

Consultation about Council Tax Charges for Long-Term Empty Properties

The law allows the Council to charge extra Council Tax for properties that have been empty for more than two years. At the moment the extra charge is a maximum of 50% of the normal Council Tax. The extra charge is called a “premium”.

From April 2019 the law is changing and the premiums that the Council can charge will be:

Property Unoccupied for	Financial Year		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
2 years to 5 years	100%	100%	100%
5 years to 10 years		200%	200%
10 years or more			300%

The Council currently charges the maximum premium for long-term empty properties to encourage the owners of empty properties to bring them back into use as homes. The Council is proposing to use these new powers to continue charging the maximum premiums, therefore, charging as included in the table above for most long-term empty properties.

It is proposed that no premium will be charged for six months when a new owner has acquired a property and is undertaking work to make the property suitable for someone to live in.

Properties for which the premium cannot be charged

By law some empty properties are exempt from any Council Tax and this is not changing. Examples include properties:

- Empty because the occupier has moved into a residential care home or elsewhere to receive care
- Empty because the occupier has died (no charge for up to six months following the granting of probate)
- Empty because the occupier is a full-time student who has moved elsewhere to study
- Which, by law, cannot be rented out separately from another property (e.g. an annexe)

Financial Hardship

The Council has a policy for awarding discounts in exceptional circumstances including cases where someone is experiencing severe financial hardship. This policy will also apply to Council Tax premium charges.

We are consulting on these proposals and invite you to share your views.

How to Have Your Say

Email us: consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk

Write to: Consulting Bedford, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP

Visit our website: www.bedford.gov.uk/ctpremium

Comments should be received by Friday 15 February 2019 and may be published.

What Happens Next

Responses to the consultation will be considered by the Council's Executive as at its meeting of 5 March 2019. Those providing a valid email address will be updated with the outcome, and the decision will be published on the Council's website.

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