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**Key local and national support with**

**energy, food and other essential costs**

*Brighton & Hove, November 2024*

**PLEASE NOTE:**

This document is intended as a high-level reference guide for professionals and workers who may be signposting or referring the people they support.

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**ENERGY**

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| **Brighton & Hove City Council** |

**Brighton & Hove Fuel Payment**

Extra financial support is available this winter through the Brighton & Hove Fuel Payment for people of pensionable age in Brighton & Hove who are struggling to pay energy bills. Through the council’s new programme of support, we can help older people with:

* providing one-off direct financial support if you are struggling to heat your home or pay your energy bills
* checking your eligibility for Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payments and help to make an application
* energy advice on keeping warm in an affordable way this winter

If you’re of pensionable age and in need of extra financial support this winter, [**complete our request for help and support online form**](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support/emergency-help-and-money-advice/request-help-and-support) or call our Community Hub helpline on **01273 293117** and select option 2. The Community Hub helpline is open from 10am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

**Local Discretionary Social Fund**

If you’re eligible for benefits and are struggling to pay for food, energy and other essential costs, you may be able to get extra help through Brighton & Hove City Council's [Local Discretionary Social Fund](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/other-brighton-hove-city-council-grants/local-discretionary-social-fund).

**Further support with energy bills**

For all the information on the support available and advice on how to keep your home warm and save energy, visit: [Help with energy bills (brighton-hove.gov.uk)](https://healthwatchbrightonandhove.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8b19e79423fcad078c2d810bd&id=99b87a6f11&e=a89bd7ed66). This includes [emergency help and money advice](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support/emergency-help-and-money-advice), [information on eligibility for discounts on energy bills](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-advice/help-and-support/get-help-energy-bills), and advice and tips and about [saving energy](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/how-be-energy-efficient-home) and [How to keep warm and well](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/how-keep-warm-and-well).

**Warm Welcome Directory** *(currently being reviewed for accuracy)*

Indoor activities and warm places to go during cold weather: [Warm welcome directory - Indoor activities and places to go](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support/directories/warm-welcome-directory-indoor-activities-and-places-go)

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| **Energyworks** |

A partnership project between Citizens Advice Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-operative (BHESCo). Energyworks provides energy advice and grants to Brighton & Hove residents experiencing fuel poverty.

To refer yourself or someone else, choose one of the following routes:

* Call the Energyworks voicemail service on **0333 090 9150**. Leave a message and they will aim to call back the same day or as soon as possible after this.
* Send an email to **energyworks@cabrightonhove.org**
* Submit a request through the online referral form at [Energyworks Online Enquiry Form – Citizens Advice Brighton and Hove (cabrightonhove.org)](https://www.cabrightonhove.org/energyworks-energy-advice-service/online-enquiry-form/)
* Drop-in for advice service: Thursdays, 1:15pm at Tisbury Road Offices, Hove Town Hall, Tisbury Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ.

For more information on Energyworks, visit <https://www.cabrightonhove.org/energyworks-energy-advice-service/>

**Brighton & Hove Energy Services Cooperative (BHESCo)**

Via the Energyworks project, BHESCo will deliver free home visits to qualifying households, offering energy advice, help with energy suppliers, installation of free energy-saving kit and emergency warmth items (e.g. lightbulbs, draught-proofing, radiator reflectors, portable heaters, thermal curtains, electric blankets).

To contact BHESCo directly, call **0800 999 6671** or email **info@bhesco.co.uk** with the subject heading: Energy Advice. For more information on BHESCo, go to <https://bhesco.co.uk/fuel-poverty-energy-bills-brighton-hove>

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| **LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership)** |

A free service that helps people keep warm in their homes and reduce energy bills. Brighton & Hove City Council is a LEAP partner and this service is available with good capacity to eligible residents in Brighton & Hove.

The service includes energy advice, tariff and meter advice, installation of free small energy efficiency measures, income maximisation & fuel debt advice, onward referrals to other organisations where appropriate, boiler repair/replacement (owner occupiers only, where/when available), white goods (where/when available).

LEAP has broad eligibility criteria: [Check Your Eligibility | LEAP](https://applyforleap.org.uk/eligibility/). To refer yourself or someone else, visit [**Apply Now | LEAP (applyforleap.org.uk)**](https://applyforleap.org.uk/apply/).

Phone free on **0800 060 7567** or email support@applyforleap.org.uk if you have any problems using the online form.

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| **National Energy Action (NEA) - Energy Advice & Support Service** |

Free, impartial support and advice for vulnerable and low-income customers. The charity can help with gas and electricity accounts, inability to pay and energy debt, Priority Service Register, energy efficiency and water rates, trust fund applications, benefits advice and income maximisation. Pre-payment vouchers are sometimes available.

