

How is your money spent? Your council tax explained

Your council tax

This booklet contains information about your council tax for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2021. It tells you how much you will pay, how the money will be used and how much goes to other organisations, such as the Greater London Authority (GLA), which is headed by the Mayor of London.

Every house in the country receives a council tax bill. Whether you live in a house or a flat, own your own house or rent, everyone has to pay council tax, which helps to pay for the services that Hillingdon Council delivers for local people – everything from leisure centres, young people’s centres, children’s centres and libraries to waste and recycling, parks, keeping you safe, services for the elderly and housing.

The council tax rise will once again be set at 90 per cent of our neighbouring boroughs’, with a small increase of 1.8 per cent.

Additionally, due to the exceptional pressures on social care due to the pandemic, the government has, for one year, allowed councils to levy up to 3 per cent (an increase of 1 per cent) as a Social Care Precept.

Residents’ bills will also reflect an additional 1 per cent increase as a result of the 9.5 per cent increase in the precept imposed by the Mayor of London.

In effect, the total increase for a Band D property is 5.8 per cent – or £1.70 per week.

Table 1: Breakdown of your payments for Hillingdon Council’s and the GLA’s services

<i>Property band</i>	<i>Hillingdon £</i>	<i>Adult Social Care £</i>	<i>GLA £</i>	<i>Total council tax payable £</i>	<i>Range of values £</i>
A	802.81	23.66	242.44	1,068.91	up to 40,000
B	936.62	27.60	282.85	1,247.07	40,001 to 52,000
C	1,070.42	31.55	323.25	1,425.22	52,001 to 68,000
D	1,204.23	35.49	363.66	1,603.38	68,001 to 88,000
E	1,471.83	43.37	444.47	1,959.67	88,001 to 120,000
F	1,739.45	51.26	525.29	2,316.00	120,001 to 160,000
G	2,007.04	59.15	606.10	2,672.29	160,001 to 320,000
H	2,408.46	70.98	727.32	3,206.76	more than 320,000

*The council tax attributable to London Borough of Hillingdon includes a precept to fund adult social care.



Valuation of properties and valuation banding appeals

All homes, including houses, flats, mobile homes and houseboats, must pay council tax. Every property is placed in a valuation band for England by the listing officer at the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) for HM Revenue and Customs. Your council tax bill shows which band your property is in, based on the expected sale price as at 1 April 1991.

If you have an enquiry about the banding of your property or wish to appeal against it, please contact the VOA via www.gov.uk/voa/contact or call the VOA centralised switchboard on 03000 501 501.

Council tax appeals

You can appeal against your council tax if you think:

- you are not the resident or owner
- your property is exempt
- there has been a mistake in calculating your bill

If you want to appeal, you must tell us in writing, giving the reasons why you are appealing.

You must continue to pay your council tax while your appeal is being dealt with. We will refund any money that you have overpaid, if your appeal is successful.

Discounts for over-65s

For the first time in 14 years, due to the challenges of the pandemic, council tax will not be frozen for those aged over 65, as the older persons discount scheme will not be applied in 2021/22. However, the council will protect the existing discounts for those already in receipt of this discount and a safety net is also in place for the most financially vulnerable residents through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Are you entitled to a reduction?

In some cases, you may be entitled to a reduction. If you are the only adult living in a property, you may be entitled to a 25 per cent discount. We work out your council tax based on at least two adults living at the property. However, the following people are not counted for council tax purposes, which may entitle you to a reduction, even if you do not live alone:

- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices (earning less than £195 a week) and youth training trainees
- 18 and 19 year olds who are in, or who have just left, a course of education for the period 1 May to 31 October in any year
- patients in hospital and people looked after in a care home
- people who are severely mentally impaired
- those staying in certain hostels or night shelters
- care workers on low pay, working for charities

- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18 years of age
- members of visiting armed forces and certain international institutions
- members of religious communities (monks and nuns)
- people in prison (unless sentenced for non-payment of council tax or a fine)

If your property has an annexe that is occupied by a relative, you may be entitled to a 50 per cent reduction in the amount of council tax you have to pay.

If you think you qualify for a council tax reduction, please call 0300 123 1384.

Discounts for empty homes

The council does not grant a discount for unoccupied and substantially unfurnished homes or properties undergoing (or require) major repair work or structural alteration.

Second homes and furnished properties that are not used as a sole or main residence do not attract a discount.

