

Important changes to Council Tax 2024/25

There are a number of changes this coming year that will affect empty properties in Medway. From 1 April 2024:

- Properties that become unoccupied and unfurnished will no longer be entitled to a reduction. This means that as soon as a property is vacated, the full council tax charge will apply. (Currently we allow 100% discount for up to three months, but this will no longer apply from April).
- Properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished and in need of or undergoing major repair work to make them habitable, or undergoing structural alteration, will no longer be entitled to a reduction. (Currently we allow 100% discount for up to 12 months, but this will no longer apply from April).
If either of the above reductions apply to a property on 31 March 2024, the reduction will automatically end the following day (1 April 2024) even if the three or 12-month period has not yet ended.
- Properties that remain unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 12 months will be charged a 100% premium, this means they will pay double the usual amount of Council Tax. (Currently we only charge the premium after a property has been empty for two years.)
Any property that has already been empty for more than 12 months on 1 April 2024 will be charged the premium from that date.

A future change

From 1 April 2025, properties that are unoccupied and furnished (sometimes referred to as second homes) will be charged a 100% premium from the day they are vacated (currently no premium is payable).

Summary of changes

Property Description	Current discount	New discount	Effective Date
Unoccupied and unfurnished	100% for up to 3 months	0%	1/4/24
Unoccupied, unfurnished and in need of repair	100% up to 12 months	0%	1/4/24

Property Description	Current premium	New premium	Effective Date
Unoccupied and unfurnished for 1-2 years	0%	100%	1/4/24
Unoccupied and furnished	0%	100%	1/4/25

My Council Tax Online

You can sign up to see your Council Tax account online with the My Council Tax Online account.

Using the online account, you can:

- check your up-to-date Council Tax account information
- go paperless by signing up for e-billing
- view, download and print bills.

[Sign up for a My Council Tax Online account](#)

Annual billing frequently asked questions

If I already pay by direct debit do I have to fill in a new form?

No, you don't need to do anything. We will start collecting your new year's council tax in April as long as you haven't cancelled your direct debit. The bottom of your new bill will tell you if your instalments are going to be collected by direct debit.

It says at the bottom of my bill that I owe money but I've already paid it.

Your bill will include all payments received at the time the bill was produced, this date will be shown at the bottom of your bill. Payments received after this date have not been included on your bill. You can check your current balance by signing up for a My Council Tax Online account (see over).

Do I have to reapply for single person's discount?

There is no need to reapply, the discount will be shown on your bill. If another adult moves into your property, you must tell us within 21 days.

I paid council tax in February and March last year, why do my payments end in January this year?

Council tax is normally paid over ten months from April to January. If you moved into the property last year, or your account was amended during the year, you may have been given instalments in February and March. You can ask to pay over 12 months if you wish.

Do standing order payments continue for next year's council tax?

No, a standing order is usually set up with an end date so you will need to set up a new one with your bank to start in April. If you [pay by direct debit](#), you only need to set it up once.

Do I need a payment booklet to pay at the Post Office?

No. Your bill will have a barcode on it that you need to take to the Post Office when you make your payment. Please note that you will be charged by the Post Office for this service.

Am I entitled to Council Tax Reduction?

You can check whether you are likely to get a reduction and make a claim at www.medway.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction. You should continue to pay your council tax while you are waiting for your claim to be assessed.

How do you work out the amount of my Council Tax Reduction?

Find details of the updated income bands in our current [Council Tax Reduction scheme](#).

What if I can't afford to pay my arrears?

We may be able to arrange for you to pay your arrears alongside your instalments for the new financial year. Email ctax@medway.gov.uk to explain your circumstances putting your payment reference number (shown on your bill) in the subject line of your email.

Is there any further help available?

Find out about the different types of [financial support and where to get free independent advice](#).

What if my bill is wrong?

If your circumstances have changed or you think you should get a reduction you can let us know at www.medway.gov.uk/counciltax where you can:

- Tell us you have moved
- Apply for a discount or exemption
- Apply for a council tax reduction (if you are on a low income)
- Apply for disabled relief

If you don't already [pay your council tax by direct debit](#), why not join more than 75,000 people that pay the easy way.