

Your guide to Council Tax in Runnymede 2018/19

See inside for information
on budgets,
your bill,
exemptions
and discounts.



Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner for Surrey



This Council Tax guide explains how your 2018/19 bill is calculated and what the Council will be spending during the year. It also provides information about exemptions, discounts and the Council Tax Support scheme.

Runnymede Borough Council is responsible for collecting the Council Tax for itself and on behalf of Surrey County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (Surrey Police).

In 2018/19 the average charge for a Band D property is £1,807.45. The majority of the amount you pay goes to Surrey County Council (£1,411.29) which provides services such as education, children's and adult social care, libraries, fire and rescue, trading standards, public transport and roads maintenance. The County's charge includes a 3% increase to be used for adult social care. For more details please see www.surrey.gov.uk/your-council/council-tax-and-finance/council-tax

Surrey Police receives the next highest amount (£236.57) to help pay for the policing services across the county that keep it one of the safest places to live in the country.

Runnymede Borough Council's share of the Band D tax is £159.59. This goes towards paying for services such as the collection of household waste and recycling, street cleaning, day centres for the elderly, community transport, community meals and alarms, leisure services, parks, Safer Runnymede CCTV and planning and building control services.

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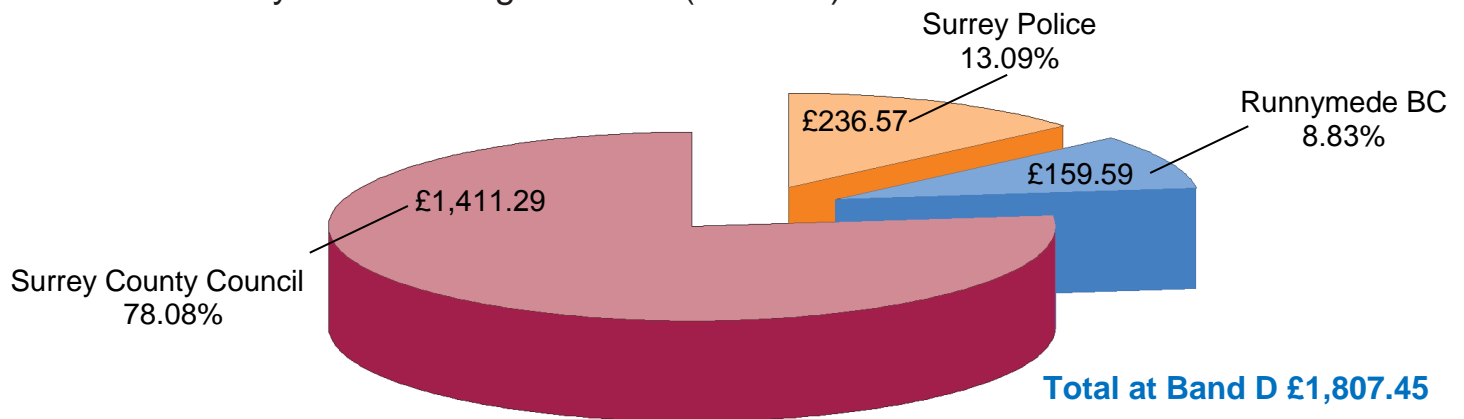
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Bangla / Italiano / P'ut' onghu`a / Polski / Español / Urdu - WITS 01483 751456. If you cannot read or speak English, and need help understanding this document, please contact WITS Linkline and leave a message in your own language.

If you cannot easily read this guide, please telephone **01932 838383** and ask to be provided with an appropriate alternative format.

Council Tax for Runnymede residents is £1,807.45 for a band D property. This pays for services provided by

- Surrey County Council (£1,411.29),
- Surrey Police (£236.57) and
- Runnymede Borough Council (£159.59).



