



# Welcome from the Leader of the Council

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“Trafford Council is working to ensure that Trafford is the most prosperous, diverse and economically successful place in Greater Manchester, creating and sustaining employment, helping local businesses to grow and investing in the things that are important to you.

This is happening at the same time that Councils across the country continue to face significant financial pressures. Trafford Council is no exception and has had to find new and innovative solutions in order to maintain Council services within a reduced budget.

Despite our budget challenges, we are still achieving great results. Ofsted has judged our children’s services joint highest in the country and our Youth Offending services received an equally top judgement from the Probation Service.

We have seen substantial savings through achieving efficiencies, changing our service delivery models and reducing costs still further by working collaboratively with our partner agencies, other councils and the private sector. Our decision to join forces with Amey LG has seen the launch of the ‘One Trafford Partnership’ providing a value for money environmental, asset management and highways service which is not only reaping financial savings, it is maintaining a high level of service and investing in new technology.

As always we will look to maximise the amount of income and funding we can attract including making the most of our buildings – we now host weddings at Trafford Town Hall. The income we generate will be invested back into services. We are also growing our housing stock and helping new businesses to open, all bringing vital investment into the borough.

For the past five years, the Council has frozen Council Tax. In our budget consultation some of you asked if a rise in Council Tax could help towards supporting services that may have to change. We considered this option, and following the announcement from Government in November that we could add a precept to pay towards adult social care, we have decided to levy a precept of 2% which will solely go towards the cost of adult social care - the biggest cost to the Council and one which is continuously rising due to a growing older population.

At the time of writing this we are awaiting the detail of our grant settlement and the Council will make its final decision on Council Tax thereafter. Whatever is decided the Council will still have the lowest level of Council Tax in the North West.

Our primary aim is to continue to provide high quality, efficient and effective services to those who need them most and to make sure that, for all Trafford residents, Trafford remains an aspirational and great place to live and work.”

**Cllr Sean Anstee, Leader of Trafford Council**

# Your 2016/2017 Council Tax bill

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Council Tax is a tax on domestic properties. It is collected by local councils and it helps to pay for services which councils provide, such as education, refuse collection and street lighting. Council Tax is charged on all domestic properties, whether they are rented or owned, and whether they are lived in or not.

This booklet forms part of your 2016/2017 Council Tax bill. In it you can find information and advice, including ways in which you might be able to reduce your bill. This booklet also provides information and advice about the empty-home premium. If you are having difficulty paying your Council Tax, help is available. Please call **0161 912 2220** or visit **[www.trafford.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/counciltax)**. The different sections of this booklet are listed below.

- A - Council Tax Support**
- B - Discounts and premiums**
- C - Disability reduction**
- D - Exemptions**
- E - How to apply for a reduction**
- F - Valuation**



## How to contact us

### Exchequer Services

Trafford Council  
PO Box 65  
Sale  
M33 6BY

**Web** [www.trafford.gov.uk](http://www.trafford.gov.uk)

**Email** [council.tax@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:council.tax@trafford.gov.uk)

**Phone** 0161 912 2220

**Minicom** 0161 912 2102

**Fax** 0161 912 2369

# A Council Tax Support

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## What is Council Tax Support?

If you are a low income household you may be entitled to a reduction in the amount of Council Tax you pay.

## How is Council Tax Support worked out?

To work out how much Council Tax Support you are entitled to, we look at things such as:

- Your family circumstances;
- The money you have coming in;
- Any benefits you get;
- Any savings you have; and
- The total of your Council Tax bill.

Council Tax Support is not only for people who are out of work. Many working people can also claim it.

To find out if you can claim Council Tax Support, visit our support calculator at [www.trafford.gov.uk/benefit-calculator](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/benefit-calculator)

## How do I claim?

If you want to make a new claim for Council Tax Support, simply fill in an online claim form available at [www.trafford.gov.uk/new-claim](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/new-claim)

If you are unable to complete the online claim you can phone us on 0161 912 2220 to make an appointment with an advisor.

## Change in Circumstances

You must tell us if your circumstances change. For example, if someone moves into or out of your property or your income or savings and investments change. We could take court action against you if you do not tell us about a change in your circumstances. Report your changes online at [www.trafford.gov.uk/benefit-changes](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/benefit-changes)

# B Discounts and premiums

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## Single-adult discounts

If there is only one adult living at the property, as a general rule we will take a 25% discount off your bill. In certain circumstances, if you are an adult living alone you will qualify for a discount of 50% if you are a 'disregarded person' (see below).

## Discounts for households with more than one adult

If there is more than one adult living in your household but one is a 'disregarded person', you might be entitled to a 25% discount. If all of the adults living in your household are disregarded, you might receive a discount of 50%.

