



STOCKPORT  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

# A guide to your Council Tax 2017/18



This leaflet is published by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and forms part of your Council Tax bill in accordance with the Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011, SI 2011 No 3038 amended by SI 2012 No 3087, SI 2016 No 188, and SI 2017 No 13.

[www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax)

The last financial year has been one of the most politically eventful in recent memory, and the decisions taken at national level have been reflected in the challenges, changes and risks faced by Local Authorities.



This year also saw the administration of Stockport Council change hands for the first time in almost two decades, and the short time for which I have led the Council from May has not been free of challenges. These include managing the continuing reductions in Council funding alongside this changing external

risk environment – and, of course, a mounting local and national situation regarding adult social care provision. In response, we have sought to put together a budget which takes bold decisions not only to manage these challenges for 2017/18, but beyond to 2020/21.

The headline issue from this year's budget is the news that Stockport is to face a 4.99% rise in Council Tax. For a Band D property this means a rise in Council Tax of £72.33 for the year, in addition to a rise of £5 per year for Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner and just over £1 for the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority. All of these rises are in response to the continued financial pressures which all these organisations face in providing important services to you.

While acutely aware of the financial impact this will have upon residents, we have made this difficult decision in order to balance the needs of the people of Stockport against the reducing funding available. I also recognise that, unlike central government direct taxation, Council Tax is not progressive. So this decision was not taken lightly, but it was passed by all political groups in the Council Chamber following numerous difficult conversations across the Council and with Stockport residents.

In Stockport, we have had to manage savings of over £90 million since 2010/11, and face just over £64 million in required savings between now and 2021/22. This is a result of reduced Council funding and increased expenditure pressures, such as the rising demand and costs for services to support our elderly and vulnerable residents. This has led to significant pressure upon our largest budgetary area - Adult Social Care, a situation which reflects national trends but is particularly notable in Stockport where we have the oldest population in Greater Manchester.

We have therefore decided to raise Council Tax in order to protect the most vulnerable in our communities along with valued public services for all residents. In doing so, we join

many other councils nationally who have chosen to make the maximum rise available to them this year in response to a national funding situation.

The positives which arise from this decision therefore include allowing social care staff breathing space while new and improved models of care are developed alongside the NHS. We also plan a range of other reforms to services so as to make savings whilst protecting front line service provision as far as possible.

However, this budget also commits further resources to our ambitious capital investment programme in Stockport and a range of other initiatives. This will help to create jobs and improve infrastructure, public spaces and facilities. As such, this programme of investment is designed not only to improve our town for its residents, but also to place the Council on a more secure financial footing in future through improving the level of business rate receipts and rents on council owned assets. The increased revenue these investments will generate can therefore be put straight into day-to-day services, widening the sources from which the Council receives its income.

This year we will welcome the completion of the Redrock cinema and restaurants development in our town centre, the commencement of refurbishment at the Grand Central leisure centre and phase two of the Stockport Exchange redevelopment around Stockport Railway Station. We have also just launched a new housing partnership, 'Viaduct', which will begin building the affordable housing badly needed by Stockport residents. In addition to this, we will see work toward the A6 to Manchester Airport relief road progress to completion, alongside a range of upgrades to our town centre road network as part of our town centre access programme.

It's important that we strike a fair and effective balance between Council Tax increases and reduced spending. Increasing our locally derived revenue will go nowhere near enough to outstrip the reductions in central government support. However, the bold decisions we have made – and will continue to make - in terms of council finance and investment have been taken to ensure valued public services are maintained while work continues to improve our Borough and the lives of all those who live within it.

**Councillor Alex Ganotis**  
**Leader of Stockport Council**

# Budget and Council Tax 2017/18

During the financial year 2017/18 the Council plans to spend some £603m on the provision of a wide range of services throughout the Borough. This includes around £206m for schools which will be met by a dedicated government grant, and almost £54m on the provision of council housing which is met primarily from rent income. After taking account of income from fees and charges and a small number of specific grants the 'net revenue budget' for council services has been set at just over £234m.

In 2017/18 the Council will be part of the Greater Manchester 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot. The Council will retain 99% of the Business Rates income collected (1% will be paid to the Greater Manchester Fire Authority). As a result around £77m of the net expenditure will be met from retained Business Rates (net of a tariff payable to Central Government of £1.4m). A further £11m of that expenditure will be financed from Government grants.

