

# Council Tax guidance

If you are disabled or have a  
disabled person living with you

Customer Services

Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman Street, Hackney E8 4RU

## **Disabled band reduction**

The full Council Tax is calculated on the assumption that at least two adults live in your property.

This leaflet explains the reduction that is available if a disabled person lives in your property, and the property has certain adaptations to meet the needs of the disabled person.

The reduction is not a general discount available because a person has a disability, it is related to the features in the property.

You may apply for the disabled band reduction if:

- You are liable to pay the Council Tax
- A disabled adult or child lives at the property: and
- The property has:
  - **a room**, other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet, which is 'predominantly used by' and be 'essential or of major importance' to the wellbeing of the disabled person; or
  - **an extra bathroom or kitchen**, which is required for meeting the needs of the disabled person; or
  - **indoor wheelchair space**, enough floor space to allow the disabled person to use a wheelchair.

This reduction is to make sure that the person liable to pay the Council Tax should not have to pay more as a result of meeting the needs of the disabled person or because they live in a larger property than they would need if they or another occupant were not disabled.

### **What do we mean by essential or major importance?**

We will consider the room to be essential or of major importance if, were it not available:

- The disabled person would find it physically impossible or extremely difficult to live in the property; or
- Their health would suffer or the disability would become worse. The room or space concerned must be needed by the disabled person as a result of their disability.

### **What do we mean by predominantly used by?**

The fact that a disabled person uses a room will not, on its own, lead us to granting a

reduction. We will consider the use that the disabled person has made of the room and if equipment is used, whether there is causal link between the equipment and the use of the room.

### **A room used by the disabled person**

A room must be adapted from its original purpose for the use of the disabled person.

For example, a downstairs sitting room now being used as a bedroom would not qualify if it also used for its normal purpose as a sitting room, but a room which is converted to a sensory or therapy room, a treatment room or a room to store equipment needed for the disabled person would qualify.

Examples of rooms which would not qualify;

- downstairs room used as a bedroom for a person who cannot climb stairs
- a room with extra facilities such as extra heating or a hearing loop
- installation of a commode for a person who finds it difficult to get to a lavatory

### **A second bathroom or kitchen**

A property with a second bathroom or kitchen does not automatically qualify for a reduction, unless the second bathroom or kitchen is essential to meet the needs of the disabled person.

The bathroom and kitchen do not have to be solely for use by the disabled person.

A shower room is treated as a bathroom.

A second, or separate, toilet is not classified as a bathroom.

### **Wheelchair space - only if required indoors**

We will only grant the reduction if the disabled person needs to use the wheelchair to get about inside the property. If the wheelchair is only required for outdoor use, this will not qualify for the reduction.

### **Other Adaptations which do not qualify**

We understand that there are many other adaptations which can be installed in a property which help to support the disabled person in the home, but unless one of the criteria above is met, extra features on their own, do not qualify. These include, for example;

- Hand rails in bathroom or toilet
- Stair lift or through lift
- Ramps
- Commode
- Hearing loop
- Walk-in shower or bath

### **How much reduction will I receive if I qualify?**

The reduction will be equal to you being charged one valuation band below that shown in the valuation List for your property. People who qualify and live in a property which is in band A will receive a 1/6 reduction.

### **When can I expect the reduction to start?**

The reduction will start from the date we receive your application. We may ask for photographic evidence in the first instance, and if necessary, an Inspector may need to visit your property to confirm the information that you have provided in your application form. We will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment for the visit.

### **When will the reduction end?**

The reduction can continue each year as long as you meet all the qualifying conditions. We will review the position periodically and ask you to confirm your circumstances. However, if you believe that the reduction should no longer apply at any time, you should contact us immediately. If you do not contact us and we subsequently find out that you are no longer entitled to it the reduction will end from the date you ceased to meet the qualifying conditions.

### **Supporting evidence**

We are not always qualified to say whether features in a room are essential or of major importance to a disabled person's wellbeing. It would be helpful to us if you could get someone qualified like a doctor, social worker or therapist to confirm if the feature, in their opinion, is essential or of major importance. This will allow us to decide on your entitlement quicker, although confirmation will not always mean that you will automatically be entitled to a reduction.

**The following are examples where we would not grant a reduction.**

- A couple, one of whom is disabled, are living in a two bedroomed property. They decide to sleep in separate rooms because of the disabled person's disability. Unless the bedroom has been specifically adapted to meet the needs of the disabled person, we would not allow a reduction because everyone needs somewhere to sleep.
- A person who lives in a purpose-built disabled property would not necessarily qualify for a reduction. A purpose-built disabled property may have been adapted to meet a disabled person's needs generally. However, they will not qualify for the reduction unless the property has been adapted to meet the specific needs of the individual living there.
- Hand rails have been added to the only bathroom to assist the disabled person in and out of the bath. We would not allow the reduction as there would need to be an extra bathroom, which is required for meeting the disabled person's needs.
- Stair lift or Through Lift. Installation of a lift does not meet the requirements.

**The following are examples where a room has qualified for the reduction**

- A specially built therapy or treatment room
- A room adapted for dialysis treatment
- A specially adapted bedroom

For further information call us on 020 8356 3154, opening times 9.00am to 5.00pm