Cost of living information



southampton.gov.uk/costofliving





Many people are being affected by the rising cost of living and it can be very hard when you don't feel in control of your money. The crisis is affecting everyone, but some are struggling much more than others.

There is a lot of support available, but it can be difficult to know where to find it. We want to help as much as we can, so we have put together this guide on the help and support that is available in the city and from the Government. So whether you are looking for help with keeping warm, putting food on the table, accessing benefits, looking after your health, or avoiding scams, please do read on.

Most information is available online but we know that this is not accessible to everyone. We have included phone numbers in this leaflet wherever we can, but some of the most useful information is only available on the internet. If you would like help accessing this please call Citizens Advice or visit your local library where our friendly Digital Champions will be able to help you. Library opening times are listed at the end of this leaflet.

All the information in this leaflet is also available on the council's website along with lots more advice and tips to help you through the cost of living crisis. www.southampton.gov.uk/costofliving



Claim what you can

When money is tight, it's important to make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. Whether you are a single person, a pensioner or a family, there may be benefits you can claim.

If you have access to the internet, the Turn2Us benefits calculator is a good place to start. Answer a series of questions and it will tell you what benefits you might be able to claim.

https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

You can also look at the council's benefits toolkit which provides information on the various benefits available to you depending on your personal circumstances.

www.southampton.gov.uk/benefitstoolkit



Need help getting online? Visit your local library - details at the back of this leaflet



If you struggle to access the internet, Citizens Advice Southampton will be able to help you understand and access most of the support in this booklet. They can help you claim benefits or other financial support and advise you about other money worries.

You can call Citizens Advice Southampton Adviceline on **0808 27 87 863** (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm). Calls are free and an answerphone is available outside these times.



Support for older people

The Age UK national Information and Advice Team are on hand to support older residents through the cost of living crisis. They can help make sure you are accessing all the benefits you are entitled to and direct you to the support that is available across the city.

Age UK

Tel: 0800 678 1602 (8am - 7pm) www.ageuk.org.uk



SO:Linked and partner organisations are supporting frail, older adults and adults with respiratory conditions who are at risk of fuel poverty, to access Warm Spaces and cost of living support. The project aims to provide advice and physical spaces that can be accessed over the winter months. To see if you or someone you know is eligible for this support please fill in a referral form or give them a call.

SO:Linked

💥 SO:Linked 023 8020 2650 (Weekdays 9am - 5pm) www.solinked.org.uk/warm-space-referral-form

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund aims to support Southampton residents who are on a low income and facing financial hardship. The council distributes this fund from the Government at different times of the year. Unfortunately the demand for funding is usually greater than the money we have been given. To find out when the next round of funding is available, to see if you are eligible, and to apply, is on our website.

Tel: 023 9401 6642 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 2pm) www.southampton.gov.uk/householdsupportfund



Council tax discount scheme

You may be entitled to Council Tax Reduction if you have a low income or are in receipt of certain benefits. There are many different circumstances that could mean you are entitled to some form of support. More details are available on our website www.southampton.gov.uk/housingbenefit

If you are already in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and are still struggling, then further support can be applied for at www.southampton.gov.uk/discretionary

Council tax discounts may also be available to you if you meet other criteria. Visit the council website to see if you are eligible for a discount or exemption. www.southampton.gov.uk/counciltaxdiscount

If you are unable to access the website and do not have anyone who can help you get online, then please call 023 8083 3009

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 8.30am - 5pm

Wednesday: 9am - 5pm Friday: 8.30am - 4.30pm

If you are struggling to pay your Council Tax please contact us as soon as possible. We may be able to help you identify relevant discounts and set up affordable repayment plans.



Care leavers tax allowance

The care leaver reduction scheme aims to support care leavers, up to the age of 25 years old, to help manage their Council Tax. If you have previously been in the care of the council, you should check your Council Tax bill to see whether we have automatically applied this discount. If this hasn't happened and you believe you are eligible for the reduction, you can apply online.

www.southampton.gov.uk/careleaverreduction

Need help getting online? Visit your local library - details at the back of this leaflet



Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments are additional help you can apply for if you are already getting Housing Benefit, or the Housing Cost Element of Universal Credit.

The council has limited funds for Discretionary Housing Payments, so these payments are normally for a temporary period.

Appy online at: www.southampton.gov.uk/discretionary



Free School Meals

Free School Meals are available for children whose households meet certain criteria. These include being in receipt of one or more of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Asylum Support, Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit. To apply for free school meals, it is recommended that you contact the school your child attends and apply online for an eligibility check.

More information is on our website www.southampton.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals



Need help getting online? Visit your local library - details at the back of this leaflet.

