

## **Council Tax bills - FAQs**

*We get lots of questions about Council Tax. Here are the answers to the ones we get most often.*

### **When I get a new Council Tax bill each year do I need to set up a new Direct Debit?**

No. If you've been paying your last Council Tax by Direct Debit then this will continue. Your Direct Debit will be taken on the same date of the month as before, unless you've cancelled it with your bank. Please tell us if you'd like to change any details, via [info@selby.gov.uk](mailto:info@selby.gov.uk) or 01757 292088.

### **What if I live on my own?**

If you had a single person discount on your last bill, and you're still living on your own, then this will continue. The discount should be included on your new bill.

### **I'm on benefits – what part of my Council Tax do I have to pay?**

This is worked out differently depending on whether you're old enough to get your state pension. If you're of pension age then how much support you can get is worked out on the basis of the whole of your Council Tax bill. If you're of working age then you must pay at least 10% of your bill. This means the support you could get is worked out on 90% of the bill.

### **What about annexes on homes?**

You can get half off your Council Tax you pay if you live in an 'annex' to a house – by this we mean a building that's connected to a main home - providing you're related to the people paying Council Tax in the main part of the house. This also applies to people living in homes with annexes that are empty, but only if you're using the annex as part of your main home. If you think you may qualify please contact us via [info@selby.gov.uk](mailto:info@selby.gov.uk) or by calling 01757 292088.

### **Can I get a discount if there's major structural repair work at my home?**

When you can't live in a home or it's unfurnished because of building work or repairs, you may be able to get 20% off your Council Tax bill for up to a year. We'll need to take a look at the property to make a decision on this. If you think you may qualify for this, an application can be found on the District Council's website: [www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk).

### **My property's been empty and unfurnished for less than six months – what discount do I get?**

If you've got a home that's empty and unfurnished you may be able to get money off your Council Tax for up to six months or until someone starts living there. You could get the first month without having to pay anything, then 20% off your Council Tax bill for the rest of the time.

You can't claim both the money off for the home being empty AND the money off because of major building work at the same time. It's one or the other.

You need to tell us straight away if someone starts to live in the home.

Bear in mind that any property that has been empty more than two years will be charged a further 50% empty homes premium.

### **Do I need to report any change of circumstances?**

Yes. If you move you need to tell us straight away so we don't charge you the wrong amount (and it could be that we'd be charging you too much).

If you're getting money off your Council Tax you must tell us straight away if anything changes that could affect how much discount you get. If you've been given money off that you don't think you deserve, you must tell us within 21 days. It's the law to do that. Not doing it could mean you'll get a £70 fine. You can tell us really easily by filling in a change of circumstances form, which can be found on our website.

### **How much can Council Tax go up by before there has to be a local vote?**

The County Council must hold a referendum if Council Tax is to be increased by 5% or more. Within this there is a limit of 2% for general spending and 3% linked directly to social care services.

District Councils must hold a referendum if their part of the Council Tax is increased by 2% or more *and* more than £5 on a Band D property. This means that an increase of more than 2% is allowed without a referendum vote, providing that the overall increase doesn't go above £5 for a Band D property.

Other organisations can raise their part of Council Tax by 1.99% without having to hold a vote on this.

It's important to note, however, that by law we must show the increase to the nearest decimal point – which means that a 1.99% increase shows as 2%, a 2.99% increase shows as 3%.