

Council Tax Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme

The government has announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills, worth £9.1 billion in 2022-23. This includes:

- A £200 discount on their energy bill this autumn for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain. This will be paid back automatically over the next 5 years.
- A £150 non-repayable rebate for eligible households in England in council tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who are in need but are not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate, known as the Discretionary Fund.

The Discretionary Fund

The government recognises that billing authorities may also wish to provide support to other energy bill payers who are not eligible under the terms of the core scheme. It will therefore provide every billing authority with a share of a £144 million Discretionary Fund.

Merton's share is £565,350.

Councils can determine locally how best to make use of this funding to provide payments to other households who are energy bill payers but not covered by the Council Tax Rebate. This could include households living in property valued in bands E to H that are on income related benefits or those where the energy bills payers are not liable for council tax. Occupants of class M (student halls) are unlikely to be eligible for discretionary support, unless they are exposed to rising energy prices in a similar way to other households. Discretionary support should not be offered to occupants of property in exemption class O, where the Ministry of Defence will provide cost of living support.

Once determined and approved, councils should publish their agreed guidelines setting out the eligibility criteria for their Discretionary Fund.

Support from the Discretionary Fund does not have to be provided in relation to the position on 1 April 2022, but councils should take all reasonable steps to ensure they are not providing additional support to an individual from a household that has already received a payment under the Council Tax Rebate. Support from the Discretionary Fund should consist of no more than £150 per household. Councils should undertake pre-payment checks before providing support from the Discretionary Fund.

Allocations from the discretionary fund should be spent by 30 November 2022. Any remaining funding will be required to be repaid to government.

Merton's Scheme

Group	Estimated number	Amount Paid	Total
Council Tax Support households in bands E to H	950	150	£142,500
New CTS households from 1 April to 30 June all bands that haven't received payment	350	150	£52,500
Household where pensioner(s) liable in band E to H	Unknown	*	Balance of fund

*Will be dependent on the number of applicants, but maximum of £150 and could be much lower

Timeframes

Council tax support households will commence in mid-May 2022

New council tax support households from 1 April 22 to 30 June 22 will commence mid-July

Households where pensioners are liable will commence early June with a three month application window

(The timeframes may vary depending on volume of work support available)

Applications

An application will be required. This will be via a simple online web form. The council will provide residents with assistance to make applications, if they cannot access the web form from their mobile or on-line.

Pre Payment Validation

The government require councils to undertake pre-payment checks before providing support from the discretionary fund.

Payments

The standard method of payment will be via a bank transfer to the applicants bank account. The council will consider making payments to family or friends bank accounts where permission has been granted.

Applicants can choose to have the payment credited to their council tax account.

In exceptional circumstances payments via the Post Office will be considered

Decisions

The scheme will be administered by the Revenues and Benefits section on behalf of the Director of Corporate Services

Decisions on applications will be made by the Head of Revenues and Benefits

Appeals

Merton is not required to provide a right of appeal against any decision against the discretionary scheme.

However, Merton will work with applicants to make sure they provide the necessary evidence to support a successful application.

The Council operates a complaints process for dissatisfied service users.