# About your Council Tax

Medway Council, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority together deliver most of the local services in your area. If you live in an area with a parish council, they too provide some local services.

This booklet provides information from each of these authorities.

The Council Tax you pay, is collected by Medway Council on behalf of all the above authorities. The total amount is then divided between them.

Medway's Council Tax is the lowest in Kent.

# How much will I have to pay

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **House banding** | **A - up to £40,000** | **B - £40,001 To £52,000** | **C - £52,001 to £68,000** | **D - £68,001 to £88,000** | **E - £88,001 to £120,000** | **F - £120,000 to 160,000** | **G - £160,001 to £320,000** | **H - £320,001 and above** |
| Total for Medway residents | £1,334.45 | £1,556.86 | £1,779.27 | £2,001.68 | £2,446.50 | £2,891.32 | £3,336.13 | £4,003.36 |
| Medway Council | 1,114.15 | 1,299.84 | 1,485.54 | 1,671.23 | 2,042.62 | 2,414.00 | 2,785.38 | 3,342.46 |
| Kent Police and Crime Commissioner | 162.10 | 189.12 | 216.13 | 243.15 | 297.18 | 351.22 | 405.25 | 486.30 |
| Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority | 58.20 | 67.90 | 77.60 | 87.30 | 106.70 | 126.10 | 145.50 | 174.60 |

If you live in one of the following parishes, you have to pay additional parish precepts on top of your normal Council Tax rate:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **House banding** | **A - up to £40,000** | **B - £40,001 To £52,000** | **C - £52,001 to £68,000** | **D - £68,001 to £88,000** | **E - £88,001 to £120,000** | **F - £120,000 to 160,000** | **G - £160,001 to £320,000** | **H - £320,001 and above** |
| Allhallows | 1,423.67 | 1,660.95 | 1,898.23 | 2,135.51 | 2,610.07 | 3,084.63 | 3,559.18 | 4,271.02 |
| Cliffe and Cliffe Woods | 1,359.24 | 1,585.78 | 1,812.32 | 2,038.86 | 2,491.94 | 2,945.02 | 3,398.10 | 4,077.72 |
| Cooling | 1,365.88 | 1,593.52 | 1,821.17 | 2,048.82 | 2,504.12 | 2,959.41 | 3,414.70 | 4,097.64 |
| Cuxton | 1,376.50 | 1,605.92 | 1,835.34 | 2,064.76 | 2,523.60 | 2,982.44 | 3,441.26 | 4,129.52 |
| Frindsbury Extra | 1,357.40 | 1,583.63 | 1,809.87 | 2,036.10 | 2,488.57 | 2,941.04 | 3,393.50 | 4,072.20 |
| Halling | 1,358.49 | 1,584.91 | 1,811.32 | 2,037.74 | 2,490.57 | 2,943.41 | 3,396.23 | 4,075.48 |
| High Halstow | 1,380.46 | 1,610.54 | 1,840.62 | 2,070.70 | 2,530.86 | 2,991.02 | 3,451.16 | 4,141.40 |
| Hoo St. Werburgh | 1,354.46 | 1,580.20 | 1,805.95 | 2,031.69 | 2,483.18 | 2,934.67 | 3,386.15 | 4,063.38 |
| St James. Isle Of Grain | 1,417.97 | 1,654.30 | 1,890.63 | 2,126.96 | 2,599.62 | 3,072.28 | 3,544.93 | 4,253.92 |
| St. Mary Hoo | 1,410.20 | 1,645.23 | 1,880.27 | 2,115.30 | 2,585.37 | 3,055.44 | 3,525.50 | 4,230.60 |
| Stoke | 1,384.47 | 1,615.22 | 1,845.96 | 2,076.71 | 2,538.20 | 2,999.70 | 3,461.18 | 4,153.42 |

# Where the funding will come from

In 2023 to 2024 funding will come from:

* retained business rate and baseline need funding: £73,696,826
* specific government grants: £162,703,415
* fees, charges and other income: £142,000,223
* Council Tax: £148,883,353
* uses of reserves: £2,985,300

Total: £530,269,117

# What does the council spend money on?

We mostly spend our money on education, schools and children's social services. This is like most other councils that have a responsibility for education.

