

Your guide to cost of living support in 2024



We can help.

If you're having difficulty paying your rent or household bills, please get in touch with us.



Talk to us

Your housing officer can:

- ✓ provide guidance to help reduce your debts and manage your money
- ✓ refer you to free services that provide specialised support, and
- ✓ help you with grant and benefit application forms.

See the back page for your housing officer's contact details.

There's also lots of support information on our website:
www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/support

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This guide provides an overview of many schemes and support organisations, with links to their websites to find out more.

If you need support

Please talk to us, we can help.

If you don't have access to the internet

Please get in touch with your housing officer. They can talk to you about the support available. Please see the back page for contact details.

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All the information in one place



With so many schemes and benefits, offered by the government, councils and local organisations, it's hard to know where to look.

Below are a few great websites, that provide cost of living information and advice in one place.

**Money
Helper**

- ✓ Free, impartial money and pension guidance
- ✓ Easy to use and backed by government
- ✓ Based on your circumstances
- ✓ Available online, web chat or over the phone

☎ 0800 138 7777

www.moneyhelper.org.uk

**Help for
Households**

Help for Households is a government website that explains what support is available to help with the cost of living. This includes:

- ✓ benefits and payments
- ✓ bills and allowances
- ✓ housing
- ✓ travel
- ✓ childcare

www.gov.uk/helpforhouseholds

Leicestershire local authority

Leicestershire County Council has created a central hub of information about managing increased household costs:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/cost-of-living

☎ 0116 232 3232

Specialist housing support



Our Housing Officers can provide advice, but you may benefit from specialist local support, including:



Citizens Advice – housing, benefits, debt and work advice.

There are centres across Leicestershire:

www.citizensadviceleicestershire.org ☎ 0808 278 7854



The Bridge: Housing Matters service – a free, floating housing-related support service. They help people with housing difficulties such as lack of furniture, managing bills and little or no income. ☎ 0800 038 5964

www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk



First Contact Plus – information and support across Leics:

www.firstcontactplus.org.uk 📧 firstcontact@leics.gov.uk

These services are all free. For The Bridge and First Contact Plus, you can find links to self refer on their websites. If you need help, or would like us to refer you, please contact your housing officer (see back page).

Debt support



StepChange - Debt support charity

Free, confidential and expert money guidance with support for as long as you need it.

www.stepchange.org ☎ 0800 138 1111

Benefit entitlements



turn2us - Benefits calculator

Quickly and easily check what benefits you may be entitled to. turn2us.org.uk/get-support



Discretionary Housing Payments

These are a top-up to Housing Benefits or the Housing Element of your Universal Credit award, and are available if your local council considers that you need extra help with housing costs.

They are issued through your local council. Find out more on their websites – search for '**Discretionary Housing Payments**':

Blaby District Council: www.blaby.gov.uk ☎ 0116 275 0555

Charnwood Borough Council:
www.charnwood.gov.uk ☎ 01509 263151

Harborough District Council:
www.harborough.gov.uk ☎ 01858 828282

Melton Borough Council: www.melton.gov.uk ☎ 01664 502502

North West Leicestershire District Council:
www.nwleics.gov.uk ☎ 01530 454545

Rushcliffe Borough Council:
www.rushcliffe.gov.uk ☎ 0115 981 9911

Local authority Household Support Fund

This fund provides financial support for vulnerable households who can't afford to pay for food or energy.

How to apply for the fund: You can't apply for this fund directly, **you'll need to be referred** by a professional support worker. Your GP, school, or your housing officer can also refer you. If you'd like help, please get in touch with your housing officer (see back page for details). This fund is available until **31 March 2024**.

Find out more on the Leicestershire County Council website:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/household-support-fund

☎ 0116 232 3232

Food bank vouchers



Food is one of the biggest household expenses. If you're struggling to feed yourself or your family, food banks, such as the Trussell Trust, can provide emergency food.



To get an emergency food parcel from a Trussell Trust food bank, you'll need to be referred and provided with a voucher.

We can issue Trussell Trust food bank vouchers.

If you need food vouchers, please give us a call: **0300 1234 009.**

Find out more: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/food-banks

Community Fridges

Community Fridges make surplus food available for anyone – either freely or at a discounted rate.

