

COUNCIL TAX DEMAND NOTICE EXPLANATORY NOTES

Council Tax valuation bands

Most dwellings will be subject to Council Tax. There will be one bill per dwelling, whether it is a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat, and whether it is owned or rented. Each dwelling has been allocated to one of eight bands according to its open market value at 1 April 1991. These are:

<u>Valuation Band</u>	<u>Range of Values</u>
A	Up to & including £40,000
B	£ 40,001 - £ 52,000
C	£ 52,001 - £ 68,000
D	£ 68,001 - £ 88,000

<u>Valuation Band</u>	<u>Range of Values</u>
E	£ 88,001 - £120,000
F	£120,001 - £160,000
G	£160,001 - £320,000
H	More than £320,000

Valuation appeals

You can only appeal against the band your home is in if one of the following applies:

- Where you believe that the banding should be changed because there has been a material increase or material reduction in the dwelling's value:
- A **material increase** in value may result from building, engineering, or other work carried out on the dwelling. In these cases revaluation does not take place until after a sale, so the person appealing would usually be the new owner or resident.
- A **material reduction** in value may result from the demolition of any part of the dwelling, any change in the physical state of the local area or an adaptation to make the dwelling suitable for use by someone with a physical disability. In these cases revaluation should take place as soon as possible.
- Where you start or stop using part of your dwelling to carry out a business, or the balance between domestic and business use changes.
- Within six months of a band change made to your property or a similar property by the Listing Officer or Valuation Tribunal.
- Where you became the taxpayer in respect of a dwelling for the first time. (Your appeal must be made within six months, but if the same appeal has already been considered and determined by a Valuation Tribunal, it cannot be made again).

Details of when and how to appeal are on the Valuation Office Agency website at www.voa.gov.uk

Non-valuation appeals

You may also appeal if you believe you are not liable to pay Council Tax, for example: because you are not a resident or owner; your dwelling is exempt; Milton Keynes Council (MKC) has made a mistake in calculating your bill; or any Council Tax Reduction scheme entitlement has not been calculated correctly. If you wish to appeal on these grounds you must first notify the Council Tax department in writing so that they have the opportunity to reconsider the case. **Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of Council Tax owing in the meantime. If your appeal is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid Council Tax.**

Exempt dwellings

Some dwellings are exempt, including those occupied only by students, members of a visiting force, diplomats and members of international organisations, persons under 18, persons who are severely mentally impaired, 'granny annexes' occupied by elderly or disabled family members and certain vacant dwellings. Details are available at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/council-tax

Discounts for unoccupied and unfurnished dwellings

Dwellings that are unoccupied and unfurnished will receive a 100% discount for a maximum of one month, except those that require or are undergoing structural repair, where a 50% discount will apply for a maximum of 12 months. In both cases, once the period of discount has expired, full Council Tax will be payable. The period of discount is not re-started by a change in ownership or liability. Please visit www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/council-tax for the information you will need to supply.

Empty homes premium

In line with Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, MKC will charge a premium of 100% on top of the full Council Tax already paid for a property which has been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than two years and a premium of 200% for more than five years. More information can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/benefits-council-tax/empty-homes-premium

Discounts for occupied dwellings

The full Council Tax bill assumes that there are two adults living in a dwelling. If only one adult lives in a dwelling (as their main home), the Council Tax bill will be reduced by a quarter (25%). If none of the adult occupiers count towards the number of adult's resident a 50% discount will apply. A full list of people who do not count as occupiers can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/council-tax

If you think you may be entitled to a discount please visit our website at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/council-tax. If your bill indicates that a discount has been allowed, **you must tell the Council Tax department of any change of circumstances which affects your entitlement to that discount.** If you fail to do so you may be required to pay a penalty and/or be subject to prosecution.

People with disabilities

If you or someone who lives with you needs a room or an extra bathroom or kitchen, or uses a wheelchair within your dwelling to meet special needs arising from a disability, you may be entitled to a reduced Council Tax bill. The bill may be reduced to that of a property in the band immediately below the band shown on the valuation list, or in the case of a Band A home, 1/9th of a Band D property. These reductions ensure that disabled people do not pay more tax on account of space needed because of a disability. For further details contact the Council Tax department.

Council Tax reduction scheme

If you are on a low income, in receipt of income support, universal credit, or some other state benefit, you may be entitled to Council Tax reduction, which could reduce your Council Tax.

To find out if you are able to get any help visit www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/benefits-council-tax. You can also make your claim online too. **If you are already in receipt of Council Tax reduction and you have a change of circumstances which may affect the amount of reduction you get you must tell us straight away. If you do not tell us within 21 days of the change occurring you could be prosecuted for fraud.**

We also have powers to reduce or remit the amount of Council Tax payable to such extent as we see fit. This is a discretionary power we have and we will determine under which circumstances we consider a reduction in Council Tax will be appropriate. You can find out more and apply for a discretionary award at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/benefits-council-tax/local-welfare-provision.

What happens if I can't pay?

If any payment is not received by the due date, the full amount for the year may become immediately payable following the issue of one reminder notice. This could also lead to a summons being issued for proceedings in the Magistrates' Court, with costs being added to your account. It is therefore important that you pay your instalments on time. If you have difficulty in paying any instalment, please contact us before you fall into arrears. It may be possible to make a different arrangement for payment that you can afford. Further information on the recovery process can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/cantpay

Instalments

Council Tax is usually paid in 10 instalments from April to January. New rules introduced by the Government allow customers to pay in 12 instalments if they wish. If you would like to take up this option please contact the Council Tax department.

Financial information

Financial information detailing how the amount of Council Tax has been calculated can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/ctinfo. Hard copies of this information can be issued free of charge if requested by writing to Corporate Finance, Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ or you can email corporatefinance@milton-keynes.gov.uk. Information regarding the other major preceptors' budgets can be found on the websites below:

www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/information-hub/ and www.bucksfire.gov.uk/fire-authority/financial-information

Statement concerning adult social care funding

The Secretary of State made an offer to adult social care authorities. ("Adult social care authorities" are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.)

The offer was the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional "precept" on its council tax without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting its expenditure on adult social care from the financial year 2016-17. It was originally made in respect of the financial years up to and including 2019-20. If the Secretary of State chooses to renew this offer in respect of a particular financial year, this is subject to the approval of the House of Commons."

Manage your Council Tax online

Manage your Council Tax account online by registering for 'MyCouncil' Account at mycouncil.milton-keynes.gov.uk/. Once you have registered for an account, you can set details to view your Council Tax account. All you will need is your Council Tax reference number and your Online Key, as shown on your bill. You will be able to view your account details, apply to pay by Direct Debit, apply for the Single Occupancy discount or make payments by using a Debit or Credit Card.

If you have any queries please contact the Council Tax department on 01908 253794.

Further information and contact details

Further information regarding Council Tax can be found at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/council-tax,

You can also contact us at:

Council Tax

Tel 01908 253794

Email: counciltax@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Benefits Service [for Council Tax Reduction]

Tel 01908 253100

Email: benefits@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Or write to us at: PO Box 5327, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

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Please note that these notes comprise part of your Council Tax Demand Notice