

Cost-of-living support

Find out what support is available to help you and your family get through the cost-of-living crisis.

Let us know if you're in financial difficulty

We know that many families are going through a tough time this winter and we want to do everything we can to help you and your child. If you're struggling with your finances, please get in touch to let us know, as there may be things we can suggest which will help.

[Check out the 16-19 Bursary information here.](#)

Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) or Family Hub

You don't have to be a UK citizen to get support from your local CAB, you just need to be a resident of the local area. The CAB can help you with:

- Getting benefits or organising other financial support
- Accessing support for essential costs (food, bills, rent)

Visit the [Citizens Advice](#) website or contact your local branch to book an appointment.

[Citizens Advice South Shields](#). Edinburgh Bldg, 2 Station Approach, South Shields NE33 1HR. 0191 455 7958

[Citizens Advice Sunderland](#). 5A Waterloo Pl, Sunderland SR1 3HT. 0808 278 7950

Check you're paying the right amount of tax

Make sure you're on the right tax code. If you aren't you might be due a refund. Use the [Money Saving Expert's](#) free tax code calculator to find out.

Claim any benefits you're entitled to

Use 1 of these benefits calculators to determine whether there are any benefits you could be claiming:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)
- [Support for migrant families](#) – use this calculator if you are a migrant family, or if you have no recourse to public funds (meaning you're not entitled to the majority of welfare benefits)

You may be able to get benefits paid early if you need cash urgently – this is known as 'a short-term benefit advance'. You will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office that's dealing with your claim.

Check you've received all the government's cost-of-living payments

The government's [cost-of-living payments](#) are available for those receiving certain benefits or tax credits. You don't need to apply for these – if you're eligible the money should go straight into your account.

If you think you're due a payment but haven't received one, [report a missing payment](#) to the government here.

Be aware of scams! If you receive any emails, texts or phone calls asking you to fill in an application form or asking for your bank details to receive a cost-of-living payment, **do not talk to them or send a reply**. Get more information on [cost-of-living scams](#) on the Money Saving Expert's website.

Find out what help you can get with your energy bills

Take a look at these resources from the [British Gas Energy Trust](#) and the [Money Saving Expert](#).

Check if your child is entitled to free school meals (FSM)

If your child is eligible for FSM you need to get them registered. This will allow them to get a free meal at school, and we'll get extra funding (known as the pupil premium) to support your child's learning.

Go to [this government website](#) to check if your child is eligible. If they are, or if you're not sure, try the eligibility check on the school website here: [Online FSM Application \(cloudforedu.org.uk\)](#)

See what other support you can get from your local authority

Local authorities have many schemes that you might be eligible for, including:

- The [Holiday Activities and Food Programme](#) – access to food and activities over the school holidays. Note that if your child is eligible for free school meals (see above), they'll also qualify for this programme
 - [Help with transport to school](#)
 - [Help with school uniform costs](#)
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Get free or low-cost food

If you're worried about not having enough food to feed your family, you're not alone. There are a number of places offering support.

- If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to [healthy start food vouchers](#)
- There are [links to local foodbanks on the South Tyneside Council website](#). Find your local food bank here: [Bankuet](#), [The Independent Food Aid Network](#), the [Trussell Trust](#), or your local [community fridge](#)
- Use food waste apps and websites like [Olio](#) (for free food and household items from your local community), [Too Good To Go](#) (for low-cost food from local restaurants), or [Low Price Foods](#) (food that has passed its best before date, but is still safe to eat)
- Become a member of a community shop. These organisations sell food to their members at a reduced price. Some shops are free to join if you meet certain criteria, and others ask for a small contribution. There is one called [The Company Shop in Washington on Pattinson](#)

[Industrial Estate North](#). Find out if there's one near you by checking these websites: [Community Shop](#), [Your Local Pantry](#), [Community Grocery](#)

- Get more tips on free and cheap meals from [Which](#)

Free hygiene products

- In Sixth Form, we have free period products in baskets on the doors of our toilets. If more products are needed, Mrs Townsley in the Sixth Form office can arrange this.
- Food banks may offer free toiletries and sanitary products. Check with [your local food bank](#) to see what's available.
- Find the cheapest disposable sanitary products on [Sanitary Saver](#)

Replace or repair household items at a low cost or for free

Check if you can get broken household goods replaced or repaired by your local community.

- Get free household goods on [Freecycle](#)
- Get help with DIY repairs at a [Repair Cafe](#)

Find a warm space to beat the chill

Some community spaces open their doors to provide a safe and warm space for a few hours. Many also offer hot drinks and wifi.

Local Warm Space Links – <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/12684/Overview>

Find a warm bank on:

- [Warm Welcome](#)
- [Warm Spaces](#)

Cheapest Fuel

There are comparison websites that tell you where fuel is cheapest in your area. Try [PetrolPrices.com](#)

There is more advice on driving more economically at [MoneySavingExpert here](#).

Further information

- Contact [StepChange](#) for debt advice
- Contact [Shelter](#) if you're having issues related to housing
- Contact the [Salvation Army](#) for emergency assistance
- See if you're eligible for [grants from Turn2us](#)
- Single parents can get support from [Gingerbread](#)