'Cost of Living Crisis' - Quick Links

March 2023

Contacting Citizens Advice:

Dorset Adviceline: 0800 144 8848 **BCP AdviceLine: 0808 2787 939**

National website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Local offices offer face to face, phone and email advice – for details of office locations, opening hours and email enquiry forms, go to:

- **Bridport & district:** https://bridportca.org.uk/
- **Central Dorset** [Weymouth, Dorchester, Sherborne, North Dorset]: https://centraldorsetca.org.uk/
- **East Dorset and Purbeck:** https://edpcitizensadvice.org.uk/
- **Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole:** https://www.citizensadvicebcp.org.uk/

Benefit checks:

General benefit information: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/

Help to Claim: national Citizens Advice helpline for Universal Credit claims: **0800 144 8444**.

Benefits check: Make sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to. There are three reliable online 'calculators' – follow the links from the Government website - https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators

Grants

Household Support Fund: ***more information coming soon on the next rounds.***

DORSET: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/coronavirus/support-for-residents/household-support-fund

BCP: https://www.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/Communities/Cost-of-living-help/Household-Support-Fund.aspx

Also search for **grants for individuals** in need on **Turn2Us:** https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/

Government support for cost of living: For information on cost of living payments*, help with energy bills, Winter Fuel Payments, Warm Home Discount etc, see the **Help for Households campaign: https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/**

***Summary of Government Support in 2022:** what there is, when it should be paid, how to report a missed payment etc - **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment**

- Energy Bills Support Scheme – £400 grant paid in 6 instalments from Oct 2022
- £650 Cost of Living Payment if on means tested benefits, paid in 2 instalments
- One-off £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment

- £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment (paid from 20 Sept 2022)

Govt Support from April 2023: Millions of low-income households to get new Cost of Living Payments from Spring 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) More details soon.

Money saving tips and ways to reduce your bills

Help with Energy bills (grants etc) from Ofgem:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/reduce-your-bills-schemes-and-grants

Social tariffs *[discounted bills / packages available to people in receipt of certain benefits e.g. Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance]:*

Ofcom: cheaper broadband and phone packages: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs

Water - help with bills:

Wessex Water: https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/your-account/help-paying

Bournemouth Water: https://www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/bills/need-help-paying-your-bill/

Other money saving tips

Citizens Advice – if you are struggling with living costs:
https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/get-help-with-the-cost-of-living/

Money Saving Expert – cost of living crisis 'survival guide' 90+ ways to save money:
https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/cost-of-living-survival-kit/

Money Helper – living on a squeezed income:
https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/way-forward/squeezed-income

Other ways to increase income /save money

Healthy Start Scheme: vouchers for pregnant women and families with a child under 4 on low income to buy basic food items. https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/

Help with health costs: https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/

Childcare: https://www.gov.uk/get-childcare [includes getting help with costs]

Debt Advice: Local Citizens Advice can offer a Debt Assessment; referral for fuller debt advice may involve a wait due to demand on services. Other FREE sources of debt help:

Citizen Advice national debt helpline: 0800 240 4420

National Debtline: 0808 808 4000 https://nationaldebtline.org/

StepChange: 0800 138 1111 https://www.stepchange.org/#

PayPlan: 0800 280 2816 https://www.payplan.com/