

South Somerset District Council

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Council Tax Benefit Scheme was abolished with effect from 1 April 2013 and replaced with a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to provide financial support to residents on a low income to help them pay their Council Tax liability. Entitlement is calculated through a means test which essentially compares income against a 'needs' level.

By 31 January each year Councils are required to set a scheme for the following financial year, in this case for 2015/16. This is the third year of the SSDC local scheme.

There are no changes proposed to how the scheme operates, and no new measures are being introduced. It is proposed that elements of the policy used in the means test are updated for inflation. This is in keeping with similar increases in elements of the national Housing Benefit Scheme and Social Security Benefits.

The rest of this Executive summary sets the detail of the proposed upratings, and the current scheme (2014/15) values.

Summary of proposed changes to the 2014/15 approved policy

- a) Personal Allowances and Premiums to be uprated in line with Housing Benefit

The table below sets out the values for the current scheme (2014/15) and the proposed values for the 2015/16 scheme.

Personal Allowances		
	2014/15	2015/16
Single Person		
16 to 24	57.35	57.90
25 or over	72.40	73.10
Any age – entitled to main phase rate ESA	72.40	73.10
Lone Parent		
Under 18	57.35	57.90
18 or over	72.40	73.10
Any age – entitled to main phase rate ESA	72.40	73.10
Couple		
Both under 18	86.65	87.50
One or both over 18	113.70	114.85
Any age – entitled to main phase rate ESA	113.70	114.85
Polygamous Marriages		
For the claimant and the other party to the marriage	113.70	114.85

	2014/15	2015/16
For each additional spouse who is a member of the same household as the claimant	41.30	41.75
Dependent children		
From birth to September following 16 th birthday	66.33	66.90
Premiums		
Family Premium	17.45	17.45
Family Premium (lone parent rate)	22.20	22.20
Disability Premium		
Single	31.85	32.25
Couple	45.40	45.95
Enhanced Disability Premium		
Single rate	15.55	15.75
Couple rate	22.35	22.60
Disabled child rate	24.08	24.43
Severe Disability Premium		
Single	61.10	61.85
Couple – one qualifies	61.10	61.85
Couple – both qualify	122.20	123.70
Disabled Child Premium	59.50	60.06
Carer Premium	34.20	34.60

- b) Non-dependant deductions are uprated in line with the annual percentage increase in Council Tax (1.11%)

The table below sets out the non-dependant deductions applied in the current scheme (2014/15) and the proposed deductions for the 2015/16 scheme.

Type	2014/15 rate	2015/16 rate
Receiving Passported Benefit	£3.67	£3.71
Non-dependant aged 18 years and working		
Gross Weekly Income less than £189	£5.83	£5.89
Gross Weekly Income between £189 to £327.99	£10.60	£10.72
Gross Weekly Income between £328.00 to £407.99	£13.58	£13.72
Gross Weekly Income equal or more than £408.00	£16.30	£16.48
Non-dependant aged over 18 and not working	£3.67	£3.71

c) That the non-dependent income bands are increased by the same percentage as those in the Prescribed Scheme

The table below sets out the income bands used to determine which non-dependant deduction is applied in the current scheme (2014/15) and the proposed income bands for the 2015/16 scheme.

Income bands 2014/15	Income bands 2015/16
Gross Weekly Income less than £188	Gross Weekly Income less than £189
Gross Weekly Income between £188 to £325.99	Gross Weekly Income between £189 to £327.99
Gross Weekly Income between £326.00 to £405.99	Gross Weekly Income between £328.00 to £407.99
Gross Weekly Income equal or more than £406.00	Gross Weekly Income equal or more than £408.00

The SSDC Council Tax Reduction Policy document sets out the full details of the scheme including:

- who is entitled to claim
- how to claim
- how entitlement will be determined
- how income and capital will be calculated
- requirement to notify SSDC of changes in circumstances
- how non-dependants are treated
- decision notices
- appeals