



TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL TAX BILL – EXPLANATORY NOTES

Council Tax valuation bands

Council Tax is charged on most properties. Each property belongs in one of nine bands according to its value on 1 April 2003.

Valuation band	Range of value	Valuation band	Range of value
A	Up to and including £44,000	E	£123,001 – £162,000
B	£44,001 – £65,000	F	£162,001 – £223,000
C	£65,001 – £91,000	G	£223,001 – £324,000
D	£91,001 – £123,000	H	£324,001 – £424,000
		I	£424,001 and above

Your Council Tax bill shows the band for your property.

Granny flats

We do not charge Council Tax on granny flats. A granny flat is a self-contained part of a property which an elderly or disabled relative lives in.

Exempt properties

Council Tax is not charged on certain properties (known as exempt properties). Exempt properties include:

- student halls of residence and properties only lived in by students; and
- properties that were lived in by people now in prison, hospital or a nursing or residential care home.

The following properties are exempt for up to six months.

- Properties which are owned by a registered charity.
- Properties which have had structural alterations or repairs done on them.
- Properties which probate is to be granted on. If the previous occupier has died then we have to wait until probate is granted. Probate is the legal process by which a will is proved to be valid and the estate is sorted out.

If you think your property may be exempt you should contact the Customer Care Team.

People with disabilities

If you (or a member of your household) are disabled, and part or all of the property has been adapted for a wheelchair, an extra room (other than a bathroom, kitchen or toilet) or a second bathroom or kitchen for the disabled person, we may reduce your bill. We can only reduce your bill to the next band below yours. From 1 April 2000, this has also applied to properties in band A. Please contact the Customer Care Team for further information if you think you may qualify.

Discounts

You will get a 25% discount if only one person who is 18 or over lives in your property. Discounts may also apply to students, student nurses, people on youth training, people who are severely mentally impaired, 18- and 19-year-olds who have just left school and careworkers. If you think you may qualify for a discount, please contact the Customer Care Team.

Empty properties and second homes

Some empty properties will be exempt (see above). However, under Welsh Law, we have decided that second homes will not receive a discount. Your bill will show whether we believe your property is a second home. Please contact the Customer Care Team if you think our decision is wrong.

Council Tax Benefit

This benefit helps people on low incomes to pay their Council Tax bill. If you are on Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) you will normally not pay any Council Tax. You may also qualify for benefit if you work and your income is below a certain level. Please contact the Customer Care Team on 01495 766349 or 01495 766430 for further information on how to claim.

General appeals

Council Tax bands are set by the Valuation Office Agency. You can appeal if you think your property is in an incorrect band, but there are limitations on when you can appeal. For further information please contact the Valuation Office Agency at:-

Valuation Office Agency, 2nd Floor, Clarence House, Clarence Place, Newport NP19 7AA

Tel: 0845 6001748, Fax: 01633 205699, E-mail: southwalesgroup@voa.gov.uk or visit the Agency website at www.voa.gov.uk

You may also appeal if you think that you should not be paying Council Tax. For example, because you are not living in the property, or the owner of it, or because your property is exempt, or that the way we have worked out the bill is wrong. If you want to appeal please write to us so we can reconsider your case. If you are not happy with our decision you can appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. You must still pay your Council Tax if you are making an appeal. If we accept your appeal we will refund any Council Tax you have overpaid.

Our Customer Care Team will give you any help you need. If you need further information you can phone the team on 01495 766131 / 766129 / 766145 or write to the Council Tax Team, Civic Centre, Pontypool, NP4 6YB.

Discretionary powers

From 1 April 2004, the Council has discretionary powers to extend the provision of discounts in individual cases, or to locally determined classes of property.