

Your guide to cost of living support in 2026



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

Notes

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CONTENTS

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.

Cost of living information



- 4** ► All the information in one place

Housing



- 5** ► Specialist housing support

Benefits



- 5** ► Debt support
► Benefit entitlements
- 6** ► Universal Credit migration
► Pension Credit
- 7** ► Discretionary Housing Payments
► Local authority Household Support Fund

Energy and utilities



- 8** ► Support with energy and utility costs
- 9** ► Warm Home Discount
► Warm banks
- 10** ► Support with water bills
► Support with broadband

Food and shopping



- 11** ► Food bank vouchers
► Community Fridges
► Healthy Start card

Get in touch

- 12** ► Talk to us

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 hub

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 ☎ 0800 278 7854



The Bridge: Housing Matters service – a free, floating housing-related support service. It's for local people in housing crisis, who are in need of advice, support, outreach or advocacy.

☎ 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 debt and 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

Universal Credit migration



If you've had a Universal Credit Migration Letter, please don't ignore it, as your benefits may stop.

If you claim any of the benefits listed below, you're likely to receive (or may have already received), a 'Migration Notice' letter from the DWP telling you to claim Universal Credit (UC):

▶ Child Tax Credit ▶ Housing Benefit ▶ Income Support
▶ Income-based JSA or income-related ESA ▶ Working Tax Credit

Your move to Universal Credit doesn't happen automatically. You must actively claim Universal Credit within the three-month deadline in your letter. If you don't make a claim in time, your benefits will stop.

Transitional protection

If it looks like you'd get less on UC than you do on your current benefits, you'll receive an extra payment to make up the difference. This is known as 'transitional protection'. To get this you must make your claim within the deadline.

Already moved to Universal Credit?

If you've already had a letter and moved across to Universal Credit, you don't need to do anything else.

Need support?

Your Housing Officer can help you with this. Please get in touch:



0300 1234 009



enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk

Pension credit

If you've reached state pension age, and you're on a low income, you may be eligible for Pension Credit. This gives you extra money to help with living costs and also gives you access to other help such as a Council Tax discount, the Winter Fuel Payment and a free TV licence. Find out more at: www.gov.uk/pension-credit


Discretionary Housing Payments



These are a top-up to Housing Benefits or the Housing Element of your Universal Credit, and are available if your council considers 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 634666

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 or agency, such as your GP or your housing officer. If you'd like help, please get in touch with your housing officer (see back page for details).

Find out more on the Leicestershire County Council website:

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

 0116 232 3232

Support with 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
- ✓ switching tariffs and suppliers
- ✓ Priority Services Register
- ✓ 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 people with a disability. 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 off your electricity bill.**



Who's eligible?

You qualify if you either:

- get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- are on a low income.

If you're eligible, your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill. The money is not paid to you. You'll usually get the discount automatically if you're eligible.

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.



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:** Households 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 £23,492 may be able to save up to £390 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/phones-and-broadband/saving-money/social-tariffs

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.leicestershira.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





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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