The next area that has a large amount spent on it is housing, followed by other services for the community such as care for older people. The cost of older people's services is increasing because people are living longer.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Services 2023 to 2024** | **Budget 2023 to 2024** | **Cost per day** |
| Services for children | £157.191 million | £431,000 |
| Housing (including benefit payments) | £101.277 million | £277,000 |
| Adult social services | £125.205 million | £343,000 |
| Services for the environment | £56.367 million | £154,000 |
| Leisure and cultural services | £20.022 million | £55,000 |
| Public Health | £16.504 million | £45,000 |
| Other services | £53.704 million | £147,000 |
| Budget 2021 to 2022 | £530.269 million | £1,453,000 |

### Key council services

* adult social services
* children and families, including education
* Council Tax reduction scheme and housing benefit
* community safety
* economic development
* environmental services and licensing
* highways and public transport
* housing and health improvement
* leisure services
* libraries
* planning services
* street cleaning and parking
* trading standards
* waste collection and recycling
* waste disposal
* youth services.

As well as providing everyday services, the council will be investing £430 million over the next 3 years in long-term projects. These projects will include:

* improving roads
* enhance our town centres
* delivery of infrastructure for the future housing development on the Hoo Peninsula
* creating school places
* delivering housing
* investing in cultural and leisure facilities.

The money for these schemes come from a number of sources, including borrowing, government grants and selling surplus assets.

The council spends £530 million a year providing services to Medway residents. The table below illustrates how spending is paid for, comparing figures to 2022 to 2023.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2022 to 2023** | **2023 to 2024** |
| Gross revenue spending on council services | £496.301 million | £530.269million |
| Less: gross income | £144.320 million | £142.000million |
| Budget requirement | £351.981 million | £388.269million |
| Less: government grant and business rates share | £213.895 million | £239.386million |
| Council Tax requirement | £138.086 million | £148.883million |
| Plus: Parish precepts | £563,000 | £615,000 |
| Council Tax requirement including parishes | £138.649 million | £149.498million |

# Changes in cost of services

The council plans to spend £530 million to provide serves to residents, the table below shows how this is spent, comparing figures for 2022 to 2023.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Services** | **Budget 2022 to 2023** | **Budget 2023 to 2024** |
| Services for children | £137.530 million | £157.191 million |
| Housing (including benefit payments) | £102.988 million | £101.277 million |
| Adult social services | £114.343 million | £125.205 million |
| Services for the environment | £55.404 million | £56.367 million |
| Leisure and cultural services | £18.960 million | £20.022 million |
| Public Health | £16.003 million | £16.504 million |
| Other services | £50.537 million | £53.704 million |
| Total spending | £495.764 million | £530.269 million |
| Less: Income from charges, government grants, etc | £358.215 million | £381.386 million |
| Council Tax requirement | £137.549 million | £148.883 million |

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 to 2017. It was originally made in respect of the financial years up to and including 2019 to 2020. 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.

# How is my Council Tax worked out?

Each residential property is put into a valuation band. There are eight bands altogether according to the estimated market value, as at 1 April 1991.

The council divides the amount of money it needs to raise by the number of properties in Medway. This gives the amount each household pays. For example, in 2023 to 2024 people with a property in Band D will pay £1,671.23. (This is for council services only and doesn’t include the amount that is added on for police and fire services and charges by parishes). Charges for the remaining bands are a proportion of the Band D charge.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Property value range** | **Band B** | **Proportion of Band D chargeable** |
| Up to £40,000 | A | 6/9 |
| £40,001 to £52,000 | B | 7/9 |
| £52,001 to £68,000 | C | 8/9 |
| £68,001 to £88,000 | D | 9/9 |
| £88,001 to £120,000 | E | 11/9 |
| £120,001 to £160,000 | F | 13/9 |
| £160,001 to £320,000 | G | 15/9 |
| £320,001 and above | H | 18/9 |

# What can I do if I'm unhappy about the band my property is in?

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) values domestic properties for Council Tax. This valuation is used to set your Council Tax band. You might need to contact the VOA if you think your Council Tax band is wrong. You can find out more about when you can challenge your band and what you need to do on [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk/challenge-council-tax-band). If you challenge your band, you must continue to pay Council Tax at your current band until your appeal is decided.

