

Citizens Advice Council Tax Protocol

Developed in partnership with the Local Government Association, the Council Tax Protocol offers practical steps aimed at preventing people from getting into debt and outlines how to ensure enforcement agents act within the law.

The protocol asks that councils:

- work with enforcement and advice agencies to help people pay their council tax bills while accessing debt advice;
- ensure all communication with residents about Council Tax is clear;
- use the Standard Financial Statement when calculating repayment plans;
- offer flexible payment arrangements to residents;
- do not use enforcement agents where a resident receives Council Tax Support;
- publish their policy on residents in vulnerable circumstances.

The full protocol is available on our website.

citizens
advice

Citizens Advice is calling on councils to commit to fair and effective debt collection



Council tax debt is the **most common** debt issue we see



Council tax debt has risen **by a third** in the last 3 years



59 councils have signed up to our council tax protocol

Why should your council sign?

1. Budget constraints mean councils face significant pressure to collect all the tax they're owed.
2. Where local authorities and debt advice agencies work closely together, collection processes can be improved.
3. This leads to more early interventions to support people struggling with payments, helps prevent further charges and reduces both collection costs and demand on local public services.

Contact your local Citizens Advice to discuss the protocol

Councils who have signed the protocol:

'We recently signed the Council Tax Protocol as our public commitment to its principles of fairness, partnership working and transparency in local authority debt collection'

- Paul Carver, Exchequer Services Manager, Basingstoke and Deane Council

'We have a duty to collect the money owed, but we want to do so in a fair way and only go down the enforcement route when other avenues are exhausted.'

- Councillor Roger Lawrence, Leader, Wolverhampton City Council