The charge for each band is based on the open market value of your property at 1 April 1991. The Council Tax charge for each band in 2018/19 is:

Property Band	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Properties valued between	£0 to £40,000	£40,001 to £52,000	£52,001 to £68,000	£68,001 to £88,000	£88,001 to £120,000	£120,001 to £160,000	£160,001 to £320,000	Over £320,000
Runnymede Borough Council	106.40	124.12	141.86	159.59	195.06	230.52	265.99	319.18
Surrey County Council	940.86	1097.67	1254.48	1411.29	1724.91	2038.53	2352.15	2822.58
Surrey Police	157.71	184.00	210.28	236.57	289.14	341.71	394.28	473.14
Total	1204.97	1405.79	1606.62	1807.45	2209.11	2610.76	3012.42	3614.90

Annual percentage changes in Council Tax (shown to two decimal places only) between this year and last year are: Runnymede Borough Council 3.23% increase, Surrey County Council 5.99% increase and Surrey Police 5.34% increase. The overall percentage increase is just over 5.7%.

Information about each authority's budget can be found at: page 5 of this leaflet for Runnymede Borough Council; www.surreycc.gov.uk/your-council/council-tax-and-finance/council-tax for Surrey County Council; www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/council-tax for Surrey Police.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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 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" in relation to each financial year up to and including the financial year 2019/20.

Surrey County Council is an adult social care authority. It has taken up the additional precept option and has charged the maximum 3% for adult social care functions for 2018/19, i.e. an additional 3% over the total amount of Council Tax it charged in 2017/18. It is included in the overall increase in the Surrey County Council charge of 5.99%. The basic charge for other expenditure and that for adult social care are shown separately on your Council Tax bill down to one decimal point. In accordance with the Government's instructions, the amount shown for adult social care is cumulative meaning that it includes the charges for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Runnymede Borough Council's budget for 2017/18 and 2018/19

2017/2018 Budgets			2018/2019 Budgets			
Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Service	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000
2,628	716	1,912	Housing Services	3,341	1,152	2,189
22,191	22,235	(44)	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support	21,721	21,739	(18)
7,418	2,986	4,432	Community Services	7,903	2,800	5,103
6,567	3,139	3,428	Environmental and Sustainability	6,323	2,930	3,393
12,708	20,897	(8,189)	Corporate Management	15,000	29,842	(14,842)
2,706	1,185	1,521	Planning Services	3,133	1,510	1,623
276	185	91	Licensing & Regulatory Services	257	187	70
54,494	51,343	3,151	Total – General Fund services	57,678	60,160	(2,482)
		8,020	Treasury & Financing			12,696
		(1,871)	Asset Management Account			(2,260)
		(1,310)	Government Grants			(792)
		(702)	Use of Reserves			95
		7,288	Budget Requirement			7,257
The budget requirement is paid for by government grant and local taxpayers as follows:						
		289	General Grant from the Government			10
		1,847	Business Rates Retained			1,902
		0	Other Items			0
		5,152	Council Tax Payers			5,345
		7,288	Budget Requirement			7,257

The cost of council housing is met from rents and the budgets for this service are not shown in this statement. Council housing receives no subsidy from Council Tax. Further details of the budget are published on our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk

This guide provides information about your Council Tax and the discounts, disregards and Council Tax Support to which you may be entitled. It should not be regarded as an exhaustive guide. If you would like further information or clarification of any points please contact either the Customer Services or Benefits Service at the Council. Contact details are on your bill and on the back page of this booklet.

Paying your bill

Who has to pay the bill?

Every household will receive a Council Tax bill. The bill will normally be paid by a resident freeholder, leaseholder, tenant, licensee or any other resident, with this order being the order of responsibility for payment. If there is more than one person with the same level of responsibility, they are jointly responsible for the full amount of the tax. Same sex civil partners are jointly liable to pay Council Tax in the same way as married couples. Where a property is occupied by more than one household and residents pay rent separately, such as in hostels or bed sits, the landlord is responsible for paying the tax. Council Tax for unoccupied properties is the responsibility of the owner, i.e. a person who holds the freehold or has a leasehold interest of six months or more.

