

Council Tax 2019/20

Wigan[♥]
Council



Foreword by the Leader of the Council,

Welcome to this year's Council Tax booklet.

I am very pleased to let you know that the council has frozen its element of council tax for the sixth year running.

A national survey by the Local Government Association indicates we are one of only 3% of councils in England to freeze council tax this year.

This means the only increase on council tax bills in the borough will be the Greater Manchester Mayor's precept.

The reason why we are able to freeze our element of council tax is because of The Deal.

The Deal was created to cope with austerity imposed by central government but also to improve the way we work as a council and in partnership with residents.

You have played your part in The Deal by recycling the right things, being involved in your local community, shopping locally and using the free car parking offer and keeping happy and healthy among other things.

This has enabled us to keep council tax as low as possible as we know it is

a tax which can be particularly difficult to afford for those on low incomes.

We were the third worst affected council by government cuts in 2010 but we are on course to hit our savings target of £160m by 2020.

A further £19.2m will need to be saved in the next three years but due to good financial management we no longer need to make cuts to frontline services.

It is important that we maintain this progress which is why we have been out to speak directly with residents over the past few months.

We heard from 6,000 people about what the most important issues are for them over the next ten years.

This has helped create our new plan for the place of Wigan Borough – The Deal 2030.

By us all playing our part, by 2030 we can make our borough a better and fairer place for all.



David Molyneux
Councillor David Molyneux
 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 2019/2020 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.gov.uk

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

Band	Band Value	Council Tax for 2019/20
A	Up to £40,000	£1043.51
B	£40,001 - £52,000	£1217.42
C	£52,001 - £68,000	£1391.35
D	£68,001 - £88,000	£1565.28
E	£88,001 - £120,000	£1913.12
F	£120,001 - £160,000	£2260.95
G	£160,001 - £320,000	£2608.79
H	£320,001 and above	£3130.56

*Additional parish precepts will apply for properties in Haigh and Shevington

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 sixth 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
2019	£794.76	£132.20	£39.96	£65.26	£11.33	£1043.51

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. On your Council Tax bill the cumulative effect of the Adult Social Care precept will be represented in the line "Wigan Council".

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 to pay for the running of the Mayor's office and to meet the Mayor's priorities in Greater Manchester.

The Deal - key statistics

3rd most
productive council



Happiest
place to live
in Greater Manchester



£141.5
million
saved so far



8% increase
in kerbside recycling
since 3-wk collection
introduced



89%
of home care
providers rated
good or outstanding



Council Tax
services element
frozen
for six years



3,000
more people in
employment today
than 2016/17



90% of schools
rated good/outstanding



£17m
invested in roads



21%
reduction
in fly tipping



£10 million
invested through the
Community Investment Fund



3rd most improved
local authority for care home
quality in the country



Deal 2030

On 27th September we launched the Big Listening Project to engage with residents and ask two important questions:

- **What should the borough look and feel like in 2030?**
- **How can we work together to achieve this?**

We were inspired by the pride, passion and creativity that we encountered on this journey and we have been able to capture some truly brilliant ideas of how we can work together to make this borough an even better place.

Certain themes came through loud and clear and you can see these on the page opposite.

Visited **83**
locations/events



500
residents took part
in the "Video Booth"



6,000
people have
had their say



Listened to
2,650
residents on our sofa



666
people completed
an online survey



250,000
people reached
on social media



Town Centres

Residents told us that they want our town centres to be revived. They recognise that retail is changing and they want our town centres to offer leisure and entertainment for all ages, from large events to independent shops and restaurants.

Feeling safe

People told us that feeling safe is a big priority and tackling anti-social behaviour is important to them.

Environment

People want to see less litter, clean air and responsible use of plastics. Our green spaces and parks are highly valued by our residents and they want to see these continue to look great.

Community and Inclusion

The value of being part of a community and celebrating our differences was a theme that came out from our residents. People are really proud of this borough and they want to celebrate it.

Better Leisure Opportunities, Parks and Green Spaces

Residents want a different leisure offer. Things to do in our town centres, reasons to visit, great walks and somewhere to sit and enjoy our beautiful green spaces were all mentioned as important.

Opportunities for Children and Young People

People told us they want our young people to have great opportunities and for everyone to be able to access these opportunities, from great jobs, apprenticeships and even a university in the town.

Health and Wellbeing and Sport

Staying fit and healthy was a priority, as well as accessing good health care. Green gyms, healthy food options and team sports were all mentioned as important to all ages.

Housing

Residents wanted to see a broader offer around housing, with more affordable housing and more town centre housing. People were concerned about homelessness and many said they wanted that to be resolved for the future.

Employment Opportunities

People talked about great jobs and apprenticeships as being important, as well the opportunity to build skills to prepare for the jobs of the future.

Connectivity

Being able to travel around the borough easily was mentioned by many residents. Frustrations around traffic and potholes came through and people also wanted to be well connected to other areas.

Education

Feedback around schools was positive. Residents want this to continue for the future with ambitions for a university in the town mentioned by both younger and older people.

Mental Health Provision

Residents were concerned about mental health and felt there was still a stigma about it. People told us they wanted reduced waiting times and more options to help build good mental health in the borough.



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.
- A self-contained annexe.
- 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. 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.



In April 2018 the government 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;

- 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

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

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.

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



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.

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 2019/20 there will be no increase in Wigan Council's Adult Social Care precept from the precept charged in 2018/19.

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 was replaced with the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept Component and this precept funds Police services. The precept for the Fire and Rescue Services was replaced with the Mayoral General Precept Component (including Fire Services). This precept includes an amount for Fire and Rescue Services and an 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 Precepts per household for 2019/20.

Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Precept Charge (£)	132.20	154.23	176.27	198.30	242.37	286.43	330.50	396.60

Mayoral General Precept (including Fire)

Council Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Precept Charge (£)	51.29	59.84	68.39	76.95	94.05	111.15	128.24	153.90

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

Printed March 2019