



Help with Energy Costs and the Cost of Living

This factsheet provides information about sources of help and advice about energy costs. See the final page of this factsheet for a list of agencies who can help you identify and claim any of the help outlined below.

The Energy Price Guarantee has been extended to the end of June 2023 this will ensure that a typical household in pays an average £2,500 a year on their energy bill. The Energy Price Guarantee is likely to continue until April 2024 but may be at a different rate after June 2023.

The energy charge via a prepayment meter will be reduced in line with those for standard tariffs with payment by direct debit from 1 July 2023.

The Energy Price Guarantee is in addition to the assistance detailed below.

Government support for energy bills and the cost of living

In February and May 2022, the government announced a range of support to help households with rising energy bills and the cost of living.

- Energy Bills Support Scheme, a £400 discount on their energy bill over Winter 2022-23 for domestic electricity customers in Great Britain. Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their account over six months from October 2022 or paid into their bank account, while customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher. This discount a grant and will not be repayable. This discount will not be continued in 2023-24.
- A £150 non-repayable rebate in Council Tax bills for all households in Bands A-D in England.
- £144 million of discretionary funding for district councils to support households who need support but are not eligible for the Council Tax rebate.
- Expansion of the Warm Homes Discount to around an additional 800,000 low-income households.
- A single Cost of Living Payment of £650 paid to people who on 25th May 2022 were in receipt of (or began a successful claim to) one the following means tested benefits:

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- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Pension Credit

This will be paid by the Department for Work and pensions in two parts - July and the Autumn, and shortly after by HMRC for those on Tax Credits only.

- An additional £300 alongside this year's Winter Fuel Allowance for pensioner households, paid in November/December. See below.
- A one-off £150 paid to people in receipt of (or began a successful claim to) one of the following disability benefits on 25 May 2022:
 - Personal Independence Payment
 - Attendance Allowance
 - Disability Living Allowance
 - Armed Forces Independence Payment
 - Constant Attendance Allowance
 - War Pension Mobility Supplement

This will be paid in September, and in addition to the £650 payment above, if eligible for both.

In November 2022 the government announced that:

- Further 'Cost of Living' payments will be made in 2023-24, with households on means-tested benefits to receive £900, pensioner households to receive £300 and individuals on disability benefits to receive £150. Further details of when these payments will be made are yet to be announced.
- Social security benefits will be increased from 10 April 2023 by 10.1% in-line with inflation in September 2022.

For more details see the Government's [Energy bills support factsheet](#), [Energy Bills Rebate factsheet](#) and [Cost of Living Support factsheet](#).

Grants /One-Off Payments

You may also be entitled to a one-off payment to help you with your fuel bill.

• Winter Fuel Payment

This is a £100 to £300 fuel payment for people born on or before 26 September 1955. Most payments are made automatically in November or December. You should have been paid for winter

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2021 to 2022. If you did not get your payment, [contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre](#) Tel: 0800 731 0160.

- **Cold Weather Payment**

This is a £25 payment for every 7 days of very cold weather between November and March. It is paid to most people who receive the following benefits:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Support for Mortgage Interest

It will be paid automatically by the DWP when the criteria for a period of very cold weather has been met.

- **Warm Home Discount**

You can get a £140 discount off your electricity bill for the winter 2021-2022. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your bill, between October and March. You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out.

There are two ways to qualify:

1. If you are entitled to the Guarantee Credit element of **Pension Credit**. You should receive a letter between October and December telling you how to get the discount if you do qualify. The letter will say if you need to call a helpline to confirm your details. Your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill by the following March.

If you did/do not get the letter and you think you're eligible, contact the **Warm Home Discount helpline**, telephone: 0800 731 0214, open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

2. Those who are not on the Guarantee element of Pension Credit, but who are on a low income/certain benefits, can apply to their own energy supplier for the Discount. If you qualify.

- **Household Support Fund**

This Fund has been increased and extend to March 2024 and is operated by **Leicestershire County Council** and can award vouchers for fuel and food to support families with children and individuals most in need.

Those who may be eligible might include:

- Families with vulnerable children aged 0-5 or that may not qualify for Free School Meals that are known to social workers and Children and Family Wellbeing Service but are not accessing Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE).

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- Vulnerable families with or without children
- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people
- Gypsy, traveller or show persons and other vehicle dwelling communities

A professional support worker or agency must apply on your behalf – no direct applications can be accepted. These could be from a registered charity, voluntary organisations, schools, Care and NHS professionals and councils.

Direct payments to vulnerable pensioners

A direct payment of £100 will be made to any eligible pensioner in receipt of pension credit. The payment is anticipated to be made in Autumn 2022.

Food vouchers for families with pupils eligible for Free School meals

- Vouchers will be provided to the parents/carers of all pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals. These will be distributed through schools.
- Vouchers to the value of £15 per child per week, will be issued to eligible pupils in Leicestershire Schools and FE Colleges over the May 2022 half term and Summer 2022 holidays.
- Vouchers to the value of £15 per child per week over May half term and summer 2022 holidays will be issued to children attending early years provision at a childminder, pre-school, or day nursery if they reside in Leicestershire and are accessing their 2-year-old Free Early Education (FEEE) or Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).

More information is available on the Council's website <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/assessment-and-eligibility-for-care-and-support/household-support-fund>

• British Gas Energy Trust

Some fuel suppliers have their own grants. The British Gas Energy Trust can also help those not with British Gas: <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/>

Other Grants for General Support

You may be entitled to a non-repayable grant, based on where you live, what work you've done, or if you have health problems. See if there is any help out there for you by visiting <https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/>

• Social Security Benefits and Tax Credits

You should check that you are receiving your correct full benefit entitlement. Check using: <https://benefits-calculator-2.turn2us.org.uk/>

• Help from your energy supplier

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If you are struggling to pay your fuel bills, contact your energy company.

You can discuss payment options, such as payment breaks or reductions or more time to pay, and some suppliers have set up hardship funds to help customers pay for arrears.

There is a free support service for those in a vulnerable situation – follow this link for more information; <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register>

- **Improve your energy efficiency**

Your fuel costs might be higher than they could be, due to the home you live in – draughty, poorly insulated or with an out-dated heating system. Making your home more energy-efficient might reduce your bills, and there are schemes that can help. Here's the link to energy efficiency advice (OFGEM) <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/>

If you've been told your energy supply will be disconnected

It's rare for someone to be disconnected as your supplier will usually offer to install a prepayment meter instead. Before disconnection, your supplier must give you a chance to pay your debt through a payment plan. If you haven't already, you should talk to your supplier about repayment options. Some people cannot be disconnected at all or between October and March.

Further and any updated information is available from:

1. **Citizens Advice** - consumer helpline: 0808 223 1133
2. **Ofgem** website
3. **AGE UK – Leicestershire & Rutland** - Information and Advice helpline: 0116 299 2278
4. **National Energy Action** - 0800 304 7159
5. **First Contact Plus: Warm Homes** – 0116 305 4286. Local support including referral to Warm Homes service