

Council Tax 2018/19



Foreword by the Leader of the Council, Lord Peter Smith

Welcome to this year's Council Tax booklet.

I'm delighted to be able to tell you that thanks to The Deal we've been able to freeze Wigan's element of Council Tax for the fifth year running.

When we created The Deal five years ago our intention was to transform council services and our relationship with you to make sure our borough was able to thrive in what was and continues to be a very difficult economic climate.

It's been brilliant to see the amount of support we've had from residents, with lots of you saying you agree with the principles of The Deal. Because of your support not only have we been able to save money but we've also been able to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill through the new bin collection arrangements. To thank you we've frozen Council Tax.

Unfortunately the problems with the NHS and Adult Social Care continue to spiral out of control as they face crisis point. The government has not provided more money to deal with these issues and has instead told councils to impose a three per cent Council Tax rise. This is unfair on areas like Wigan where Council Tax doesn't raise as much as in the leafy suburbs but also unfair on many struggling local people.



However unlike most neighbouring authorities, we have not increased the charges for any other Wigan service so we have again achieved the lowest Council Tax increase in the whole of Greater Manchester.

We will have to continue to make some tough decisions but not everyone will agree. I can assure you that they are in the long term interests of the borough. One of those decisions was to move to three weekly bin collections. I know at the beginning there were some concerns but we're getting some great feedback from people. As well as helping to keep Council Tax down, it is improving recycling rates which is good news for the environment and our future generations.

Lord Peter Smith of Leigh
Leader of Wigan Council

About Council Tax

Council Tax is a tax on residential dwellings, not people.

Each year we send a Council Tax bill to every domestic property in the borough, whether it's a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat. Each dwelling is put into one of the eight bands below, based on what it would have cost to buy on the open market on 1 April 1991.

Every year we set the Council Tax for each band. The amounts for 2018/2019 are below. The band given to your property is on the front of your bill.

The Valuation Office Agency decides the band not us. You can appeal against your property's band if you have moved into the property in the last six months or there has been a change in the building or physical state of the local area.

You can contact them at Valuation Office Agency, Manchester Valuation Office, Portland Tower, Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3LD.
Phone 03000 501 501
www.vo.a.gov.uk

For information about the council's income and spending visit www.wigan.gov.uk/incomeandspending

Band	Band Value	Council Tax for 2018/19
A	Up to £40,000	£1021.51
B	£40,001 - £52,000	£1191.76
C	£52,001 - £68,000	£1362.01
D	£68,001 - £88,000	£1532.28
E	£88,001 - £120,000	£1872.78
F	£120,001 - £160,000	£2213.29
G	£160,001 - £320,000	£2553.79
H	£320,001 and above	£3064.56

Thank you for doing your part of The Deal

Through your support of The Deal, we've been able to freeze our service element of Council Tax for the fifth year running.

Based on Band A	Council Services	GM Police precept	GM Fire precept	Adult Social Care	Mayoral precept	Total
2013	£796.74	£99.55	£38.42			£934.71
2014	£794.76	£101.53	£38.42			£934.71
2015	£794.76	£101.53	£38.42			£934.71
2016	£794.76	£104.87	£39.18	£15.89		£954.70
2017	£794.76	£108.20	£39.96	£40.21		£983.13
2018	£794.76	£116.20	£39.96	£65.26	£5.33	£1021.51

Additional parish precepts will apply for properties in Haigh and Shevington

- Adult Social Care precept**
This is a charge to cover the cost of Adult Social Care services within councils due to the budget cuts being imposed by central government.
- Council Services**
This covers council services such as bins and recycling centres, schools and Start Well centres, street lights and road repairs.
- GM Fire Service**
This is a charge levied on behalf of the Greater Manchester Fire Service.

- GM Police**
This is a charge levied on behalf of the Greater Manchester Police Service.
- Mayoral precept**
This is a charge levied on behalf of the Mayor's office and to meet the Mayor's priorities in Greater Manchester which are to:
 - Improve our public transport and ease congestion;
 - Protect our green spaces and develop affordable housing;
 - Make Greater Manchester the UK's leading digital and green city;
 - Eradicate homelessness.

