

Knowsley Council
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Do you know anyone who is
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IT'S COSTING YOU MONEY.

Knowsley Council wants to do something about it.
Please call **0800 0730 532**
or visit **www.knowsley.gov.uk**
Your call will be dealt with in confidence.



Budget Report

2009/10



	2009/10 Gross Expenditure £m	2009/10 Gross Income £m	2009/10 Net Expenditure £m	2008/09 Net Expenditure £m
SERVICES PROVIDED DIRECTLY BY THE COUNCIL				
Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	25.407	(12.306)	13.101	16.132
Children's Services	145.298	(135.444)	9.854	9.091
Finance and Information Technology	14.447	(4.837)	9.610	10.424
Corporate and Customer Services	12.688	(3.410)	9.278	9.263
Community Safety and Social Inclusion	2.266	(1.306)	0.960	1.159
Leaders Portfolio	5.050	(1.234)	3.816	2.655
Neighbourhood Delivery	28.811	(18.920)	9.891	8.886
Leisure, Community and Culture	15.180	(4.104)	11.076	11.171
Health and Social Care	82.263	(25.743)	56.520	54.716
Total	331.410	(207.304)	124.106	123.497
OTHER COUNCIL BUDGETS				
Capital Financing and other council-wide costs			11.958	10.295
Contingencies for Inflation and New Service Investments			12.064	14.699
Use of available reserves			(2.316)	(5.759)
Total			21.706	19.235
TOTAL BUDGET FOR SERVICES PROVIDED BY KNOWSLEY COUNCIL			145.812	142.732
CHARGES FOR SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHER BODIES				
Passenger Transport Authority			12.797	12.305
Waste Disposal Authority			7.743	7.235
Coroners Service			0.199	0.192
Flood Defence			0.069	0.066
Probation Service			0.006	0.006
Total			20.814	19.804
KNOWSLEY COUNCIL'S TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET REQUIREMENT			166.626	162.536
FUNDING RECEIVED BY THE COUNCIL				
Revenue Support Grant			(21.893)	(14.028)
Business Rates			(94.853)	(100.768)
Total			(116.746)	(114.796)
AMOUNT OF KNOWSLEY COUNCIL'S BUDGET TO BE FUNDED FROM COUNCIL TAX			49.880	47.740
POLICE PRECEPT			5.910	5.656
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY PRECEPT			2.622	2.537
			8.532	8.193
TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE FUNDED FROM COUNCIL TAX			58.412	55.933

COUNCIL TAX BILLS	Knowsley Council	Police	Fire and Rescue Authority
Amount per band 'A' property			
2008/09	£753.49	£89.27	£40.04
2009/10	£791.17	£93.74	£41.58
Increase	5.0%	5.0%	3.85%

Charges and Levies

These relate to amounts on your bill which Knowsley is required to pay to other organisations which provide services to Merseyside residents.

Merseyside Police Authority Precept

The Police Authority has set a Net Budget Requirement for 2009/10 of £326.121m. The precept, which provides the balance of funding not covered by Government Grant, is set at £59.259m. In council tax terms this is equivalent to £93.74 per property at Band A and £140.61 at Band D, an increase of 5% (£4.47 for the year at Band A, equivalent to 9p per week; £6.70 at Band D, equivalent to 13p per week) over the current year's level.

The Authority was awarded a net increase in general grants of 2.6% in the Local Authority Finance Settlement 2009/10. This increase was disappointing and did not meet the inflationary and developmental needs of the Force, and was well below the Metropolitan Force average increase of 3.11%.

Notwithstanding the above, within the precept increase of 5%, the Authority has been able to put in place a significant reinvestment plan. This has been achieved primarily due to a programme of efficiencies and savings amounting to £3.25m.

These resources have been used to increase frontline Police Officer strength by 79, who will be deployed in accordance with the priorities contained within the Strategic Policing Plan. This increase in officer strength comprises an additional 32 officers, along with the redeployment of 47 from back office functions.

Increasing front line Police Officer numbers has been a strategic objective of the Authority since 2004, when Members aspired to an extra 600 Police Officers on the beat. The additional front line Police Officers incorporated within the 2009/10 budget will mean that the Authority has successfully deployed an extra 489 officers towards its goal of 600. In addition, this budget will also continue to support the retention of the current Police Community Support Officers establishment of 466.

