

News release
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For immediate release

Charity urges families to claim council tax concessions

With the first instalment of this year's council tax now due, charity Contact a Family is urging families with disabled children to make sure they claim the reductions and discounts they are entitled to.

“The average income of families with disabled children is almost one quarter below the UK average and yet it costs up to three times more to bring up a disabled child,” said Mark Robertson, Contact a Family Head of Campaigns. “For many of these families, it’s vital that they claim the council tax concessions they’re entitled to, to avoid financial hardship.”

Many families are unaware that they can reduce their council tax by one band, regardless of income or savings, simply by applying for a disability reduction. To qualify, the disabled child must either use a wheelchair indoors at all times; have a second kitchen or bathroom for their use, or have another room which is predominantly for them.

Some families, like single parent families, may be entitled to a 25% discount on their council tax bills, while families on low incomes may also be in line for council tax benefit.

“Some families with disabled children face a daily struggle to make ends meet,” said Mark Robertson, “so we’re encouraging them to claim all the council tax concessions they are due. After all, just a small amount of money can make all the difference.”

To find out if you are entitled to council tax concessions, and for information on other benefits and tax credits, telephone Contact a Family's helpline on 0808 808 3555, or visit the website at www.cafamily.org.uk.

Ends

For further information

- Contact Louise Moffatt on 020 7608 8741, louise.moffatt@cafamily.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

- Contact a Family is a national organisation that provides support, advice and information for families with disabled children. It provides information on over 3,000 conditions and produces the Contact a Family Directory which details specific conditions, rare disorders and UK family support groups. For further information on Contact a Family and the Directory, visit the website at www.cafamily.org.uk.
- There are around 770,000 disabled children under 16 in the UK, which equates to 5% of all under 16s.
- According to the Times, March 28 2007, Band D bills in England increased by 4.2% this year; while in Scotland they increased by an average of 1.9%, partly due to a higher than usual funding settlement from the Scottish Parliament (source PublicFinance.co.uk). In Wales, the average increase was 4.3% according to the Welsh Local Government Association.
- A 2004 Family Fund survey of families with disabled children 'How do they manage?' found that the average income of respondents was £15,270, 23.5% below the average income for the UK as a whole. The same study found that average expenditure for these families was above the UK average, at £21,980 a year, due to the extra costs of raising a disabled child.
- A 1998 Joseph Rowntree Study, "Paying to Care", found that it costs up to three times as much to raise a disabled child, as it does to raise a child without disabilities.
- Publicity on Council Tax concessions, and a new factsheet, are being produced as part of Contact a Family's three year Pounds for Parents campaign, which will encourage parents with disabled children to claim all the benefits and tax credits they are entitled to. The campaign is funded by Sainsbury family trust, True Colours.

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