

Council Tax relief for troops on operations

On the 25th September 2007 the Defence Secretary, Des Browne, announced a Council Tax rebate for military families living in SFA or their own home, whose spouse or partner is serving in Afghanistan or Iraq. The key points about the new bonus are as follows:

- Armed Forces personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan will benefit from a tax-free rebate on the cost of council tax in new measures announced by Defence Secretary Des Browne.
- All Service personnel who pay council tax for a property in the UK will receive financial support through a rebate payment, based on the number of days in theatre, and worth some £140 over a six month tour.
- The rebate will be paid by adjusting the rate of Operational Allowance and will be made only to those who are serving on operations in Afghanistan or Iraq and who actually pay council tax, or who pay Contributions in Lieu of Council Tax (CILOCT) for Service Family Accommodation.
- The payment will not affect any discount Service personnel have already agreed with their local authority. It is MOD's intention, as part of the administrative arrangements for the new scheme, to exclude personnel from payment if they have already negotiated a discount from local authorities for being absent on operational deployment.
- The additional payment will be made at the end of an operational tour in Afghanistan or Iraq. It will be based on the number of days in theatre, with tours shorter than six months being paid in proportion.
- Payment will be implemented from 1 April 2008 and will cover deployments from 1 October 2007.

In January 2008 it was announced that the MOD would be extending payment of Council Tax Relief to additional qualifying locations from 1 April 2008, backdated to cover deployments from 1 February 2008. The additional locations are as follows:

- Bahrain
- Bosnia
- British Forces South Atlantic Islands
- Diego Garcia
- Kosovo
- Kuwait

- Oman
- Qatar
- RN Ships in receipt of Deployment Welfare Package (DWP)
(Overseas)
- UN Operations

Payment of Council Tax Relief will be made at the end of the operational tour, based on the number of days in theatre. This payment applies to all Regular Service personnel, mobilised Reserves and Full Time Reserve Service (Full or Limited Commitment) personnel serving in operational locations specified by MOD who pay Council Tax, Rates in Northern Ireland or CILOCT for SFA.

Full details of eligibility and methods of claiming, which are to be made on return from deployment, will be published in JSP 754 prior to 1 April 2008.