Recycle more, recycle right
Thank you for embracing the new bin collections. We have seen our recycling rate go up by approximately 5% with an additional 1000 tonnes of recycling collected since September 2017. That's great news and puts us on track to meet the government's 50% recycling target.

Be healthy and be active
We want all our residents to have the best possible start in life and live long and healthy lives. Working closely with our partners we launched a festival dedicated to improving residents' health and wellbeing. We call this Wellfest. As part of this, over 9,000 pupils have taken part in the national Daily Mile initiative.

Help protect children and the vulnerable
Protecting children and vulnerable residents is everyone's business. We are grateful to all our residents who have helped us to make our borough a safer place. Thanks to our adopters and foster carers, we were rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2017 and have taken the lead on a regional adoption agency.

Support your local business
A big focus for us is to improve the local economy and bring investment and jobs to the borough. We'd like to thank all our residents for engaging with our campaigns to support local businesses such as Super Saturday, which offers free parking to support town centre business and Love Your Local Market fortnight.

Get online
Over 100,000 residents have signed up to MyAccount helping us achieve our savings. Face to face contact and telephone calls are more expensive than our digital channels. With our ReportIT app for mobile devices, you can report a range of issues on the go.

Get involved in your community
Over 1,900 volunteer hours have been contributed to making our borough a better place and we have supported 190 groups through The Deal for Communities Investment Fund.



Thank you for doing your part of The Deal

Deep funding reductions coupled with rising demand in children's social services and adult social care has created a perfect storm for councils across the country.

In 2012, your council faced the 3rd worst budget cuts nationally with a reduction of £160m by 2020 according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

It is only through The Deal, the informal agreement between the council and residents, that we have been able to achieve our savings targets year on year whilst protecting frontline services and increasing resident satisfaction.

We realised that closing a few libraries, changing bin collections and reducing school crossing patrols was merely surface dressing and would not have closed a £160m budget gap.

This new way of working, which we call The Deal, focused on driving out demand through working with residents.

Through The Deal we stopped doing things to people, we started doing things with people.

Rather than cutting budgets to the third sector we instead invested in them to the tune of £9m.

We realised our best community groups could deliver the traditional council services we once did but in a much better way because they knew their communities.

Local swimming pools, libraries and community centres are now being run by the community for the community.

That's why it's a deal – it's both sides working together to achieve our vision. We've transformed and redesigned services around our residents with our residents - not just cut them.

Through The Deal...

£125 million council savings so far

50% increase in resident satisfaction with the council

Lowest council tax increase in GM over 5 years

82% of our residents agree with and support the principles of The Deal

Rated "GOOD" with areas of "OUTSTANDING" by Ofsted for safeguarding our children

Times Best Companies best large council to work for

LGC Digital Council of the year

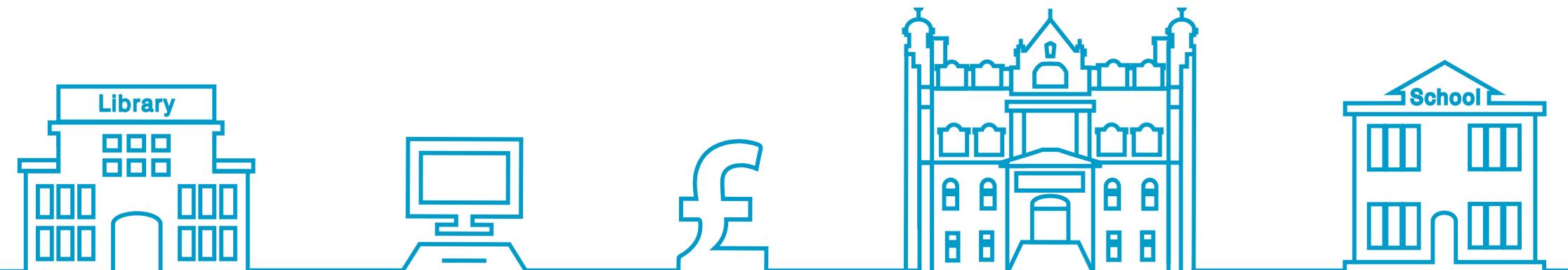
Improved healthy life expectancy

Improved school readiness to 70%

Improved educational attainment

The only Care Quality Commission "OUTSTANDING" rated reablement service in the UK, supporting our residents' independence