PAUL JOHNSON BA(Hons), CPFA

Treasurer

Merseyside Police Authority, PO Box 101a, West House, Mercury Court, Liverpool.

Telephone: 0151 236 4748

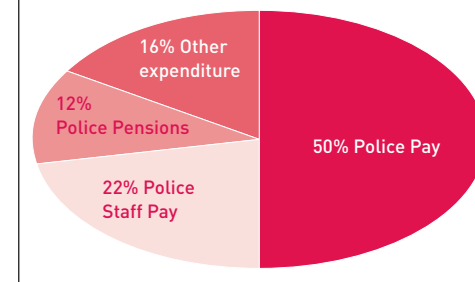
MERSEYSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2009/10

2008/09 £m		2009/10 £m	
351.214	GROSS EXPENDITURE	361.223	
(2.066)	Gross income	(2.086)	
(30.085)	Specific government grants	(30.481)	
319.063	NET OPERATING REQUIREMENT	328.656	
(1.963)	Use of provisions, reserves and general balances	(2.535)	
317.100	NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	326.121	
(131.347)	Less: Police general grant	(134.323)	41.2%
(15.790)	Revenue support grant	(24.959)	7.7%
(113.428)	Business rate income	(108.136)	33.2%
0.142	Collection fund	0.556	(0.2)%
56.677	PRECEPT REQUIREMENT	59.259	18.1%

HOW SPENDING HAS CHANGED

	£m
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2008/09	317.100
Inflation and pay awards	9.270
Net committed reductions	(0.108)
Chief Constables efficiency savings	(3.250)
Developments	2.544
Collection Fund Deficit	0.556
Additional income	(0.020)
Adjustment to grant related expenditure	0.997
Increase in contributions from provisions, reserves and general balances	(0.572)
Increase in Specific grants	(0.396)
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2009/10	326.121

ANALYSIS OF BUDGETED GROSS EXPENDITURE IN 2009/10



Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority Precept

The Authority has set a budget of £72.110m for 2009/10. This represents an increase of £0.909m or 1.3% compared to the budget for 2008/09. This is mainly because:

Forecast impact of pay and prices increases	£1.9m
Additional capital financing costs to fund Capital Expenditure	£0.4m
Cost of service improvements	£0.4m
Reduction in anticipated investment income	£0.2m
Increase in planned Efficiency savings	(£2.0m)
Net budget increase	£0.9m

The budget process for the Authority was challenging but the Authority has managed to set financial plans that allow investment in line with its Integrated Risk Management Plan and will help maintain its status as an authority judged as 'excellent' under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Process. The Integrated Risk Management Plan sets out the future strategic direction for the Authority and is available on our website at www.merseyfire.gov.uk.

The Government Support we received was £46.074m an increase of only £0.229m or 0.5%, (Approximately 64% of the Authority's income comes from Government grant).

Despite the low levels of Government grant increase, the Authority has set a budget in line with its medium term financial plan of keeping its precept increases to below 4%. The Authority has issued a precept on the five Merseyside District Councils of £26.286m, which is equivalent to a Council Tax of £62.37 for a band D property. This is an increase of 3.85% compared to the 2008/09 band D Council Tax of £60.06. Knowsley's contribution to expenditure financed by precept is £2.622m, which represents 10% of the total precept.

The Authority budget makes significant provision for investing in the Authority's world leading Community Fire Safety Work and Reducing Risk which continues to make Merseyside very much safer. Merseyside:

- Is the first fire authority in the world to visit 100,000 households in a single year
- Has fitted more than 500,000 free smoke alarms.
- Has received Beacon Status for Early Intervention (Children at Risk), working with Older People, and for Reducing Health Inequalities.
- Has formed Joint Police & Fire Service Threat Response Groups.
- Reduced fire deaths from an average of 20 in 1999 to 9 in 2007/2008 and to 7 so far this year (year ends March). Almost a 60% reduction
- Employed advocates in such diverse areas as age, disability, deafness, drugs, alcohol, arson and anti-social behaviour, as well as multilingual specialists.
- Between 2003/2004 to 2007/2008, the Authority has been successful in:
 - Reducing accidental dwelling fires by 20%
 - Reducing injuries in accidental dwelling fires by 60%
 - Reducing anti-Social behaviour fires by 45%

This work has successfully reduced the incidence of death and injury from fire in Merseyside.

To get a Free Home Fire Risk Assessment ring Fire Service Direct

0800 731 5958 Free.

