



Cost of   
Living Support
For Newcastle

Help with the **cost of living crisis**

For help and advice call our dedicated seven day
a week free hotline:

0800 170 7001



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The cost of living crisis in Newcastle

The cost of living crisis is already real for many of our city's residents. Too many people are struggling to make ends meet, with some facing extreme hardship.

Steep rises in energy prices are outstripping wage and benefit increases and putting enormous pressure on daily life. Some are facing an unacceptable choice between heating and eating.

This makes people ill – physically, and mentally too as stress levels rise. Being unwell might mean it's harder to go to work or look for work. Financial hardship can mean not being able to heat your home, pay your rent or buy essentials for your children. It means living in uncertainty and insecurity. The stress can be overwhelming.

Just as Newcastle faced the COVID-19 pandemic head-on with courage and creativity, we must now work together to protect our city against this new enemy that is damaging our health, wellbeing and livelihoods.

The council's role is clear – we will use every lever available to us to support residents through this crisis, and we will work with our partners in the city to do the same.



We know we cannot do this alone. Newcastle is made up of exceptional community groups and organisations who deliver this core support day-in, day-out. It is right that our city's response draws on everyone's expertise and experience to combine our efforts effectively.

You, our residents are at the heart of everything the council does, and this guide sets out how we will support you to tackle this crisis this winter.

Nick Kemp, Leader of the Council

This guide provides an overview of support that is available from the council and partners to help in the cost of living crisis.

All of the information here can be found on our dedicated webpage www.newcastle.gov.uk/costofliving

Residents can also call our dedicated seven day a week free hotline offering advice and support on 0800 170 7001.

Winter wellbeing hubs

Across the city a network of winter wellbeing spaces can support you, providing not just warmth but a warm welcome and a place for coming together.

Working with partners, including voluntary and community organisations, we will give you the chance to meet, learn new skills and socialise over a hot drink.

A map of the hubs is available on our [cost of living webpage](#).



Energy

Anyone struggling with gas and electricity bills or who is worried about heating their home, should contact their supplier in the first instance.

If your supplier doesn't provide the advice you need, you can get support from Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133 or [online](#).

A one-off £400 fuel discount payment for households will also be given to 30 million households, with individual suppliers determining how their customers are paid. Contact your supplier directly.

The council's sustainable warmth scheme offers a wide range of insulation measures to help you lower carbon emissions and save money on fuel bills this winter. If you are a homeowner or a private tenant and have a low annual income, find out if you are eligible for support by emailing newcastlesustainablewarmth@warmworks.co.uk or calling 0800116189.

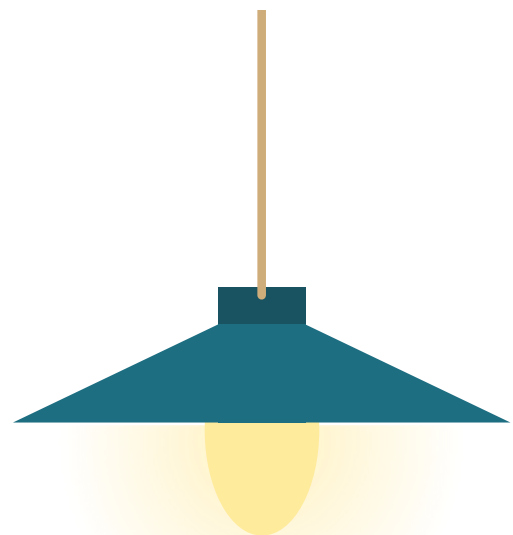
Additional government support is available for certain people such as pensioners, those in receipt of benefits and people with disabilities. See more on government schemes at www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support

Our Crisis Support Scheme provides support for people who have suffered an emergency that has left them without access to vital necessities, have a health and safety risk or are unable to secure funding from any other source.

Call 0191 278 7878 and ask for Crisis Support or go to www.newcastle.gov.uk/crisissupport

Our Energy Services team provides expert advice and support for residents and businesses including reducing fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

Email energy@newcastle.gov.uk



We are now offering a year's free local bus and Metro travel to over 300 young people leaving care. This scheme is the first of its kind in the country and supports young people to live well independently and access more opportunities in our city.



