

## **Our Council Tax Support Scheme**

Until 2013 central government paid 100% of the council tax for the people that needed it the most. This was called Council Tax Benefit, and it ended on 31/3/13.

On 1/4/14 Northampton Borough Council started its own scheme to help those who needed it. This is called the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), but it is no longer all paid for by the Government. In 2014 the council received 10% less funding than the year before, and this amount continues to reduce.

### **So how can we save so much money?**

There are lots of different ways that councils are saving money through their CTR scheme – here are some of them:

- A band cap – people in high value properties can only get as much support as those in low value properties.
- Lower savings limit – if you have more than £16,000 in savings you cannot get CTRS. At some councils this is only £6,000.
- Minimum entitlement – anyone entitled to less than £5 a week actually gets no support.
- Higher Income taper – more of your disposable income must be used to pay your council tax, so you get less support.
- Minimum payment – everyone has to pay a proportion of the council tax themselves, and only get support on the amount remaining.

### **Sound complicated? It is!**

We have kept our scheme very simple, so it is easy to understand, and cheaper for us to manage. The biggest change we have made is to gradually increase the minimum payment, which is now 35%.

This means that everyone has to pay 35% of their council tax themselves. If you have low income and not too much in savings, we can help with the 65% that is left.

### **Do you really mean everyone?**

*Nearly* everyone. If you are a pensioner you can still have 100% of your council tax paid by CTRS, depending on your income.

### **Anything else?**

Just a couple more things – if you are getting a War Disablement pension, a War Widows pension, or a War Widowers pension, then this income will be ignored. We made this decision in 2013 and have stuck with it since then.

Finally, your support will carry on for 4 weeks after you get a job or increase your hours, to help you out until the first pay comes through.

### **What about next year?**

We haven't decided yet, so please let us know what you think. There are 3 options:

1. Continue with a minimum payment of 35%;
2. Decrease the minimum payment;
3. Increase the minimum payment.

**How do I get involved?**

Visit <https://www.northampton.gov.uk/ctr-year8-consultation> for more information or go straight to the survey at <https://www.survey-monkey.co.uk/r/ctrs-202021> .