Exemptions

The following unoccupied properties are exempt from council tax:

- previously occupied and owned by a charity (exempt for up to six months)
- was last occupied by someone who has gone into prison (unless sentenced for non-payment of council tax or a fine)
- was last occupied by someone who has gone into hospital or a nursing home to receive personal care
- where probate or letters of administration are awaited (exempt for up to six months after either have been granted)
- where occupation is prohibited by law
- is waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion
- where the previous occupier has moved elsewhere (other than hospital or care home) to receive or provide personal care through old age, disability, illness or mental disorder past or present, or through alcohol or drug dependence
- is owned by a full-time student and was their last sole or main residence
- has been repossessed
- where the liable person is acting as a trustee in bankruptcy

Exemptions also apply to the following occupied properties:

- student halls of residence, forces' barracks and married quarters, a caravan pitch or mooring not in use and an unoccupied annexe that is part of a single dwelling

- property where the liable person is a member of (or has a relevant association with) visiting armed forces, or is a visiting non-UK citizen entitled to diplomatic privileges or immunities
- property where all residents are full-time students or is occupied by person(s) under 18, or those severely mentally impaired
- an annexe of an occupied dwelling that is occupied by a dependent relative

Certain conditions may apply to discounts or exemptions. Please call [0300 123 1384](tel:03001231384) for advice.

If your council tax bill shows a discount, the council has made the assumption that you are entitled to the discount for the period covered by the bill. If this assumption is no longer correct, because your circumstances have changed, or you know that they will change during the period covered by your bill, please let us know. You are required to let the council know in writing within 21 days of realising that you are no longer entitled to a discount. Failure to do this without a reasonable excuse could lead to a £70 penalty.

If you are unsure whether your change of circumstances will affect any entitlement to discount, please call [0300 123 1384](tel:03001231384) for advice.

Empty homes premium

Properties that have been unoccupied, and substantially unfurnished for two years or more, are subject to a premium of 150 per cent. Periods of six weeks or less when the property is occupied/furnished are disregarded for the purposes of calculating the two-year period for the empty homes premium.

The empty homes premium will not be charged to properties left empty for a specific purpose that have a specific statutory exemption, for example:

- when a person goes into care
- a property that would otherwise be the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services, who is absent from the property as a result of such service
- a dwelling that forms part of a single property being treated by a resident of that property as part of the main dwelling, ie. annexes

People on a low income

If you are on a low income, you can apply for council tax reduction on the amount you have to pay. The level of reduction will depend on the size of your family, your savings, your income and the amount of council tax. The maximum reduction you can receive is 75 per cent or, where you or any member of your household is in receipt of any disability income, the maximum would be 90 per cent. If you are receiving Income Support, Universal Credit (without any earned income), Jobseeker's Allowance, or

Employment Support Allowance, you have to pay 25 per cent or 10 per cent (if in receipt of disability income). This could be more if you have non-dependant adults living with you. More details of the council's local council tax reduction scheme can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

Couples

If you are married or living with someone as husband, wife or same sex partner, you will normally be jointly responsible for the council tax bill. Only make one claim for council tax reduction, which will be assessed on your joint income.

Capital limit

The capital upper limits from 1 April 2020 are:

- No limit - receiving the guarantee part of Pension Credit
- £16,000 - if you and your partner are both state pension credit age
- £6,000 - if you and/or your partner are not state pension credit age

For couples, the limit applies for each claim, not for each person.

To find out if you are state pension credit age go to www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

Non-dependents deduction

Your council tax reduction will be affected if you have someone other than your partner or dependent children living in your household. More details on the non-dependant deductions can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/ctrscheme. You can also find out how much council tax reduction you may be entitled to by using the council tax reduction calculator at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

People with disabilities

You may be entitled to a reduction in your council tax bill if your home has certain features that are essential (or of major importance) to the wellbeing of a disabled person who lives there. These features are:

- a room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) used mainly by a disabled person (for example, for storing dialysis equipment or a ground-floor bedroom in a property with two or more floors)
- an additional kitchen or a bathroom (with bath and/or shower, not just a toilet and wash basin) for use by the disabled person
- extra space inside the property to allow for the use of a wheelchair.

If you are eligible, your bill will be reduced to that of a property in the valuation band immediately below the actual band of your property.

How to pay

Council tax is usually paid in 10 instalments from April to January or you can apply to pay in 12 instalments. If you wish to do so, your request must be received in writing by 1 April. Where requests are received after 1 April, council tax will be payable in the number of months remaining up to and including March of the following year. Details of the different payment methods and contact information are online at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax.

This year's council tax

Adult Social Care precept

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. Following the Spending Review 2020, the Chancellor confirmed the extension of the Social Care Precept into 2021/22 as part of a package of additional funding for Social Care.