One of lowest delayed transfers of care and hospital admissions in the UK



When you may not have to pay Council Tax

You won't have to pay if only the following people occupy your property:

- Students,
- Care Leaver up to the age of 21,
- People under the age of 18, or
- People who have a severe mental impairment and would otherwise be liable to pay Council Tax.

You may not have to pay for a limited time if your property is not occupied because it is:

- Newly built and not yet occupied (no charge for 1 month); or
- Substantially unfurnished (no charge for 1 month); or
- Owned by a charity (exempt for 6 months).

You may not have to pay for any of the following types of properties even if they are occupied:

- Armed Forces' accommodation.
- Visiting Forces' accommodation.
- An annexe such as a 'granny flat'.
- Occupied by someone who has diplomatic, commonwealth or consular privilege or immunity.

Use your MyAccount at www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount to tell us if you think you qualify for an exemption. Certain conditions may apply.

You may not have to pay for your property whilst it is:

- Left empty by the owner or tenant, who was the last occupier, and who has moved to receive or provide personal care in either a hospital or home elsewhere.
- Repossessed by a mortgage company.
- Empty because occupation is forbidden by law.
- Waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion.
- The responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee.
- Left empty by a student owner who lived in it immediately before leaving to study elsewhere.
- An empty caravan pitch or houseboat mooring.
- Unoccupied because the last occupier, who was also the owner, had died and probate or letters of administration have not yet been granted (and for 6 months after).

Ways to pay less Council Tax

The full Council Tax bill assumes that there are 2 or more adults living in a property.

If you are the only adult living in your property your bill can be reduced by 25%. We can also consider local discounts for other reasons as well.

When we work out if you are entitled to a discount we don't count these people:

- Children under 18.
- People over 18 that still qualify for Child Benefit.
- 18 or 19 year olds who leave school after 30 April are not counted until 1 November of the same year.
- People with a severe mental impairment.
- Apprentices.
- Youth Training Trainees.
- Care Workers.
- Carers.
- People in residential care homes, nursing homes and hostels that provide a high level of care.
- Resident hospital patients.
- Student nurses.

- Prisoners in detention (unless for non payment of fines or Council Tax).
- Students in full time education.
- Diplomats and members of international organisations with headquarters in the UK (and their non British spouses).
- Members of religious communities such as monks or nuns.

Certain qualifying conditions apply.

People with disabilities

If you, or a person that lives with you, has a disability you may qualify for a reduction.

Your home will need to have an extra bathroom, kitchen or other room that is used mainly to help with the person's disability. You can also qualify if the disabled person uses a wheelchair in the home.

If you qualify we will work out your Council Tax charge again using the valuation band below the one your property is in.

Use your MyAccount at www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount to tell us if you think you qualify for a discount or reduction. Certain conditions apply.



Council Tax for empty dwellings and second homes

When a dwelling first becomes empty

A dwelling that becomes newly empty will be given a maximum 1 month full exemption followed by a 25% discount for a maximum of 5 months.

Long term empty dwellings

Dwellings left empty and unfurnished for longer than 6 months, or have already been empty for between 6 months and 2 years, will be charged 100% Council Tax.

Empty Homes Premium

Long term empty dwellings that remain empty and unfurnished for longer than 2 years will attract an Empty Homes Premium. The premium will be an extra 50% charge in addition to the 100% charge for a long term empty dwelling.