(Visit our website www.merseyfire.gov.uk or call your Community Fire Station)

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10			
2008/09		2009/10	Per head of population
£m		£m	£
74.525	Total expenditure	74.083	
(3.324)	Less income	(2.256)	
71.201	NET EXPENDITURE	71.827	
0	Contribution (from) / to reserves	0.283	
71.201	BUDGET REQUIREMENT	72.110	53.41
(5.602)	Revenue support grant	(8.640)	(6.40)
(40.243)	Non-domestic rates	(37.434)	(27.72)
0.064	Collection fund deficit	0.250	0.18
25.420	PRECEPT REQUIREMENT	26.286	19.47

Efficiency Information

The Authority is required to report upon the planned efficiency savings built into the 2008/09 budget as a percentage of the 2007/08 spend. The table below sets out this information and the Authority is currently on target to achieve this level of saving:

Saving	As a % of 2007/2008 spend
£2,288,000	3.2%

The anticipated £2,288,000 saving represents a £5 saving for the average Band D dwelling. (This is 2.5 times greater than the comparable national average figure for fire authorities across England of £2).

The Authority has delivered cumulative efficiency savings of £15.1m, well above the level of the Government efficiency target, over the 2005/06 - 2007/08 period.

Contact Us

The Authority values the opinions of the people it serves. If you wish to comment about the services of the Fire Authority contact Fire Service Headquarters 0151 296 4000.

Kieran Timmins CPFA

Executive Director of Resources

Fire Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle, Liverpool, L30 4YD.

Enquiries to: Ian Cummins

Telephone: 0151 296 4244 Fax: 0151 296 4224 E-Mail: iancummins@merseyfire.gov.uk

Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority

The Merseyside Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 and the annual Performance Report for 2005/06 resulted in a double "excellent" rating which increases the capital resource allocation from Central Government. A three-year grant funding settlement totalling £52.4m was awarded to Merseytravel. We are now entering the second of the three years. This will provide the Authority with the opportunity to consider a range of capital projects to improve the rail, bus and ferry network and deliver its strategic vision to create 'a single integrated transport network with access to all'.

The Authority's Levy on District Councils in 2009/2010 has increased by a total of £4.4m compared with the previous year and reflects the effects of inflation which is outside of our control, the impact of committed developments, and costs in respect of a variety of new projects undertaken in partnership with District Councils and other organisations as part of Merseyside's Local Transport Plan.

The Levy rise complies with a strategic objective of the Authority to keep it at the lowest possible level after taking account of the implications of the Local Transport Plan and other statutory obligations. To support the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme on Buses, additional grant funding from the government has been provided.

J. R. BARCLAY BSc, MBA, CPFA

Director of Resources

**Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority and Passenger Transport Executive (Merseytravel),
24 Hatton Garden, Liverpool, L3 2AN. Telephone: 0151 227 5181**

* On 9 February 2009 Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority became the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority (ITA).

MERSEYTRAVEL REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10

	Expend £m	Income £m	Grants/ Balances £m	Levy £m
Bus services	29.101	(7.884)	(0.145)	21.072
Rail services	120.995	(11.774)	(104.407)	4.814
Travel concessions	72.937	(20.420)	(6.673)	45.844
Facilities and promotion	16.028	(3.829)	-	12.199
Corporate policy and planning	15.216	(7.449)	-	7.767
Support services	4.544	(4.544)	-	-
Funds management	23.748	(1.154)	(1.981)	20.613
Mersey ferries	11.681	(9.494)	-	2.187
Mersey tunnels	37.275	(37.275)	-	-
Total spending	331.525	(103.823)	(113.206)	114.496
Levy changes	2008/09	Pay/Price	Population	2009/10
	Levy	Increases	Changes	Levy
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Knowsley	12.305	0.491	-	12.796
Liverpool	35.469	1.419	0.042	36.930
St Helens	14.445	0.578	0.020	15.043
Sefton	22.562	0.903	(0.043)	23.422
Wirral	25.311	1.013	(0.019)	26.305
Total	110.092	4.404	-	114.496

Notes: 1. The public transport capital programme for 2009/10 is £40.7m of which £4.4m is allocated for new schemes.
2. The Mersey Tunnels capital programme for 2009/10 is £9m: financed from Tunnels tolls.

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) arranges for the disposal of household and commercial waste collected by your council. MWDA also provides Household Waste Recycling Centres for local residents to dispose of their rubbish and recycle unwanted items.

