



## Consumer Futures Unit

Information  
**Council tax benefits and  
water and sewerage services**

## Did you know...

that if you receive Council Tax Reduction, you still need to pay for water and sewerage?

Even if you receive 100% Council Tax Reduction, the maximum discount you will receive on water and sewerage charges is 25%. Reductions are applied automatically, but it is important that you pay these charges so you do not end up in debt.

## ONE NOTICE WITH TWO BILLS

Scottish Water supplies drinking water and takes away wastewater for most households in Scotland, but your bill will come from your local council as part of your Council Tax Demand Notice in February or March every year.

Receiving one Council Tax Demand but two bills can be confusing. It is important that you read them carefully to:

- **identify** what you need to pay and when; and
- **avoid** falling into debt for water and sewerage charges.

The amount you will pay for water and sewerage charges is set by the Council Tax Band of your property. The amounts payable by band are available on Scottish Water's website [www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)



# REDUCTIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

Reductions and exemptions for water and sewerage charges can be provided in relation to the following:

- **Single occupancy:** households with a single occupant who qualifies to pay for Council Tax can receive a maximum discount of 25%. Some people including: children, students, apprentices, persons in detention, those severely mentally impaired, hospital patients, care workers, members of a religious community or armed forces, are exempt when determining the occupancy of a household for Council Tax.



- **Council tax benefit:** households that receive Council Tax Reduction will automatically receive a reduction from their water and sewerage bill. This is up to a maximum of 25%. So if you receive 100% Council Tax Reduction, you still need to pay 75% of the water and sewerage charges.
- **Exemptions:** households with no occupants eligible for Council Tax, e.g. flats fully occupied by students, are exempt from paying water and wastewater charges.



If you are unsure whether or not you are entitled to a reduction or exemption for water and sewerage charges, contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for further advice or you can access advice at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland)

# YOUR BENEFITS AND WATER CHARGE DEBTS

If you are on Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance, the local authority can have deductions taken from your benefits to pay off your water and sewerage arrears.

If your council uses the 'Water Direct' scheme, they can deduct two payments from your benefit: one to recover water and sewerage arrears, and one to cover current charges so you do not build up further arrears. Local authorities do not need your permission to use Water Direct.

## Advice and support

If you require any further information about water and sewerage charges or debt repayments, contact your local authority. You can also seek advice from your local CAB or access [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland)

Your CAB can provide you with advice on how to budget for your household bills, or can contact the local authority on your behalf.

You can find your nearest CAB at [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk) or check in your phone book.

---

The Consumer Futures Unit puts consumers at the heart of policy and regulation in the energy, post and water sectors in Scotland. Part of Citizens Advice Scotland, we research and gather evidence, which we use to improve outcomes for consumers.

**Email** [ConsumerFuturesUnit@cas.org.uk](mailto:ConsumerFuturesUnit@cas.org.uk)

**Twitter** @CFUcas

**Web** [www.cas.org.uk/spotlight/consumer-futures-unit](http://www.cas.org.uk/spotlight/consumer-futures-unit)



Produced by The Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux Citizens Advice Scotland (Scottish charity number SC016637) Spectrum House, 2 Powderhall Road, Edinburgh EH7 4GB Tel: 0131 550 1000 Copyright © Citizens Advice Scotland. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission except for purposes of review or referral.

Published March 2017