To contact the Energy Advice and Support Service call **0800 304 7159**, apply online at [**https://www.nea.org.uk/get-help/wash-advice/**](https://www.nea.org.uk/get-help/wash-advice/) or **use the chat function on the website** to speak directly to an adviser who can give tailored advice. We work with LanguageLine and BSL interpreters to provide advice to non-English speaking clients. The phonelines are often busy so clients can leave a message and they will be contacted as soon as possible.

NEA can also offer in person or online workshops for at risk groups, providing free, impartial advice on switching, bills, supplier issues, energy debt, grant applications and more. Please contactolivia.mckay@nea.org.uk for more information or make a request directly at [https://www.nea.org.uk/speaker-request](https://www.nea.org.uk/speaker-request/).

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| **National support** |

**Information on all the energy bill support available from the government** can be found on the [GOV.UK help with your energy bills page](https://www.gov.uk/get-help-energy-bills). The government’s [Help for Households website](https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/) has information on what support is available to help with the cost of living and how to save money on your energy bills.

**Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payment**

Residents should [check if they are eligible for Pension Credit using the government’s Pension Credit calculator](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator) and [apply for Pension Credit on the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim). Successful claims put in before 21 December will be back-dated, meaning residents will be able to receive this year’s winter fuel payment.

You can also [visit Ofgem’s website for the latest energy advice, support and information.](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households)

The **Priority Services Register** (PSR) is free to join. It helps utility companies, including energy suppliers, electricity, gas and water networks to look after customers who have extra communication, access or safety needs. It helps tailor services to support households who need extra help with everyday energy matters like bills, and also in the unlikely event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption.

**For more information and to join the Priority Services Register:** <https://www.thepsr.co.uk/>

**Food & Other Essentials**

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| **Brighton & Hove City Council** |

**Food, energy & other essential costs**

Extra help is available for households struggling to pay for food, energy and other essential costs. The funding is part of the UK Government’s Household Support Fund. Due to the limited nature of this fund: we are only able to make one award to each household; we will not be able to accept subsequent applications to this fund from the same household; we may not be able to help every household who applies. The funding does not provide cash. We'll offer vouchers or find another way to help you access essential goods and services.

If you receive benefits and need help to pay for essentials you can’t live without, apply for help from our Local Discretionary Social Fund at [Get emergency help with food, energy bills and other essentials](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-advice/help-and-support/get-emergency-help-food-energy-bills-and-other-essentials). If you already claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and need extra help to pay your Council Tax, [apply for discretionary council tax support](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/apply-extra-help-your-rent-or-council-tax). Further information is available at: [Request help and support](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support/emergency-help-and-money-advice/request-help-and-support) and [Cost of living support](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support).

**Help for families**

Families can access support through Family Hubs. We provide information, advice and guidance on a range of different subjects including help with cost of living, accessing affordable food schemes, and support for families to get benefit calculations.

Familyhubs@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Professionals can refer to Family Hubs any families who need more specialist support or are in financial crisis and in need of food: [Refer a child or family to Front Door for Families](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/frontdoorforfamilies/refer-child-or-family-front-door-families)

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| **Brighton & Hove Food Partnership**  |

**Information on accessing emergency food in Brighton & Hove:**  <https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/accessing-emergency-food/>

* There are a range of [affordable food projects](https://bhfood.org.uk/how-to-hub/low-cost-and-free-community-shopping/) across the city, where you can sign up for a weekly shop cheaper than your average supermarket.
* We also have information on [free & cheap meals](https://bhfood.org.uk/low-cost-meals-for-delivery-takeaway/) outside the home e.g. lunch clubs, community cafes and other shared meals.
* There are three [Community Fridges](https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/community-fridge/) in Brighton where you can pick up surplus food for free.

*The Food Partnership are compiling information on festive meals and food service opening times over the winter holidays. To get updated when the 2024 information guide is published at the end of November, please sign up to the* [*fortnightly newsletter*](https://bhfood.org.uk/get-involved/sign-up/)*or visit the website for the* [*Latest news*](https://bhfood.org.uk/category/news/)*.*

**Please note: the Food Partnership no longer have capacity to provide food bank referrals or in-depth advice. Please signpost to Impact Initiatives as detailed below -**

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| **Impact Initiatives - Food Access Service** |

The Food Access Service supports residents in Brighton and Hove aged 18+ who are struggling to access food due to financial instability. The team can help by:

* Providing information on local affordable food initiatives
* Referring for short-term support from a food bank
* Offering eligible people emergency support on the day as a last resort
* Linking people with further services to support them with the wider issues that might be impacting them, such as cost of living support or health and wellbeing services.