MWDA has in the past produced an Annual Review and Best Value Performance Plan which set out the principal objectives of the Authority and detailed performance, future targets and how services were reviewed. A copy of the Performance Plan 2008 is available from the Authority. It shows MWDA's recycling and composting performance exceeded the set target for 2007/08.

Best Value legislation is now being replaced by a Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships. A new set of National Indicators will replace previous Best Value Performance indicators, with effect since April 2008.

The following performance indicators and targets are of particular importance:

	Target 2007/08	Actual 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Estimate 2008/09	Target 2009/10
NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	26.00%	30.26%	33.00%	35.70%	36.00%
Cost of waste disposal per tonne for municipal waste	£62.42	£64.88	£70.76	£73.98	£82.46
Total tonnage of waste deposited at WRC's - percentage recycled, reused and composted (excluding rubble)	44.80%	40.09%	45.00%	41.14%	45.00%

The Authority is expected to have increased operational costs as a result of payments arising out of the new Waste Management Recycling Contract. In addition, landfill tax will increase by £8 per tonne (up to £40 per tonne). The Authority's Revenue Budget for 2009/10 is shown below along with the comparative figures for 2008/2009.

MERSEYSIDE WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY APPROVED BUDGET

	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m
Operational and other costs	45.7	48.2
Landfill tax	18.2	21.1
Total expenditure	63.9	69.3
Less: Income	(1.4)	(1.0)
Net expenditure	62.5	68.3
Contributions to/from balances	0.8	2.6
The levy	63.3	70.9

The Levy for your Council based upon the new apportionment system is £7,742,865.

The authority's contact details are:

**Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority,
6th Floor, North House, 17 North John Street, Liverpool L2 5QY.**

Tel: 0151 255 1444 Fax: 0151 227 1848 Email: enquiries@merseysidewda.gov.uk

Coroners Service

The day to day cost of running the Coroners Service is estimated at £0.774m for 2009/10. This is apportioned between the Councils of Knowsley, Sefton and St Helens on the basis of population. Knowsley has budgeted for a charge to the council of £0.199m compared to £0.192m in 2008/09. The figures are subject to final confirmation from the Coroners Service.

Flood Defence

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood defence along 6,500km of main river and along tidal and sea defences, in the area of the North West Regional Flood Defence Committee. Flood defence money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system. The financial details are:

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD DEFENCE REVENUE BUDGET 2009/10

	2008/09	2009/10
	£m	£m
Gross expenditure	45.519	54.787
Levies raised from the council	3.433	3.567
Total Council Tax Base	2.259	2.274

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, where there are schemes which do not attract central funding the Agency may seek funding from County and Metropolitan Councils, Unitary Authorities and London boroughs in the form of a Local Levy.

Changes in the Gross Budgeted expenditure between the years is due mainly to maintain the level of investment in building new defences to reduce the risk of flooding to the people and communities of the north. The total Local Levy raised has increased from £3.433m in 2008/09 to £3.567m for 2009/10.

The Local Levy is shared on the basis of band D equivalents between all contributing bodies within the Committee area. Knowsley has budgeted for a charge of £0.069m in 2009/10 compared to £0.066m in 2008/09.

Parish and Town Councils

If you live in one of Knowsley's six parishes your bill will include a "precept" for the budget requirements of your Parish or Town Council.

	Gross Expenditure Budget			Precept		
	2008/09	2009/10	increase/ (decrease)	2008/09	2009/10	increase/ (decrease)
	£	£	%	£	£	%
Halewood	464,267	467,317	0.66%	316,483	316,905	0.13%
Whiston	236,956	245,249	3.50%	236,956	245,249	3.50%
Knowsley	321,840	329,730	2.45%	298,540	307,330	2.94%
Prescot	449,150	461,800	2.82%	214,500	225,000	4.89%
Cronton	14,779	14,815	0.24%	14,405	14,405	0.00%
Tarbock	3,420	3,500	2.34%	3,420	3,500	2.34%

The following narratives are provided for those councils with precepts above £0.140m.

Halewood Town Council: This Quality Status local council continues to operate the Arncliffe Community Centre and the Hollies Community Centre. The acknowledgement by the National Association of Local Councils in naming Halewood Town Council as "Council of the Year" in 2008, further underpins the work that we do, and how we deliver it.

