# Manchester council leads UK with exemption of council tax for terminally ill residents



Two leading UK end-of-life charities have called for councils nationwide to exempt people diagnosed with less than 12 months to live from paying council tax, following a pioneering initiative by Manchester City Council. The council’s scheme, introduced last month, allows residents with terminal illnesses to apply for exemption by submitting a clinician-issued letter confirming their prognosis. This means neither the individual nor their household will have to pay council tax until the end of the financial year following their death, or for a few months if death occurs near the year-end.

Nathaniel Dye, a 39-year-old primary school music teacher from London with terminal cancer, emphasises the importance of such relief. Although council tax payments—around £200 per month in his case—may seem modest, he describes the exemption as "peace of mind" that enables him to focus on life’s final moments without financial worry. "Maybe even being able to afford some kind of luxuries as you’re nearing end of life that otherwise might not be able to afford," he told the BBC.

Terminal illness often causes severe financial strain, particularly for working-age individuals who may have to reduce or stop work altogether, while their carers also face income losses. Jamie Thunder from Marie Curie highlights how additional costs—such as heightened energy bills due to medical devices—compound these difficulties. “Council tax is one of the larger bills people worry about,” he adds. Rapid enforcement of unpaid council tax can exacerbate stress at an already difficult time, meaning relief from this burden is a “really valuable thing.”

Manchester City Council estimates around 175 residents—mainly of working age—will benefit from the new policy. Councillor Bev Craig, leader of Manchester City Council, said the measure reflected the council’s commitment to flexible and compassionate public services, stressing that council tax remains a significant bill for many households. “We’re saying as a council, what can we do practically to take away one of those biggest bills people have to worry about?” she said.

For those qualifying, medical professionals can apply on their behalf using an SR1 form confirming a terminal diagnosis, sent directly to the council. This operational detail has been well set up to ensure timely support.

The call by Marie Curie and Hospice UK for other local councils and devolved governments to follow Manchester’s lead aligns with broader efforts to tackle end-of-life poverty. While councils generally offer some discretion and help with council tax payments for vulnerable residents, formal exemption for the terminally ill remains rare. The Local Government Association and devolved administrations note that support already exists in various forms, but the new Manchester model suggests a more straightforward and compassionate approach.

Additional financial support for people with terminal illnesses also exists through grants, which can help with household costs or home adaptations, although individuals are advised to seek benefits advice to understand potential impacts on other entitlements. Mental health charities similarly point out that certain conditions, including dementia or stroke effects, may entitle residents to council tax reductions up to 100%, further illustrating the patchwork of available assistance.

In short, Manchester’s step to scrap council tax for the terminally ill marks a significant development in reducing financial burdens for vulnerable individuals and families during profoundly difficult times, setting a potential precedent for other authorities to follow.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo), [[2]](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/9727/manchester_city_council_takes_pioneering_step_to_tackle_end_of_life_poverty), [[3]](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/sr1), [[7]](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Scrap-council-tax-for-terminally-ill-people-charity-says/62595)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/9727/manchester_city_council_takes_pioneering_step_to_tackle_end_of_life_poverty), [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/sr1), [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo), [[7]](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Scrap-council-tax-for-terminally-ill-people-charity-says/62595)
* Paragraph 7 – [[4]](https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/information/money-and-work/grants-for-terminal-illness), [[6]](https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/news/residents-with-some-mental-health-conditions-could-get-council-tax-reductions-2731), [[5]](https://www.manchestermind.org/our-services/advice/benefits/council-tax-support/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr79dnx1r4mo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/9727/manchester_city_council_takes_pioneering_step_to_tackle_end_of_life_poverty> - Manchester City Council has partnered with Marie Curie to exempt residents diagnosed with terminal illnesses from paying council tax. This initiative aims to alleviate financial burdens during challenging times. The council estimates that approximately 175 residents, predominantly of working age, will benefit from this policy. The move is part of a broader strategy to address poverty and support vulnerable residents in Manchester. Councillor Bev Craig emphasized the importance of reducing financial stress for those facing terminal diagnoses, highlighting the council's commitment to compassionate public services.
3. <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/sr1> - Manchester City Council offers a council tax discount for individuals who are terminally ill or have a terminally ill household member. To qualify, a completed SR1 form, confirming a terminal illness, is required. Medical professionals can apply on behalf of the patient by emailing the council with the necessary documentation. This initiative aims to provide financial relief to those facing terminal diagnoses, ensuring they are not burdened by council tax payments during their final months.
4. <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/information/money-and-work/grants-for-terminal-illness> - Marie Curie provides information on grants available for individuals affected by terminal illnesses. These grants can assist with everyday household costs, home modifications, and holidays. The charity does not directly offer these grants but guides individuals to appropriate resources. It's important to note that some grants may impact existing benefits. Marie Curie advises consulting with a benefits adviser to understand the implications and to explore all available financial support options.
5. <https://www.manchestermind.org/our-services/advice/benefits/council-tax-support/> - Manchester Mind offers guidance on council tax support and reductions for residents in Manchester. Depending on individual circumstances, support or reductions may be available. The council provides a 25% reduction for single occupants and further deductions for those with severe mental impairments. Applications can be made online, and Manchester Mind directs individuals to the council's website for more information. They also recommend consulting with Citizens Advice for comprehensive support and advice on council tax matters.
6. <https://www.gmmh.nhs.uk/news/residents-with-some-mental-health-conditions-could-get-council-tax-reductions-2731> - Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust highlights that residents diagnosed with certain mental health conditions, such as dementia or the effects of a stroke, may be eligible for council tax reductions of up to 100%. To qualify, individuals must be certified by a registered medical practitioner and be entitled to specific benefits like Attendance Allowance. The Trust encourages families, friends, and carers to assist eligible individuals in applying for these reductions to alleviate financial burdens.
7. <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Scrap-council-tax-for-terminally-ill-people-charity-says/62595> - Marie Curie has called for councils across England to exempt individuals with terminal illnesses from paying council tax. This appeal follows Manchester City Council's proposal to change its discretionary council tax policy to support those diagnosed with terminal illnesses. The council plans to use the SR1 form, completed by clinicians, to confirm a terminal medical condition, thereby reducing council tax for the household until the resident's death. Marie Curie urges other councils to adopt similar measures to support individuals facing end-of-life challenges.