

# Changes to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions for Empty Dwellings and Second Homes



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Introduction

Stockton-on Tees Borough Council is reviewing what it can do to bring some of the homes that are stood empty across the borough back in to use.

The Government is making a number changes in relation to Council Tax that take effect by 1 April 2013, so that councils can ensure that the Council Tax scheme supports local priorities. As part of this, councils will be able to change the level of council tax discounts and exemptions on certain empty properties and second homes.

Empty homes have a financial impact on the local area. Empty homes can be targeted for vandalism and can quickly become a dumping ground for rubbish. So not only does the empty home owner lose potential income from letting or selling the property, an empty home also affects the value of surrounding properties and could be a potential cost to the Council.

We think that there are some changes on empty property and second home Council Tax discounts that will support our aim to turn empty properties into homes that people value.

The changes would also generate additional income for the Council which could be used to support our work to reduce the problem of empty homes as well as helping to deliver a balanced Council budget.

We would like your views on these proposed changes - the closing date for this consultation is 6 January 2013.

Please return completed forms to:

PO Box 410  
Kingsway House  
West Precinct  
Billingham  
TS23 2YD



## What are we considering?

- Ending the Council Tax exemption for dwellings that are empty for less than six months. This means that people who own empty homes will have to pay full Council Tax from the time that they become empty.
- Ending the 50% discount for dwellings that are empty for more than 6 months.
- Ending the Council Tax exemption on empty dwellings that require or are undergoing major structural repair work to make them habitable. This means that people who own empty dwellings that are uninhabitable or undergoing structural repairs will have to pay full Council Tax
- Ending the 10% discount on second homes
- Introducing an additional 50% Council Tax charge for dwellings that have been empty for over two years. This means that owners of all dwellings that have been empty for over two years will have to pay 150% Council Tax for their dwelling.

Other discounts and exemptions are not affected by these proposals, *for example there will be no changes to other council tax discounts such as single person discount or exemptions for example when the owner of a property is in a residential care home these discounts and exemptions will remain the same.*

## When would this happen?

The changes would take effect from 1 April 2013

## Currently, owners of empty homes:

- Can be exempt from paying Council Tax for six months after the property becomes empty and unfurnished
- Receive a 50% discount on Council Tax charges for properties that are empty and unfurnished for over six months
- Are not required to pay Council Tax charges on properties that are empty and require or are undergoing major structural repair work to make them habitable, for a period of up to 12 months (i.e. 'uninhabitable properties').

## Currently, owners of second homes:

- Receive a 10% discount on Council Tax charges for those homes.

The following questions ask for your views on the Council's proposals for changes to the Council Tax charges applied to empty and second homes.

## Empty Homes

1. To what extent would you agree with the following proposals for changes to Council Tax charges for empty homes? Please select the most appropriate option for each proposal below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No opinion
Owners of homes that become empty should be charged full Council Tax on those homes from the time they become empty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owners of homes that have been empty for more than 6 months and which are unfurnished should be charged full Council Tax on those homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owners of homes that have been empty for 2 years or more should be charged 150% of the Council Tax charge for those homes for so long as the home remains empty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owners of homes that are empty and require or are undergoing structural repair should be charged full Council Tax on those homes from the time they become empty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. If you would like to, please briefly explain your responses to Q1 in the space below.

## Second Homes

3. To what extent would you agree with the following proposal for changes to Council Tax charges for second homes? Please select the most appropriate option below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No opinion
Owners of second homes should be required to pay full Council Tax charges on those homes at all times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. If you would like to, please briefly explain your response to Q3 in the space below.

- Please put a tick in this box to confirm that this is your one and only response to this questionnaire, and that the answers you have provided are your own. The Council's consultation data quality management rights can be found at [www.stockton.gov.uk/yourCouncil/consult/howweconsult](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/yourCouncil/consult/howweconsult)

**5. If you would like to, please use the space below to share with us any other brief thoughts or comments you have about changing Council Tax charges on empty and second homes**

**6. What is the nature of your interest in this questionnaire/consultation?  
Please select as many options as necessary below.**

- Developer
- Estate Agent
- Home owner in Stockton-on-Tees
- Housing Association
- Letting Agent
- Owner of a second home in Stockton-on-Tees
- Owner of an empty, unfurnished home in Stockton-on-Tees
- Private Landlord
- Registered Social Landlord (RSL)
- Tenant in Stockton-on-Tees
- Prefer not to say
- Other (Please specify)

**7. If you are responsible for an empty property within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees at the moment, why is the property currently empty?  
Please select the most appropriate option.**

- It is awaiting probate settlement
- It is being renovated/repared
- It is on the market awaiting sale
- It is in need of renovation/repair
- It is waiting for new tenants
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

# About you

To help us understand what different people think about the proposed changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions for empty dwellings and second homes, please provide us with the following information.