Free childcare for two, three and four year olds

Free early years education is available for all three and four year old children. The offer includes 15 hours per week for all three and four year old children, and 30 hours per week for children whose parents qualify for extended funding. We are also able to offer up to 15 hours per week to eligible two year olds.

For more information:

Tel: 023 8036 3309 (please leave a message)

Email: fis@southampton.gov.uk www.southampton.gov.uk/earlyyears

(Website includes a directory of Ofsted registered early

years childcare providers)



The Healthy Start initiative

If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four, the NHS's Healthy Start scheme can help you buy healthy foods like milk or fruit and get free vitamins. You need to be claiming certain benefits to qualify. If you are pregnant and under 18 you can claim even if you do not receive any benefits.

You can get more information and apply via the NHS website. www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Need help getting online? Visit your local library - details at the back of this leaflet.



Did you know

You can get a 25% discount on bulky waste collection if you are claiming the benefits listed below:

- Income Support
- Pensions Credit
- · Job Seekers Allowance income related
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Employment Support Allowance
- Universal Credits

Tel: 023 8083 3005

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 8.30am - 5pm Wednesday: 9am - 5pm, Friday: 8.30am - 4.30pm

(you will need your National Insurance or benefits reference number)

Welfare Rights and Money Advice service for Southampton City Council housing tenants

If you are a council tenant and you are having problems paying your bills or making ends meet, you should contact our Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team. The friendly team can check you are receiving the benefits you are entitled to and help you create a budget plan.

They can also explain which debts should be paid first and why they are so important, advise on the options available to help resolve your debt problems, help respond to court action, and give you information and the skills to regain control of your finances.

Tel: 023 8083 2339

(Monday to Thursday: 9am - 5pm, Friday: 9am - 4.30pm)

Email: welfarerights.advice@southampton.gov.uk

www.southampton.gov.uk/moneyadvice

Don't pay more than you need to for your home phone and internet

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband. They're delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a lower price.

Contact your provider to see if they offer a social tariff. If they don't, you can switch to one that does. Your provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee but you should always check before you switch.

For more information visit www.ofgem.org.uk



Help with your water bill

If you're struggling to pay your bill, you could be entitled to one of Southern Water's payment schemes.

You could be eligible for a discount if any of the following applies to you:

- Your household income is low
- · Someone in your home gets a means-tested benefit
- You've got three or more children under 19 living at home
- Someone living with you needs more water because of a medical condition
- · You haven't made a payment to them for a while

If you are struggling to pay your bills, call Southern Water on **0800 027 0363** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).





Southampton Healthy Homes scheme

Managed by Southampton City Council and delivered by the Environment Centre, Southampton Healthy Homes offers support and advice to people who are finding it difficult to pay their energy bills.

The Environment Centre's highly qualified energy advisors provide impartial advice on keeping warm at home, accessing grants and saving money.

The Environment Centre

Tel: 0800 804 8601 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) Email: enquiries@environmentcentre.com

www.environmentcentre.com





Get a warm welcome at your local library

Did you know that most residents live within one mile of a library?

Our libraries are warm, free and safe spaces, with friendly faces, and plenty of places to relax quietly or get involved in one of the many activities on offer. Activities are available for people of all ages - from crafting workshops and reading groups, to Rhyme and Story time and homework clubs for kids. There is free wifi, PC access, cheap printing and free phone charging sockets.

One-on-one support is available from staff and volunteer Digital Champions, who can help you become more confident using technology such as filling in forms online and shopping for the best deals.

Library opening times and phone numbers are listed at the back of this leaflet.



You can also get free support from Citizens Advice at the Video Advice Hub in Central and Shirley libraries. Opening times are Monday to Friday from 10am - 12noon. Please note the video hubs rely on volunteers so opening times may vary. Please call the Citizens Advice admin team on 023 8022 3659 to find out if the video hub is open before you visit.



Family Hubs (Sure Start Centres)

Whether you are a parent to be, a mum, dad, grandparent or carer of a child under five, you will always get a warm welcome at one of our Sure Start centres. There are seven centres located around the city. Their addresses and phone numbers are listed at the back of this booklet.



Need help getting online? Visit your local library - details at the back of this leaflet.

Keep warm this winter

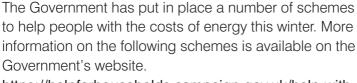
A warm welcome is also available at Erskine Court (Lordshill) and Potters Court (Maybush). These modern, council-run housing with care schemes are opening their doors to allow the wider community to enjoy activities and a hot meal or drink.