The 2017/18 budget includes the delivery of ongoing savings with one-off support amounting to around £3.7m being made available to support adult social care services.

In relation to services provided by Stockport Council the Council Tax will increase by 4.99%. Of this, 3% is the 'Adult Social Care Precept' allowed for by Central Government to provide additional support for adult social care services. For 2017/18, Council Tax receipts will total over £140m with a 'Band D equivalent' figure of £1,521.77. The Council is also required to collect Council Tax on behalf of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire and Rescue Authority. This results in an overall Council Tax 'Band D equivalent' figure of £1,744.02 in 2017/18.

Further details of the Council's budget, including details of the precepts, are available on the Council's website at [www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax).

**Michael Cullen**  
Borough Treasurer  
Corporate and Support Services

## **Statement concerning adult social care funding SI 2017 No 13**

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made an offer to adult social care authorities. ('Adult social care authorities' are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly).

The offer is the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional 'precept' on its council tax for financial years from the financial year beginning in 2016 without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting expenditure on adult social care. Subject to the annual approval of the House of Commons, the Secretary of State intends to offer the option of charging this 'precept' at an appropriate level in each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019-20.



# Your Council Tax, Support, Discounts, Exemptions and Appeals 2017

**Council Tax is based on the value of a property. All homes are subject to Council Tax. There is one Council Tax bill for each domestic property whether lived in or not. Your Council Tax bill shows which band your property is in. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) is responsible for setting the bands which are based on property values at 1st April 1991.**

The District Valuer has allocated each property to one of eight valuation bands according to its market value at 1st April 1991. Stockport Council has set the Council Tax for each band. The amounts have been worked out as proportions of the Band D figure. Your bill shows the relevant Valuation.

| Band | Range of values      | Proportions | Council Tax |
|------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| A    | £40,000 and under    | 6/9ths      | £1,162.67   |
| B    | £40,001 to £52,000   | 7/9ths      | £1,356.45   |
| C    | £52,001 to £68,000   | 8/9ths      | £1,550.23   |
| D    | £68,001 to £88,000   | 1           | £1,744.02   |
| E    | £88,001 to £120,000  | 11/9ths     | £2,131.58   |
| F    | £120,001 to £160,000 | 13/9ths     | £2,519.13   |
| G    | £160,001 to £320,000 | 15/9ths     | £2,906.69   |
| H    | More than £320,000   | 2           | £3,488.04   |

**Details regarding the Council's Budget and the Council Tax calculation can be found on the web at [www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax)**

**Details regarding Police and Fire precepts plus Waste and Combined Authority Levies can also be found at [www.stockport.gov.uk/preceptsandlevies](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/preceptsandlevies)**

## Scam Alert

Trading Standards advise caution if you receive a call from anyone saying you are in the wrong Council Tax band or you are entitled to a refund of Council Tax. The caller will charge a fee and some have given misleading information including false claims that:

- They are from the Council or other official body
- They are working with the Police
- It will cost you more to challenge your tax band on your own
- The Council or VOA will not help you

Remember that;

- Nobody can guarantee you a lower Council Tax band
- The vast majority of bandings are correct
- It's free to challenge or enquire about your Council Tax band
- These companies do little more than what you can do yourself for free.

If you think you have been misled, report it to  
Citizens Advice  
Consumer Services  
on 08454 040506

## Banding Appeals

The grounds for appeal are restricted to the following cases:

- Where you believe that the banding should be changed because of an increase or reduction in the value of the property due to building work being carried out on the dwelling, i.e. demolition, extensions or converting the property from houses to flats
- Where you start or stop using part of your property to carry out a business
- Where the Band has been altered by the Valuation Office Agency
- Where you become a new Council Tax payer at a property. Your appeal should be made within six months of becoming the Council Tax payer. You cannot appeal if the previous Council Tax payer has already appealed.

If you are appealing against the valuation of either your domestic property or a non-domestic property you should send your appeal to the following address and NOT the Council:

**Manchester Valuation Office**  
**53 Portland Street**  
**Manchester**  
**M1 3LD**  
**Tel: 03000 501501**  
**Email: [ctnorth@voa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ctnorth@voa.gsi.gov.uk)**

Please quote your Council Tax account number (shown on your Council Tax bill) on any correspondence with the Valuation Office Agency.

## Occupied Property Discounts

If you are the only adult (over 18) living at your address, you can claim 25 % discount.

If only one adult living at your address is counted then a 25 % discount can be claimed.