You can contact the VOA on [GOV.UK](http://gov.uk/contact-voa). If you are unable to use the online service you can also call on 03000 501 501.

# While my band is being reviewed, do I have to pay Council Tax?

Yes. If your appeal is successful you will be refunded any overpaid Council Tax.

# Can I get help paying my Council Tax?

If you have a low income or are unemployed, you may be able to claim Council Tax reduction.

[Make a Council Tax reduction claim](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200131/council_tax_and_benefits/410/claim_housing_benefit_or_council_tax_reduction/2)

If you are suffering financial hardship, you can also apply for Council Tax discretionary relief.

[Get help with your Council Tax](https://www.medway.gov.uk/counciltax)

# While my Council Tax reduction claim is being dealt with, do I have to pay Council Tax?

Yes. If your claim is successful, you will be refunded any overpaid Council Tax.

# I live alone. Do I still have to pay the full Council Tax?

No. Single adult households can claim a discount of 25%.

# Are there any other discounts available?

In some cases, a discount can be claimed by a household with two or more adults. For example, if they include full-time adult students, trainees, apprentices, 18/19 year olds at school, those receiving or providing care, severely mentally impaired, long-term hospital patients, certain categories of prisoners, members of visiting forces, certain international bodies and closed religious orders. If your property has space for someone to use a wheelchair or facilities for use by a disabled person, such as an extra bathroom, you may also be entitled to a reduction.

There are also reductions available for:

* people living in annexes - provided they are related to the person liable to pay the Council Tax of the main dwelling.
* annexes that are not separately occupied but used with the main property as part of the same residence.
* unoccupied and unfurnished properties. You can claim a 100% discount (for a maximum of three months). You may also be able to claim a 100% discount for up to 12 months if your property is empty and in need of or undergoing structural or major repair work.

# Are there any exemptions from paying Council Tax?

Yes. Even if the property is occupied, you may not need to pay Council Tax if every adult in the property is a full-time student, under-18, or severely mentally impaired. Claims should be made as soon as possible.

You may not need to pay Council Tax for self-contained annexes. To qualify, the property must be occupied by an elderly or disabled relative of the family in the other part of the building.

# Can discounts and exemptions be backdated?

We will usually only consider backdating a discount or exemption to 1 April of the preceding year unless there are valid reasons why the claim was not made sooner. In all cases you must supply the relevant information or evidence for the backdated period.

# Can I get a reduction if I am living with dementia?

If you or one of your household are living with dementia and in receipt of one of a number of benefits, you may be considered ‘severely mentally impaired’ for Council Tax purposes.

This could mean you are entitled to a discount or exemption depending on who else lives in your home. You may also get a reduction if you have someone living with you who you care for, or who cares for you.

# Can I pay my Council Tax in instalments?

You will normally be offered 10 monthly instalments on your annual bill but you can ask to pay over 12 months.

# Why am I being charged more for my empty property?

Any property that has been unoccupied and unfurnished for two or more years will be charged a 100% additional premium (double the usual amount of Council Tax). Properties empty for five or more years will be charged a 200% additional premium (three times the usual amount of Council Tax).

From 1 April 2022, any properties that have been empty for ten years or more will be charged a 300% additional premium (four times the usual amount of Council Tax).

# How do I appeal against the council's decision to award or not award a discount or exemption?

Email us at [ctax@medway.gov.uk](mailto:ctax@medway.gov.uk) explaining why you are unhappy with our decision. You can then appeal to a valuation tribunal, if:

* we do not accept your argument
* we make a change you don’t agree with
* after two months we haven’t made a decision

Find more information and appeal online at [valuationtribunal.gov.uk](http://valuationtribunal.gov.uk).

