**Key local and national support with**

**energy, food and other essential costs**

*Brighton & Hove, November 2022*

Heating the home to at least 18°C is important for everyone’s health and immune system, particularly young children, people aged 65 or over and those with reduced mobility or a health condition such as heart, lung or kidney disease, asthma and diabetes. Sitting or sleeping in a cold room increases the risk of heart attacks, stroke, breathing problems and chest infections.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contents** | **Page** |
| Energy (Local support) | **1** |
| Food and other essentials (Local support) | **3** |
| Money, water & home safety (Local support) | **4** |
| National schemes – Energy | **5** |
| Public Health advice and guidance on keeping warm and well at home | **6** |
| COVID-19 and Flu vaccinations | **8** |

**LOCAL SUPPORT - Energy**

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

Free home visits or phone calls to help people keep warm and reduce their energy bills. LEAP works in partnership with the council and has already helped lots of people in Brighton & Hove. The local LEAP advisor can:

* give practical advice on heating systems and saving energy
* fit free energy-saving kit in your home (e.g. lightbulbs and draught-proofing)
* check eligibility for insulation or a new boiler
* arrange a free, confidential money advice telephone call to help with benefits, debt and other money problems.

To book a free energy advice phone call or home visit call **0800 060 7567** or **apply online at** [**https://applyforleap.org.uk**](https://applyforleap.org.uk).

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

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 call **0800 999 6671** or email**info@bhesco.co.uk** **with the subject heading: Energy Advice.**

For more information go to[**https://bhesco.co.uk/blog/energy-bill-crisis-what-help-is-available-sussex**](https://bhesco.co.uk/blog/energy-bill-crisis-what-help-is-available-sussex)

|  |
| --- |
| **NEA (National Energy Action) - Warm & Safe Homes Advice Service (WASH)** |

Free, impartial support and advice for vulnerable and low-income customers. The service can help with gas and electricity accounts, Warm Home Discount and Priority Service Register, switching, energy efficiency and water rates, trust fund applications, benefits advice and income maximisation.

To contact the WASH Advice Service call **0800 304 7159** **(M-F 10-12)**, 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.

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 contact**rebecca.jones@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/)**.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Brighton & Hove City Council** |

**Disabled Facilities Grants**

**Warm Safe Homes Grant** - for eligible householders who are owner occupiers or living in privately rented homes. Up to £20,000 for works to make homes warmer and more energy efficient, such as safety checks and repairs, boiler repair/replacement, loft/cavity wall insulation, replacement of windows and doors, other forms of heating, roofing and guttering repairs.

Grants are also available for older and disabled people, including children, to help prevent falls and injury in the home and assist hospital discharge. These are all non-repayable grants with a simple application process.

To apply, contact the Disabled Facilities Grant Teamat**disabledfacilitiesgrant@brighton-hove.gov.uk**or call **01273 294366.** For the hospital discharge grant, contact Possability Peopleon **01273 069851** or**HDS@possabilitypeople.org.uk**.

For more information about the range of assistance on offer go to:

[**www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/care-and-support-adults/changes-your-home**](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care/care-and-support-adults/changes-your-home)

**Warm Welcome Directory - Indoor activities and warm places to go this winter:**

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support/warm-welcome-directory-indoor-activities-and-warm-places-go-winter>

**LOCAL SUPPORT – Food & Other Essentials**

|  |
| --- |
| **Brighton & Hove City Council - Household Support Fund** |

**Food, energy & other essentials**

For people struggling to pay for food, energy and other essentials, help through the Household Support Fund is available this winter, whether or not you’re currently receiving benefits. **Funding is limited and residents in emergency situations will be prioritised. Only one award can be made to each household.**

**Apply online at** [**www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/household-support-fund**](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/household-support-fund)

**If you can’t get online, call 01273 293117** (select option 1 if you receive benefits,or option 2 if you don’t receive benefits).Phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 10am to 4.30pm. Phone interpreters are available on this number.

You can find more advice and support at [**www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support**](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/cost-living-support)**.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Brighton & Hove Food Partnership**  |

Information on all the local support available for people struggling to buy food, including signposting to the city’s food banks and to organisations that can provide referrals or food bank vouchers.

**Food Emergency:** [**https://bhfood.org.uk/resources/referring-to-a-food-bank/**](https://bhfood.org.uk/resources/referring-to-a-food-bank/)

**Food Poverty:** [**https://bhfood.org.uk/how-to-hub/food-poverty-advice/**](https://bhfood.org.uk/how-to-hub/food-poverty-advice/)

* 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 pick up a weekly shop cheaper than your average supermarket.
* We also have information on [**free & cheap meals**](https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/meal-delivery-takeaway-services-covid-19-info/) outside the home e.g. lunch clubs, community cafes and other shared meals.
* You can pick up surplus food from Real Junk Food Project at [**Bevendean Food Hub**](https://bhfood.org.uk/directory/real-junk-food-project-bevendean-food-hub/) on a pay-as-you-feel basis.
* There are three [**Community Fridges**](https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/community-fridge/) in Brighton where you can pick up surplus food for free.

**For more information, visit** [**www.bhfood.org.uk**](http://www.bhfood.org.uk) **or call 01273 234810.**

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

We provide an emergency on-the-day service for people with no access to funds and work with individuals to find long term solutions removing barriers to accessing food and shopping. We work with Brighton and Hove residents who are aged 18+ and are struggling to get food due to lack of money or other barriers.

Call **01273 322950**, email **food.access@impact-initiatives.org.uk**or use the online contact form at [**www.impact-initiatives.org.uk/services/food-services**](http://www.impact-initiatives.org.uk/services/food-services)

|  |
| --- |
| **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**](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/free-school-meals) or call **01273 293497**.

