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Five city residents have each been awarded £250 worth of shopping vouchers as part of a competition run by Peterborough City Council. Winners were chosen at random from those who had paid their council tax for June, July and August 2017 by direct debit.

Councillor David Seaton, cabinet member for resources, said: "I'd like to congratulate our five prize winners, all of whom use the direct debit facility to pay their council tax. This competition was our way of thanking those residents who pay using direct debit, which is the easiest and most convenient way to pay your council tax. The majority of households in Peterborough pay in this way, however by running this competition we hope to encourage many more to do the same."

The city council processes almost one million payments every year, with approximately 65 per cent of Peterborough households paying their council tax by direct debit. Last month the council approved a new Payments Strategy aiming to encourage more residents to opt for cashless transactions when settling their bills with the local authority.

One of the winners, Clare Holden (pictured), on receiving her prize said: "At first I couldn't believe it so I checked online to make sure. I've put my award card aside for now, and plan to use my prize for Christmas shopping.

"I pay most of my bills by direct debit. It's just a lot easier, simple and more straightforward. No reminders needed, and you can't forget to pay."



Councillor David Seaton, cabinet member for resources, Clare Holden, one of the winners, Amanda Best, Serco partnership director.

The competition was sponsored by Serco, which began a ten-year strategic partnership with the council in 2011 and now runs many of the local authority's services including IT infrastructure, customer services, and many back office functions.

Speaking on behalf of Serco, Partnership Director Amanda Best commented: "Serco sponsored this competition to raise awareness of the direct debit option among those residents who still pay by cash, cheque and card.

"Paying by direct debit costs the council less to process than other payment methods, and that saving is important in helping the council deliver value for money to our residents.

“Delivering value for money is the cornerstone of Serco’s strategic partnership with the city council and, therefore, all of our staff working in Peterborough are dedicated to that aim.”

You can sign up online to [pay your council tax by direct debit](#)

(https://selfservice.peterborough.gov.uk/publicaccesslive/selfservice/services/directdebit.htm?_flowId=services%2Fdirectdebit&_flowExecutionKey=e1s1).