

Does Gateshead really charge the highest council tax?

You may have seen this claim in social media comments or in our Focus leaflets and wondered how this can be true. A quick search online will bring up results that seem to contradict this. This is how we came to that conclusion.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities tracks council tax rates and publishes the data on its website as a series of tables¹. Anyone can download these and see the information. All local authorities are compared by how much they charge in council tax for a Band D property.

There are five different types of local authority in the UK²: county councils, district councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, and London boroughs. Gateshead is one of 36 Metropolitan Districts, alongside Newcastle, Sunderland, and North Tyneside. Other notable Metropolitan Districts include Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester.

Table 7 shows the details of the average Band D Council tax for all the Metropolitan Districts in the country. As you can see in this sample below, Gateshead is top of the list. Newcastle is the only one in the Tyneside area that makes it to the top ten highest band D tax rate list, and is about £150 less than we pay in Gateshead.

| Authority | Average council tax (Band D) |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Gateshead | 2070.54 |
| Walsall | 1985.48 |
| Liverpool | 1947.97 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne | 1919.32 |
| Coventry | 1909.87 |
| Wolverhampton | 1909.01 |
| Stockport | 1883.41 |
| Rochdale | 1867.78 |
| Oldham | 1863.16 |
| Salford | 1862.28 |

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-tax-levels-set-by-local-authorities-in-england-2023-to-2024>

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/communications-support/digital-councils/social-media/go-further/a-z-councils-online>

So among our peers, both locally and nationally, Gateshead does indeed charge the highest council tax when compared on the same terms.

What about our closest neighbours? Gateshead is again top of the list. The next highest tax in the region is Northumberland, at £85 less.

| Authority | Average council tax (Band D) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Gateshead | 2070.54 |
| Northumberland (Unitary Authority) | 1985.34 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne | 1919.32 |
| North Tyneside | 1851.15 |
| South Tyneside | 1829.62 |
| Sunderland | 1637.12 |