

# Balancing the Council's Budget

All councils are experiencing significant financial pressures. Hartlepool Borough Council faced a net budget gap of £16.5m for 2025/26. This gap has arisen due to previous use of one-off balances, significant pressures in children's and adult social care, the increase in employers' national insurance and general pay and contract inflation.

Hartlepool will benefit from £10m of additional government funding next year, significantly addressing this budget position. Importantly, this includes new funding of £3.6m explicitly targeted at councils such as ours with high deprivation and a low tax base.

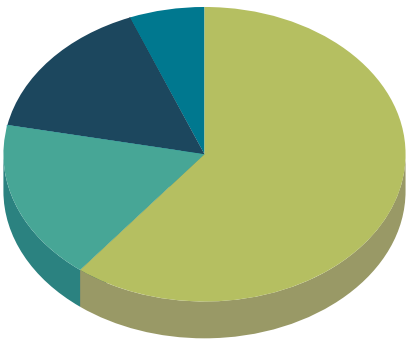
Unfortunately, difficult decisions are still required to

balance the budget for 2025/26. This includes £2.9m of proposed savings as well as the difficult decision to increase Council Tax by 4.99%. This increase will equate to £1.27 a week for a typical Band A property.

The Council continues to push for a fairer distribution of Government grant, and we look forward to working with the Government during the coming year to make that a reality. In the meantime, the Council has been able to invest in services, including a new mechanical street cleaner round to improve the cleanliness of our streets, and funding to protect car parking promotions and our annual firework display.

## How the gap has been addressed

- Government Grants - £10m
- Savings - £2.9m
- Council Tax - £2.6m
- Use of Reserves - £1m











## How your HBC Council Tax is spent



Join the 3,000 households signed up to view their Council Tax account and bills on-line: [www.Hartlepool.gov.uk/mycounciltaxaccount](http://www.Hartlepool.gov.uk/mycounciltaxaccount)

# A band-by-band guide to Council Tax 2025/26

	Hartlepool Borough Council Basic Amount without parishes	Hartlepool Borough Council Adult Social Care Precept	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner	Fire Authority	Total for areas without a Parish Council
 Band A	1,175.01	213.95	211.82	62.97	1,663.75
 Band B	1,370.84	249.61	247.12	73.47	1,941.04
 Band C	1,566.68	285.27	282.43	83.96	2,218.34
 Band D	1,762.51	320.93	317.73	94.46	2,495.63
 Band E	2,154.18	392.25	388.34	115.45	3,050.22
 Band F	2,545.85	463.56	458.94	136.44	3,604.79
 Band G	2,937.52	534.88	529.55	157.43	4,159.38
 Band H	3,525.02	641.86	635.46	188.92	4,991.26

*If you live in an area with a parish council, there will be an additional small charge for services it provides*

## Are you eligible for help paying your Council Tax?

### Discounts

Reductions are available if, for example, you're the only person in your household over the age of 18, a family member is disabled or severely mentally impaired or your partner is in a nursing home. Discounts depend on individual circumstances.

### Local Council Tax Support Scheme

You may be able to claim if you or your partner are on a low income, either in or out of work. The level of support depends on your income.

### Tackling Fraud

The Council is committed to tackling fraud. So far during 2024/25 we have reduced Single Person Discount numbers by over 700, generating £250,000 of on-going annual savings. This work will continue and expand during 2025/26. **Please ensure your records are kept up to date.** If you suspect fraud, you can report it here at [www.hartlepool.gov.uk/report-fraud](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/report-fraud)

## Paying your Council Tax

### Direct Debit



The easiest way to pay your council tax is by Direct Debit and we have made it as flexible as possible to help households. With Direct Debit you can choose what date you would like to pay monthly (on 1st, 10th, 20th or 28th), weekly or fortnightly Monday or Friday, and you can pay future bills over 12 months rather than 10.



### By Card

0300 1230703 (charged at local rate) or on-line [www.hartlepool.gov.uk/paycounciltax](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/paycounciltax)



### On-line Banking

You can make payments on-line through your banking app. You must quote your council tax number as detailed on your bill so we know it is your payment.

**The Council's Bank:** Lloyds Bank plc  
**Account Name:** Hartlepool Borough Council  
**Sort Code:** 30-00-00  
**Account Number:** 00321168

# Council Tax/Budget 2025/26 - your questions answered

## Hartlepool has the highest Council Tax in the country?

Whilst Council Tax in Hartlepool is relatively high, it is not the highest in the country or within the top 25. A typical Band A house pays on average just £8 more a year than the North-East average. We continue to lobby the Government for changes to the Council Tax system, and we support Hartlepool MP Jonathan Brash's campaign for reform.

## Hartlepool is always increasing Council Tax by the highest amount?

We have had the second lowest percentage rise in Council Tax across the 12 North-East councils since 2013/14. Also note that Hartlepool has a low Council Tax base – the amount that the Council can raise from increasing Council Tax. This is because most homes in our town are in band A.

## What is Council Tax spent on?

Our biggest spend is on social care, at just under 70p of every £1. This pays for delivering care for our most vulnerable adults and children. We are legally required to do this and it places additional pressure on other budgets which are not legally protected such as leisure, culture and neighbourhoods.

## Do you have to pay your Council Tax in one go?

There are many ways you can pay, including a one-off payment and weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments via Direct Debit.

## We are spending a further £7m on Children's Social Care next year – what is the Council doing to control these costs?

The demand for children's social care in Hartlepool is increasing – more children are now in our care and their needs are more complex. We have a number of plans to try to reduce costs, including opening new Council-run care homes and investing in early intervention to prevent children going into care.

We can all help with these costs by considering becoming foster carers. You can find out more about fostering on page 15.

We are also working with the Government to raise awareness and lobby for change. We welcome the additional funding from the Government for social care this year of just over £2m, as part of a wider settlement that provided £10m of extra funding for Hartlepool.

## What additional investments are being made in the budget?

The 2025/26 budget includes a number of new investments, including an additional street cleaner and crew. We are to begin locking park gates at nighttime for the first time in many years, and we are funding the first stage of implementing a landlord licensing scheme.

## Support Council Tax petition, residents urged

Residents are being urged to support a campaign to reform Council Tax by signing a public petition.

Copies of the petition have been placed in all Hartlepool Borough Council buildings open to the public.

The petition which must be hand-signed, will be subsequently handed into Parliament by Hartlepool MP Jonathan Brash who has set up a cross-party parliamentary group to push for change.

There was cross-party support for change at a recent meeting of Hartlepool Borough Council, with councillors voicing support for the petition.

The petition aims to highlight the disproportionate impact of Council Tax and ensure that the UK moves towards a system that is fair to everyone regardless of where they live.

Critics of Council Tax say it is a regressive form of taxation which takes more money from people on lower incomes.

It has created a situation where a homeowner in Hartlepool with a property valued at £90,000 pays more than someone who owns a £3m property in the London Borough of Wandsworth.

