

Council Tax information about Enforcement Agents

If the Council holds a Liability Order for outstanding Council Tax your account may be passed to an Enforcement Agent, previously known as Bailiffs.

What happens if my arrears are passed to an Enforcement Agent?

If your account is passed to an Enforcement Agent for collection, a fee of £75.00 will be added to your account. The Enforcement Agent will contact you asking you to arrange payment of the outstanding balance plus the fee. This is known as the Compliance Stage and it is important that you respond to the Enforcement Agent's letter promptly in order to avoid further action and additional fees being added. If you do not contact, or if you make a payment arrangement that you do not keep to, the Enforcement Agent will visit your home.

For further information please see Enforcement Fees.

What happens when an Enforcement Agent visits my home?

If the Enforcement Agent has to visit your property, a further fee of at least £235.00 will be added to your account. This is known as the Enforcement Stage. Enforcement Agents will carry written authorisation from the Council, which you can ask to see. The Enforcement Agent will try to obtain full payment from you, including fees. Please see above for further information about fees.

If you cannot make full payment, the Enforcement Agent can seize goods with a value of up to the amount owed, including fees. This is known as Taking Control of Goods. The Enforcement Agent may then either agree a Controlled Goods Agreement with you, or arrange for the removal of the goods.

Controlled Goods Agreement

The Enforcement Agent may let the goods stay in your property, providing you make an arrangement to pay. The Enforcement Agent will provide you with a list of the goods covered, and if you do not keep up the payments, they can return and remove the goods.

Removal of Goods

If the Enforcement Agent has to visit your property to attempt to remove goods, a fee of at least £110 will be added to your account. This is known as the Sale or Disposal Stage.

There will be additional costs (disbursements) involved with this process including the costs of removal, storage and the auctioneer's fees.

Usually, goods sold at auction will not make the same money you paid for them.

What can the Enforcement Agent take?

Enforcement Agents can only remove goods belonging to the person named on the liability order. They cannot remove certain goods; these include:

- Fixtures and fittings
- Tools, books, vehicles and other equipment that is necessary for your personal use or for work
- Food, clothes, bedding, furniture, and household equipment that is necessary to meet basic needs of you and your family.

What happens if I can't pay and I don't have many possessions?

If the Enforcement Agent cannot find enough goods to cover the amount owed, or if they cannot gain entry to the property, they will tell the Council.

The Council will then have no choice but to take another course of action such as:

- Putting a charge on your property.
- Apply to make you bankrupt
- Apply to the magistrates' court for your committal to prison.

What if I'm not in when the Enforcement Agent calls?

If you are not in when the Enforcement Agent calls, they will leave their contact details. You should either pay in full including the fees or contact the Enforcement Agent to arrange another visit.

How can I make a complaint about the Enforcement Agent?

We monitor the Enforcement Agents' performance on a continual basis, to ensure that the Enforcement Agents are working within the terms and conditions of our contract. We have a code of practice in place.

This is in addition to the Enforcement Agents' own code of practice and lays down the guidelines and procedures that the Enforcement Agent is required to follow.

If you think the Enforcement Agent has done anything wrong, you can complain to the Council.

Appendix A**ENFORCEMENT AGENT FEES SCHEDULE (Extract)**

Fees recoverable under regulation 4 of The Taking Control of Goods (Fees) Regulations 2014

Table 1

Enforcement other than under a High Court Writ

Fee Stage	Fixed Fee	Percentage fee (Reg. 7):percentage of sum to be recovered exceeding £1500
Compliance stage	£75	0%
Enforcement stage	£235	7.5%
Sale or disposal stage	£110	7.5%

Explanatory Note (This note is not part of the regulations)]

- The Compliance stage comprises all activities relating to enforcement from the **receipt** of the instruction by the Enforcement Agent. If a payment arrangement is agreed and maintained at this stage, the fee is limited to £75
- The Enforcement stage comprises all activities relating to enforcement from the **first attendance** at the premises. The fee of £235 (plus a percentage if the debt exceeds £1500) is applied at this stage if a payment arrangement is not made and maintained at the compliance stage; but does not include the commencement of the sale or disposal of goods fees.
- The Sale or Disposal stage comprises all activities relating to enforcement from the first attendance at the property for the purpose of transporting goods to the place of sale, or from commencing preparation for sale if the sale is to be held on the premises.