



HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENERGY BILLS REBATE LOCAL SCHEME
July 2022

1.0 Purpose of the scheme and background

- 1.1 In order to help households with the increased cost of energy bills, the Government has tasked local authorities with administering the Energy Bills Rebate (EBR) scheme.
- 1.2 It is recognised that whilst these rising costs affect most households, they are more likely to disproportionately affect those on lower incomes who tend to spend a higher proportion of their income on utility bills.
- 1.3 Initial funding of £9m has been given to Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) to make payments of £150 to eligible households in Council Tax bands A-D (including Band E, where the award of a Disabled Band Reduction has lowered the band to D).
- 1.4 The main scheme will provide financial assistance to around 60,000 households.
- 1.5 In addition, HDC has been given a further budget of £211,350 for discretionary payments to be made to support households who do not qualify for help under the main scheme.
- 1.6 Government guidance has determined that local authorities can decide how best to make use of the funding to provide payments to households who are energy bill payers but are not covered by the main scheme.

2.0 Huntingdonshire District Council's Energy Bills Rebate Local Scheme

- 2.1 The HDC Local Scheme will provide rebates to the following households:

Household Type	Level of award
In Council Tax Bands A - D and on Council Tax Support at 1 April (top up)	£25
In Council Tax Bands E - H and on Council Tax Support at 1 April	£150
In Council Tax Bands F-H and in receipt of a Disabled Band Reduction at 1 April	£150
In Council Tax Bands E-H with an N, S, U or W exemption at 1 April	£150

Council Tax Bands A-D and on Council Tax Support at 1 April

Council Tax Support is a means tested benefit to help people on low incomes pay their Council Tax. Eligible households in Council Tax Bands A-D have already received £150 under the main EBR scheme. Under the HDC local scheme, they will receive a top-up payment of £25.

Council Tax Bands E-H and on Council Tax Support at 1 April

There is no eligibility for a payment under the main EBR scheme for households in Council Tax Bands E-H who are in receipt of means tested Council Tax Support and so making an award under the HDC local scheme will mean that all households on Council Tax Support will receive financial support.

Council Tax Bands F-H and in receipt of a Disabled Band Reduction at 1 April

A Disabled Band Reduction is awarded where a property has been adapted to take account of a disabled person's needs and moves the property to a lower band. People living in a Band A–E property with a DBR receive £150 under the main scheme.

Awards under the HDC local scheme ensure that all households where a Disabled Band Reduction has been awarded will receive financial support.

Council Tax Bands E-H with an N, S, U or W exemption at 1 April

People in Bands A-D with an N, S, U or W exemption receive £150 under the main scheme. Awards under the HDC local scheme ensure that all households will receive financial support where one of the following exemptions has been awarded:

N: all residents are students

S: all residents are under the age of 18

U: all residents are classed as Severely Mentally Impaired

W: an annexe is occupied by an elderly or disabled relative of the householder

- 2.2 In addition, applications will be accepted from the Council's Resident Advice and Information Team on behalf of households they are supporting. The level of award will depend on the amount of budget left and the individual circumstances of the customer.
- 2.3 In line with government guidance the following households will not be eligible for a rebate under the Local Scheme:
 - occupants of student halls (Class M)
 - occupiers of MoD supported properties (Class O)
 - properties where a local authority, corporate body, charities, private schools, religious governing bodies and other similar bodies such as housing associations and government bodies are the liable party for Council Tax

3.0 Application and payment process

- 3.1 The households eligible for a rebate under the Local Scheme will be identified from HDC databases.
- 3.2 The underlying principle of the EBR scheme is to help people with the increased cost of living and so, where possible, the payment will be made by BACS to the bank account of the person liable to pay Council Tax.
- 3.3 Where bank details are already held and have been verified, the rebate will automatically be paid to the nominated bank account.
- 3.4 Where bank details are not held, the eligible householder will be invited to complete a short application form to securely provide their bank details. This information will be verified as part of the pre-payment assurance checks required by Government and then paid to the relevant bank account.

- 3.5 Where bank details are not provided or do not meet the verification standards, the rebate will be credited to the eligible householder's Council Tax account reducing the amount they have to pay.
- 3.6 One rebate will be made per household regardless of the number of occupants or liable Council Tax payers.
- 3.7 All payments will be made by 30 November 2022.

4.0 Overpayments

- 4.1 If a rebate is made to a household and it is later established that they were not eligible for such a payment, action will be taken to recover the overpayment.

5.0 Appeals

- 5.1 There is no right of appeal regarding decisions made under the Energy Bills Rebate - Local Scheme.

6.0 Fraud

- 6.1 In accordance with government guidance, applications to the Local Scheme may be subject to pre-payment checks (including with third-party agencies) prior to payment. If fraudulent claims are subsequently detected after the rebate is awarded, action will be taken to reclaim any monies paid.