Tel: **01273 322950** (Mon – Fri 10am – 4pm)

Email: food.access@impact-initiatives.org.uk

Website: <https://impact-initiatives.org.uk/services/food-services/>

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| **Free School Meals & Healthy Start Vouchers** |

**Free School Meals**

For information on who can get free school meals and how to apply online, visit

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/free-school-meals>, call **01273 293497** or email freeschoolmeals@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

**Healthy Start Vouchers**

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. If you’re eligible, you’ll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. We’ll add your benefit onto this card every 4 weeks. Find out more and apply at [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)or call **0300 330 7010**

**Money, Water & Home Safety**

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| **Moneyworks** |

A partnership of community advice agencies across the city who can help with all money issues, including fuel bill payments and vouchers, debt and benefits help, foodbank referrals, getting a bank account, getting online. To access the service, contact either:

* **Moneyworks –** the best way to contact isvia the online form to request a call back or an email back from an adviser: <https://advicebrighton-hove.org.uk/adviceline-questionnaire/>. Or call Moneyworks Advicelineon **0800 988 7037** (open Mon 2-5, Tue 2-5, Wed 10-, Thu 2-5, Fri 10-1).
* **Citizens Advice Helpline** on **08082 78 78 15** or go to <https://www.cabrightonhove.org/get-advice>

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| **Southern Water**  |

Help and advice for people struggling to afford water bills, including discounts and support from Southern Water and free, water-saving home visits and operational support in the event of a water outage.

**Help with paying your water bill:**

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/account/help-paying-your-bill>

**Free, water-saving home visits:**

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/help-advice/how-to-save-water/water-saving-home-visits>

**Operational Support in the event of a water outage:**

[Priority Services Register - Southern Water](https://www.southernwater.co.uk/help-and-support/priority-service-register/)

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| **East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS)** |

**Help for people to save money safely and keep warm this winter**.

Visit <https://www.esfrs.org/contact-us/getting-involved/save-safely/> for ideas on saving money and reducing the chances of a fire.

**Keeping warm and fire advice - Citizens Advice Brighton & Hove and ESFRS**

Lots of useful information on the different methods people may be using to heat their homes and how to do this safely: <https://www.cabrightonhove.org/campaigns/keeping-warm-and-fire-advice-energyworks>

**Free** [Home Safety Visits](http://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/home-safety-visits)offer a range of advice on keeping the home warm safely; falls and accident prevention; health and wellbeing; escape route planning and much more. ESFRS will also fit free smoke alarms and other specialist equipment when needed. To find out more call **0800 177 7069** (freephone) or visit <https://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/home-safety-visits>.

**Free Fire Safety Training Sessions** can also be delivered to front line staff / volunteers offering advice, guidance and best practice for fire safety in the home. [Book a training session here](https://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/safer-homes/care-providers-fire-safety-scheme/).

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| **KEY PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES****Advice and guidance on keeping warm and well at home** |

**Groups who are more vulnerable to harm during cold weather**

At-risk groups include people whose health, housing or economic circumstances put them at greater risk of harm from adverse weather, including:

* older people (aged 65 and above)
* people with cardiovascular (heart and circulation) conditions
* people with respiratory conditions (in particular chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
* people with mental health conditions
* people with learning and/or physical disabilities
* young children (particularly those aged under 5)
* pregnant women
* people on a low income

**Keep your home warm, efficient and safe:**

* Try to heat the rooms you use to at least 18°C if you can, as this reduces the risk to health of someone wearing suitable warm clothing.
* Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, and it is important to try and heat the rooms you use to at least 18°C if you can, particularly if you have reduced mobility, are 65 and over, or have a health condition such as heart or lung disease.
* Overnight, people who are 65 and over or who have pre-existing health conditions, may find bedroom temperatures of at least 18°C are good for their health; this may be less important if you are a healthy adult under 65 and have appropriate clothing and bedding.
* If you can’t heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and your bedroom just before you go to sleep.
* Get your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated.
* If you have an electric blanket, use it as instructed and get it tested every three years. Never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket.
* Do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home; it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning which can kill.
* If you are not on mains gas or electricity, make sure you have a good supply of heating oil, LPG or solid fuel so you do not run out in winter.

**Keep the warmth in your home:**

* Fit draught-proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors.
* Make sure you have loft insulation. And if you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too.
* Insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes.
* Draw your curtains at dusk and tuck behind radiators to help keep heat inside.
* Make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains.

