



Support This Winter

Your newsletter full of advice, hints and tips for this Winter.



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

SUPPORT FOR ARMED FORCES, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Royal British Legion have launched a Cost of Living Grants Programme.

This programme is designed to assist members of the armed forces community (serving personnel, veterans and their families, dependents and carers) who need help in a quick and easy way with everyday essentials such as kitchen appliances, clothes, and energy costs.

This programme is open to anyone who is eligible for support struggling to pay for items and services they need.

To find out more, just visit:

www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/financial-and-employment-support

THE BREAD & BUTTER THING



The Bread and Butter Thing offers weekly groceries at a fraction of high street prices. A brand new hub for our area has just opened in Haswell at The Lisa Dixon Centre.

For £7.50, they offer roughly £35 worth of food each week including fresh fruit and veg, chilled food for the fridge and cupboard staples such as pasta and cereal.

There is no membership rules - ANYONE CAN JOIN - and it's open to people from EVERY VILLAGE & TOWN. It's really simple to sign up as a member. There is no fee to join either and your first week is FREE!

To join, text 07860 063 304 with your name, postcode, and end the text with HASWELL.

COST OF LIVING – HELP & SUPPORT

As the cost of living continues to put financial pressure on many residents, we would like to remind everyone of the services where you can get help and support. Please also share this information with family, friends and neighbours or anyone you know who is facing financial difficulties.

Durham County Council (DCC) continue to update information as things change to make it as easy as possible for anyone experiencing financial difficulty to access the information and support they need. The most up to date information can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithyourmoney

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

DCC have received a further allocation of £4.6m from the Government's Household Support Fund. This will be used to support residents between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023. DCC will continue to work with partners to provide support to households in need, particularly those struggling with the cost of energy. The fund can also be used to support with costs associated with food, energy and water bills and wider essentials. In cases of genuine emergency, it can also be used to help with housing costs.

COUNCIL TAX ENERGY REBATE SCHEME

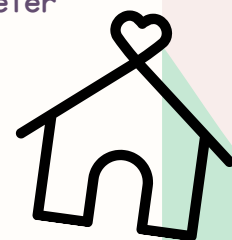
Applications for the council tax energy rebate payment have now closed. However, there are a number of households who receive Council Tax Reduction who have not yet applied for the payment, despite DCC writing out to encourage them to do so. Where this is the case, they have credited their council tax account with £150. DCC encourage any household that has not yet applied for this support and have reduced Council Tax liability through their Council Tax Reduction scheme, to contact the customer services team on 03000 26 0000 or by emailing help@durham.gov.uk.

ENERGY SUPPORT

All households will receive a £400 discount this winter to help with their rising energy bills; this discount is being applied as a credit on electricity bills over the next 6 months; starting this month. The government has also confirmed that support equivalent to this amount will also be available for households who don't have a main electricity provider, including those that do not have a domestic electricity meter and heat network consumers on a private wire system.

Those entitled to the winter fuel payment will receive an extra £300 from November 2022.

More detailed information on how residents can save on their energy bills can be found on our help with your heating page and energy bills web page which can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/saveonyourenergybills



OTHER SUPPORT

DCCs Welfare Rights Team can help by offering benefit checks to ensure people are claiming all the support they are entitled to and support those faced with difficulties when claiming benefits. The team also produces factsheets on benefits and their advice line number is 03000 268 968. If someone has immediate short term needs or needs help to maintain their independence in the community, they may be able to get support through the council's Welfare Assistance Scheme at www.durham.gov.uk/welfareassistance

DCCs customer services team can help complete forms or access online information in relation to financial support. To ensure that a full wrap-around support service is provided they link with their employability team to enable residents to access improved employment opportunities where appropriate. Residents struggling with debt can access a free-to-use MoneyHelper service at www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en

Residents can also find further debt advice on the DCC website including details of organisations in Durham and their areas of specialism: www.durham.gov.uk/debtadvice

DCC are working with NEfirst Credit Union to promote affordable loans and a cashback loan scheme for the purchase of furniture and white goods to support residents who don't qualify for our Welfare Assistance Scheme. More details can be www.nefirstcu.co.uk

WARM SPACES

DCC are also working alongside the County Durham Community Foundation to offer funding to the voluntary and community sector to create a network of warm spaces where people can get warm. Both the council and CDCF are contributing to the funding, with £200,000 available to support premises, with a grant of up to £1,000 for their warm space offer.

Information on which venues have signed up and where your nearest warm space is can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/warmspaces



FIRE SAFETY

County Durham Fire and Rescue Service is also reminding people to ensure they have working smoke alarms and to check these are working each week.

For any household that has a heating appliance which doesn't run off electricity, the fire service recommends installing a carbon monoxide alarm.

Regular services should be carried out on boilers and gas appliances and households should also ensure they use the correct fuel for woodburning stoves and open fires to reduce the risk of toxic fumes, chimney fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.



SUPPORT IN PLACE FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

Vulnerable households across County Durham can access additional support to help them cope with the rising cost of living this winter. Durham County Council has been allocated a further £4.6 million from the government's Household Support Fund to help those who are most in need through to March 2023.

The support will be given to those households which would otherwise struggle with energy, food and water bills, as well as other essential costs. In cases of genuine emergency, the funding can also be used to support housing costs where existing schemes do not meet this need. The fund is intended to support a wide range of low-income households in need. For more information just visit:
www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithyourmoney



East Durham Trust
Moving our community forward

FOOD EMERGENCIES

We work in partnership with East Durham Trust and their FEED project. If you need support with food and a food parcel, please either contact school or Haswell & District Mencap who will be able to complete the referral process for you.

SUPPORT FUNDS FROM ENERGY COMPANIES

There is also information about energy companies who have support funds and hardship grants available for customers who are struggling. If a resident is in debt to their energy supplier, they might be able to get a grant from the supplier to help pay it off.

Please note that if residents can't get a grant from their own supplier, they might be able to get a grant from the British Gas Energy Trust. These grants are available to anyone - you don't have to be a British Gas customer to be eligible. Here's a list of energy suppliers who offer grants to their customers. Simply search for them on the internet:



British Gas Energy Support Fund
Scottish Power Hardship Fund
Ovo Energy Fund
E.ON Energy Fund

E.ON Next Energy Fund
EDF Energy Customer Support Fund
Bulb Energy Fund
Octopus 'Octo Assist Fund'

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

We have a selection of school uniforms that can be collected for FREE for any families that may need them. The uniforms can be either collected from school or there is a collection point at Haswell & District Mencap.