The Town Council continues to maintain an overview of life in the Parish, and contributes to environmental, planning and highway issues, as well as inter-agency liaison, especially within the Area partnership Board, and Pride Team in Halewood. A largely standstill precept for 2009/10 has been approved, thus assisting householders in Halewood during these difficult economic times.

Whiston: This Quality Status Town Council operates Whiston Town Hall, Robert Foulkes Centre and the recently refurbished George Howard Centre, and is responsible for a number of Public Open Spaces (including football pitches, playground, fishing pond and multi use games area) within the Township.

The precept this year has been kept to a reasonable level whilst at the same time making provision not only to continue to provide existing service but to also support future projects which will benefit the community of Whiston.

Knowsley: The Parish Council continues to operate three facilities: Knowsley Village Hall, Knowsley Youth Club and the Sports Pavilion (Stockbridge Village). In addition, the Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of several woodland sites and public open spaces.

The Council continues to provide heavy support for youth and play activities in the parish. A new play area was completed on the Recreation Ground in Knowsley Village. Small grants and concessionary prices were awarded to over twenty community groups able to satisfy Council criteria.

The Parish Council continued to take a keen interest in local planning applications and proved an effective agent in representing local views back to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

The Council was awarded Quality Status and this national recognition places the Parish Council as one of the very best parish/town councils in the country. The Parish Council also won national recognition for its Annual Report published during the year.

The Parish Council continued to enhance its communication mechanisms through the continuation of initiatives including:

- Nationally recognised Annual Report
- Improved Website
- Newsletters
- Notice boards
- Increased consultation.

Prescot: The maintenance of leisure services within the township is yet again at the top of the Town Councils agenda for 2009/10. The Leisure Centre itself needs constant repair to both the sports and function sides but the Town Council are determined to keep the facilities available for the residents of the Town.

The Council will once again be providing the annual Town Carnival with free admission to the public. Not only does this provide entertainment for local residents but allows many community groups to raise much needed funds.

Money has once again been put aside to help maintain the two public open spaces at King George Vth Playing Field, Wood Lane and Eaton Street play area.

Council Tax Demand Notice

Explanatory Notes

THE FOLLOWING NOTES FORM PART OF YOUR COUNCIL TAX DEMAND AND SHOULD BE READ CAREFULLY

Council tax valuation bands

Most dwellings will be subject to council tax. There will be one bill per dwelling, whether it is a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette, mobile home or houseboat, and whether it is owned or rented. Each dwelling has been allocated to one of eight bands according to its open market capital value at 1 April 1991. The actual amount billed will vary dependant upon which of the eight valuation bands has been allocated to your dwelling:

		Knowsley	Police	Fire & Civil Defence	Totals
	Net requirement £m	£49.880m	£5.910m	£2.622m	£58.412m
	% Increase in Council Tax Bill	5.00%	5.00%	3.85%	4.95%
Valuation Band	Range of Values	£	£	£	£
A	Up to and including £40,000	791.17	93.74	41.58	926.49
B	£40,001 - £52,000	923.03	109.36	48.51	1080.90
C	£52,001 - £68,000	1,054.89	124.99	55.44	1235.32
D	£68,001 - £88,000	1,186.75	140.61	62.37	1389.73
E	£88,001 - £120,000	1,450.47	171.86	76.23	1698.56
F	£120,001 - £160,000	1,714.19	203.10	90.09	2007.38
G	£160,001 - £320,000	1,977.92	234.35	103.95	2316.22
H	More than £320,000	2,373.50	281.22	124.74	2779.46

In addition residents who live in parishes will have to contribute towards the cost of their parish council. These additional costs are as follows:

Valuation Band	Cronton £	Halewood £	Knowsley £	Prescot £	Tarbock £	Whiston £
A	20.01	35.20	65.90	45.95	2.92	43.60
B	23.34	41.07	76.88	53.61	3.41	50.87
C	26.68	46.93	87.87	61.27	3.89	58.13
D	30.01	52.80	98.85	68.93	4.38	65.40
E	36.68	64.53	120.82	84.25	5.35	79.93
F	43.35	76.27	142.78	99.57	6.33	94.47
G	50.02	88.00	164.75	114.88	7.30	109.00
H	60.02	105.60	197.70	137.86	8.76	130.80

For 2009/10, the Council Tax instalment date for cash and standing order payers continues to be the 1st of each month. If you are paying by Direct Debit, your instalment due date will be based on your choice of the 1st, 5th, 15th, 24th or last day of the month.

