



Ein cyf/Our ref: RE/0226/20

Russell George MS
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12 June 2020

Dear Russell,

I apologise for the delay in following up the reply to your question about the application of council tax premiums during the coronavirus pandemic (WAQ79660). You asked what consideration has been given to suspending the vacant property council tax premium during and after the coronavirus outbreak.

The application of council tax premiums is a matter for individual local authorities. All authorities in Wales have discretionary powers, under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to apply council tax premiums to long-term empty properties. As well as determining whether to apply a premium, authorities may determine the level of premium to apply, up to 100%. Premiums may only be charged after a property has been empty for at least 12 months. Authorities also have powers to apply discounts to the council tax charged on empty homes.

These powers were provided as discretionary powers to enable local authorities to determine the approach to council tax on empty properties in their areas, taking account of local circumstances. The Welsh Government has no plans to alter the discretionary nature of these powers.

Local authorities in Wales also have powers to reduce council tax bills for households experiencing hardship. We are working with them to consider what support they can offer during this difficult time to ease the financial strains being faced by people across the country. Anyone experiencing difficulty in paying their council tax bill should check whether they might be eligible for support and contact their local authority. Our website provides information on the range of support available: <https://gov.wales/pay-less-council-tax>

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.