Debt and money advice

You can contact Money Matters, our debt and budgeting team, who can provide specialist help and advice. Call us on 0800 1707008 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm) or email moneymatters@newcastle.gov.uk

The council runs the Supporting Independence Scheme for basic items to help you live independently, for example beds, cookers, fridges or removal costs. It's for people on low incomes who are being supported by Adult Social Care or Children's Social Care, Community Mental Health Teams, Housing Advice Centre, Probation, Your Homes Newcastle Advice and Support Workers and other housing support workers/resettlement teams to:

- resettle people into the community following a stay in an institution for example, a hospital, a care home or custody
- help people to remain in the community rather than enter an institution
- set up home in the community as part of a planned resettlement programme, following an unsettled way of life

Visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/help/movehome for more information. This scheme replaced the Community Care Grants which were previously part of the DWP's social fund.

Turn2Us and Charity Choice provide search tools for help with one-off or regular payments from charities. Charis administers trust funds on behalf of several energy companies.

Turn2Us	www.turn2us.org.uk/about-Us/contact-us
Charity Choice	www.charitychoice.co.uk
Charis	www.charisgrants.com

Having savings available when you have urgent one-off needs can be invaluable. The main credit union in Newcastle is Moneywise Credit Union and for information on how to begin saving with them, call 0191 276 7963.

You can find information on borrowing wisely, including help and advice to avoid loan sharks, and access affordable credit options in Newcastle, by visiting www.newcastle.gov.uk/borrowwisely or calling the council's Money Matters Team on 0800 1707008. Opening hours are Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.00pm.

Citizen's Advice Newcastle provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice, and can be contacted by email or phone 0808 278 7823.

Support with vets bills

PDSA offers free veterinary treatments and medications to pet owners who live within the Newcastle hospital catchment area and are in receipt of Housing Benefit, Council Tax support or Universal Credit with a housing element. For more details, visit www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/our-services or telephone 08009172509.

Council Tax

If you are struggling to pay your Council Tax due to a reduction in your income, you may be eligible for Council Tax reduction, or a discount or exemption on your bill.

Go to
www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

If you are struggling to pay your Council Tax you can spread your instalments over 12 months. You can apply to do this online or email council.tax@newcastle.gov.uk



Housing

If you need housing advice, are at risk of homelessness or are homeless and have nowhere to stay please contact the Housing Advice Centre on 0800 1707 008 or email housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk

Staff at the Housing Advice Centre will assess your situation and give you free confidential advice with the aim of helping you to keep your home or assisting you to find one that meets your needs.

Opening hours for phone advice - Mon to Fri, 8.30am to 12 noon and 1pm to 4.30pm.

If it is after 5.30pm (or any time at a weekend) and you have nowhere to sleep tonight please call the out of hours service for advice on 0800 1707 008 (press option 2 for the operator and ask for the Emergency Homeless Officer).

Housing providers in Newcastle have dedicated support services to help their customers cope with bills, save energy, find furniture and improve their income. These include:

<p>Your Homes Newcastle Services for customers</p>	<p>https://www.yhn.org.uk/services-customers 0191 2788600 Or make an appointment at West Denton, Benwell, Kenton, Walker, or Byker community hubs</p>
<p>Home Group Money, benefits and wellbeing advice</p>	<p>www.homegroup.org.uk/manage-my-home/renters/money-benefits-and-wellbeing-advice/ 0345 1414663</p>
<p>Places for People Help with finances</p>	<p>www.placesforpeople.co.uk/help-support/help-with-finances 01772 667002</p>
<p>Karbon Homes Money Matters Team</p>	<p>www.karbonhomes.co.uk/customer-area/my-money/ 0808 1640111</p>
<p>Bernicia Managing your money</p>	<p>www.bernicia.com/help-and-support/managing-your-money/ 0344 8003800</p>
<p>Anchor Housing Guides and Support</p>	<p>www.anchor.org.uk/guides-and-support 0800 7312020</p>

Benefits

Billions of pounds of benefits go unclaimed each year. For example, Pension Credit for older people, disability benefits for those with care or mobility needs, benefits for carers and extras for those not able to work through sickness.

Most benefits are administered by the Government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Others are offered via HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the council or employers.

Find out more at www.newcastle.gov.uk/checkyourbenefits



Food banks and emergency food

If you are struggling to afford to eat, food banks or charities may be able to help. There are a number of places that give free food or food vouchers to those who need it most.

You can find up to date information on their locations, opening times and how to use their services at www.informationnow.org.uk/article/food-banks-in-newcastle/

We are extending our Holiday Activity Fund Programme over October half term as well as the Christmas holiday to provide children with a valuable source of food and activity.