How can I pay my bill?

Direct Debit: you can use the instruction form enclosed with your bill to complete and return to the Council, or call **01932 838383** and it can be set up over the phone. You will need your Council Tax account number and your bank details. If you paid by Direct Debit last year we will continue to take payments unless you advise us otherwise. **There is no charge for this service.**

By phone or online: you can pay by credit or debit card using our 24-hour automated payment line by calling **01932 425030** or **425031** or by paying online at **www.runnymede.gov.uk/payment**. There is no charge for debit or credit card payments.

By post: whilst we would prefer you not to pay by cheque, if you have no alternative way of paying please make cheques payable to Runnymede Borough Council and post to: **Exchequer Services, Runnymede Borough Council, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AH**. Please write your Council Tax account number, shown on your bill, along with your name and address on the back of the cheque. The cheque needs to be crossed *A/C Payee Only*.

Via the payment machine – You can make payments at the Civic Centre by cash, cheque, credit card or debit card using our automated payment kiosk.

Using banking services: you can make payments by telephone or online banking services offered by your bank or building society or by BACS. Please ensure that you quote your account number as shown on your bill, along with our bank details as follows:

Bank name: Lloyds Bank

Account name: Runnymede Borough Council

Account number: 11208060

Sort code: 30-80-12

Post Offices and PayPoint outlets: You will be able to take your Council Tax bill into any Post Office or shop offering the PayPoint facility. Your bill is printed with a bar code unique to you. Post Offices will accept cash, cheques and debit cards; PayPoint outlets will only accept cash. At present, there is no fee to the payer for this service. All PayPoint sites in the country are listed on **www.paypoint.co.uk/locator**

When does Council Tax have to be paid?

Your instalment plan is shown on the front of your bill and states the amounts payable. A full year's Council Tax is payable over 10 monthly instalments if the bill is issued on or before 30 April. Payments are usually due from 1 April to 1 January and must be paid on or before the first of each month. You can pay by 12 monthly instalments if you apply in writing before 15 April. **The first instalment must still be paid in April.**

Half yearly payments: If you wish to pay twice a year, please pay **April to August** instalments on or before **1 April** and **September to January** instalments on or before **1 September**. You may also pay your Council Tax in full on or before **1 April**.

IMPORTANT: if you wish to pay your instalments on any day other than the first day of each month, you **MUST** pay a month in advance (the first payment should be paid in March) so that payment reaches the Council on or before the due date.

Late or non-payment

If your payment is late, you may receive a reminder shortly after the due date. Please note that no more than two reminder notices are issued in one year. If you do not bring your instalments up-to-date, or if you continue to make late payments in following months, we may withdraw the instalment facility and demand settlement of the year's Council Tax immediately.

Recovery action: in fairness to the majority of payers who do pay on time, we will take legal proceedings against those who do not pay on time. If we do take action, we will make an application for a Liability Order at a Magistrates Court, which will entitle the Council to:

- instruct an enforcement agent to recover the debt; or
- order an employer to make deductions from earnings; or
- apply for part of any income support, job seekers allowance or pension credits, to be paid directly to the council; or
- begin bankruptcy proceedings against the debtor or make a charge upon the debtor's home (if he/she owns it).

We may also apply for the debtor to be committed to prison for up to three months if the reason for non-payment is wilful refusal or due to culpable neglect.

View your Council Tax on-line

The Council's website offers you the facility to look up details of your Council Tax account. You can see at a glance what we are charging you, what you have paid and your instalment plan.

You can also obtain an account statement and check your balance. There is a link to assist you in making an on-line payment. Register on-line at **www.digital.runnymede.gov.uk** if you would like to use this service. You will find all the information you need to register on your Council Tax bill, including your unique pin code.

