

More money in your pocket

If you are impacted by the increased costs of living and energy prices in particular, the following support is available.

This includes support from central government, the councils, and our partners.

If you are at risk of eviction or being cut-off from by your energy supplier, please access the help available as soon as possible.

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Cost of living support on GOV.UK

You can find out about many forms of support on the government website:
www.costoflivingsupport.campaign.gov.uk

Pension Credit

Pensioners are the age group least likely to be claiming all the financial help available to them, including Pension Credit. This can provide thousands of pounds in extra help each year.

Check if you can claim at www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim

Household Support Grants

If you're finding it difficult to keep warm, buy enough food or pay essential bills, you may be able to get extra help.

Residents in Lewes district and Eastbourne can now apply for help from the government's Household Support Fund, which local councils are now helping to pay out.

You must live within Lewes district or Eastbourne area, be over the age of 18, have recourse to public funds, and be finding it difficult to pay for heating, lighting, water bills or food. You must also be in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction but not receiving one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Income Based Job-Seeker's Allowance
- Income Based Employment & Support Allowance
- Or do not qualify for any means tested benefit but have a low household income.

You can get help with the cost of food and utility bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders.

For more information and to apply visit:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/HSG

Lewes District Council 'safety net' fund

Lewes District Council is offering funds to residents on a low income who will miss out on the government's £650 cost-of-living payments.

Our 'safety net' payment is available to eligible residents in Lewes district who are struggling to keep warm, buy enough food or pay essential bills.

To qualify you must currently receive housing benefit or council tax reduction but not one of the means-tested benefits that would qualify you for a cost-of-living payment from the government. Alternatively, you can claim if you do not receive a means-tested benefit but you have a low household income, as set out in the eligibility framework.

Details of who can claim are available at: lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/cost-of-living

The safety net award is a one-off payment of £400, that will be paid alongside the latest Household Support Fund payment of £250 which opened for applications in October 2022. You only need to apply once to receive a payment of £650.

The funding is limited and will be paid out on a first come, first served basis.

Apply via our grants portal: grantapproval.co.uk

Warm Spaces Directory

Warm Spaces are safe, non-judgemental spaces where you can: sit and be warm, study or work on your laptop (with access to Wi-fi), have a hot drink, be with company, access advice or information on things such as debt, bills, benefits and food. The directory is available at www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.ukWarmSpaces

Fuel vouchers

If you are struggling financially, have a pre-payment meter, have less than £4 on it, and not due a payment for a while, you can seek help.

You can phone your utility company and ask for a fuel voucher - worth £49 – which you can apply for twice a year and does not have to be repaid.

A PIN number is sent to your mobile phone. You show this at your top-up shop, along with your gas card or electricity key.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/covid-19/request-support-for-vulnerable-residents/fuel-voucher-scheme

Referrals for fuel vouchers are also available with a referral from Citizens Advice in Lewes district and Eastbourne. Phone Citizens Advice on **03444 111 444**.

Keep warm and well – warm home check service

East Sussex County Council provide a warm home check service which is available all year round. It offers advice and support to anyone who struggles to keep warm at home.

The service includes:

- advice on getting help to pay for heating
- an assessment of your home to identify how to keep warm
- small works such as improving insulation or repairing boilers
- emergency temporary heating

To be offered a home visit, you need to own your own property or rent it privately (in East Sussex) and have the owner's permission to do the work.

You must also either be:

- On a low income and be living with a long-term health condition or a disability

Or receive one of the following benefits:

- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Pension Guarantee Credit and/or Pension Savings Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

If you claim Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit then your eligibility will depend on your income

To find out more, text WARM to 80011 or phone 0800 464 7307.

Help if you are at risk of your power being cut off

Citizens Advice have set up an Extra Help Unit for people who are vulnerable or at risk of being disconnected by their energy provider. They can help raise complaints with your energy provider.

www.ehu.org.uk

Call the Citizens Advice Extra Help Unit on 0808 223 1133

Loans and grants to maintain your home

There are a number of loan and grant schemes available to help home-owners maintain their homes. This includes the Disabled Facilities Grant, home improvement loans and grants to repair your heating.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/apply-for-a-grant-or-loan

Citizens Advice - other grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills

Citizens Advice have information about other grants and benefits to help pay your energy bill. This includes Winter fuel payment, Warm Home Discount, Grants to help pay off your energy debts and Cold Weather Payments.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills

Phone Citizens Advice on **03444 111 444**.

Make heating your home more efficient

Warmer Sussex offer help improving your home to make it more energy efficient and make better use of sustainable energy.

www.warmersussex.co.uk

Phone Warmer Sussex on 0330 223 5755

Advice on reducing energy use at home

The Energy Saving Trust offer help to save money on bills at the same time as reducing your carbon footprint.

energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home

Phone Simple Energy Advice on 0800 444 202

The British Gas Energy Trust is an independent charity set up to support families and individuals facing financial hardship and energy debt. You do not need to be a British Gas customer to access help.

britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

Phone British Gas Energy Trust on 0121 348 7797

Help with water bills

Southern Water has set up a Customer Hardship Fund to help their customers in financial difficulty to reduce their water your bills or write-off debt.

There are three different types of support available:

- Up to 50% one-year bill reduction for customers hit temporarily by hard times

- Debt write-off of up to £2,000 for customers who have managed to get back on track with payments but will never be able to repay their debt
- A grant of up to £1,000 to make improvements to a customer's home

To find out more including who is eligible for help visit:

www.southernwater.co.uk/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund

Phone Southern Water on 0330 303 0368.

Help if you are struggling to afford food

If you are finding you can't afford food, there is a range of support available through local authority and community services.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/help-if-you-are-struggling-to-afford-food

For Lewes Residents, there is also the Lewes District Food Partnership, their leaflet can be found on the web page above.

Help if you are struggling to pay your Council Tax or need to claim Housing Benefit

Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible to claim Housing Benefit or a reduction on your Council Tax.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/how-to-claim-housing-benefit-or-council-tax-reduction

Exceptional hardship payments

The exceptional hardship payment fund has been set up to support our most vulnerable customers who have seen a reduction in the Government support which helped to pay their Council Tax liability or are suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances. Find out more at:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-exceptional-hardship-payments

Help if you might get evicted

Discretionary housing payments (DHPs) help those who are in receipt of housing benefits or the Housing Element of Universal Credit (UC) to meet the cost of their rent. This is normally awarded where there is a shortfall between the eligible rent and housing benefit or UC.

Find out more at:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/discretionary-housing-payments

Help with money and debt

If you are struggling with managing your money, debt or the causes of debt, there are several organisations that can help guide you.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/help-with-money-and-debt

Be Aware of Scams

Unfortunately, scammers are using the cost-of-living crisis to take advantage of those in need.

Anyone can be a victim irrespective of age, education or income and this can have a devastating impact.

Advice on how to spot and report scams:

Get Safe Online:

www.getsafeonline.org/personal/blog-item/frauds-you-may-encounter-during-the-cost-of-living-crisis

East Sussex County Council – Scams:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/trading-standards/consumer/scams

Trading Standards - Scams Team:

www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/work-areas/scams-team

To provide a correction or update to this information please email:
BPP@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk