



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISCRETIONARY FUNDING POLICY
ENERGY COUNCIL TAX REBATE 2022

I. Introduction

1.1 The Government has announced a package of support, known as the Energy Bills Rebate to support households with rising energy bills. This includes:

- a) £150 non-repayable rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A to D, known as the Council Tax Rebate scheme; and
- b) £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

1.2 This Policy is specifically intended to support those households who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the main Council Tax Rebate scheme.

2. Eligibility

2.1 The discretionary funding is to support other households who on 1 April 2022 are either council taxpayers or energy bill payers, but are not covered by the main Council Tax Rebate scheme. This will include:

- Council Tax bands E – H where a disabled band reduction is awarded
- Properties in bands E – H where:
 - I. Council Tax Support is paid
 - II. A Carer disregard is applied
 - III. A Severely Mentally Impaired (SMI) disregard is applied
- Anyone else who pays the energy bills in respect of a property which is their primary residence and are not the Council Tax Payer and are on a low income or income related benefits. (There must also be no payment made for the property under the main scheme).
- People who are in supported/emergency accommodation. The property must be their primary residence and they must be paying or contributing to energy bills.
- People that are in receipt of a low income or income related benefits who reside in houses of multiple occupation (HMO's) and other properties where the landlord, property owner or employer is the council taxpayer. The property must be the primary residence of the person being paid and they must be paying or contributing to energy bills. (There must be no payment made for the property under the main scheme).
- Properties where a review, proposal or appeal pre-dating the Government's announcement on 3 February 2022 is successful after 1 April 2022, the change is effective on or before 1 April 2022 and as a result, a property would have been eligible for the rebate.

3. Exclusions

3.1 The following will not be considered eligible for discretionary funding:

- People who took up residency after 1 April 2022.
- People who reside in properties that have already received a payment through the main scheme.
- Occupants of properties in exemption Class O (Armed Forces Accommodation) where the Ministry of Defence will provide the cost of living support.
- Occupants of properties in exemption Class M (Student Halls of Residents)
- Second Homes
- Unoccupied Properties
- Any council tax payer or energy bill payer that does not have their primary residence in the property

4. Application Process

4.1 The Council will be able to identify the majority of households that are eligible and contact them directly.

4.2 For those where the Council is unable to, applications along with supporting documentation will be accepted electronically through the Council's website.

4.3 An 'application window' will be given in which the Council will accept applications. The application windows will be communicated through various platforms.

4.4 For those households who do not have electronic access, paper applications will be available on request.

5. Funding Allocations

5.1 A payment of £150 will be made to eligible applications.

5.2 Where an eligible person already has a direct debit in place to pay Council Tax the Council will use these details to make a direct payment to the person's bank account.

5.3 Where no bank details are held by the Council, the person will have to provide details of their bank account, and those details must match those of the person's address.

5.4 The Council reserve the right to request further evidence, if appropriate, to confirm a person's eligibility before any payment is made.

6. Appeals

6.1 There is no right of appeal against any decision not to award a discretionary payment. A person will not be eligible if they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

7 Fraud

- 7.1 The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any person caught falsifying their records to gain a discretionary payment may face prosecution. The Council will seek recovery of any payment made as a result of fraud or payments made in error.