

COUNCIL TAX BRANCH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAXATION

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
TRANSPORT AND THE REGIONS

ZONE 5/J2
ELAND HOUSE
BRESSENDEN PLACE
LONDON SW1E 5DU

TELEPHONE: 0171 890 4206
FAX: 0171 890 4209
GTN CODE: 3533 4206
EMAIL: COUNCIL.TAX.LGT@DIAL.PIPEX.COM

OUR REF: CTIL 18

16 JUNE 1999

Dear Chief Finance Officer

COUNCIL TAX INFORMATION LETTER NO.18

The issues covered in this letter are:

Amendment to the Reduction for disabilities scheme

Amendment to Exempt Class A

The Council Tax (Reductions for Disabilities) (Amendment) Regulations 1999 SI.No. 1999/1004;

This amendment was laid before Parliament on 7 April.

As explained in CTIL 17, the Government announced on 8 February in its National Carers Strategy Report that the council tax reductions for disabilities scheme will be extended to dwellings in valuation band A. The above amendment has been made.

The standard qualifying criteria for a reduction remain the same, i.e. an extra room or sufficient floorspace for wheelchair circulation will be required in order to qualify for a reduction. The reduction will be 1/9th of band D, i.e. equivalent to that currently given to dwellings in bands B, C and D. The new arrangements will come into effect on 1 April 2000.

The Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (Amendment) (No.2) Order 1999 SI.No. 1999/1522

This amendment was laid before Parliament on 8 June and its purpose is explained below.

Council Tax Exempt Class A exempts vacant dwellings (i.e. dwellings which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished) which require or are undergoing major repair works to render them habitable. Class A also exempts dwellings which are undergoing structural repair works which have not been substantially completed. At present, there is no time limit in which to commence repair works or to complete the repair works once started. Similarly, once structural alterations are underway, there is no time limit in which to complete the alterations before the exemption expires. Once repairs or structural alterations have been substantially completed, the dwelling continues to be exempt, for a maximum of six months, whilst it remains vacant.

From 1 April 2000, the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (Amendment) (No.2) Order 1999 SI No1522 limits the period of exemption to one year. This means that, from 1 April 2000, any dwelling which has been exempt by Class A for a year or more, regardless of whether the repairs or structural alterations have been completed, will cease to be exempt.

This amendment has been made in support of the DETR's work to encourage the use of long term empty dwellings. I have attached a copy of the new release on the announcement.

Further enquiries

If you have any queries about the reduction for disabilities scheme or Exempt Class A call Tom Maunsell on 0171 890 4187 or Jeremy Ketley on 0171 890 4206.

Staff changes in LGT

The Head of Local Government Taxation Division, Stephen Hughes, has left the DETR to take up a new post at Brent. We will advise of his replacement in due course.

Andrew Colski has taken over from Mark Barnett as head of the Business Rates Branch and Luis Jarero has joined the Business Rates branch to work on prescribed industries.

e-mailing CTILs

A couple of years ago, we started e-mailing copies of CTILs instead of posting to those of you who wished to receive CTILs this way and who provided their e-mail address. About 50 people receive CTILs this way. This saves us a bit of time and means you receive CTILs immediately. If any more of you would like to receive CTILs by e-mail can you provide us with your name and address (for cross referencing purposes) and your e-mail address. If you wish you can e-mail this to us on: council.tax.lgt@dial.pipex.com

Updating or mailing list

If any of you no longer wish or need to receive CTILs, or any details have changed, please let us know.

Jeremy Ketley