We are extending our meals on wheels service for those with higher levels of need and the Grainger Market Food Pantry is being relaunched in November 2022.



Free childcare

All parents of pre-school children are entitled to some free early education and childcare before they take up a reception place.

All three and four year old are entitled to at least 15 hours per week, term time or 570 hours over the year.

Some working parents are entitled to 30 hours (or 1140 hours over the whole year) .

Many two year olds are entitled to 15 hours a year early if they are from lower income families or meet some other criteria.

Go to www.newcastle.gov.uk/freechildcare

School and learning costs

Your child may be eligible for free school meals and free travel through a variety of different eligibility criteria.

Bursaries are available to help students aged 16 to 19 remain in education.



Go to www.newcastle.gov.uk/helpwithschoolcosts

Crisis Support Scheme

This scheme offers short-term help with food, clothing, fuel for heating and expenses for emergency travel to cover periods of crisis or disaster.

This includes:

- Shopping packages ordered online and delivered direct to the customers
- Pre-paid utility top up vouchers for gas and electricity
- Emergency travel costs through the council's travel office
- Clothing through supermarket gift cards

You can complete a crisis support application form by visiting www.newcastle.gov.uk/crisissupport or calling 0191 2787878 and asking for Crisis Support. Opening hours are between 9.30am and 3.30pm.

Mental health

If you are struggling to manage your mental health well because of the added pressures of the rising costs of living, there are services in Newcastle that can help.

Local health partners provide details for a range of support services in Newcastle.

Need urgent help now?

The last couple of years have been tough for us all. If you need a helping hand with your mental health, there is a range of services to support you.

- Adults – 0800 652 2863
- Children and young people – 0800 652 2864
- Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties – 07919 228 548

Lines are open 24 hours a day. If you or another person have been harmed or are at immediate risk, you may require an emergency response – call 999.

A range of services to help you

- Free, safe and anonymous online mental health service at www.togetherall.com
- Free online support and counselling at www.qwell.io (age 18+) or www.kooth.com (11-18)
- A listening ear and emotional support from Tyneside and Northumberland Mind – seven days a week, 8am to 10pm (age 16+) on 0330 174 3174 (charged at local rate)
- If you're finding it difficult to cope, feeling low, anxious or stressed, or not sleeping properly, and live in Newcastle, contact Talking Helps Newcastle on 0191 282 6600. If you're in Gateshead, call Gateshead Talking Therapies on 0191 283 2541
- If you are feeling suicidal, anxious or low, or are worried about someone else, you can phone the Samaritans free on 116 123
- If you need support or you are concerned about someone, you can also visit www.stopsuicidenenc.org
- Visit www.111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111
- Text Shout on 85258 to use a free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service
- And of course you can contact your GP if these options are not suitable

Mental Health Concern's Together in a Crisis service provides practical and emotional support to help you through. You can find out how to access this service by calling 0300 1312000.

The NHS Better Health – Every Mind Matters service gives practical tips on looking after your mental health, including self-help techniques, setting a personalised mental health action plan, and looking after the mental health of those around you. Visit www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters for details.

If you are under 25, you can access confidential mental health support service through The Mix – www.themix.org.uk or 0808 8084994.

Quick reference help and support

Cost of living hotline	0800 170 7001 available seven days a week
Cost of living website	www.newcastle.gov.uk/costofliving
Citizens Advice	0808 223 1133 www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Sustainable Warmth Scheme	0800116189
Crisis Support Scheme	0191 278 7878 www.newcastle.gov.uk/crisissupport
Money Matters Debt advice	0800 1707008 Email moneymatters@newcastle.gov.uk
PDSA Support with Vets bills	08009172509 www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/our-services
Council Tax Support	www.newcastle.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport Email council.tax@newcastle.gov.uk
Housing Advice Centre	0800 1707 008 Email housingadvicecentre@newcastle.gov.uk
Homelessness	0800 1707 008
Food banks	www.informationnow.org.uk/article/food-banks-in-newcastle/
Homelessness	0800 1707 008
Mental Health Support	www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

Get Online Newcastle

We know that not everyone is comfortable using a computer, tablet or mobile phone. We also know that a lot of cost of living support is online.

Get Online Newcastle supports people to learn basic digital skills.

If you want to speak to someone about how to get started online:

- call 0191 277 8842 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm)

Or if you can use a website, and want more information about digital skills support and courses, visit:

- www.newcastle.gov.uk/getonline

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