Exempt Dwellings

There are certain classes of dwellings that are exempt from council tax. They are:

Unoccupied categories

- an unoccupied and unfurnished dwelling that has been so for less than six months (Class C)
- an unoccupied dwelling that requires or is undergoing structural alteration or major repair work to make it habitable; or such alterations or works have been completed for less than six months. Following legislative changes, from April 2000 this exemption is time limited to a maximum of 12 months. Those properties which have been exempt under this class for 12 months or more at 1 April 2000, will now be subject to a 50% charge (Class A)
- a dwelling that has been unoccupied for up to six months and is owned by a charity (Class B)
- an unoccupied dwelling left empty by a person who has gone to prison (except those in prison for non payment of council tax or a fine) (Class D)
- an unoccupied dwelling left empty by a person who is now resident in a hospital or a nursing home (Class E)
- an unoccupied dwelling where the last occupier has died and the personal representative is waiting for a grant of probate or letters of administration or less than six months have elapsed since such a grant was made (Class F)
- a dwelling, the occupation of which is prohibited by law (Class G)
- an unoccupied dwelling waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion (Class H)
- an unoccupied dwelling where a person has moved out to receive personal care (Class I)
- an unoccupied dwelling where a person has moved to provide personal care to another person (Class J)
- an unoccupied dwelling which was last occupied solely by students (Class K)
- an unoccupied dwelling which has been repossessed by a mortgagee (Class L)
- an unoccupied dwelling that forms part of another dwelling and which may not be let separately (Class T)
- an unoccupied dwelling which is the responsibility of a bankrupt's trustee (Class Q)
- an unoccupied caravan pitch or boat mooring (Class R)

Occupied Categories

- a hall of residence provided predominantly for students (Class M)
- a dwelling wholly occupied by students (Class N)
- forces barracks, married quarters and accommodation for visiting forces (Classes O and P)

- a dwelling occupied only by a person or persons under the age of 18 (Class S)
- a dwelling occupied by a severely mentally impaired person or persons (Class U)
- a dwelling occupied only by diplomats or their non British spouse (Class V)
- a dwelling that is a separate unit within a property and is occupied by a dependant relative of the tax payer of that property (Class W).

If you consider that your property falls into one of the above categories and should be exempt, please contact the council tax office for an application form.

Discounts

Single Person and Unoccupied Property Discounts

Your council tax bill comprises two elements, 50% property element and 50% personal element. A full council tax bill assumes that there are at least two qualifying adults resident in the household.

Where only one adult lives in a dwelling, and it is their main or sole residence, the council tax bill is reduced by 25%, this is known as single person discount.

If a dwelling is no-one's main residence, then the owner is entitled to a 50% discount. This can apply to empty and unoccupied dwellings and second homes.

Status Discounts (Disregards)

Certain people will not be counted when looking at the number of adults resident in a dwelling. This means that it is possible to qualify for a discount where there are two or more adult residents.

These disregarded adults can be classified as follows:

- full time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth training trainees
- patients resident in hospital
- people who are being looked after in care homes
- people who are mentally impaired
- people staying in certain hostels and night shelters
- 18 and 19 year olds who are at or who have just left school after completing a qualifying course of education
- careworkers working for low pay, usually for charities
- people caring for someone with a disability who is not a spouse, partner or child under 18
- members of visiting forces and certain international institutions
- members of religious communities (monks and nuns)
- people in prison (except those in prison for non-payment of council tax or a fine)
- spouses of students who are not of British citizenship and who are prevented by the terms of their stay in the United Kingdom from taking paid employment or from claiming benefit
- Diplomats and their non British spouse

If you think you may be entitled to a discount and none is shown on your bill, please make your application in writing to the Council Tax Office.

If your bill has been reduced by a discount, the code adjacent to the discount on your bill will indicate which of the following circumstances apply:

25% discount single occupancy - one adult occupier only **or** two or more occupiers but only one person is not disregarded.

50% discount zero occupancy - property which has been empty more than six months **or** is no-one's sole or main residence **or** where all occupiers are disregarded.

50% discount second home - property is unoccupied but still furnished.

If your bill indicates that a discount has been allowed, you must tell the council of any change of circumstances which affects your entitlement. If you fail to do so you may be required to pay a penalty.

