

Changes from 1 April 2015

1. That Care Leavers become a recognised protected group until their 25th birthday, if on a qualifying benefit such as job seekers allowance they would receive a full Council Tax Reduction.
2. That the minimum contribution rate for non working but working age customers is increased to £3.65 (2014/15 rate) as a minimum but will be uprated to remain in line with any changes proposed in the annual autumn uprating for 2015/16 and will continue to be uprated on an annual basis thereafter.
The minimum contribution rate for 2015/16 is set at £3.75
3. The maximum period for backdating a Council Tax Reduction award is one month, and is fully aligned with the conditionality set out in Universal Credit; in that the following conditions must be satisfied, such as you were previously getting a benefit and you were not notified that your entitlement was going to end, you have a disability, you were unwell and could not claim online or by telephone or you previously had a joint claim that has been terminated as you are no longer a couple.
4. That non-dependent deductions are increased to the rates in the table below as a minimum but that going forward the Council will uprate the non-dependent deduction annually in line with the consumer prices index (CPI) increase (rounded up to the nearest 5p) announced by the Minister of State for Work and Pensions in the annual autumn uprating for 2015/16 and will continue to be uprated on an annual basis thereafter.

Non-dependant deductions	
In receipt of Pension Credit	Nil
Aged 18 or over and not in remunerative work	£4.75
Aged 18 or over and in remunerative work	
- gross income less than £188.00	£4.75
- gross income not less than £188.00 but less than £326.00	£9.40
- gross income not less than £326.00 but less than £406.00	£11.90
- gross income in excess of £406.00	£14.25

5. That the Council no longer annually updates the applicable amounts and premiums currently used in the assessment of a Council Tax Reduction claim; with the exception of those stated at 2 (the minimum contribution) and 4 (non-dependent deductions) above.
6. That with the continued roll out of Universal Credit the Council Tax Reduction scheme is amended as follows:
 - i. Claims for Universal Credit will be accepted as the first date of claim for a Council Tax Reduction
 - ii. If the Universal Credit award is not decided within the first month the Council will assess the claim according to the means test applied when claims for other relevant benefits are received; treating the subsequent award of UC as a change in circumstances.
7. The Council will use the minimum income floor to calculate self-employed income. However, for self-employed claimants with caring responsibilities discretion should be allowed to reduce the hours worked on an individual basis and dependent on the level of caring support.
8. Personal Independence Payments to be added to the list of income types used to define a vulnerable adult.
9. The Council maintains protection for households with children under the age of two year olds and removes protection for households with children between three and five.
10. That the level a Council Tax Reduction is calculated at remains capped at Band D.
11. All earned income disregards will be set at £20
12. Carers Allowance shall be fully disregarded as an income.