## Disregarded people

The following adults are disregarded for Council Tax purposes:

- People in prison or certain types of legal detention centres;
- People who have a severe learning disability, mental illness or form of dementia;
- People aged 18 or over for whom Child Benefit is paid;
- Students;
- The wife, husband or dependant of a student who is not a British Citizen and who cannot take paid employment or claim benefits;
- Apprentices;
- Student nurses (including student nurses on Project 2000);
- Youth trainees;
- Patients who are staying in hospital for a long time;
- Adults who mainly live in a nursing or residential home and who receive care or treatment there;
- Certain school-leavers under the age of 20 who have finished a course of education between 1 May and 31 October;

# B Discounts and premiums

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## Disregarded people (continued)

- Certain carers providing care or support to another person other than their husband, wife or partner, or their child under the age of 18;
- People living in hostels – people with no fixed address;
- Members of religious communities;
- Members (or their dependants) of international headquarters and defence organisations;
- Foreign-language assistants who are registered with the Central Bureau;
- People associated with visiting armed forces; and
- Diplomats and senior officials of international organisations and their husbands or wives.

## Second homes

If a residential property is furnished, but is not used as a main home and is needed under a contract of employment, we might give a discount of 50%.

## Empty-home discounts

If your property is empty and unfurnished, you might be entitled to one of the following discounts:

- An empty and unfurnished property can receive a 100% discount for up to one month from the date it became empty and unfurnished. Newly built properties can receive a 100% discount for up to one month after they are finished as long as the property remains empty and unfurnished. After this period, the full Council Tax becomes payable.
- An empty and unfurnished property which needs structural repairs or alterations to make it suitable to live in can receive a 100% discount for up to 12 months. After this period, the full Council Tax becomes payable.

# B Discounts and premiums

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## Empty-home premium

We will add a premium of 50% to Council Tax bills for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for two years or more. This means that you will receive a bill for 100% of the full charge plus an extra 50% charge on top of this.

We introduced this premium to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use. This is consistent with our Empty Property Strategy.

The empty-home premium will not apply to the following:

- A home which has been left empty by a person who lives in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence (for example, service personnel posted away from home);
- A home which is part of another home (for example, an annexe).

## Cancelling or changing a discount or premium

If your bill shows that we have given you a discount or charged an empty-home premium, you must tell the Council Tax Section if you think that the reduction or premium no longer applies or should be for a different amount.

You must also tell us about any change within 21 days. If you do not do this, we may charge you a £70 penalty.

## Annexes

A 50% discount is available for properties with self-contained annexes occupied by family members. Any qualifying annexe will have a 50% reduction. The liability on the main house remains unaffected.

# C Disability reduction

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In certain circumstances, we will reduce the amount of Council Tax you have to pay if any member of your household is severely and permanently disabled. To qualify for this reduction, the property must have at least one of the following features:

- A room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) which the disabled person uses and needs;
- An extra bathroom or kitchen needed for the disabled person;
- Enough floor space indoors to allow the disabled person to use a wheelchair.

If you qualify for disability reduction, we will give you a discount in your banding (for example, if your home is in band B, you would pay the same Council Tax as a property in band A). The disability reduction scheme applies to properties in all valuation bands (A to H).





# D Exemptions

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Sometimes you may not have to pay Council Tax. This is known as an exemption. Most exemptions only apply when no-one is living in a property, but sometimes properties which are lived in can be exempt.

**Class B** - Empty properties owned by a charity and which were last used for charitable purposes are exempt for up to six months.

**Class D** - Properties left empty by people who are in prison.

**Class E** - Properties left empty by people who have gone to live in a hospital or home to receive care.

**Class F** - Properties left empty because the person responsible for paying the Council Tax has died are exempt for up to six months after the grant of probate or letters of administration.

**Class G** - Properties which nobody can live in by law.

**Class H** - Empty properties such as vicarages, which are kept for a minister of religion.

**Class I** - Properties left empty because the person responsible for paying the Council Tax has gone to live elsewhere to receive personal care.

**Class J** - Properties left empty because the person responsible for paying the Council Tax has gone to live elsewhere to provide personal care to another person.

**Class K** - Properties left empty because the person responsible for paying the Council Tax is a student who is living elsewhere.

# D Exemptions

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**Class L** - Properties that have been repossessed by a mortgage lender.

**Class M** - Student halls of residence.

**Class N** - Properties which only students live in.

**Class O** - Armed forces accommodation.

**Class P** - Properties used by visiting forces or members of international defence organisations, or their dependants.

**Class Q** - Properties where the person who has possession is a trustee because the owner is bankrupt.

**Class R** - A caravan pitch without a caravan or a mooring without a boat.

**Class S** - Properties where everyone living there is under 18.

**Class T** - An unoccupied home which is part of another home (for example, an annexe), if planning controls do not allow the annexe to be treated as a separate property.

**Class U** - Properties lived in only by people who have a severe learning disability, mental illness or form of dementia who would otherwise have to pay Council Tax.

**Class V** - Properties which are lived in by diplomats.

**Class W** - A home which is part of another home (for example, an annexe) which is lived in by an elderly or disabled relative of the owner, who lives in the main property.