People with disabilities

If you, or someone who lives with you, need a room, or an extra bathroom or kitchen or extra space in your property to meet special needs arising from a disability, for example the use of a wheelchair, you may be entitled to a reduction in your Council Tax bill. The disabled person may be a child. The bill will be reduced to that of a property in the band immediately below the band your property is in, or by one-ninth if your home is in band A. The reduction ensures that disabled people do not pay more tax on account of space needed because of a disability. If you want further information, please contact us on **01932 838383**.

Exempt properties

Some properties are exempt from Council Tax if they fall into one or more of the following classes:

- A** exemption abolished from 1st April 2013;
- B** properties unoccupied and owned by a charity are exempt for up to 6 months, after which full Council Tax is payable;
- C** exemption abolished from 1st April 2013;
- D** properties left unoccupied by someone who has gone to prison or another place of detention;
- E** properties left unoccupied by someone who has moved to receive personal care in a hospital or home;
- F** unoccupied properties awaiting probate or letters of administration to be granted are exempt for up to 6 months after grant of probate;
- G** unoccupied properties where occupation is prohibited by law because of action taken by a public authority;

- H** unoccupied properties kept empty for future occupation by minister of religion;
- I** properties left unoccupied by a person who has gone to live elsewhere (not a hospital or care home) to receive care because of old age, disability, illness, drug or alcohol dependency;
- J** properties left unoccupied by a person who has moved to provide personal care to another person;
- K** property left unoccupied by a student who owns the property;
- L** unoccupied property that has been repossessed by the mortgagee;
- M** student halls of residence;
- N** properties occupied solely by full time students or by partners who are not British Citizens and who by law are not permitted to work or claim benefits;
- O** armed forces' accommodation and married quarters (contribution to the cost of local authorities are received through a special arrangement);
- P** properties occupied by members and dependants of visiting forces;
- Q** property left unoccupied by a person who is bankrupt and is the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee;
- R** a caravan pitch or mooring not occupied by a caravan or boat;
- S** properties lived in only by people under the age of 18;
- T** unoccupied annexe forming part of another property which cannot be let separately, without a breach of planning restrictions;
- U** properties occupied solely by those who are severely mentally impaired;
- V** properties occupied by diplomats as their main UK residence;
- W** separate annexes (often called 'granny flats') lived in by a person who is related to the people living in the rest of the property and is 65 or over, or severely mentally impaired or permanently disabled.

Discounts, disregards and premiums

DISCOUNTS

The full Council Tax bill assumes that there are two or more adults (that is, people aged 18 or over) living in a property.

Single occupancy discount: if only one adult lives in a property (as their main home) the Council Tax bill will be reduced by 25%. Backdating will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and proof will be required.

Unoccupied unfurnished accommodation: for a property that is habitable but is unoccupied and unfurnished (empty), and upon application to the Council, a 100% discount can be granted for the maximum of three months from the date the property became empty. Applicants will be required to prove that their properties were empty from that date. After the discount period, full Council Tax will be payable. There is no discount for uninhabitable properties.

Unoccupied furnished accommodation: for properties that are unoccupied and furnished, full Council Tax will be payable. This also applies to properties that remain furnished but unoccupied between tenancies (including student-let accommodation).

Second home discount: if a property is occupied as a second home the current discount is 0%. This means that the bill will have no reduction applied.

Houseboats and caravans: for second homes that consist of a pitch occupied by a caravan, or a mooring occupied by a boat, there will be a 50% discount.

PEOPLE DISREGARDED FOR DISCOUNT PURPOSES

People in the following groups do not count towards the number of adults resident in a property. This means that if all but one of the residents in a property falls into one of

the groups below, the Council Tax will be reduced by 25%:

- full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees;
- people staying in certain hostels or shelters;
- patients permanently resident in hospital;
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at or have left school and will be taking up a university type course;
- people who are being looked after in care homes;
- care workers working for low pay, usually for charities;
- people who are severely mentally impaired;
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or a child under 18 years;
- members of visiting forces and certain international institutions;
- people in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of Council Tax or a fine);
- members of religious communities (monks and nuns); or
- diplomats.

PROPERTIES WITH ANNEXES

You can have a 50% discount on an annexe to your property which is lived in by a family member. In order to qualify for the discount, the annexe must be either used by the resident(s) of the main property or occupied by a family member. If a non-family member occupies the annexe the discount will not apply. Some annexes are already exempt from Council Tax. These will not be affected by this discount and will continue to be exempt. If you think you may qualify for the discount please contact Customer Services Office on **01932 838383**.

If your bill indicates that a discount or exemption has been allowed, you must inform Customer Services of any changes of circumstances that may affect your entitlement. If you fail to do so you may have to pay a penalty.

All bills issued with a discount or exemption will assume the circumstances will remain the same throughout the whole financial year. If the discount or exemption is only applicable for a period of time (e.g. unfurnished/unoccupied discount is only applicable for up to three months) a revised bill will be issued once the discount or exemption ceases.

For further information on any of the above discounts or exemptions, and an application form, visit our website at **www.runnymede.gov.uk**.

You can also contact Customer Services directly on **01932 838383**.

LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUM

To encourage owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use, a 50% Council Tax premium will be charged on properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than two years. The person liable for the Council Tax for the empty property will then have to pay 150% of the Council Tax charge.

Appeals

Property bandings are based on property values as at 1 April 1991. Where a property has been built or converted after this date, its value for banding purposes has been determined by reference to comparable properties in the area. The price paid for a property listed after 1 April 1991 may not necessarily reflect its value at that date. This applies throughout the Valuation List. Accordingly, recent purchase prices may not be the best evidence if you feel that the banding for your property is incorrect.

If you want to appeal against the band your property has been placed in, you should write to the **Listing Officer, Council Tax South, Valuation Office Agency, Second Floor, 1 Francis Grove, Wimbledon, London SW19 4DT**.

Telephone number **03000 501501**. Email: **ctsouth@voa.gsi.gov.uk**

The grounds for appeals regarding bandings are restricted to the following cases:

- where you believe that the banding should be changed because there has been a material increase or material reduction in the dwelling's value;
- where you start or stop using part of your dwelling to carry out a business, or the balance between domestic and business use changes;
- where the Listing Officer has altered a list without a proposal having been made by a taxpayer; or
- where you become the taxpayer in respect of a dwelling for the first time. (Your appeal must be made within six months, but if the same appeal has already been considered and determined by a Valuation Tribunal it cannot be made again.)

A material increase in value may result from building, engineering or other work carried out on the property. In these cases revaluation does not take place until after a sale, so the person appealing would usually be the new owner or resident.

A material decrease in value may result from the demolition of any part of the property, any change in the physical state of the local area, or an adaptation to make the property suitable for use by someone with a physical disability. In these cases revaluation should take place as soon as possible.

Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of tax in the meantime.

If your appeal is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid tax.

You can also appeal if:

- you consider that you are not liable to pay Council Tax, for example, because you are not the resident or owner;
- you believe your property to be exempt and no exemption has been granted;
- you have claimed a discount and this has not been granted;
- you disagree with your Council Tax Support assessment or;
- the Council has made a mistake in calculating your bill.

If you wish to make an appeal on any of the above grounds, you must write to the Council Tax Section first and give details of your appeal. If the matter cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, or you do not get a reply within two months, you may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.

For further information on appeals and bandings, visit the Valuation Office website at www.voa.gov.uk

HOW WE USE YOUR PERSONAL DATA

Personal information gathered by Runnymede Borough Council for processing Council Tax, Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support for local residents, is held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only be used in compliance with its principles.