Potters Court - Coffee Afternoon, Tuesdays, 11am - 3pm. Erskine Court - Fish and Chip Friday, Fridays, 11am - 3pm. (Charges apply) No need to book - just turn up.

For further information please contact Laura Morgan, Housing Support Coordinator on Tel: 07775 220 109.

Other warm spaces are available across the city. To find out where your nearest one is, you can call a Community Navigator at So:Linked on 023 8020 2650.







https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/help-with-your-bills/

Energy Bills Support Scheme

Every household is getting £400 off their energy bill as part of this scheme. You don't need to do anything to get this payment, and you won't need to pay it back. It will be applied to your energy account over six months starting from October 2022.

For people with a pre-payment meter, the money will be applied to your meter or paid via a voucher. If you have not received your voucher you will need to contact your energy supplier.

Beware of scams

There is no need to apply and you will never be asked for bank details in relation to this scheme.

Energy Price Guarantee

From 1 October the Energy Price Guarantee has reduced the unit cost of electricity and gas for UK households. This will limit a typical dual-fuel household annual energy bill to £2,500 which will last until April 2023. This is not a cap on how much you'll pay and your bill will still depend on how much energy you actually use.





Winter fuel payments

If you were born before 26 September 1956 you could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'.

This winter, the Government is also paying a Pensioner Cost of Living Payment of £150 to £300. This will be paid as an automatic top-up to the Winter Fuel Payment.

If you are eligible, you should have received a letter in October or November saying how much you will get. If you did not get a letter but you think you're eligible, you can check on the Government's website. www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-to-claim



Need help getting online? Visit your local library - details at the back of this leaflet.

Cold weather payments

Cold weather payments are made to people on certain benefits or Support for Mortgage Interest. If the average temperature in Southampton is recorded as, or is forecast to be zero degrees Celsius or lower over seven consecutive days between 1 November and 31 March, eligible people will receive £25.

To see if you are eligible and for more information you will need to visit the Government's website www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment



The Warm Home Discount Scheme

You could get £150 off your electricity bill for winter 2022 to 2023 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money is not paid to you – it is 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. The discount will not affect any Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment you might receive.

You will qualify for this scheme if you either:

- · receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, or
- are on a low income and have high energy costs

More information is available on the Government's website www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-eligible-for-warm-home-discount





Be scam aware, if in doubt check it out

When times are hard it can be tempting to take an offer of some extra cash or take advantage of a big discount on a product or service. However, if something sounds too good to be true, it often is. It's always worth checking if you are not sure. Remember no bank, council or utility company will ask for your personal information via text message, phone call, email or by knocking on your door.

Citizens Advice have lots of information on how to identify scams and what to do if you think you have been a victim. If you think you have been a victim of a scam you can call their consumer hotline on 0808 223 1133. Lots more information about how to identify scams is available on their website.



Citizens Advice Southampton

Tel: 0808 223 1133

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Never borrow money from loan sharks as it is likely to cost you a lot more than you actually borrow. Loan sharks are not regulated and are likely to add huge amounts of interest to the money you borrow from them. If you think you or someone you know may have borrowed money from a loan shark, you should report it to Stop Loan Sharks.

Tel: 0300 555 2222 (lines open 24 hours a day) Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk

SMS: Text lender's details to 07860 022116

www.stoploansharks.co.uk



Access food support

Access to food across the city comes in many different forms including pantries, marketplaces and even free meals for those in need of a hot home-cooked meal.

If you find yourself struggling, contact So:Linked to chat through your circumstances. A Community Navigator will help you find appropriate support, including an up-to-date list of all food projects in Southampton.

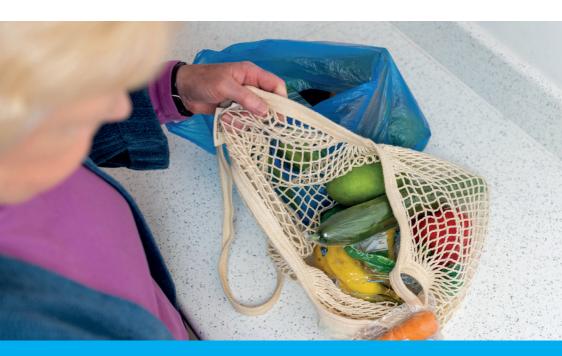
So:Linked

023 8020 2650 (Weekdays 9am - 5pm)

Email: soccg.solinked@nhs.net

www.solinked.org.uk







Look after your mental health – it's ok not to be ok

Your wellbeing and that of your loved ones is really important and financial worries can lead to extra stress and worry. There is lots of support available and we have listed some useful numbers below.