Surplus perishable food is donated by supermarkets, local food businesses, producers and households. The fridges are **available for anyone** to get quality food that would otherwise be thrown away. They're often a place for people to eat together and learn new skills.

Find a Fridge: www.communityfridgemap.org.uk

Healthy Start card

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk with Healthy Start.



The scheme provides you with a Healthy Start card with money on it to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses and milk. The card is topped up every 4 weeks.

Find out more and apply: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Support with increasing energy and utility costs




If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, your supplier **MUST** work with you to agree a **payment plan you can afford**.

If you can't agree on a way to pay, you can get help from Citizens Advice.

They may be able to refer you to their Extra Help Unit, which helps people through difficulties with their energy supplier.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk


 **0800 144 8848**

Support from National Energy Action

Their Warm And Safe Homes service provides free impartial advice to help people stay warm affordably, including:

-  managing fuel debt
-  Priority Services Register
-  switching tariffs and suppliers
-  benefits advice

www.nea.org.uk/wash-advice


 0800 304 7159

 info@nea.org.uk

Scope – Disability Energy Support

A free energy and water advice service for disabled people. Apply online for personalised support:

www.scope.org.uk/disability-energy-support

 0808 801 0828

 Disability.EnergySupport@scope.org.uk

Warm Home Discount

The Warm Home Discount is a one-off £150 discount on your electricity bill.



If your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity, you may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead.

Who's eligible?

- 1 Core group 1:** for people who get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit.
- 2 Core group 2:** for people on a low income and who get certain means-tested benefits.

If you're in either of these groups and qualify, you should have received a letter telling you how to get the discount.

Not all suppliers are part of the scheme. Check if yours is at:
www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Warm banks If you're struggling to keep your home warm and buy food, using a warm bank / warm space may help you.

They are safe places provided by libraries, charities, churches, community centres and even some fire stations, where you can spend time to keep warm without worrying about the heating bill.

Find a warm bank near you






The Warm Welcome Spaces website has map of warm spaces:
www.warmwelcome.uk

Not all warm banks are registered on the site, so you could also try searching 'warm bank' and 'warm space' near me.



Simple energy saving ideas



| Could you save money by using any of these ideas from the Energy Saving Trust? | Possible annual saving* |
|---|--|
|  Unplug: Don't leave devices on standby, turn them off. | £55 |
|  Switch off: Turn the lights off when leaving a room. | £20 |
|  Load them up: Run your dishwasher when it's full and using it once less each a week could save money. | £13 |
|  Turn them down: Use your washing machine on a 30-degree cycle and reduce it's use by one run each a week. | £27 |
|  <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Keep your shower time to 4 minutes.✓ Swap one bath a week with a 4-minute shower.✓ Only boil the water you need in your kettle. | £65 £14 £11 |

*Figures correct as of October 2023 based on a typical three-bed semi-detached house in England, on a standard energy tariff, paying by direct debit. Energy costs based on gas and electricity prices set by Ofgem's price cap from 1st October - 31st December 2023 (electricity price of 27.4p/kWh and gas price of 6.9p/kWh). www.energysavingtrust.org.uk





Support with water bills

SEVERN

TRENT


Severn Trent has several schemes that can help if you're struggling to pay your water bill, whatever your circumstances. They include:

WONDERFUL ON TAP

- ✓ **Bill cap scheme – WaterSure:** Customers living with three children under 19, or a medical condition requiring extra water use, may be entitled to capped water charges.
- ✓ **Big Difference:** Severn Trent customers, with a household income below £20,048, may be able to save up to 70% off their water bill by applying to the 'Big Difference' scheme.

Find out if you could be eligible for support:

www.stwater.co.uk/financial-support

 0345 7500 500



Support with broadband bills

Many providers offer social tariffs to help people struggling to afford broadband or phone services.

What are social tariffs?

They are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people receiving Universal Credit, Pension Credit or other benefits. They may also be called 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

They're delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a lower price. Find out more at www.ofcom.org.uk/social-tariffs




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Get in touch

Talk to us

It's important to get money and debt issues under control as soon as you can. We're here to help.

Please get in touch if you need support:

 **0300 1234 009**

 **enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk**

 **@LeicsRural**

Your housing officer is:

David Kolodynski

Latest benefit and support news

There's lots of support information on our website and Facebook:

www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/support

 **@LeicsRural**

