



Cash for carers

Do you look after an adult other than a spouse or partner?

If you look after someone who is:

- Over 18 AND
- not your spouse or your partner AND
- they receive the higher rate of **Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Care Component** (or higher rate **Attendance Allowance**) AND
- You care for that person for a minimum of 35 hours per week AND
- the person lives with you

You may be entitled to a *Council Tax Carers Discount*.

What is a discount?

A discount means money off.

Carers get special treatment

You do not have to claim Carer's Allowance to receive a discount and your income and savings will not affect your eligibility.

How it works

Council Tax bills are based on two adults living at an address. However, discounts are available based on the number of people living there.

How are the number of people in a house calculated?

Make a list of everyone who lives in the home, then cross out the names of anyone who is:

- A carer.
- children under 18
- people on apprentice schemes
- 18 and 19-year-olds who are in full-time education
- full-time college and university students
- young people under 25 who receive funding from the Skills Funding Agency or Young People's Learning Agency
- student nurses
- foreign language assistants registered with the British Council
- people who have a severe mental disability
- live-in carers who look after someone who isn't their partner, spouse or child (up to 18 years)
- diplomats

(SOURCE: DIRECT GOV)

Whoever is left on your list will be counted for Council Tax purposes. If there's only one adult living in your home, or because some people have been ignored only one person is counted as living in your home, you will get a **25% DISCOUNT**.

If there are no adults living in your home, or because certain people have been ignored no one is counted as living in your home, you will get a **50% DISCOUNT**.

Claiming money back

Council Tax discount can be backdated to the date when Council Tax was first introduced on **April 1 1993**.

You don't have to give a reason why you didn't previously apply for a discount, but you will need to provide evidence that you were eligible for previous years. If you provide evidence but the council is unwilling to backdate the claim, you can challenge the decision at a valuation tribunal.

You can use the letter below to apply for Council Tax discount to be backdated. Include your own details, the level of discount that applies to you, and the date to which you think the discount can be backdated.

Sample Council Tax discount letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: backdating Council Tax discounts

Thank you for your letter of (insert date of letter agreeing to discount here) agreeing to a 25%/50% discount in my Council Tax bill.

I understand that it is possible to backdate claims for discount under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and would ask you to deal with my claim on this basis. I think my claim should be backdated from (if you can establish when you first became entitled insert the applicable date here).

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible and thank you in anticipation of your valuable help

Yours faithfully,

If you do not receive a positive response you may need to highlight the fact that the legislation makes it clear that granting of a discount is not dependant upon a claim. Therefore the discount can clearly be awarded for a past period providing that the appropriate conditions are met. There is also no requirement for 'good cause' to be shown before a discount is backdated. Ultimately it is possible to present an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.

Making a claim

In order to make a claim you need to complete a form provided by your local council and send it back to them.

You can obtain a form online or by contacting your local council. If you have trouble getting hold of this form then ask us to get it for you. Omega can also help you fill it in.

Check your entitlement to benefits

You, like many people, may be missing out on financial help that you are entitled to through welfare benefits. Turn 2 Us (www.turn2us.org.uk) offers an easy to use calculator on its website, which may be of help to you if you are unemployed and looking for work, on a low income, retired, bringing up children, ill, have a disability or care for someone. Follow the link below to start the benefit checker:

http://www.turn2us.org.uk/benefits_search.aspx



Omega, the National Association for End of Life Care

Web: www.omega.uk.net
Email: carers@omega.uk.net
Phone: 0845 259 3163 (local rate)

Omega is keen to share useful information with carers. If you have benefitted from a similar concession and would like us to tell other unpaid carer-givers, please get in touch.