Solent Mind (Advice, information and support for anyone with mental health issues)

Tel: 023 8202 7810

Email info@solentmind.org.uk

www.solentmind.org.uk

CALM - Campaign Against Living Miserably

(feeling down or concerned about someone?)

Tel: 0800 58 58 58 (lines open daily from 5pm to midnight)

Samaritans (need to talk?)

Freephone: 116 123 (any time, any day)

Papyrus HopelineUK (for people under 35 years of age)

Tel: 0800 068 41 41

Childline (for people under 19 years of age)

Tel: 0800 11 11 (any time, any day)

Mental Health Support (help when you need it)

www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

www.southampton.gov.uk/mentalhealth

Steps2Wellbeing

Tel: 0800 612 7000

Email: dhc.sstw@nhs.net www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk



Health & wellbeing

It is important that we look after our bodies as well as our minds. In winter our hospitals and GP practices see more people becoming ill with flu and COVID-19. It's never too late to come forward for your first, second or booster COVID-19 vaccinations.

COVID-19* jabs are available from walk-in clinics or by booking an appointment. Appointments will need to be booked for children aged 5 on or before 31 August 2022.

Tel: 0300 561 0018

Help is available in a variety of languages (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination

(To book an appointment or find a walk-in clinic)

Flu vaccines are available if you are aged 50+ or at risk*. Vaccines are available from your own GP surgery or from many pharmacies (contact your local pharmacy directly or book online). If your child is aged between two and three, your child can also have their flu vaccine at your GP practice. School aged children will be offered the vaccine as part of the school immunisation programme.

Vaccinations continue to be our best form of protection against these illnesses together with hand washing or sanitising and wearing a face covering in crowded places. www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations (to book an appointment)

*Eligibility criteria apply

Useful local contacts

Provider/contact details	Opening times	Services offered
Southampton City Council Cost of living general enquiries Tel 023 9401 6611	Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm	Help you find what support is available.
Southampton City Council Welfare Rights and Money Advice Team Tel: 023 8083 2339 Email: welfarerights.advice @southampton.gov.uk	Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm Friday 9am - 4.30pm	Advice with benefits, budget planning and managing debts for council housing tenants.
Bitterne Library Bitterne Road East SO18 5EG Tel: 023 8083 3007	Monday 10am - 7pm Tuesday 10am - 4pm Wednesday 10am - 7pm Thursday 10am - 5pm Friday 10am - 5pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday closed	Warm Space, free wi-fi, cheap printing, access to computers, help filling in online forms to get financial support.
Central Library Civic Centre SO14 7LW Tel: 023 8083 3007	Monday 10am - 7pm Tuesday 10am - 7pm Wednesday 10am - 6pm Thursday 10am - 7pm Friday 10am - 5pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday - closed	Warm Space, free wi-fi, cheap printing, access to computers, help filling in online forms to get financial support.
Lordshill Library Lordshill District Centre Lordshill SO16 8HY Tel: 023 8083 3007	Monday - closed Tuesday 10am - 7pm Wednesday 10am - 5pm Thursday 10am - 7pm Friday 10am - 4pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday - closed	Warm Space, free wi-fi, cheap printing, access to computers, help filling in online forms to get financial support.
Portswood Library Portswood Road Portswood SO17 2NG Tel: 023 8083 3007	Monday 10am - 7pm Tuesday 10am - 5pm Wednesday 10am - 7pm Thursday - closed Friday 10am - 5pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday - closed	Warm Space, free wi-fi, cheap printing, access to computers, help filling in online forms to get financial support.

Provider/contact details	Opening times	Services offered
Shirley Library Shirley Precinct Shirley SO15 5LL Tel: 023 8083 3007	Monday 10am - 7pm Tuesday 10am - 7pm Wednesday 10am - 7pm Thursday 10am - 4pm Friday 10am - 5pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday - closed	Warm Space, free wi-fi, cheap printing, access to computers, help filling in online forms to get financial support.
Woolston Library Centenary Quay Victoria Rd Woolston SO19 9EF Tel: 023 8083 3007	Monday 10am - 5pm Tuesday 10am - 7pm Wednesday 10am - 7pm Thursday - closed Friday 10am - 5pm Saturday 10am - 4pm Sunday - closed	Warm Space, free wi-fi, cheap printing, access to computers, help filling in online forms to get financial support.
Burgess Road Library Burgess Road SO16 3HF Tel: 023 8058 6804	Monday 10am - 5pm Tuesday - closed Wednesday 12noon - 5pm Thursday - closed Friday 10am - 4pm Saturday 11.30am - 1.30pm Sunday - closed	Warm SpaceFree wi-fiCheap printingAccess to computers
Millbrook Library Pickles Coppice Children's Centre Windermere Avenue SO16 9QX Tel: 023 8054 0135	Monday 9am - 12noon Tuesday 9am - 12noon Wednesday - closed Thursday 12noon - 3pm Friday 9am to 12noon Saturday - closed Sunday - closed	Warm SpaceFree wi-fiCheap printingAccess to computers
Thornhill Community Library 328 Hinkler Road SO19 6DF Tel: 023 8043 2761	Monday 2pm - 4.30pm Tuesday 9.30am - 12noon Wednesday 2pm - 4.30pm Thursday - closed Friday 9.30am - 12noon Saturday - closed Sunday - closed	Warm SpaceFree wi-fiCheap printingAccess to computers

