

Important notes about your summons – please read.

Why have I been sent this summons?


The Council has sent you this summons because you have not paid your Council Tax account exactly in line with your instalment plan. They have already sent you a reminder or final notice, so the law says that they must now send you a summons for the whole balance on your account.


If you want to stop the case going before the Magistrates' Court, you need to pay the full amount shown on the front of this summons, including the summons costs, **before the hearing date**. See 'How to Pay' over the page for details.

What if I can't pay in full before the hearing?

If you have not paid the full amount on the summons, including the summons costs, by the hearing date, the Council will ask the magistrates for a **Liability Order**. This will add extra costs to your bill. The Liability Order gives the Council certain powers, such as:

- they can arrange to take money out of your wage or benefit; and
- they can arrange for bailiffs to take away some of your belongings and sell them.

However, the Council will consider making a payment arrangement with you and if you keep it exactly up to date, they will not use the full powers which the Liability Order gives them. If you cannot pay in full, please call the Council Tax office on  **0113 398 4732** straight away. You will need to give details of your income and outgoings.

If you cannot call, you can speak to Council staff face-to-face at 2 Great George Street in town, or you can email ctax.recovery@leeds.gov.uk 


Do I have to go to the Magistrates' Court for the hearing?

You **do not** need to go to Court if you just want to **discuss** a payment arrangement. This you can do by ringing the Council, sending an email or calling at the Council's One Stop Shop Centres. See 'If you need to contact the Council' over the page.

The Magistrates cannot make a payment arrangement with you. However, staff from the Council Tax office will be at court 30 minutes before your hearing, so you can speak to them then. However, **please make every effort to contact the Council before the hearing date**, as it can be very busy at court on the hearing date.

You may decide to attend court if you have a 'valid defence' to stop the Council asking for a Liability Order. There are two main defences which can do this:


1. the Council has not followed the procedures set down in law when trying to collect your Council Tax; or
2. you have paid all the overdue Council Tax within the time limit given on the last reminder or final notice sent to you.

However, if you think you have one of these defences, please call the Council Tax office straight away on  **0113 398 4732** so they can look into it for you. The Council may tell you that you do not need to go to court.

You can speak to the Court about these valid defences, or you can get a solicitor to speak for you. You will need to provide evidence to back up what you say. The Court cannot take into account any other reasons why you have not paid, even if you have been **unable to pay**. They cannot change the law and they must apply it as it stands.

(please turn over)

What if I was on benefit during the period on the summons?

You cannot talk to the Court about the fact that you believe you should have had Housing or Council Tax Benefit for the period concerned or part of it. Instead, you should ring  **0113 222 4404** straight away and **select option '1'**. If you cannot call, **send an email to lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk**, or contact the council some other way - see below for details.


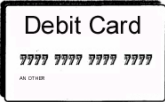

What if I think I should not have been charged for Council Tax, or I think that I should have had a discount or exemption?

You cannot talk to the Court about these things, because they are things which have to be put forward to a Valuation Tribunal (the Tribunal is not part of the council).

If you think your charge is wrong, contact the Council and they will look into it for you. If they do not agree with you, they will tell you how to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.

If you have already written to the Valuation Tribunal and are waiting to hear about it, you still have to pay your Council Tax in full. If your appeal is successful, the Council will send you a refund if you have overpaid and do not owe any other Council Tax.

How to Pay

<p>In person – you can pay at any Post Office, Paypoint or Payzone outlet for free. Please take your summons or bill with you when you go to pay and make sure you have not torn or written over the bar code on the front. At the Post Office you can pay by cash or cheque (made payable to Post Office Ltd) but Paypoint outlets are cash-only, and Payzone outlets are cash or debit card payments only.</p>	
<p>By debit card over the telephone – if you have a touch-tone phone, just ring (0113) 395 7100 and follow the easy, step-by-step instructions. You can ring any time – this service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Or, call 0113 222 4404 during office hours to speak to Council staff and pay by card.</p>	
<p>Over the Internet – to pay by debit card, go to www.leeds.gov.uk/epayments</p>	

If you need to contact the Council...

If you have a question or you need help or advice, please contact the Council straight away. Please have your Council Tax **account number** with you – it is on the **front of your summons**.

	<p>Call 0113 398 4732 for Council Tax enquiries Call 0113 222 4404 and select option 1 if you want to discuss Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. Opening times are 8am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, and 8am to 4:30pm on Friday.</p>
	<p>If you are deaf and use a Minicom, ring 0113 222 4410</p>
	<p>You can email the Council at ctax.recovery@leeds.gov.uk. Please do not forget to give your Council Tax account number from your bill in your email.</p>
	<p>If you want to speak to someone in person, please call at any of the Council's One Stop Centres. The town centre one is at 2 Great George Street, Leeds (formerly the City of Leeds school). Opening times: Monday to Thursday 8.30 am - 4pm, Friday 9.30 am - 4pm. The building is fully wheelchair accessible, has disabled parking bays and the enquiry counter has an induction loop.</p>
	<p>If you are having problems paying your Council Tax due to other serious debt problems, please ring: 0113 2475096 or 0113 3952783, to get debt and benefit advice.</p>