

## 2018/19 FAQs

### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COUNCIL TAX RISE

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/finance-and-budgets/how-your-council-tax-is-spent/>

- **Why is an increase in council tax necessary?**

Like other councils we're facing difficult financial circumstances – there are increasing pressures with growing numbers of older people and children needing social care, along with new burdens such as the government's national policy on the National Living Wage. This combined with the continued reduction in our core funding from central government means a council tax increase has been unavoidable.

We are also comparatively low funded. For 2018/18 our core funding from Government is around £105 per head of population, this compares to an average of £152 for other county authorities. Our funding from government has also decreased significantly in recent years. In 2014/15 the money we received from central government known as Revenue Support Grant stood at £92.6m. For 2018/19 it is down to £12.1m, over £80m less.

Despite the reduction in funding we have faced since 2010, members of the County Council have been reluctant to raise your council tax. We froze your council tax between 2011/12 and 2015/16 (five years). In 2017/18 our Band D charge was lower than the comparable average for a County Council by £11.92. By 31 March 2019 we will have made almost £219m of savings since 2010, which helps keep your council tax down.

- **Why is the increase 4.95%?**

The increase at 4.95% includes a rise of **2.95%** for the County's core element of council tax and **2.0%** specifically for Adult Social Care.

The **core element** follows an agreement by Government to allow authorities to raise council tax by a further 1% before a referendum is required. This takes the maximum permissible increase from 2.0% to 3.0%. For 2018/19 West Sussex County Council has approved a core increase of **2.95%**.

In addition, there is a **levy** charged in relation to the Adult Social Care precept. Introduced by the Government in 2016/17, this allows councils to levy an annual charge of up to 3% to assist with meeting expenditure on adult social care. For 2018/19 West Sussex County Council has levied a **2.0%** charge for the Adult Social Care precept. This part of the increase has been applied in full to cover the extra spending needed in social care to keep pace with rising demand. We have invested £14.8m in Adults and Children's Social Care in 2018/19 to keep pace with rising demand and the costs associated with Government implementing the national living wage.

The additional money raised through the total increase of **4.95%** will therefore be used to protect frontline services and ease the pressures on our adult social care budget.

- **Why is my council tax demand showing an increase of 5.00% for West Sussex County Council – shouldn't it be 4.95%?**

Unfortunately the system used to generate the council tax demand is unable to show percentages to two decimal places. As a result the percentages have been rounded to 3.00% for the core increase and 2.00% for the Adult Social Care precept. This is a presentational issue and has no impact on the amount of the charge.

- **What is the 2% Adult Social Care precept?**

Since 2016 the Government has allowed Councils which provide adult social care to levy an annual charge on the council tax of up to 3%. This additional charge is called the Adult Social Care precept. The income generated from this charge is ring-fenced, meaning it can only be used for adult social care services.

For 2018/19, West Sussex County Council has levied an Adult Social Care precept of 2% which is £25.11 or £0.48 per week for a Band D property. This will raise £8.2m in 2018/19 across the County towards adult social care pressures.

- **Why is the Adult Social Care precept shown separately on the Council Tax Bill?**

For transparency and as prescribed by government regulations, the Adult Social Care precept is identified separately on the council tax demand; it is also shown on a cumulative basis. As 2018/19 is the third year of the levy the amount shown on the council tax demand represents the sum of the charge for the current year and two previous years:

Year	Adult Social Care Levy Applied	Adult Social Care Levy Band D £
2016/17	2%	23.24
2017/18	2%	24.16
2018/19	2%	25.11
<b>Total</b>		<b>72.51</b>

- **How is the Adult Social Care precept calculated?**

The Adult Social Care precept is calculated on the whole of the West Sussex County Council element from the previous year. The calculation for a Band D is as follows:

Year	Previous Year Total Charge	Core Increase		Adult Social Care Increase		Total Charge £	% increase
	£		£		£		£
2016/17	1,161.99	1.95%	22.66	2.00%	23.24	3.95%	1,207.89
2017/18	1,207.89	1.95%	23.54	2.00%	24.16	3.95%	1,255.59
2018/19	1,255.59	2.95%	37.08	2.00%	25.11	4.95%	1,317.78