People with Disabilities

If you or someone who lives with you, is disabled, you may qualify for a reduction in the amount of council tax payable. These reductions take the form of charging council tax at a rate one valuation band lower than the banding shown in the valuation list for the property concerned.

The person liable to pay the council tax is eligible for this reduction if the dwelling meets certain conditions. These are:

- a disabled person must be resident in the dwelling, **and**
- the dwelling contains a room **other than** a bathroom, kitchen or lavatory which is predominantly used by and is required for meeting the needs of the disabled person, **or**
- the dwelling contains an **additional** kitchen or bathroom which is required for meeting the needs of the disabled person, **or**
- there is sufficient floor space in the dwelling to permit the use of a wheelchair, and the disabled person needs the use of a wheelchair within the dwelling.

From April 2000, if you live in a band 'A' property, you may now qualify for a reduction. The amount of the reduction in these cases will be 1/9th of the band 'D' charge for your area.

If you require more information or an application form for disabled reductions, please contact the council tax office.

Benefits

You can get help with paying your council tax if you are in receipt of Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Pension Credit or you have a low income.

If you already receive council tax benefit, this will be shown on your bill. Remember if you are receiving council tax benefit and your circumstances change you **must** tell us. If you wish to apply for council tax benefit you must fill in an application form (available from the one stop shops, most registered social landlords or by ringing our contact centre or downloading from the internet).

Council tax benefit like housing benefit is based on the circumstances of yourself and any partner, taken into account are:

- Money you and your partner have coming in, including earnings, some benefits, tax credits and things like occupational pensions. The figure used for earnings and pensions is that after any tax and national insurance that you pay have been taken off.
- Your savings and your partner's savings. (The first £6,000 is ignored)
- Your circumstances, such as your age.
- The ages and size of your family, whether you or any of your family are disabled, and whether anyone who lives with you could help with the rent.

In-work Benefits

You may be able to continue to receive help with paying your council tax if you are employed and receive a low income. If you have recently started work and you receive a low wage, you may be able to obtain council tax benefit, which like housing benefit, is based on the circumstances of yourself and any partner and takes into account all earnings, income and capital.

If you have started work or are about to, and receive a low wage, you may be able to get the following:

- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit
- Uniform Grants
- Free School Meals
- Energy Grant
- Optical voucher

To find out more contact your local One Stop Shop.

Second Adult Rebate

Even if the council tax bill payer does not qualify for benefit based on their own income, benefit may be awarded for other adults living in the dwelling. In order for a second adult to qualify, the bill payer must normally be a single person who is sharing their property on a non commercial basis with someone who is getting Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Pension Credit or have a low income.

The income of the bill payer is not relevant in this situation.

If you wish to apply for **Second Adult Rebate**, application forms are available in all one stop shops, most registered social landlords or by ringing our contact centre or downloading from the internet.

Recovery Procedure

If you experience genuine difficulty in meeting your payments, you should contact the council tax office as soon as possible rather than wait until recovery action has been taken. Every effort will be made to alleviate personal difficulties.

Appeals

Valuation Matters

There is no longer a general right of appeal against the valuation band allocated to your property.

The grounds for appeal against the banding of your property are:

- if you believe that the banding is incorrect because there has been a material increase or reduction in the dwellings value
- if you start or stop using part of your dwelling for business purposes, or the balance between domestic and business elements change
- if the Listing Officer has altered a list without a proposal having been made by a taxpayer
- if you have become the new occupier of a property, you have six months to make an appeal, but only if the same appeal has not been previously lodged.

Making an appeal does not allow you to withhold payment of tax owing in the meantime. If your appeal is successful you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid tax. Appeals should be addressed to:

The District Valuer and Valuation Officer, 72 Church Street, Liverpool, L1 3AY.
(Telephone: 0151 802 1000)

Non Valuation Matters

You may appeal against the authority's decision that a dwelling is a chargeable dwelling, that you are the liable person for council tax, that a dwelling is or is not exempt or decisions made in respect of the granting of a discount, disability reduction or council tax benefit.

In the first instance such appeals should be made in writing to the Borough Treasurer, Municipal Buildings, Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby, Knowsley, Merseyside, L32 1TX.

Foreword

Knowsley Council's Budget

Each year, the Council has to make sure that it spends its money on the key priorities facing the Borough and that it gets the best value for money that it can.

