

## **My council tax seems very high this year, but my income has stayed the same. Everything else seems more expensive - how can I cope?**

Contact the council if you are having problems paying your council tax. Firstly, there are discounts available to some people. If you're the only adult in your home, you'll get a 25% discount on your bill. Some adults, e.g. student nurses, are disregarded. If everyone who lives in the property is disregarded, there is a 50% discount.

Next, if you are on a low income or receive benefits, you might be able to get your council tax reduced. The council will ask you details about your income and your circumstances, so they can work out if you're entitled to a reduction. If you have other people living with you who are aged 18 or over, you might all be responsible for paying council tax. The council will make the calculations.

You may also be eligible for additional support if you're reached State Pension age.

Even if none of the reduction criteria apply to you, the council can still make a 'discretionary reduction'. They'll normally only do this if you can show that you're suffering severe hardship. If your immigration status doesn't let you claim public funds, you can still apply for a discretionary reduction, as this doesn't count as public funds.

Council tax is a priority bill because you can be taken to court if you get into arrears, so it's important to tell the council if you can't keep up payments. Contact South Lakes Citizens Advice for more help.

***Free, confidential advice and help is available from South Lakes Citizens Advice on any aspect of debt, consumer problems, benefits, housing, employment or any other problems. South Lakes Citizens Advice, your local charity, is here for you. How to access:***

- ***Call 015394 46464 - this is being staffed from 9:30 – 2pm***
- ***Adviceline: 0808 2787 984***
- ***email advice via our submission page on our website [www.southlakescab.org.uk](http://www.southlakescab.org.uk)***
- ***Help to Claim (Universal Support): 0800 144 8 444***