If none of the adults living at your address are counted then a 50 % discount can be claimed and in some cases an exemption may apply – see exemptions for occupied properties on the next page.

If you have a second home that is provided under a contract of employment then a 50 % discount can be claimed.

## Occupied Annexe Properties

A 50 % discount applies to annexes occupied by the occupiers of the main building or by a relative(s), including parent(s), child and grandparent(s), who do not qualify for any other exemption. See website for further details.

## Unoccupied Annexes - which are being used/occupied as part of the main dwelling

A discount of 100 % will be awarded for annexes which have become unoccupied and are being used as part of the main home. The discount will end once the property is sold.

## Adults who are not counted

Here are examples of people who may not be counted:

- Full time students, student nurses, apprentices and those on youth training schemes
- People permanently resident in hospital or in care homes
- People who are severely mentally impaired
- Carers – people living with and caring for someone who is not their spouse, partner or child under 18
- 18 or 19 year olds who are still at college or have just left
- 18 year olds for whom child benefit is still being paid
- Members of religious communities, such as monks or nuns
- People staying in hostels or night shelters
- People in prison or detention (except those in prison for non-payment of Council Tax or fine).

## Reductions for people with disabilities

If you or someone who lives with you (adult or child) needs extra space in the property for the use of a wheelchair or if you have an additional bathroom, kitchen or other room to meet the needs arising from the disability, you may be entitled to Disabled Person's Relief. This reduction is the equivalent of your band being reduced to the one below, or by a sixth if your property is in a band A.

Working age people who qualify for Disabled Person's Relief are protected from the changes to Council Tax Support and will receive the same level of discount as they did under Council Tax Benefit.

## Reductions for unoccupied properties

### Unoccupied and unfurnished properties.

A 100 % discount will apply for the first two months only from the date the property became unoccupied and unfurnished.

If the property remains unoccupied and unfurnished for 2 years or more, the full charge will become payable **plus** a 50 % premium. (150 % payable).

### New owners of a vacant property.

If you have recently bought property which has been unoccupied and unfurnished before you bought it, you will not be entitled to the full discount.

The discount begins on the day the property became unoccupied and unfurnished and the previous owner will have used some of the discount period. New owners are allowed the balance of the discount unused by the previous owner.

If the property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or more the new owner will be charged the premium from the date of purchase.

### Unoccupied and unfurnished properties that are undergoing or requiring major repairs or alterations.

Where a property requires or is undergoing major repairs or structural alterations a 75 % discount will be given for the first 12 months only. After 2 years or more, the full charge **plus** a 50 % premium will become payable. The original empty property start date is still used when applying the discount.

Therefore if a property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or more this discount does not apply and the full charge plus 50 % premium becomes payable.

### Properties left unoccupied by Service Personnel.

Currently 100 % discount applies for an unoccupied main residence of Service Personnel, posted away from home, whilst they live in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.

## Exemptions for occupied properties

### No Council Tax is payable if the property is only:

- Occupied by people under 18
- Occupied only by people who are full-time students or student nurses
- Occupied only by people who are severely mentally impaired
- Where the property is part of another property and a dependent relative lives in it, such as granny flat or annexe.

## Exemptions for unoccupied properties

No Council Tax is payable for six months on unoccupied properties which:

- Are owned by a charity and kept empty for charitable purposes.

**No Council Tax is payable on unoccupied properties if the following conditions apply:**

- It is left empty by someone who is on remand or in prison (unless this is for not paying fines or Council Tax)
- It is left empty by someone who has moved permanently into a nursing home or hospital
- It is left empty by someone who has moved to provide personal care for, or to receive personal care from another person
- It is repossessed by a mortgage company
- It cannot be lived in by law
- It is waiting to be lived in by a minister of religion
- It is the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee
- It is left empty by a student owner
- It is an empty caravan pitch or houseboat mooring, or
- The owner has died and probate or letters of administration have not been granted. We will award another six months if the property is still not lived in after probate or letters of administration are granted
- Annexes such as Granny Flats which are difficult to let separately.

**No Council Tax is payable on some properties whether they are lived in or not.**

Any of the following types may be exempt:

- Armed forces accommodation (e.g. Barracks)
- Visiting forces accommodation
- A property lived in by someone from abroad who has diplomatic, commonwealth or consular privilege or immunity who uses the property in an official role.

We will send you a new bill each time the amount of discount or exemption changes or the premium becomes payable.