Provider/contact details	Opening times	Services offered
YMCA Weston Community Library 68 Weston Lane Southampton SO19 9HG Tel: 023 8043 1604	Monday 2pm - 4.30pm Tuesday 9.30am - 12noon Wednesday 2pm - 4.30pm Thursday closed Friday 9.30am - 12noon Saturday - closed Sunday - closed	Warm SpaceFree wi-fiCheap printingAccess to computers
Age UK Tel: 0800 678 1602 (8am - 7pm, 365 days per year)		Benefits advice and signposting to general support for older people.
Citizens Advice Southampton Tel: 0808 27 87 863 Lines open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4pm (answerphone available outside these hours) www.citizensadvice southampton.org.uk	Call or visit the video hubs in Central or Shirley libraries (usually open 10am to midday) to talk to an adviser.	Help with benefits, money and debt advice, heat and electricity, food vouchers, family and relationships, housing, work, consumer problems, legal problems, immigration, healthcare.
Communicare Southampton Tel: 023 8250 0050 Email: enquiry@communicarein southampton.org.uk		Good neighbours scheme, help with loneliness.
The Environment Centre Tel: 0800 804 8601 Email: keepwarm@ environmentcentre.com		Advice on keeping warm at home, how to access grants and save money.
SO:Linked Tel: 023 8020 2650 (Weekdays 9am - 5pm) Email: soccg.solinked@ nhs.net www.solinked.org.uk		Information on warm spaces and food pantries, plus money, debt and benefits advice.

Provider/contact details	Opening times	Services offered
Southampton Advice and Resource Centre (SARC)		Advice on welfare benefits and employment.
Tel: 023 8043 1435 Email: admin@ sarc.org.uk		
Sure Start Family Hub West The Ashby Centre Stratton Road, SO15 5QZ Tel: 023 8078 7422		Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Sure Start Family Hub Pickles Coppice Pickles Coppice Children's Centre 65 Windermere Avenue SO16 9QX		Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Tel: 023 8054 0135		
Sure Start Family Hub Swaythling Bassett Green Primary School Honeysuckle Road SO16 3BZ	Email: surestart.centrallocality@ southampton.gov.uk Facebook: Sure Start Family Hub Southampton	Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Tel: 023 8083 3552		
Sure Start Family Hub Central 60-68 Clovelly Road SO14 0AU	Email: surestart.centrallocality@ southampton.gov.uk Facebook: Sure Start	Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Tel: 023 8033 1635	Family Hub Southampton	

Provider/contact details	Opening times	Services offered
Sure Start Family Hub Townhill Cutbush Children's Centre, Cutbush Lane Townhill Park, SO18 2GF Tel: 023 8091 5480	Email: surestarteastlocality@ southampton.gov.uk Facebook: Sure Start Family Hub Southampton	Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Sure Start Family Hub Weston (On the same site as Weston Shore Infant School) 60 Foxcott Close Weston, SO19 9JQ Tel: 023 8043 7866	Email: surestarteastlocality@ southampton.gov.uk Facebook: Sure Start Family Hub Southampton	Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Sure Start Family Hub Thornhill (On the same site as Thornhill Primary School) Byron Road Thornhill, SO19 6FH Tel: 023 8091 7633	Email: surestarteastlocality@ southampton.gov.uk Facebook: Sure Start Family Hub Southampton	Warm space, children's activities, family support.
Erskine Court Sutherland Rd, Lordshill, SO16 8LY Laura Morgan, Housing Support Coordinator Tel: 07775 220 109	Fish and Chip Friday Every Friday, 11am-3pm (Charges apply)	Hot meal plus activities like bingo etc.
Potters Court 538 Wimpson Lane SO16 4PW Laura Morgan, Housing Support Coordinator Tel: 07775 220 109	Coffee Afternoon Every Tuesday, 11am-3pm	Hot drink and activities.