The Valuation Tribunal can also be contacted by phoning 03001 232 035.

# Can the council charge what it wants for Council Tax?

No. Each year the government indicates what it considers to be an excessive increase. If a council increases its Council Tax above this figure, it will trigger a local referendum. If the local electorate votes against the increase the council will have to revert to a Council Tax level that is compliant.

# Can the council choose what to spend money on?

There are some services that the council has to spend money on – it has no choice – that’s what the government tells councils to do to meet central targets, for example, spending on schools. There are other services where the council can decide how much it wants to spend and how much it can afford, for example leisure centres and libraries. The council finds out what is important to residents and then it decides what to spend.

# What else is included in my Council Tax bill?

Your bill also includes charges for services that the council doesn’t provide itself, like police and fire services, and if you live in a rural area, a charge by your parish council. There are 11 parishes in Medway.

# Does Medway Council get to keep money raised through Council Tax from the police, fire services and parish precepts?

No. The total that will be raised from Council Tax in 2023 to 2024 is £179.4 million, of which Medway Council will get £149.3 million. The remaining £30.1 million goes to the police, fire service and to individual parishes. If you don’t live in a parish, you don’t have to pay a parish charge, but everyone pays for police and fire services.

The key services provided by authorities other than Medway Council.

Parish councils maintain local assets including:

* allotments
* common lands
* burial grounds
* play areas
* tennis courts
* litter bins
* seats
* ponds

Parish councils are consulted on all planning applications affecting their area.

# Council Tax data protection and fair processing notice

Your personal information will be held and used in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Medway Council will use the information you have provided in connection with the administration of Council Tax. Medway Council is also under a duty to protect the public funds it administers and to this end may lawfully disclose information to other public sector agencies to:

* prevent or detect benefit fraud and any other crime and/or to administer claims for non-payment of Council Tax
* support national fraud initiatives – the council is required by law to participate in National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercises. Council Tax information may be provided to the Audit Commission for NFI purposes and will be used for cross-system and cross-authority comparison for the prevention and detection of fraud
* protect public funds in investigating misuse of public money

The council also uses basic Council Tax information about you, for example name and address, in other areas of service provision if this:

* helps you to access services more easily
* promotes the more efficient and cost-effective delivery of services
* helps recover monies owed to the council.

The council will not use your personal data in a way that may cause you unwarranted detriment. Any disclosure of personal data shall be made in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

You can see a copy of the information held about you. For more information, visit our [data protection](http://www.medway.gov.uk/dataprotection) pages or to see a copy of the information held about you, you can [make an information request](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200217/freedom_of_information/1406/information_requests/2).

# Get in touch

If you have any comments or questions about the information provided above, please contact:

### Medway Council

Visit: [www.medway.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.medway.gov.uk/counciltax)

Phone: 01634 332 222

Email: [ctax@medway.gov.uk](mailto:ctax@medway.gov.uk)

Write to: Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR

### For further financial information regarding the police and fire services, please contact:

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### Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

Visit: [kent-pcc.gov.uk](https://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk/what-we-do/setting-the-kent-police-budget/)

Phone: 01622 677 055

Twitter: [@PCCKent](https://twitter.com/PCCKent)

Write to: Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road, Maidstone ME15 9BZ

### Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority

Visit: [kent.fire-uk.org/financial-information](https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/financial-information)

Phone: 01622 692 121

Email: [KFRSFinance@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:KFRSFinance@kent.fire-uk.org)

Write to: Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, Headquarters, Straw Mill Hill, Tovil, Maidstone ME15 6XB

If you have a question about paying your Council Tax bill or claiming a Council Tax reduction, please contact Medway Council.

This booklet can be made available in other formats and languages, phone 01634 333 333.

If you want to speak to someone in your own language about this booklet please phone 01634 335 577.