We will not normally backdate any discount, disregard or exemption for more than one calendar month from the date of your application unless you can provide documentary evidence of entitlement for the period requested.

**If you think you might be entitled to a discount, exemption or Disabled Person's Relief, please visit our website at [www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax) for more information and an application form or call us on 0161 217 6014.**

**You must continue to pay your bill until a decision on your application for a discount, exemption or reduction has been made. If your application is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid Council Tax.**

**If you have been awarded a discount, exemption or reduction you must notify the Council Tax Section within 21 days of any change in your circumstances which may affect your entitlement. Failure to do so may result in a penalty of £50.**

## Council Tax Appeals

You may also appeal if you consider that you are not liable to pay Council Tax, the property should be exempt or because we have made a mistake in calculating your bill or Council Tax Support. You should notify the Council Tax Section in writing if you wish to appeal on these grounds. Contact details are on your bill and the back page of this leaflet.

**You must still pay your bill while your appeal is being considered. If you are successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid Council Tax.**

## Council Tax Support

If you are on a low income you may be able to get help towards paying your Council Tax bill. You can apply for Council Tax Support whether you own your own home, rent, are unemployed or working.

For more information and to apply visit [www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax)

## Manage your Account

### My Account

[www.stockport.gov.uk/myaccount](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/myaccount)

Register now for My Account to securely view and manage your Council Tax account.

**Convenient.** Manage your account at a time that suits you, 24/7.

**Faster.** Enquiries are prioritised with a guaranteed faster response from the Council.

**Flexible.** View, print and quickly make changes and updates to your accounts free of charge.

**Timely.** Electronic billing - immediate access to new bills and an archive of past e-bills online.

**Informative.** View calculations, payment dates, and any reductions that have been applied.

**Cheaper.** Less paper, postage and phone calls; saving you and the Council money.

### You can access your account on-line at

[www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/counciltax)

There is free internet access, and also people to help you, in Fred Perry House, Edward Street, Stockport SK1 3UR or any of the Stockport Local Advice Centres.

For the opening times and location of your nearest Centre, visit

[www.stockport.gov.uk/advicecentres](http://www.stockport.gov.uk/advicecentres)

### If you can't use the internet you can call on

**Council Tax: 0161 217 6014**

**Business Rates: 0161 474 5188**

### Council Tax Support &

**Housing Benefit: 0161 217 6015**

**Minicom (Textphone): 0161 217 6024**

**Telephone payments: 0161 474 4050**

### Write to us at:

Local Taxation Team, Town Hall, Stockport SK1 3XE

If you would like this leaflet in large print, on audio tape, in Braille or on disk, please contact 0161 474 3083 for a copy. Email: [performance@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:performance@stockport.gov.uk)

An interpreting service is available, if you need help with this information.

Please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000. Email: [eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk)

تتوافر لدينا خدمة مثيرة للاهتمام فإذا كنت في حاجة لفهم هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية يرجى الاتصال بوحدة الترجمة في ستوكبورت  
Eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk على الرقم التالي: 01614779000 أو على البريد الإلكتروني:

এই তথ্য বাংলা ভাষায় বুঝতে সাহায্যের দরকার হলে ইন্টারপ্রিটারের (দোভাষীর) ব্যবস্থা আছে। দয়া করে  
Eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk বা ইমেইল করুন: 0161 477 9000

如果你需要他人為你解釋這份資料的內容，我們可提供傳譯服務，

請致電 0161 477 9000 史托波特傳譯部。電郵 [eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk)

اگر در مورد این اطلاعات احتیاج به کمک داشتید خدمات مترجمی رایگان موجود است لطفا با سازمان مترجمی استاکپورت با شماره تلفن و یا  
01614779000 ایمیل آدرس زیر تماس بگیرید. Eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy z tą informacją dostępne są darmowe usługi tłumaczeniowe. Prosimy dzwonić  
do Wydziału Tłumaczeń w Stockport pod numer 0161 477 9000. Email: [eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk)

اگر آپ کو ان معلومات کے ساتھ مدد درکار ہے تو انٹرپرائٹنگ سروس (ترجمانی کی خدمات) دستیاب ہے۔ براہ مہربانی اسٹاکپورٹ انٹرپرائٹنگ یونٹ  
کو 0161 477 9000 پر ٹیلیفون کریں۔ ای میل [eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk)

A free interpreting service is available if you need help with this booklet/leaflet.

Please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000. Email: [eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk)