

# TWENTY YEARS OF COUNCIL TAX

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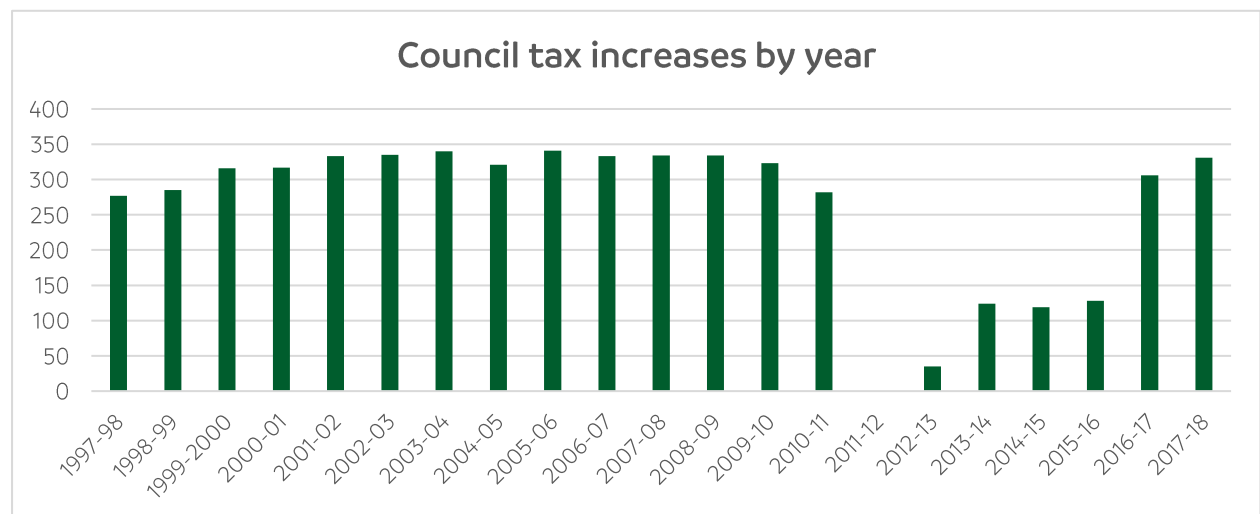


## 20 years of council tax

### Introduction

Seven years on from the introduction of the council tax freeze scheme in 2010 – a coalition government policy of providing grants to local authorities in England to allow them to freeze Council tax – it appears that the days of inflation busting increases are back.

Although in 2010-11 there were no council tax increases, and the numbers remained well below their pre-freeze scheme levels in the following years, 306 councils increased council tax in 2016-17, and this year this number has jumped to 331 – well within the usual rate of increases:



This note looks at council tax bills in England in the past 20 years, since 1997-18. Figures are for Band D council tax.

### Key findings

- Seven years on from the council tax freeze scheme, the number of annual increases in council tax is back up to pre-freeze levels, jumping from 0 in 2011-12 to 124 in 2013-14 to 331 in 2017-18. The average number between 1997-98 to 2010-11 was 319.
- In 1997-98, the average band D council tax bill in England was £688. Today the figure is £1,591, **a real terms increase of 57 per cent.**
- Residents under **Weymouth & Portland Borough Council** pay the highest band D council tax in England - £1,891.
- Residents under **Westminster City Council** pay the lowest band D council tax in England - £688.
- Per dwelling, residents in **Chiltern District Council** pay on average the most council tax - £1,905.95.
- Per dwelling, residents in **Wandsworth Borough Council** pay on average the least council tax - £644.50.

- Between 1997-98 and 2017-18, there were **5,514 individual council tax increases**, compared to 1,379 freezes and 366 cuts.
- In real terms, **seven councils have lower council tax today than they did in 1997-98** (excluding precepts):<sup>1</sup>
  - Watford Borough Council (2.6 per cent lower)
  - Hyndburn Borough Council (3.5 per cent lower)
  - Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (5.2 per cent lower)
  - London Borough of Islington (6.6 per cent lower)
  - Eastleigh Borough Council (7.3 per cent lower)
  - London Borough of Wandsworth (11.5 per cent lower)
  - London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (28.4 per cent lower)
- Including precepts, in real terms, only residents of **Hammersmith & Fulham** pay less council tax today than they did in 1997-98 (13.5 lower).
- 185 out of 354 councils, or 53 per cent, have **never cut their council tax rates in the last 20 years**.
- **Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council** has increased council tax by more than any local authority since 1997-98 - £985.78.
- **Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council** has increased council tax the least of any local authority since 1997-98 - £31.67.

[To see full data CLICK HERE](#)

### Findings by area (excluding precepts):

#### District Councils

- Ipswich has the highest band D council tax - £341.46
- Breckland has the lowest band D council tax - £80.46
- Weymouth & Portland has increased council tax the most since 1997-98 - £209.04
- Basingstoke & Deane has increased council tax the least since 1997-98 - £31.67

#### Outer London Boroughs

- Kingston upon Thames has the highest band D council tax - £1,477.46
- Newham has the lowest band D council tax - £964.54
- Kingston upon Thames has increased council tax the most since 1997-98 - £918.41

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<sup>1</sup> Precepts are additional charges added to a council tax bill to pay for a service which is not directly run by the council, such as the police and fire departments. Local authorities have no control over the level of precept charged by the body delivering the service, which means they are not fully accountable for a figure inclusive of precepts.

- Newham has increased council tax the least since 1997-98 - £398.30

### Inner London Boroughs

- Lewisham has the highest band D council tax - £1,157.68
- Westminster has the lowest band D council tax - £406.90
- Lewisham has increased council tax the most since 1997-98 - £600.71
- Hammersmith & Fulham has increased council tax the least since 1997-98 - £38.55

### Metropolitan Districts

- Gateshead has the highest band D council tax - £1,606.41
- Trafford has the lowest band D council tax - £1,183.58
- Wallsall has increased council tax the most since 1997-98 - £985.78
- Manchester has increased council tax the least since 1997-98 - £462.57

### Unitary Authorities

- City of Nottingham has the highest band D council tax - £1,593.03
- Windsor & Maidenhead has the lowest band D council tax - £961.46
- Brighton & Hove has increased council tax the most since 1997-98 - £914.39
- North Lincolnshire has increased council tax the least since 1997-98 - £493.93

### County Councils

- Nottinghamshire has the highest band D council tax - £1,351.87
- Somerset has the lowest band D council tax - £1,124.79
- Oxfordshire has increased council tax the most since 1997-98 - £858.59
- Somerset has increased council tax the least since 1997-98 - £618.75

**Table 1, highest Council tax including precepts, 2017-18**

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-2018 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Weymouth & Portland	706.61	<b>1,890.83</b>	1,184.22	81.51
East Dorset	716.36	<b>1,860.79</b>	1,144.43	76.19
Purbeck	692.18	<b>1,852.22</b>	1,160.04	81.51
City of Nottingham	808.72	<b>1,851.74</b>	1,043.02	55.31
Newark & Sherwood	807.99	<b>1,849.34</b>	1,041.35	55.25
Rutland	793.31	<b>1,842.05</b>	1,048.74	57.50
Lewes	686.73	<b>1,841.90</b>	1,155.17	81.93
Hartlepool	885.80	<b>1,835.05</b>	949.25	40.52

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-2018 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Wealden	703.60	<b>1,833.59</b>	1,129.99	76.76
West Dorset	709.42	<b>1,822.10</b>	1,112.68	74.22
North Dorset	696.72	<b>1,819.89</b>	1,123.17	77.18
Oxford	706.10	<b>1,810.87</b>	1,104.77	73.96
West Devon	639.77	<b>1,808.61</b>	1,168.84	91.75
Hastings	703.81	<b>1,807.00</b>	1,103.19	74.15
Bassetlaw	759.53	<b>1,804.77</b>	1,045.24	61.17
Rushcliffe	714.14	<b>1,803.77</b>	1,089.63	71.32
Ashfield	762.44	<b>1,799.89</b>	1,037.45	60.12
Bristol	914.91	<b>1,799.75</b>	884.84	33.43
Mansfield	757.74	<b>1,798.50</b>	1,040.76	60.99
Durham	n/a	<b>1,797.32</b>	n/a	n/a
Broxtowe	752.45	<b>1,796.57</b>	1,044.12	61.95
Central Bedfordshire	n/a	<b>1,795.33</b>	n/a	n/a
Eastbourne	685.20	<b>1,789.59</b>	1,104.39	77.16
Christchurch	691.94	<b>1,788.39</b>	1,096.45	75.31
Rother	672.46	<b>1,787.38</b>	1,114.92	80.29

**Table 2, lowest council tax including precepts, 2017-18**

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-2018 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Westminster	304.12	<b>688.14</b>	384.02	53.48
Wandsworth	422.61	<b>700.04</b>	277.43	12.36
City of London	475.00	<b>931.20</b>	456.2	32.97
Hammersmith & Fulham	790.00	<b>1,007.83</b>	217.83	-13.47
Kensington & Chelsea	526.02	<b>1,077.94</b>	551.92	39.00
Windsor & Maidenhead	627.74	<b>1,213.85</b>	586.11	31.16
Newham	648.00	<b>1,244.56</b>	596.56	30.27
Tower Hamlets	645.91	<b>1,246.82</b>	600.91	30.93
Southwark	747.71	<b>1,256.82</b>	509.11	14.01
Lambeth	655.00	<b>1,310.34</b>	655.34	35.69
Hackney	796.62	<b>1,328.99</b>	532.37	13.16
Isles of Scilly	452.71	<b>1,346.18</b>	893.47	101.70
Islington	879.00	<b>1,351.08</b>	472.08	4.26
Greenwich	820.92	<b>1,351.10</b>	530.18	11.64
Ealing	585.00	<b>1,361.15</b>	776.15	57.82
Dudley	696.76	<b>1,390.61</b>	693.85	35.38
Hillingdon	627.41	<b>1,392.95</b>	765.54	50.59
Bromley	580.50	<b>1,394.04</b>	813.54	62.89
Hounslow	691.01	<b>1,402.87</b>	711.86	37.71
Trafford	620.37	<b>1,406.95</b>	786.58	53.83
Barking & Dagenham	635.00	<b>1,411.85</b>	776.85	50.81
Camden	800.07	<b>1,417.75</b>	617.68	20.20

Merton	697.50	<b>1,419.73</b>	722.23	38.06
Brent	553.70	<b>1,425.18</b>	871.48	74.59

### Tables 3-18, highest and lowest Band D council tax by region (including precepts)

#### Highest council tax in East of England, 2017-18

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-18 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Central Bedfordshire	n/a	<b>1,795.33</b>	n/a	n/a
Fenland	614.24	<b>1,743.76</b>	1,129.52	92.56
Norwich	663.75	<b>1,714.12</b>	1,050.37	75.17
Bedford	761.79	<b>1,704.11</b>	942.32	51.73
Ipswich	718.92	<b>1,701.81</b>	982.89	60.56

#### Lowest council tax in East of England, 2017-18

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-18 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Thurrock	641.88	<b>1,452.69</b>	810.81	53.51
Peterborough	610.50	<b>1,496.04</b>	885.54	66.22
Southend-on-Sea	617.44	<b>1,499.06</b>	881.62	64.68
Broxbourne	591.26	<b>1,521.07</b>	929.81	74.50
Suffolk Coastal	642.37	<b>1,578.56</b>	936.19	66.68

#### Highest council tax in East Midlands, 2017-18

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-18 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
City of Nottingham	808.72	<b>1,851.74</b>	1,043.02	55.31
Newark & Sherwood	807.99	<b>1,849.34</b>	1,041.35	55.25
Rutland	793.31	<b>1,842.05</b>	1,048.74	57.50
Bassetlaw	759.53	<b>1,804.77</b>	1,045.24	61.17
Rushcliffe	714.14	<b>1,803.77</b>	1,089.63	71.32

#### Lowest council tax in East Midlands, 2017-18

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-18 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Wellingborough	584.82	<b>1,537.73</b>	952.91	78.35
Derby City	671.76	<b>1,551.35</b>	879.59	56.64
South Kesteven	641.97	<b>1,561.70</b>	919.73	65.01
East Lindsey	647.58	<b>1,563.11</b>	915.53	63.72
Corby	661.47	<b>1,570.42</b>	908.95	61.04

**Highest council tax in London, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Kingston upon Thames	640.81	<b>1,757.48</b>	1,116.67	86.03
Richmond upon Thames	745.00	<b>1,638.54</b>	893.54	49.18
Harrow	668.70	<b>1,627.68</b>	958.98	65.10
Havering	654.00	<b>1,597.73</b>	943.73	65.71
Croydon	624.70	<b>1,558.93</b>	934.23	69.27

**Lowest council tax in London, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Westminster	304.12	<b>688.14</b>	384.02	53.48
Wandsworth	422.61	<b>700.04</b>	277.43	12.36
City of London	475.00	<b>931.20</b>	456.2	32.97
Hammersmith & Fulham	790.00	<b>1,007.83</b>	217.83	-13.47
Kensington & Chelsea	526.02	<b>1,077.94</b>	551.92	39.00

**Highest council tax in the North East, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Hartlepool	885.80	<b>1,835.05</b>	949.25	40.52
Durham	-	<b>1,797.32</b>	n/a	n/a
Gateshead	862.52	<b>1,782.55</b>	920.03	40.18
Middlesbrough	712.02	<b>1,779.94</b>	1,067.92	69.56
Redcar & Cleveland	942.21	<b>1,761.43</b>	819.22	26.80

**Lowest council tax in the North East, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Sunderland	704.43	<b>1,471.50</b>	767.07	41.69
South Tyneside	763.20	<b>1,612.42</b>	849.22	43.30
North Tyneside	809.00	<b>1,626.12</b>	817.12	36.34
Darlington	597.57	<b>1,651.07</b>	1,053.5	87.41
Newcastle upon Tyne	830.50	<b>1,683.40</b>	852.9	37.49



