



Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Council Tax

2013 - 2014

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 centres are located at:
Council offices:	Station Road, Wigston, LE18 2DR
Wigston library	Bull Head Street, Wigston Magna, LE18 1PA
Oadby library	Oadby Library, 10 The Parade, Oadby, LE2 5BF
South Wigston library	Bassett Street, South Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 4PE
	<i>See our website for details of our opening hours at the local libraries</i>
Website:	www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk
By fax:	0116 288 7828
By email:	ctax@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

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. 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:

Band	Value of Property at 1st April 1991	Proportion of Band D
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**, their 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:

Band	Leics County Council	Leics Police Authority	Combined Fire Authority	Oadby and Wigston	Total Charge
A	708.67	115.91	38.92	135.07	998.57
B	826.78	135.24	45.40	157.58	1,165.00
C	944.89	154.56	51.89	180.09	1,331.43
D	1,063.00	173.87	58.38	202.60	1,497.85
E	1,299.22	212.51	71.35	247.63	1,830.71
F	1,535.44	251.15	84.32	292.65	2,163.56
G	1,771.66	289.79	97.29	337.67	2,496.41
H	2,126.00	347.74	116.75	405.20	2,995.69

Council Tax Rates

Normal Charge

Council Tax is normally charged a 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 Properties

Some occupied properties are exempt from Council Tax. This means that there is no Council Tax due. Exempt properties 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 Unoccupied Properties

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

- 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

Council Tax Discounts

Single Person Discounts

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

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.

Unoccupied and Unfurnished Homes

A 100% discount can be awarded for properties which are not someone's main home and which are unfurnished. This discount can be awarded for a maximum period of 28 days.

Other types of Discount

Also, some classes of resident are disregarded when we work out the Council Tax bill, these means that a discount can be claimed in 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

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 higher 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 the following languages: Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi.

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 Support, 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 Council Tax Support 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) 257 2747. 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 8.5% 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 receive an application form visit our offices or call our Leicester (0116) 288 8961. Do not delay in sending back 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 Hinckley (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 Leicester (0116) 257 2634.

Council Budget

Balances and reserves - It is estimated that there will be reserves of £0.7m on 31st March 2014 compared to £0.7m on 31 March 2013.

Outstanding Debt - Estimated debt outstanding on 31 March 2014 is £19.6m.

Employees – The overall budgeted establishment decreased from 192.28 FTE in 2013/14 to 185.57 in 2013/14.

2012/13

Committee	Gross Spend £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expend £000
Finance, Policy and Development	15,735	13,280	2,455
Service Delivery Committee	5,293	1,364	3,929
Development Control	868	196	672
Youth	15	0	15
Licensing and Regulatory	60	91	(31)
Capital Financing	229	0	229
Government Grants and Contributions	0	157	(157)
General Fund Total	22,200	15,088	7,112
Use of Revenue Balances	0	35	(35)
General Fund Budget Requirement	22,200	15,123	7,077
Council Housing	3,883	4,790	(907)
Borough Total	26,083	19,913	6,170

2013/14

Committee	Gross Spend £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expend £000
Finance, Policy and Development	12,490	10,068	2,422
Service Delivery Committee	4,796	1,225	3,571
Development Control	774	187	587
Youth	15	1	14
Licensing and Regulatory	102	85	17
Capital Financing	263	0	263
Government Grants and Contributions	0	54	(54)
General Fund Total	18,440	11,620	6,820
Use of Revenue Balances	0	0	0
General Fund Budget Requirement	18,440	11,620	6,820
Council Housing	5,066	4,991	75
Borough Total	23,506	16,611	6,895

Expenditure to be met by Council Tax

2012/13			2013/14	
£000	Per Band D Household	Council Tax is made up as follows:	£000	Per Band D Household
7,077	393.88	Oadby and Wigston Precept (Gross)	6,820	423.01
		Less		
62	3.45	Government Grant (RSG)	1,717	106.51
3,095	172.25	Business Rate Pool	1,142	70.86
-	-	Council Tax Support Funding	372	23.07
182	10.13	Council Tax Freeze Grant	127	7.90
79	4.40	New Homes Bonus	177	10.99
19	1.06	Share of Collection Fund Surplus / (Deficit)	17	1.08
3,640	202.60	Oadby and Wigston Precept (Net)	3,266	202.60
19,100	1,063.00	Leicestershire County Precept	17,138	1,063.00
3,124	173.87	Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	2,803	173.87
959	53.38	Leicestershire Fire Authority Precept	941	58.38
26,823	1,492.85	Total	24,149	1,497.85

Comparing Expenditure

The Council intends to decrease its net expenditure requirement by £292,000, the main reason for which are:	£000	£000
Net Expenditure 2012/13		7,112
Inflation		
Decrease in Fees and Charges Income	30	
Increased Capital Finance Costs	34	
Reduction In Use Of Reserves	102	
Decrease in Costs of Services	(143)	
Organisational Restructure	(315)	
		(292)
Net Expenditure		<u>6,820</u>

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 river systems 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

	2012/2013 £000	2013/2014 £000
Gross Expenditure	£27,196	£34,320
Levies Raised	£1,936	£1,936
Total Council Tax Base	1,887	1,628

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 Gross Budgeted expenditure between the years reflect the impact of the Government Spending Review and national prioritisation of capital projects.

The total Local Levy raised has remained the same in 2013/14 as 2012/13 at £1,936,000.