The Council is required to collect and use certain types of information to meet legal obligations and to prevent and detect crime. The information may be shared with other officers of the Council and with Government Departments and agencies. Information is also gathered to allow the Council to conduct surveys and research, to provide you with information about activities and events involving the Council and to give you information from which you can benefit. The Council respects your privacy rights and is committed to ensuring that your personal information is protected. Personal information collected for Council Tax, Housing Benefit and or Council Tax Support uses will NOT be disclosed to third parties for marketing purposes. However, you should note that your property address and Council Tax band value are publicly available information.

Council Tax Support

Council Tax Support (CTS) is a means-tested Council Tax discount. It is available for anyone on low income with entitlement based on household income, savings/capital and the number of people living in the property. For people of qualifying pension

age it is a national scheme set by the Government. For people of working age the scheme has been locally set by the Council. No matter what your age, if you and/or your partner have combined savings or capital assets worth more than £16,000 (not including your home) you cannot claim CTS.

If you are of qualifying pension age you may be entitled to a discount of up to 100% of your Council Tax, no matter what the size of your property. For working age people the basic Runnymede CTS scheme is based on the national Council Tax Reduction default scheme set by the Government, but with some notable differences:

- The maximum CTS entitlement is 80% of the annual Council Tax charged, i.e. you will be expected to pay at least 20%.
- CTS for Band E, F, G and H properties is restricted to the average Band D Council Tax charge, including any other appropriate discounts, i.e. no more than 80% of Band D will be paid after other discounts have also been applied at that level.
- The minimum entitlement payable is £5.00 per week, i.e. anything less will not be paid.
- Second Adult Rebate has been abolished for most working age people.
- The maximum period for backdating new claims is 3 months.
- Earnings disregards are higher by £5.00 per week.
- Some disabled people and families with a disabled dependant are treated the same as pensioners.
- War widow(er) and war disablement pensions are fully disregarded.

Your Council Tax bill will show the amount you have to pay after Council Tax Support and other discounts have been applied.

If you would like to claim CTS, you will need to complete an application form. You can download the form from our website at www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefits or you can contact us on **01932 425388** or email benefits@runnymede.gov.uk and we will send you one.

Alternatively you can get a form at the Civic Centre. You will need to send it back to us as soon as possible as your entitlement will not usually start until the Monday after we receive the completed form.

Appeals

You may appeal against the Council's decision about your entitlement to CTS but you may not appeal against the conditions of the local scheme. If you wish to appeal you should write to the Benefits office stating clearly why you believe your claim has been assessed incorrectly. If your appeal is refused you may then appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. For more information please see page 9 – APPEALS.

Had a change in your circumstances?

If you receive CTS (and/or Housing Benefit) you must tell us immediately of any change that could affect your entitlements. Any delay could result in an overpayment, which will be recovered, or an underpayment, which might not be paid if we are not informed on time.

Fraud

Our aim is to deliver CTS (and Housing Benefit) only to those people who are entitled and to detect false claims made by those who are not. We prosecute the worst offenders. If you suspect that someone is making a false claim, please call our free 24-hour Benefit Fraud Hotline on **08000 130814**, email fraud@runnymede.gov.uk, or use the 'REPORT A SUSPECTED FRAUD' form on our website, www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefits. Anything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence and you are under no obligation to leave your contact details.

You can contact us by visiting the Runnymede Civic Centre in person, by writing, by telephone, by fax or by email. You can also find more information about our services by visiting the Council's website at www.runnymede.gov.uk

For general enquiries

Call our switchboard on
01932 838383

Email: general.enquiries@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about your Council Tax

Call **01932 838383** (Options 2,1)
Email: counciltax@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about Council Tax Support and/ or Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance

Call **01932 838383** (Options 2,3)
Email: benefits@runnymede.gov.uk

For enquiries about our finances

Call **01932 425336**
Email: finance@runnymede.gov.uk

Civic Centre opening hours

Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.00pm
and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Runnymede Borough Council, Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2AH

Surrey County Council

Call **03456 009 009** (8am-6pm weekdays)
Email: contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk

Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner

Call **01483 630 200**
www.surrey-pcc.gov.uk