**Highest council tax in the North West, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Pendle	803.25	<b>1,766.20</b>	962.95	49.14
Preston	783.89	<b>1,754.56</b>	970.67	51.82
Liverpool	1,110.66	<b>1,751.92</b>	641.26	6.99
Copeland	752.65	<b>1,745.63</b>	992.98	57.32
Stockport	839.18	<b>1,744.02</b>	904.84	40.97

**Lowest council tax in the North West, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Trafford	620.37	<b>1,406.95</b>	786.58	53.83
Wigan	748.06	<b>1,475.52</b>	727.46	33.79
Manchester	897.98	<b>1,502.12</b>	604.14	13.46
Halton	686.18	<b>1,552.60</b>	866.42	53.48
Tameside	814.50	<b>1,568.56</b>	754.06	30.63

**Highest council tax in the South East, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Lewes	686.73	<b>1,841.90</b>	1,155.17	81.93
Wealden	703.60	<b>1,833.59</b>	1,129.99	76.76
Oxford	706.10	<b>1,810.87</b>	1,104.77	73.96
Hastings	703.81	<b>1,807.00</b>	1,103.19	74.15
Eastbourne	685.20	<b>1,789.59</b>	1,104.39	77.16

**Lowest council tax in the South East, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Windsor & Maidenhead	627.74	<b>1,213.85</b>	586.11	31.16
Basingstoke & Deane	644.14	<b>1,493.59</b>	849.45	57.28
Bracknell Forest	583.58	<b>1,497.99</b>	914.41	74.11
Portsmouth	603.09	<b>1,508.42</b>	905.33	69.65
Slough	594.21	<b>1,512.08</b>	917.87	72.60

**Highest council tax in the South West, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Weymouth & Portland	706.61	<b>1,890.83</b>	1,184.22	81.51
East Dorset	716.36	<b>1,860.79</b>	1,144.43	76.19
Purbeck	692.18	<b>1,852.22</b>	1,160.04	81.51
West Dorset	709.42	<b>1,822.10</b>	1,112.68	74.22
North Dorset	696.72	<b>1,819.89</b>	1,123.17	77.18

**Lowest council tax in the South West, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Isles of Scilly	452.71	<b>1,346.18</b>	893.47	101.70
Taunton Deane	633.30	<b>1,556.55</b>	923.25	66.71
Tewkesbury	571.89	<b>1,558.71</b>	986.82	84.87
Bath & North East Somerset	707.92	<b>1,572.98</b>	865.06	50.72
North Somerset	624.85	<b>1,573.05</b>	948.2	70.76

**Highest council tax in the West Midlands, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
North Warwickshire	756.95	<b>1,744.95</b>	988.00	56.36
Walsall	662.17	<b>1,744.04</b>	1,081.87	78.65
Nuneaton & Bedworth	745.69	<b>1,711.15</b>	965.46	55.65
Herefordshire	-	<b>1,702.24</b>	n/a	n/a
Rugby	721.26	<b>1,690.37</b>	969.11	58.97

**Lowest council tax in the West Midlands, 2017-18**

<b>Council</b>	<b>1997-98 (£)</b>	<b>2017-18 (£)</b>	<b>Increase (£)</b>	<b>Real terms increase (%)</b>
Dudley	696.76	<b>1,390.61</b>	693.85	35.38
Birmingham	793.62	<b>1,446.15</b>	652.53	23.60
Sandwell	745.79	<b>1,457.33</b>	711.54	32.54
Solihull	660.96	<b>1,459.37</b>	798.41	49.76
Stoke-on-Trent	644.64	<b>1,471.68</b>	827.04	54.85

### Highest council tax in Yorkshire and the Humber, 2017-18

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-18 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Harrogate	655.12	<b>1,721.38</b>	1,066.26	78.23
Scarborough	615.69	<b>1,721.38</b>	1,105.69	89.64
Richmondshire	628.36	<b>1,713.88</b>	1,085.52	85.01
Ryedale	659.30	<b>1,708.09</b>	1,048.79	75.73
Selby	632.21	<b>1,703.84</b>	1,071.63	82.80

### Lowest council tax in Yorkshire and the Humber, 2017-18

Council	1997-98 (£)	2017-18 (£)	Increase (£)	Real terms increase (%)
Bradford	714.46	<b>1,482.27</b>	767.81	40.72
Doncaster	654.88	<b>1,490.43</b>	835.55	54.37
Leeds	674.49	<b>1,496.33</b>	821.84	50.48
Wakefield	649.77	<b>1,512.63</b>	862.86	57.90
Kingston upon Hull	683.01	<b>1,535.65</b>	852.64	52.50

### Sources and methodology

1. All data was taken from the statistical data set "Live tables on Council Tax"<sup>2</sup>
2. To calculate real terms price changes, the CPI index for the second quarters of 1997 and 2017 was used.
3. Missing values in tables 1-18 are due the fact those local authorities were not yet in existence in 1997-98.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-council-tax>