The Council gets most of its funding from the Government, and this helps to pay for the day to day cost of services. However in 2009/10, the general grant from the Government will increase by 1.75% but the Council's costs are expected to rise by almost 5%. This means that the Council has had to bridge a significant funding gap in setting its 2009/10 budget as well as identifying significant resources that can be reinvested in key areas.

In 2009/10 the key areas that the Council will invest in include:

- additional funding to deliver a transformational secondary education system through seven new learning centres across the Borough by 2010;
- additional health and social care support for the borough's most vulnerable residents;
- long-term investment in services to tackle anti-social behaviour;
- additional Safer, Cleaner Greener Neighbourhood services; and
- major investment in brand new street lighting across the Borough.

In 2009/10, the Council will also spend over £45m on improving its buildings, roads and other major assets across the Borough. Capital projects planned for 2009/10 include:

- new Leisure facilities across the Borough costing over £25m;
- major investment as part of the Stockbridge Village Regeneration scheme; and
- multi-million pound investment in roads and footpaths across the Borough.

Improving Efficiency

Each year the Government requires Councils to improve their efficiency whilst seeking to maintain the level and quality of the priority services provided to the community. All councils are assessed by the Audit Commission on their use of resources. In the most recent assessment (2007/08) the Council scored the highest possible score of 4 - recognising the strong performance of the council in making efficiency savings and improving services.

An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of a service falls, but its effectiveness is not reduced. The Government has asked all councils to use their budget leaflets to report the value of efficiency savings that they have achieved over the last 12 months. The Council's forecast for 2008/09 is that it will achieve estimated efficiency savings of £4.600m (around 2.3% of the Council's 2007/08 budget). This is in addition to efficiency savings of over £14m that the Council has achieved over the previous three years.

Your tax bill shows that for all of Knowsley, efficiency savings of £114 have been made for each Band D equivalent household. Within this, £109 relates to the Council's efficiencies. This compares with an average of £112 for the Council's benchmark authorities.

Your Council Tax

Knowsley Council prides itself on delivering quality services whilst maintaining the lowest possible level of council tax. For 2009/10, the bill for most households in Knowsley (those in Band A) will be £791.17 - a rise of 5% or about 72p a week more than last year. Your council tax bill also includes amounts to pay for the Police and Fire services. When these are added to Knowsley Council's share, the annual charge for most households will be £926.49 - an overall increase of 4.9% or 84p a week. As well as giving details of the council's budget, this leaflet also explains how your total bill is calculated and includes background information on the charges from the Parish Councils, Police and Fire services.

Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to Council Tax Benefit, and this will reduce the amount you have to pay. If you need any help on this, please speak to our advisors at the One Stop Shops or Contact Centres.

If you have any other questions about the council's budget or how your council tax is calculated, you can use the council's web site (www.knowsley.gov.uk) or contact me in writing at: Borough Treasurer, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby, Knowsley, Merseyside L32 1TX

JAMES DUNCAN CPFA
Borough Treasurer

Assistance with Council Tax or Benefit Enquiries

The Council's Contact Centre or One Stop Shops listed below, will be pleased to assist with Council Tax enquiries or advice on how you may seek help under the benefit scheme.

Contact Centre Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm and Saturday, 9.30am-1pm

Halewood Halewood One Stop Shop, The Halewood Centre, Roseheath Drive, Halewood
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and Saturday, 10am-12.30pm

Huyton Huyton One Stop Shop, Municipal Buildings, Archway Road, Huyton
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and Saturday, 10am-12.30pm

Kirkby Kirkby One Stop Shop, Municipal Buildings, Cherryfield Drive, Kirkby
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and Saturday, 10am-12.30pm

Prescot Prescot One Stop Shop, Prescot Shopping Centre, Aspinall Street, Prescot
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and Saturday, 10am-12.30pm

For enquiries regarding your council tax account please contact us on 0151 443 4476 or for Council Tax Benefit on 0151 443 4042, Minicom 0151 443 3401.

REMEMBERED TO PAY YOUR COUNCIL TAX THIS MONTH?

No need to queue to pay. No forms to complete. Just pick up the phone. Pay your council tax by Direct Debit.

You can choose to pay on the 1st, 5th, 15th, 24th or last day of the month.



**DIRECT
Debit**

**Simply ring the DD Hotline on
0151 443 4476 today.**

(Please have your bank details and council tax account number to hand when you call)

You can also get this information in other formats.
Please phone Customer Services on 0151 443 4031,
or email customerservices@knowsley.gov.uk