# E How to apply for a reduction

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If you do not currently receive any of the reductions we have mentioned and you would like to apply for one or more of them, you can contact us by:

- Visiting our website at **www.trafford.gov.uk** or emailing us at **council.tax@trafford.gov.uk** or **benefits@trafford.gov.uk**;
- Phoning our Customer Services Team on 0161 912 2220;
- Writing to us at Director of Finance, PO Box 65, Sale, M33 6BY; or
- Visiting any library in Trafford.

# F Valuation

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## The Valuation List

This Valuation List contains the address of every residential property in the borough, with the relevant valuation band next to it. An officer of the Valuation Office Agency (known as the listing officer) puts this list together and maintains it.

## Valuation principles

The valuation is based on an estimate of how much the property would have been worth if it was sold on the open market on 1 April 1991 (not the current value) and the following applied:

- The property was empty when it was sold;
- The property sold was freehold or, in the case of a flat, had a lease for 99 years with a small charge for ground rent;
- The size, character and layout of the property, and the physical state of the area it is in, are the same now as they were at the time of the valuation in 1991;
- The property was in a state of reasonable repair.

# F Valuation

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## The valuation bands

The following chart shows the valuation bands and the proportion of the full Council Tax charge for each of the bands. The Council Tax is based on band D being the full Council Tax charge. For example, a household with a property assessed in band A will pay 6/9 of the Council Tax compared with a property in band D which will pay 9/9 (100%) of the Council Tax. A property in band H will have a Council Tax charge double that of a band D property.

Valuation band	Range of values (as at 1 April 1991) (£)	Tax proportion (£)
A	Up to 40,000	6/9
B	Over 40,000 to 52,000	7/9
C	Over 52,000 to 68,000	8/9
D	Over 68,000 to 88,000	9/9
E	Over 88,000 to 120,000	11/9
F	Over 120,000 to 160,000	13/9
G	Over 160,000 to 320,000	15/9
H	Over 320,000	18/9

# F Valuation

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## Appealing against a valuation

In certain circumstances you can appeal against the valuation band your home is in.

This may be for the following reasons:

- You believe the banding of your property should be changed because of a significant reduction in its value. This may be because part of your property has been demolished, there has been a change in the physical state of your local area or the property has been adapted to make it suitable for someone with a physical disability to live in. In these cases, your property should be revalued as soon as possible;
- You start or stop using part of your home to carry out a business or you start to use more or less of it for business purposes;
- The listing officer has altered the Valuation List without you appealing against the band your home is in;
- You have become the taxpayer for a property for the first time. You must make the appeal within six months, but if a valuation tribunal has already considered and decided an appeal for the same reasons, you cannot make the same appeal again.

If you have any questions about a valuation appeal, you should contact the Valuation Office Agency.

Manchester Valuation Office  
53 Portland Street  
Manchester  
M1 3LD

**E-mail** [ctnorth@voa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ctnorth@voa.gsi.gov.uk)

**Telephone** 03000 501 501

If you have appealed against a valuation and are waiting to hear the decision, you will still have to pay the instalments shown on your Council Tax bill. However, if your appeal is successful, you will be entitled to a refund of any Council Tax you have overpaid.

# Further information

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## Data disclaimer

We may share the information we have about you in relation to Council Tax with other local authorities and other departments within our council to prevent and detect fraud.

## Facts and figures on finance

Please visit [www.trafford.gov.uk/formsandleaflets](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/formsandleaflets) for more information about the following:

- What your Council Tax helps pay for;
- Our spending plans;
- Why spending has changed;
- How council services are paid for;
- How we work out your Council Tax;
- Charges for other public services;
- Staffing information; and
- Capital spending and loan debt.

Or, you can ask us to send you a copy of this information.

**Email** [council.tax@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:council.tax@trafford.gov.uk)

**Phone** 0161 912 2220

**Minicom** 0161 912 2102

**Fax** 0161 912 2369



# View Your Account Online

You can view your Council Tax, Housing Benefits and Non-Domestic accounts on Trafford Council's OpenAccess system.

OpenAccess allows you to access:

- a statement of account
- payments which have been made
- payments you need to make
- details of reduction/relief
- printable statements

To register for OpenAccess go to [www.trafford.gov.uk/traffordonline](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/traffordonline) you will require:

- Your full name/business name
- Your address
- Your email

Please note that by signing up for this you are also signing up to our e-secure service. This means you will not receive your Council Tax bill, Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Support notification or Business Rates bill by post. Instead we will email you when a new document is available and you log in to your online account to view it securely.

## Direct Debit

Direct Debit is the most convenient way to pay your Council Tax bill.

- No need to remember when to pay
- Paying by Direct Debit can result in 94% less carbon emissions than paying by cheque

You can set up a Direct Debit to pay your Council Tax online by visiting [www.trafford.gov.uk](http://www.trafford.gov.uk) before you complete the form, make sure you have the following information to hand:

- Your Council Tax reference number – this can be found in the top right hand corner of your bill.
- The address of the property you are paying
- Your Bank/building society details