Second homes

Dwellings that are unoccupied but furnished are classed as second homes. There is no discount for these dwellings. The charge for a second home is 100%.

If your property becomes empty, contact us straight away and we can tell you if you qualify for any reduction.

A property in need of, or undergoing, major repairs

If you own a property that is either in need of, or undergoing, major repairs you may be entitled to a reduction of 75% from your bill for a maximum of 12 months, or until the work is completed if that is sooner. You will be asked to provide evidence of the extent of the works required to render the property habitable. Only one major repairs reduction can be given for any period during which a property is continuously empty. Certain qualifying conditions apply for all reductions.

Family annex

If your property has an annex which has a separate Council Tax band and is occupied by a relative, they may be entitled to a reduction from their Council Tax.

Use your MyAccount at www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount to tell us if your property has become empty or if your property has a separate annex occupied by a family member.



Council Tax Reduction

Our Council Tax Reduction Scheme helps households on low incomes to pay their Council Tax bill. Wigan Council has two schemes:

1. The National Council Tax Reduction Scheme – pensioner households and households with children under 5

These households:

- Can apply for support.
- Can apply for Second Adult Rebate if the only other adult living in the property is on a low income.
- Can apply for backdated support. This will only be awarded if there is good cause why the claim wasn't made from the earlier date.

2. The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme – working age households with no children under 5

These households:

- Can apply for support under our local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Will have their entitlement calculated using the national scheme but support will be reduced by 20%.
- Cannot apply for Second Adult Rebate.
- Can only get support from the date a claim for reduction is made.

Who can apply for Council Tax Reduction?

To apply for Council Tax Reduction you must be the person whose name is on the Council Tax bill.

You may qualify if you are:

- On Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit;
- On Pension Credit, Guaranteed Credit and in some cases Saving Credit;
- Working and on low pay (including people who are self employed);
- On a low income. For example you might only get a retirement pension or be getting social security benefits like Incapacity Benefit;
- A working age household with capital / savings under £12,000; or
- A pensioner household, or household with a child under 5, with capital / savings under £16,000.

£

The government has made changes to all Local Council Tax Reduction schemes that may affect how much Council Tax Reduction we can award you.

These include changes to:

- Limit the child premium to two children for new claims or where you become responsible for a third child;
- The amount of the Non Dependant Deductions for some customers who have another adult (not their partner) living with them;

How to apply

Register for MyAccount and apply online at www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount

You cannot make a claim for Council Tax Reduction through Job Centre Plus or the Pensions Service.

For more information about Council Tax Reduction visit www.wigan.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction

If you rent your home you might also be entitled to Housing Benefit. For more information about Housing Benefit visit www.wigan.gov.uk/housingbenefit

- The Applicable Amounts we use to work out how much Council Tax Reduction you are entitled to;
- Limit the length of time you are allowed to leave the country and keep your claim active to 4 weeks.

For a full list of these changes and for more information on this please visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction

Need help to make an application?

- You can get help and use our online facilities at our Life Centres in Wigan, Marsh Green, Atherton, Leigh Town Hall, Ince and Platt Bridge.
- If you are a tenant of Arena Housing, Adactus Housing, or Riverside Housing, your landlord can help you fill in and check your benefit claim online.
- If you do not have access to a computer or are unable to visit us at any of the above places, contact us 01942 489002.



The following agencies can give advice about your application:

- Citizens Advice
Tel: 0344 826 9713
Email: advice@wigancab.org
www.wigancab.org
- Age UK (for those over 50) Wigan
Tel: 01942 241972
Email: enquiries@ageukwiganborough.org.uk
www.ageukwiganborough.org.uk
- You can also get Welfare Rights Advice from us by emailing welfarerightsadvice@wigan.gov.uk

Changes you need to tell us about

Tell us straight away if you are getting Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction and have a change in circumstances. If you do not tell us about a change as soon as it happens, you could lose benefits or we could pay you too much and you will probably have to pay it back.

It is an offence not to tell us about any change in circumstances that affects your entitlement. We may take court action against you.

