



Kent County Council

Council Tax Policy for young people
aged 18-21 years who are Care Leavers

FEBRUARY 18, 2020

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
Care Leavers 18+ Service

Guidance for council tax payments for young people aged 18 – 21 years eligible for a Kent Care Leavers 18+ Service

From 1st April 2020, Kent County Council will fund the council tax payments for young people aged 18-21 years who have been in Kent Local Authority Care and are eligible for a Kent Care Leavers Service. This guidance sets out the procedure for council tax payments for all KCC Care Leavers from 18 years old up to their 21st birthday (aged 18 to 20 inclusive) including young people placed by Kent, who are living outside of the county.

Eligibility for the payment from KCC will end on the young person's 21st birthday. Where a young person's 21st birthday falls on any day in that calendar month KCC will pay for that month's council tax. This is the same for those individuals born in a leap year on the 29th February, KCC will pay for February.

All young people who are care leavers will be expected to claim any applicable council tax discount/benefit entitlement such as Council Tax Support, single person discount, student exemption etc. A large number of young people who are care leavers will already have their council tax funded through these entitlements, which should continue and will not be affected by the scheme.

Where a young person is living in a Staying Put or Supported Lodgings arrangement with a single carer, and the carer loses their 25% single person discount, any increased Council Tax Liability that is accrued by the Staying Put or Supported Lodgings carer will be covered by KCC through the scheme.

Where a young person already has their council, tax paid for within their rent then this will remain unchanged and KCC will not be liable for paying their council tax. These can be situations where a young person is living in a commissioned/private semi-independent placement (aged 18 and over) and the Council Tax Liability is covered in the contract value.

In situations where a care leaver is part of a couple and both are care leavers, the 100% payment will continue until the oldest care leaver reaches the age of 21 years. Thereafter a 50% approach will be taken, unless the youngest care leaver is a full-time student, in which case eligibility for the scheme will cease.

Care Leavers living in multiple occupancy with adults who are not care leavers. KCC will pay our care leavers share of council tax liability. E.g. 4 adults divide by 4 KCC would pay 25% towards the bill. (Monthly)

When a care leaver leaves his/her accommodation, he/she will be responsible for informing their PA, and if any refund has been received from the district council this

will be put towards their new property (if applicable) and any difference will be paid by KCC for their new accommodation.

If a care leaver fails to inform KCC of any refund they may have received or any change to their personal circumstances that could affect their council tax, then KCC will consider not paying their council tax in the future.

If a care leaver moves and receives a **refund**

- This must be put towards the council tax in their new accommodation which the care leaver can do directly or this can be given back to KCC to process. If the care leaver fails to put the money towards their new accommodation KCC will not pay for the council tax in that financial year towards the new property and will reconsider future payments.
- If there is an increase in the council tax in the new property KCC will pay the difference providing the young person has adhered to any refund process as stated above.
- If the care leaver has moved back in with parents or relatives, the care leaver must pay back any refund to KCC.

There will be situations where some care leavers accommodation is complex and payments for the council tax could be challenging for a variety of reasons. Each case would be dealt with on an individual basis to decide the best course of action in making the payments on behalf of the care leaver. This would possibly include making payments by the IProc system.

If a Care Leaver has already made a payment (e.g April / May) KCC will reimburse the care leaver and business staff will inform Corporate Parenting to issue a cheque made payable to the care leaver.

Administration process

Personal Advisor will take a photograph of the young person's council tax bill using their smart phone and forward to the dedicated email box: 18+service.council-tax@kent.gov.uk

All payments for council tax will be paid by Treasury by monthly direct debit payments. Business Support will complete the tracking of council tax spreadsheet recording full details of the tax paid including the care leavers liberi number, to ensure a robust audit tracking of all payments submitted to Treasury and performance monitoring.

Conditions

Care leavers must be made aware of the support available to them and ensure they claim any council tax discount applicable to them.

The scheme will cease when a young person reaches the age of 21 years.

No back dated payments or arrears will be funded by Kent County Council.

Council tax declaration documents must be signed by the young person and witnessed by the PA prior to any process taking place.

CARE LEAVERS COUNCIL TAX DECLARATION



This declaration form should be completed by the young person and their Personal Adviser and returned to Business Support to process the payment

Full name of applicant	
Contact number	
Date of birth	

Address (applicant must be liable or jointly liable for council tax at this address)	
Postcode	

Declaration

I declare that the information given is correct, to the best of my knowledge. I know I must tell you immediately about any changes in my situation which may affect my Council Tax payments.

I understand if I receive a refund as a result of an overpayment made by Kent County Council for my council tax, I will have to repay this back, as failure to comply with this could result in any future payments for my council tax not being paid for by Kent County Council.

I understand Kent County Council is paying for my council tax **only** and is not liable for any other individual that is not a care leaver and Kent County Council will not be held responsible for any default of non-payment by a non-care leaver.

Care Leavers Signature		Date	
Print Name			

Witness Signature		Date	
Print Name			

If after you have returned this form, there are any changes to your circumstances, please inform your Personal Adviser within 21-days.

To be completed by Care Leavers 18+ Service

I confirm the applicant is supported by the Care Leavers 18+ Service and is eligible for Council Tax payment support.

Signed		Date	
Print Name			

A copy of this form and the young person's Council Tax bill **must** be uploaded onto their Liberi record.

Guidance

From 01 April 2020, Kent County Council will implement the payment of Council Tax bills for young people aged 18-21-years old that are Care Leavers. Young people will be eligible from their 18th birthday up until their 21st birthday.

To qualify, young people who are Care Leavers must:

- Have a Council Tax liability in their own name or be jointly liable.
- Be aged 18 to 20 years (entitlement to payment will end on the 21st birthday)
- Have applied for and be in receipt of all other Council Tax discounts/exemptions, such as Single Person Discount, Council Tax benefit etc. where eligible.
- The reduction does not apply if the Council Tax liability/bill is in someone else's name, where they are the person who is solely responsible for the bill e.g. a friend, foster carer, relative or landlord.
- It will apply if the young person is solely liable or jointly liable with someone else for the Council Tax payment e.g. sharing a privately rented property with a friend, young person would be eligible for a payment of 50% of the Council Tax payment.
- The discount only applies for Council Tax payments due from 1st April 2020. If a young person owes Council Tax for an earlier period, Kent County Council is not liable for any arrears incurred by a young person who is a Care Leaver or anyone else where there was a joint responsibility to pay.
- Any arrears for Council Tax payments should be discussed with your Personal Advisor and the Local District Council to set up a payment plan.
- Young people are responsible for keeping their Personal Advisor informed of any change of circumstances relating to Council Tax liability or accommodation arrangements.

How we use your information

Your personal information will be processed by the Data Controller, Kent County Council.

We require this information from you to allow us to fulfil our statutory duty for council tax collection, as defined in the Local Government Finance Act (1992), and the legal basis for processing your data is to fulfil this legal obligation which is in the public interest.

We may also share this information with other public bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, and with other suppliers we commission to support us with our duties. Please refer to our website <https://www.kent.gov.uk/> for full details relating to the processing of your information.

This will include an explanation of your rights as a data subject, who we share information with and why, contact details (including for Data Protection Officers), and an explanation of our plans to retain your information.