

COUNCIL TAX

(2 people having a chat in a relaxed cafe style environment)

Person 1: How are you? I've not seen you for a while.

Person 2: I'm really worried. Work have reduced my hours and now I've had this letter from Council Tax. It looks important but I don't really understand it. Can you help?

Person 1: Yes of course. Pass it here. Let me have a look.

Person 2 Oh great thank you.

Both read letter.

Person 1 Ok I think the letter is saying that you are behind with your Council Tax payments and you need to pay them straight away.

Person 2: But what is Council Tax. Why is it so important?

Person 1: Because Council Tax pays for all local services – repairs to roads, bins being emptied, children being kept safe, older people being looked after, all those kinds of things. And if you don't pay your Council tax you might have to go to court.

Person 2: Oh dear. That's a worry. I had no idea. How much do I owe?

Person 1: The letter says you haven't paid anything yet this year.

Person 2: That can't be right. I'm sure I have a direct debit and it comes out every month without me having to do anything. Maybe there's been a problem since hours at work have been reduced and now I earn less.

Person 1: Well the Council say they haven't received any payments. You may be able to claim Council Tax Support which can help people who are low incomes to pay their Council Tax. It is really important you don't ignore it though and get in touch with them quickly.

Person 2: It would be good to have some help like that Council Tax Support. How do find out if I can get this help?

Person 1: I think you should check your account online to find out what has happened. You can use this to check if you can get Council Tax Support too.

Person 2: But that's no good. I can't use the internet and I can't speak to them on the phone. What can I do?

Person 1: It's quite easy to at least check your Council Tax account on-line. Look I'll show you.

Shows website on iPad and logging into account.

Person 1: You see I just click on this webpage and then put in my account number and password. And then it tells you what you have paid and how much you still owe this year. You should set up an account.

Person 2: That looks a lot simpler than I thought. But how do I set up an account? I don't have a tablet or a computer?

Person 1: That's not a problem. You can do it on your phone too. And the Council run training courses for Deaf people to help them get online.

Person 2: Ok that sounds good. I'll try that next time. But I think I need to do something quickly with this letter. What do you suggest?

Person 1: When they write to me they give me a text number so I can send a text message to sort out any problems or to check what the letter is saying. Have you nothing like this?

Person 2: No but it sounds like a great idea. Can I contact them this way too?

Person 1: I think it's available for any Deaf person who needs to ask about their council Tax. Yes, look here on your letter – it says if you have problems contacting the council on-line you can ask for help.

Shows ConnectAbility link.



The banner features a woman smiling at a laptop on the left. The top has a blue and yellow graphic with the words 'CONNECT' and 'ABILITY'. The main text asks if the user is disabled and needs help contacting Barnsley Council. At the bottom, it provides contact information: a text number (represented by six hash symbols) and an email address (####@barnsley.gov.uk).

CONNECT **ABILITY**

Are you disabled and need help when contacting Barnsley Council?

To discuss how we can help you:
Text: ##### ##### Email: ####@barnsley.gov.uk

Person 2: That's great thank you. I feel more confident now. I'll get in touch with ConnectAbility today and see if I can sort out the problem with someone in Council Tax. In fact I'll go and do that now.

Person 1: Good luck. See you later. Bye.

Person 2: Bye.