These facilities are available to all customers:

- Access for wheelchair users at our Life Centres in Wigan, Marsh Green, Atherton, Leigh Town Hall, Ince and Platt Bridge.
- Browsealoud is available on our website to download so that you can have the information on our web pages read aloud to you.

Tell us online by registering for MyAccount at www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount and click on our 'report a change in your circumstances' form.

You can get face-to-face help with any enquiry about a council service at our Life Centres in Wigan, Marsh Green, Atherton, Leigh Town Hall, Ince and Platt Bridge.

Complaints or compliments

Fill in an online form at www.wigan.gov.uk/contactus

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a payment paid by the Department for Work and Pensions to help with your living costs if you are on a low income or out of work.

It replaces existing benefits and credits into a single monthly payment.

From 18th April 2018 most people making a claim for working age benefits and help with housing costs in Wigan Borough will be placed in Universal Credit Full Service.

You will be automatically transferred to Universal Credit in the Wigan borough if you have a change of circumstances that affects your current benefits.

Help available

Need help with money or other problems? For information go to www.wigan.gov.uk/moneyadvice

Don't be excluded

Get in touch with those you owe money to as soon as you can. You can nominate a friend or representative to help you if you find it hard to manage it yourself.

You will have to pay your Council Tax from your monthly Universal Credit payment yourself. If you are on a low income you may qualify for Council Tax Reduction.

Apply at www.wigan.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction

Find out more about Universal Credit on the government website www.gov.uk/universal-credit

If you don't have a computer at home you can use one for free at your local library or Life Centre.

There are also drop-in sessions for residents that need extra help to get online. For more information about help and support for Universal Credit claimants visit www.wigan.gov.uk/universalcredit

In a crisis?

If you find yourself in a crisis our Local Welfare Support Advisors can help support customers to:

- access financial help and advice,
- gain appropriate referrals e.g. food parcels, white goods, and
- build self-reliance.

To speak to a Local Welfare Support Advisor ring 01942 705221 or visit our Life Centres at Wigan or Leigh.

Avoid doorstep loan companies. Their interest rates can be extremely high.

Information about the Adult Social Care Precept

Wigan Council has responsibility for Adult Social Care functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has given Wigan Council the option to charge an annual 'precept' on its Council Tax for the financial years from 2016/17 to 2019/20 without holding a referendum, subject to annual approval of the House of Commons. This money will be used to fund Adult Social Care. For 2018/2019 Wigan Council has taken the maximum option to charge an Adult Social Care precept of 3% of the value of the amount of the Wigan Council Charge set in 2017/2018 including the 2% Adult Social Care precept for 2016/2017 and the 3% Adult Social Care precept for 2017/2018.

Information about the Mayoral Precepts

The Mayor of Greater Manchester has now taken on the responsibilities of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner and the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue services. From 2018/2019 the precept on Council Tax bills for Police services will be replaced with the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept Component and this precept funds Police services. The precept for the Fire and Rescue Services will be replaced with the Mayoral General Precept Component (including Fire Services). This precept includes an amount for Fire and Rescue Services and a new amount to fund the Greater Manchester Mayor and the work he wants to do in Greater Manchester. The information provided by the Mayor indicates that the precept will pay for the running of the Mayor's office and to meet the Mayor's priorities in Greater Manchester which are to:

- Improve our public transport and ease congestion;
- Protect our green spaces and develop affordable housing;
- Make Greater Manchester the UK's leading digital and green city;
- Eradicate homelessness.

The table below shows the cost of the Mayoral Precept per household for 2018/2019.

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
New Mayoral charge	£5.33	£6.22	£7.11	£8	£9.78	£11.56	£13.33	£16

For more info go to [Greater Manchester Mayoral General Precept](#).

We can make the information in this booklet available in other formats and languages on request. Contact us at: Wigan Council, PO Box 100, Wigan, WN1 3DS. 01942 489001
Email: revenues@wigan.gov.uk

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