**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**

**LOCAL SUPPORT – Money, Water & Home Safety**

|  |
| --- |
| **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 Adviceline** on **0800 988 7037** (open Mon 1-5, Tue 9-1, Wed & Thu 12.30-4.30, and Fri 10-2)
* **Citizens Advice Helpline** on **08082 78 78 15** or go to [**https://www.cabrightonhove.org/get-advice**](https://www.cabrightonhove.org/get-advice/)

|  |
| --- |
| **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:

**Help with paying your water bill:**[**https://www.southernwater.co.uk/account/help-paying-your-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**](https://www.southernwater.co.uk/help-advice/how-to-save-water/water-saving-home-visits)

|  |
| --- |
| **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/**](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**](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**](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/)**.**

**NATIONAL SCHEMES - Energy**

|  |
| --- |
| **Energy Bills Support Scheme** |

This winter, households will receive a £400 discount on their energy bills. This discount will be applied over 6 months, starting in October 2022. Households will receive an automatic discount of £66 on their energy bills in October and November. This will rise to £67 each month from December to March 2023.

**If you have a domestic electricity meter and pay for your energy by standard credit, payment card or direct debit, you will receive an automatic discount.** This will be on your bills over the 6 month period, and total £400.

**If you have a prepayment meter, you will receive energy bill discount vouchers** from the first week of each month. This will be from October 2022 to March 2023. You will get these by SMS text message, email or post, using your registered contact details.

|  |
| --- |
| **Energy Price Guarantee** |

The Energy Price Guarantee reduces the cost of electricity and gas from 1 October 2022. This is so that a typical household will pay around £2,500 a year on their energy bill from October 2022 to March 2023, and £3,000 a year from April 2023 to April 2024. The Energy Price Guarantee limits the amount you can be charged per unit of gas or electricity but your bill will still depend on how much energy you use and may be more.

**You do not need to apply for the Energy Price Guarantee and there’s no need to contact your energy supplier.**

The discount is automatic. If you get a message telling you that you need to apply, or asking for your bank or credit card details, this could be a scam. You can [report messages you think are suspicious](https://www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-emails-websites-phishing) ([www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-emails-websites-phishing](http://www.gov.uk/report-suspicious-emails-websites-phishing)).

|  |
| --- |
| **Warm Home Discount** |

You could get £150 off your electricity bill this winter with the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money is not paid to you - it’s a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October 2022 and March 2023.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity and you’re eligible. **Contact your supplier to find out.**

[To find out more about the Warm Home Discount, visit the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme) ([www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)) or call 0800 731 0214.

|  |
| --- |
| **Winter Fuel Payment** |

If you were born on or before 25 September 1956 you could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a ‘Winter Fuel Payment’. [The amount you’ll get](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-much-youll-get) includes a ‘Pensioner Cost of Living Payment’. This is between £150 and £300. You’ll only get this extra amount in winter 2022 to 2023. This is in addition to any [Cost of Living Payment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment) you get with your benefit or tax credits.

You will get your Winter Fuel Payment automatically (you do not need to claim) [if you’re eligible](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/eligibility) and either:

* get the State Pension
* get another social security benefit (not including Adult Disability Payment from the Scottish Government, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit)

**If you do not get either of these, or if you live abroad, you may need to**[**make a claim**](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-to-claim)**.** The deadline for you to [make a claim](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-to-claim) for winter 2022 to 2023 is 31 March 2023.

To find out more, [visit the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment) ([www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)) or call 0800 731 0160.

|  |
| --- |
| **Cold Weather Payments** |

You may get a Cold Weather Payment if you’re getting [certain benefits or Support for Mortgage Interest](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/eligibility). You’ll get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days. You’ll get £25 for each 7 day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March. You’ll be able to check if your area is due a payment from November 2022.

**You do not need to apply.** If you’re [eligible to get a Cold Weather Payment](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/eligibility), you’ll be paid it automatically. Visit the gov.uk website to [find out if you qualify](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment) ([www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](http://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment)).

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

**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 Weather Plan for England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-cwp-for-england) 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 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.

Get your COVID-19 and Flu vaccinations

All those who are at greater risk from the COVID-19 and flu viruses should take the extra protection offered by vaccination this winter. If you are aged 50 or over, or pregnant, or have a weakened immune system or long-term health condition, you will be eligible to receive your free COVID-19 booster and flu vaccinations.

**Covid vaccine**

The NHS will email or text you when it’s your turn to be invited, and people can book their COVID-19 booster vaccine using the National Booking Service or by calling 119, or you can find a local vaccination walk-in site. 119 is also available by textphone on 18001 119 and the NHS 119 BSL interpreter service at: [**www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs119**](http://www.signvideo.co.uk/nhs119)

**Flu vaccine**

If you are pregnant you are eligible for a free flu vaccination at any time in your pregnancy; ask your GP practice, pharmacist or midwife. And if you are the main carer of an older or disabled person, you may also be eligible for the free flu vaccine. If you have young children or grandchildren they may also be eligible for a free flu nasal spray vaccination. Speak to your GP practice or pharmacist. You can also find more information at [**www.nhs.uk/fluvaccine**](http://www.nhs.uk/fluvaccine)

**Stay Well This Winter** leaflets in a variety of accessible formats are available at:

[**https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/97-stay-well-this-winter/resources)**](https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/97-stay-well-this-winter/resources%29)

*This resource was compiled by Sarah Podmore, Health Promotion Specialist,*

*Public Health, Brighton & Hove City Council; November 2022.*

*sarah.podmore@brighton-hove.gov.uk*