**Look after yourself:**

* Keeping well will allow you to do more and keep your independence. Being cold isn’t just uncomfortable it can be bad for your health. Sitting or sleeping in a cold room is not good for you and increases the risk of heart attacks, stroke and breathing problems. Don’t let the cold catch you out, check the weather forecast and be ready for cold weather.
* Keep your bedroom windows closed on cold nights. Breathing cold air can increase the risk of chest infections.
* Exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter.
* Keep moving if you can, this will help keep you warm. Try not to sit for more than an hour, get up and walk around, make a hot drink and spread housework throughout the day.
* Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer; this will trap the heat to keep you warm.  Thin layers of clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are best for maintaining body heat.
* Wear shoes with a good grip to prevent slips and falls. Make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out.
* Food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks.
* Aim to include five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count towards your five a day.
* Prepare for cold weather. Stock up on tinned and frozen foods, warm clothes and any medication so you don’t have to go out too much when it’s cold or icy.
* Power and utility companies have schemes which make at-risk groups a priority for reconnection following power cuts. Find out if you meet the criteria and if so, sign up. Visit <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register-people-need> for more information

**Look after others:**

* All of the advice for looking after yourself can be used to plan how to help others.
* Check on frail or older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well.
* Ask about living in a cold home and support vulnerable individuals to access existing resources to keep warm.
* Those with care responsibilities, whether that’s for family members or on a professional or voluntary basis, should consult the [Cold-Health Alert action card for health and social care providers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-action-cards-for-cold-weather-alert-service/cold-health-alert-action-card-for-health-and-social-care-providers) for a range of useful advice.
* In advance of winter, carers should be aware of how to refer to local housing and health services if further support is required.
* Charities, social and health care organisations should consult [The Cold-Health Alert action card for the voluntary and community sector](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-action-cards-for-cold-weather-alert-service/cold-health-alert-action-card-for-the-voluntary-and-community-sector) to ensure that carers of those most-at-risk are getting the support and advice they need to protect those who may be vulnerable to the ill-effects of cold weather

**Useful resources to support people to stay warm and well in winter:**

* [How to stay well this winter](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/) webpages and has easy read, large print and audio resources.
* [Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-warm-keep-well-leaflet-gives-advice-on-staying-healthy-in-cold-weather)
* [16 tips on how to stay warm in cold weather](https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/blog/keeping-warm/179148)
* [Keep well this winter AgeUK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/keep-well-this-winter/) web pages
* Health and Safety advice on [Slips and trips - Icy conditions and winter weather (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/slips-trips-bad-weather.htm)
* Protecting workers from cold temperatures - [Managing workplace temperature (hse.gov.uk)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/managing.htm#when_people)

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| COVID-19, Flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccinations  |

All those who are at greater risk from the COVID-19, flu and RSV viruses should take the extra protection offered by vaccination this winter.

**COVID-19 vaccine**

**Who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn?**

* frontline health and social care workers and staff in care homes for older adults
* residents in a care home for older adults
* all adults aged 65 years and over
* persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group, as defined in the [Green Book, chapter 14a](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a)

**Community pharmacies** will continue to provide bookable appointments and some walk-ins for people who are eligible. These can be booked:

* through the [NHS website](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/covid-19-services/covid-19-vaccination-services/)
* using the NHS App
* by calling 119

If you can’t find a time or location that suits you, keep checking back as more times and locations will be added as soon as they are available.

**Flu vaccine**

**Who is eligible for the flu vaccine?**

* those who are pregnant
* all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2024
* all children in clinical risk groups aged from 6 months to less than 18 years
* School-aged children (from reception to Year 11) will mainly be offered their flu vaccinations at school
* those aged 65 years and over
* those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups (as defined in the [Green Book, Influenza Chapter 19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19)
* those in long-stay residential care homes
* carers in receipt of carer’s allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person
* close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
* frontline workers in a social care setting without an employer led occupational health scheme including, those working for a registered residential care or nursing home, registered domiciliary care providers, voluntary managed hospice providers and those that are employed by those who receive direct payments (personal budgets) or Personal Health budgets, such as Personal Assistants

Adults should be invited by their GP. Once invited, you should book an appointment with your GP or [a pharmacy that offers the flu vaccine](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/pharmacy-nhs-flu-vaccine-service/) as soon as possible to ensure you are protected ahead of winter.

Most children are offered the flu vaccine as a nasal spray. Younger children will be invited by their GP and school-aged children will be offered this through their schools. Parents are strongly encouraged to fill out their consent forms to enable their child to get protected.

**RSV vaccine**

For the first time from September the NHS is offering vaccines for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common cause of coughs and colds which can be dangerous to older people and young children. In small babies, this condition can make it difficult to breathe and feed.

The vaccination will be available to those aged 75 to 79, and it will be offered to pregnant people from 28 weeks, to protect their child.

For more information and translated and accessible versions, visit the [Your guide to the RSV vaccine for older adults - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv-vaccination-for-older-adults/your-guide-to-the-rsv-vaccine-for-older-adults)

**More information** about seasonal vaccinations can be found on [Vaccinations - Sussex Health & Care](https://www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/your-care/stay-protected-vaccinations/)

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