For the first time in 14 years, due to the challenges of the pandemic, council tax will not be frozen for those aged over 65 as the older persons discount scheme will not be applied in 2021/22. However, the council will protect the existing discounts for those already in receipt of this discount and a safety net is also in place for the most financially vulnerable residents through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

For Hillingdon residents, fees and charges on services provided by the council, including parking charges, will remain at least 10 per cent lower than those charged by neighbouring boroughs.

As part of the budget, £10 million has been set aside as a contingency should government grants not be sufficient to alleviate the funding pressures created by COVID-19.

Table 2: This year's council tax

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Gross expenditure on services	464,687	472,323
Service income (specific government grants, fees and charges)	(230,403)	(234,078)
Net expenditure on services	234,284	238,245
Corporate income (business rates, general government grants and use of balances)	(113,498)	(111,706)
Hillingdon's council tax requirement	120,786	126,539
Greater London Authority precept	33,907	37,119
Total council tax requirement	154,693	163,658
Divided by Band D equivalent properties within the borough	102,107	102,071
Charge for each Band D household	£1,515.01	£1,603.38

Table 3: Development of 2021/22 budget

	£'000
Council tax requirement 2020/21	120,786
Increase in government funding	(237)
Reduction in business rate income	1,765
Movement in drawdown from balances	264
Inflationary cost increases	4,700
Increase in contingency	3,779
Savings and efficiencies	(8,054)
Priority growth	50
Corporate adjustments	3,486
Council tax requirement 2021/22	126,539

What do I get for my money?

The council delivers nearly 800 different services, which directly benefit local residents and the borough. These services are funded through a combination of grants from central government, a share of local business rates and your council tax. The amount to be raised from council tax is known as the council tax requirement.

Further information about the council's budget can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/budgetreports.

Table 4: The split of costs between different council services

	2020/21 £'000	Change £'000	2021/22 £'000
Adult social care	78,550	785	79,335
Cultural, environmental and planning services	41,971	(1,143)	40,828
Children's social care	43,488	438	43,926
Public health	17,536	274	17,810
Education services	15,048	258	15,306
Highways, roads and transport services	11,409	(1,802)	9,607
Housing services	7,587	(829)	6,758
Central services to the public	4,388	2,450	6,838
Capital financing charges	7,802	1,348	9,150
Corporate and democratic core	5,194	838	6,032
Priority growth and general contingency	500	323	823
Levies and other London-wide charges	811	1,021	1,832
	234,284	3,961	238,245

Greater London Authority

Introduction

The Mayor of London's budget for the 2021/22 financial year sets out his priorities to support London's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to tackle the huge social, health and economic inequalities which it has exposed and exacerbated. It supports job creation and London's business community, our city's future growth and economic success and the Mayor's vision to rebuild London as a greener, cleaner and safer city with stronger and more cohesive communities.

This year's budget will provide resources to improve the key public services Londoners need. This includes delivering more genuinely affordable homes, securing funding to maintain and expand the capital's transport infrastructure and tackling toxic air pollution and the climate emergency. The budget also provides resources to support jobs and growth, fund skills and retraining programmes, help rough sleepers, invest in youth services and make London a fairer and cleaner place to live.

The budget prioritises resources for the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade to keep Londoners safe, including violence reduction initiatives and initiatives to improve opportunities for young Londoners. In light of the significant reductions in fare revenues and property tax income due to the pandemic some difficult decisions have been unavoidable. However, this budget remains focused on delivering a swift and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, as well as building the better, brighter, fairer future all Londoners want and deserve.

Council tax for GLA services

The GLA's share of the council tax for a typical Band D property has been increased by £31.59 (or 61p per week) to £363.66. The additional income raised will fund the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade and will also go towards maintaining existing travel concessions for the under 18s and Londoners aged 60 and over. Council taxpayers in the City of London, which has its own police force, will pay £96.53.

Table 5: The GLA's share of council tax

Council tax	2020/21 £	Change £	2021/22 £
MOPAC (Metropolitan Police)	252.13	15.00	267.13
LFC (London Fire Brigade)	55.28	1.59	56.87
GLA	22.69	(0.12)	22.57
TfL (Transport)	1.92	15.12	17.09
Total	332.07	31.59	363.66

Investing in frontline services

This budget will enable the Mayor to fulfil his key priorities for London. These include:

- ensuring the Metropolitan Police have the resources they need to tackle violent crime – the Mayor has funded 1,300 additional police officer posts from locally raised council tax and business rates revenues;
- tackling the underlying causes of crime through the rollout of funding to support disadvantaged young Londoners access positive opportunities and constructive activities that allow them to make the most of their potential, as well as resources for new violence reduction initiatives;
- protecting vulnerable children and women at risk of abuse and domestic violence;
- providing enough resources to the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to ensure that first and second fire engines arrive at emergency incidents within 10 minutes on at least 90 per cent of occasions and 12 minutes on at least 95 per cent of occasions respectively, after being dispatched. The Mayor is also providing resources to rollout a transformation programme so that the LFB can implement the recommendations of the Grenfell fire inquiry. This includes investing in the new vehicles and equipment required;
- working with London boroughs to maintain existing concessionary travel and assisted door to door transport schemes. This includes for example, maintaining free bus and tram travel for under 18s as well as free off-peak travel across the network for Londoners aged 60+, the disabled, armed forces personnel in uniform and eligible armed services veterans and protecting the Taxicard and Dial a Ride schemes;
- continuing the Hopper bus fare, which makes transport more affordable for millions of Londoners;
- opening the central London section of the Elizabeth line (the operational name for Crossrail) in the first half of 2022, followed by the full line opening with through services as

soon as possible to increase central London's rail capacity by ten per cent. TfL will also open the Northern line extension to Nine Elms and Battersea Power station in 2021;

- continuing to tackle London's housing crisis, by investing £4.4 billion to continue delivering 116,000 affordable home starts within London by 2023 and an additional 35,000 by 2026, as well as allocating resources to tackle homelessness and reduce rough sleeping;
- tackling the climate emergency through continued roll out of a £50 million Green New Deal for London fund;
- investing in Healthy Streets to fund projects to enable more walking and cycling across London. The Mayor will also expand the Ultra Low Emission Zone to the North and South Circular roads in Autumn 2021 to tackle air pollution; and
- funding projects to bring Londoners together, promote arts, sports and culture, help tackle inequality and improve the environment.

Summary of GLA budget

The following tables compare the GLA group's planned spending for 2021-22 with last year and set out why it has changed. The GLA's gross expenditure is higher this year. This is mainly due to the impact of extra investment planned by the Mayor in transport and policing. Overall the council tax requirement has increased because of the extra funding for the Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade and maintaining existing concessionary free travel for under 18s and Londoners aged 60 and over. There has also been a 1.0 per cent decrease in London's residential property taxbase. Find out more about our budget at www.london.gov.uk/budget.

Table 6: How the GLA's budget is funded

	2021/22 £m
Gross expenditure	13,804.4
Government grants and retained business rates	(8,453.9)
Fares, charges and other income	(5,136.9)
Use of reserves	883.0
Amount met by council tax payers	1,096.6

Table 7: Changes in spending

	2021/22 £m
2020/21 council tax requirement	1,010.9
Inflation	176.7
Efficiencies and other savings	(196.3)
New initiatives	383.3
Other changes (for example fares revenue and government grants)	(278.0)
2020/21 council tax requirement	1,096.6

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 5,200 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Table 8: Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee budget

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Gross expenditure	132,291	133,962
Levies raised	11,807	12,042
Total council tax base	5,163	5,127

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 1.99 per cent.

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £11,807,323 in 2020/2021 to £12,042,289 for 2021/2022.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Lee Valley Regional Park is a unique leisure, sports and environmental destination for all residents of London, Essex and Hertfordshire. The 26-mile long, 10,000 acre park, much of it is formerly derelict land, is partly funded by a levy on the council tax. This year, there has been a two per cent increase in this levy. Find out more about hundreds of great days out, world class sports venues and award-winning parklands at www.visitleevalley.org.uk.

Table 9: Lee Valley Regional Park Authority budget

Budget/levy changes	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m
Authority operating expenditure	15.1	20.9
Authority operating income	(7.9)	(12.7)
Net service operating costs	7.2	8.2
Financing costs		
- debt servicing/repayments	0.9	0.5
- capital investment	1.2	0.8
Total net expenditure	9.3	9.5
Total levy	(9.6)	(9.8)

Further details on how this budget is spent and the amount each council contributes can be found at www.leevalleypark.org.uk.

London Pensions Fund Authority

The London Pensions Fund Authority (LPFA) raises a levy each year to meet expenditure on premature retirement compensation and outstanding personnel matters for which LPFA is responsible and cannot charge to the pension fund. These payments relate to former employees of the Greater London Council (GLC), the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and the London Residuary Body (LRB).

For 2021/22, the income to be raised by levies is set out below. The Greater London levy is payable in all boroughs, the inner London levy only in inner London boroughs (including the City of London). The figures show the total to be raised and, in brackets, the percentage change on the previous year.

Table 10: London Pensions Fund Authority levy

Share of levy	£
Inner London	13,065,200
Greater London	10,317,753
Total	23,382,953 0% change