## Your age

Please state which of the following age groups you fall into:

- 0 – 19 years     20 – 29 years     30 – 39 years     40 – 49 years     50 – 59 years   
60 – 69 years     70 – 79 years     80 – 84 years     85+ years     Prefer not to say

## Your ethnic origin

Please tick the most appropriate box below:

### White

- English/Welsh/Scottish/  
Northern Irish/British  
 Irish  
 Gypsy or Irish Traveller  
Any other White background,  
please specify:  
.....

### Black/Black British

- Caribbean  
 African  
Any other Black background,  
please specify:  
.....

### Asian/Asian British:

- Indian  
 Pakistani  
 Bangladeshi  
 Chinese  
Any other Asian background,  
please specify:  
.....

### Other ethnic groups:

- Arab  
Any other ethnic background,  
please specify:  
.....

### Mixed /multiple ethnic groups:

- White and Black  
Caribbean  
 White and Black African  
 White and Asian  
Any other mixed/multiple  
ethnic background, please  
specify:  
.....  
 Prefer not to say

## Your country of birth

Please state (or, leave blank if  
you would prefer not to say):  
.....

## Your nationality

Please state (or, leave blank if  
you would prefer not to say):  
.....

## Your gender

- Please tick the most  
appropriate box below:  
 Male  
 Female  
 Prefer not to say

## Your marital status

- Please tick the most  
appropriate box below:  
 Single  
 Married  
 Civil Partnership

- Living with partner  
 Separated  
 Divorced  
 Widow  
 Widower  
 Civil widow  
 Civil widower  
 Prefer not to say

## Disability

Do you consider yourself to be  
a person with a disability as  
described by the Equality Act  
2010? Please tick the most  
appropriate box below:

- Yes  
 No  
 Prefer not to say

## UK Armed Forces (including Territorial Army (TA))

Do you currently serve in the  
UK Armed Forces (including  
Territorial Army) or have you  
done so previously? Please  
tick the most appropriate box  
below:

- I am currently serving in  
the UK Armed Forces  
(including Territorial Army)  
 I previously served in the  
UK Armed Forces  
(including Territorial Army)  
 Prefer not to say

If you would like this information in any other language or format for example **large print** or audio please contact 'Diversity Team' on 01642 528830.

إذا كنت ترغب الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغات أو بأشكال أخرى على سبيل المثال بالطبعة الكبيرة أو بالشريط المسجل فالرجاء الإتصال 'بدايفرستي تيم' [Diversity Team] على هاتف رقم 01642 528830

ARABIC

欲要這份資訊的其它語言版或其它版式例如大字體印刷/錄音帶，請致電 01642 528830 接洽 '多元化隊' (Diversity Team)

MANDARIN

اگر شما این اطلاعات را به زبان یا شکل دیگری مثلا چاپ بزرگ یا بصورت صدا میخواهید لطفا با تیم دایورسیتی (گوناگونی) [Diversity Team] با شما ره 01642 528830 به تماس شوید

FARSI

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ces informations dans d'autres langues ou sous un autre format, par exemple, en gros caractères / version audio, veuillez contacter l'équipe "Diversity" au n° 016 42 52 88 30

FRENCH

ئەگەر هەزرت لێ ئەم زانیاریە بە دەستت بکەوت بە زمانەکانی تریان بە شیوەیەکی تر بۆ نمونە چاپی گەورە/یان بە تیپی تۆمارکراو تکایە پەيوه ندى بکە بە 'تیمی دایفیرستی' [Diversity Team] لە سەر ژمارەى تەلەفۆن 01642 528830

KURDISH

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਣਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ, ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ/ਸੀ ਡੀ 'ਤੇ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 'Diversity Team' ਨੂੰ 01642 528830 ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

PUNJABI

اگر آپ ان معلومات کو کسی بھی اور زبان یا انداز، مثلاً بڑے پرنٹ/آڈیو ٹیپ وغیرہ میں حاصل کرنا چاہیں، تو 'ڈائیورسٹی ٹیم' (Diversity Team) کو اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے 01642 528830

URDU



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