

Help and advice

All our pockets have been hit by the rising cost of living and energy bills, so we've put together some guidance to signpost people who need it to the right support...



Fuel vouchers

If you are struggling to make ends meet, have a pre-payment meter with less than £4 on it, and are not due a payment for a while; you can phone your utility company and ask for a fuel voucher worth £49. You can apply for the voucher twice a year and it does not have to be repaid. A PIN number will be sent to your mobile phone which you show at your top-up shop, along with your gas card or electricity key. Referrals for fuel vouchers are also available from Citizens Advice in the Lewes District and Eastbourne. Call Citizens Advice on **03444 111 444**.

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

**citizens
advice**

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice have information about other grants and benefits to help pay your energy bill.

The list includes Winter fuel payments, Warm Home Discounts, Grants to help pay off your energy debts and Cold Weather Payments. You can call Citizens Advice on **03444 111 444**.

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

Energy Bills Discount Scheme

The Government has recently announced the Energy Bills Discount Scheme.

Domestic energy customers in Great Britain will receive a £200 cash discount on their bills this Autumn. The government will provide funding to all suppliers for them to pass on to their domestic energy customers from October. Customers will pay back the discount automatically in equal instalments over five years, starting from financial year 2023-24, when it's expected that wholesale gas prices will come down. This is expected to be reflected as an increase to standing charges on bills. It is hoped this approach will help spread the increased costs of global prices over time in a way that is more manageable for households. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will set out more detail on this policy in a consultation later this year.

Households in England in Council Tax Bands A-D, who are not exempt from Council Tax, will be eligible for a £150 Council Tax Rebate payment from April this year. The rebate will be made by local authorities as a payment to households and won't have to be repaid. 80% of households in England are in Council Tax Bands A-D, so they will benefit from this rebate, but it will not be paid for second homes or empty properties. Households in England in Bands A-D that pay less than £150 or do not pay Council Tax as a result of Local Council Tax Support will also be eligible for a payment of £150. People in receipt of the Single Person Discount in Bands A-D will also be eligible for a payment of £150.

www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-to-receive-350-boost-to-help-with-rising-energy-costs

**ENERGY
BILLS
REBATE**
#EnergyBillsRebate

**Not Costing
the Earth**



HOMES FIRST

Working together to reduce our carbon footprint

Make heating your home more efficient

Warmer Sussex can offer help to improve your home to make it more energy efficient and make better use of sustainable energy. You can call Warmer Sussex on **0330 223 5755**.

www.warmersussex.co.uk

**warmer
sussex**

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. You can call Simple Energy Advice on **0800 444 202**.

energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home

**energy
saving
trust**

**British Gas
Energy Trust**

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. You can call the British Gas Energy Trust on **0121 348 7797**.

britishgasenergytrust.org.uk



Help with water bills

Southern Water has set up a Customer Hardship Fund to help their customers in financial difficulty reduce their water 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's eligible, you can call Southern Water on 0330 303 0368 or visit their website

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

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. You can find out more on the website:

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 are suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances.



You can find out more on the website:

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 & 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

Loans and grants to maintain your home

There are a number of loan and grant schemes available to help homeowners 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

Debt Respite Scheme

The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space) gives someone with debt the right to legal protections from creditor action. There are two kinds of breathing space: a standard breathing space and a mental health crisis breathing space. A standard breathing space is available to any client with problem debt and gives them legal protections from creditor action for up to 60 days. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors and freezing most interest and charges on their debts. The mental health crisis breathing space is only available to a client who is receiving mental health crisis treatment. The mental health crisis breathing space has some stronger protections than the standard breathing space and lasts as long as the client's mental health crisis treatment, plus 30 days (no matter how long the crisis treatment lasts). You can find out more at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance-for-money-advisers

Charity Grant Search

Charity-run website Turn2us has an easy-to-use grant search which tells you how to contact any suitable charities directly, or you can register for a free account to send online enquiries and applications to charities through the site: www.turn2us.org.uk

Who can apply? *Anyone*

What's the maximum award? *Varies*

What does it cover? *Varies*, but includes items such as household essentials, clothes and medical help.

Grants and schemes from Energy Companies

The following energy companies offer grants and schemes that are open to anyone, not just their own customers:

British Gas Energy Trust

www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

EDF Energy

www.edfenergy.com

Eon Energy Fund

www.eonenergy.com

There are also companies who offer grants specifically for their customers:

Scottish Power Hardship Fund

www.sedhardship.fund

SSE Priority Assistance Fund - check eligibility by calling 0800 072 8616.

For other providers or general advice, contact Simple Energy Advice on 0800 444 202.

citizens
advice



The Extra Help Unit can assist if you're at risk of having your power cut off

Citizens Advice have set up the Extra Help Unit for people who are vulnerable or at risk of being disconnected so that they can help raise complaints with your energy provider.

You can call the Citizens Advice Extra Help Unit on 0808 223 1133.

www.ehu.org.uk

Help if you are struggling to afford food

If you are finding it hard to afford food, there's 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

