditure to be met by Council Tax

2014/15			2015/16	
£000	Per Band D Household	Council Tax is made up as follows:	£000	Per Band D Household
6,601	401.02	Oadby and Wigston Precept (Gross)	6,469	387.39
1,458	88.58	Less Government Grant (RSG)	1,130	67.67
-	-	Other General Grants	373	22.34
1,316	79.95	Business Rate Pool	1,358	81.31
166	10.07	Council Tax Freeze Grant	38	2.28
238	14.49	New Homes Bonus	318	19.04
-	-	Share of Business Rates Surplus (Deficit)	(174)	(10.42)
88	5.33	Share of Collection Fund Surplus (Deficit)	43	2.58
3,335	202.60	Oadby and Wigston Precept (Net)	3,383	202.60
17,500	1,063.00	Leicestershire County Council Precept	18,104	1,084.15
2,905	176.48	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	3,006	180.00
975	59.25	Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Precept	1,009	60.43
<b>24,715</b>	<b>1,501.33</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,502</b>	<b>1,527.18</b>

## Comparing Expenditure 2014/15 with 2015/16

The Council plans to decrease its net expenditure requirement by £219,000, the main reason for which are:	£000	£000
Net Expenditure 2014/15		6,601
Inflation		106
Decreased Capital Finance Costs		(177)
		<b>6,530</b>
Decrease in Costs of Services	(132)	
Decrease in Use of Earmarked Reserves	42	
Decrease in Fees and Charges Income	29	
		(61)
<b>Net Expenditure 2015/16</b>		<b>6,469</b>



## ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MIDLANDS REGION

### The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 2369 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defences schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

#### Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

	2014/15 '000s	2015/16 '000s
Gross expenditure	£37,677	£51,205
Levies Raised	£1,936	£1,936
<b>Total Council Tax Base</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>1,692</b>

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide 'matching' funding the Agency may seek funding from County and Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities and London Boroughs in the form of a Local Levy. The Local Levy is shared on the basis of Band D Equivalents between all contributing bodies within the Committee Area.

Changes in the Gross Budgeted expenditure between the years both reflects the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of projects. For 15/16 we have included Grant Aided Expenditure on all Risk Management Authority Programs. The total Local Levy raised has increased by 0%.

The total Local Levy raised has remained the same in 2015/2016 as 2014/2015 at £1,936,000.