

Your Essex



Help and support are available

We know many of you are worrying about how you will cope with the rise in living costs this winter, and beyond.

Our message to anyone struggling is "help and support are available", and we have made this a key priority.

We have launched several urgent support measures over the last few months, focusing on keeping people

fed, warm and feeling supported. These are in addition to the Government's [Help for Households](#) campaign, which is a great source for information too.

We appreciate that there is a lot of advice going around at present. So, in this special edition of Your Essex, we have summarised all the support available at present in addition to Help for Households.

We are continuing to work with the Government and partners across the county. We will share news of cost of living initiatives with you via future editions of Your Essex. You can also visit our [cost of living hub](#) on our website.

I know it isn't always easy to ask for help, but whatever your situation, if you need support, please reach out.

Please forward this newsletter on to your friends and family, so they can benefit from our support too.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Louise McKinlay, your Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities

Help with food



Foodbanks

Foodbanks give free food to people who are struggling financially. Visit the Trussell Trust to [find a foodbank near you](#).

Emergency assistance

The Salvation Army also offers [emergency assistance](#) to people in need.

Food savings

Download the [Kitche app](#) for free to help you reduce your food waste and save money.

If you download between the 14 and 30 November, you will be in with a chance of winning a free air fryer.

Free school meals

Children in reception, year 1 and year 2 automatically get free school meals. This is called Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) and you do not need to apply for it.

Children in year 3 and above may be [eligible for free school meals](#).

Meal vouchers

Meal vouchers will be available for the December 2022, February and Easter 2023 school holidays.

The vouchers are for:

- children and young people aged 4 to 19 who are registered for free meals with their school or college
- children aged 2, 3 and 4 who are entitled to pupil premium or free entitlement funding supplement

Vouchers will be sent to parents before the start of the holiday by the school or college. You can use the vouchers to buy food only. You can use them in most supermarkets.

For more information, visit the [School Vouchers website](#).

National Breakfast Clubs

Speak to your child's school to see if they are participating in the Government's National Breakfast Club programme.

Help with energy bills



Get specialist advice

You could get help from a specialist energy advisor if you are finding it hard to pay energy bills or have debts with energy suppliers. They might be able to help you get a grant to improve your home's energy efficiency.

Get advice from the [Warm Homes Essex](#) website or call the Citizens Advice Warm Homes team on 0300 3033 789.

£25,000 of energy efficiency improvements for homes off the gas grid

The Sustainable Warmth Scheme offers grants worth up to £25,000 for energy efficiency home improvements for

homes in Essex that are off the gas grid. Helping you reduce your energy bills and keeping you warm.

Find out if you are eligible to apply for the [Sustainable Warmth Scheme grant](#). The scheme closes to applicants on 31 December 2022.

Energy savings

From 1 October, a new '[Energy Price Guarantee](#)' means a typical UK household will pay no more than £2,500 a year on their energy bill. The Energy Price Guarantee will be in place until April 2023.

A £400 government grant for all domestic energy customers will appear as a credit from energy suppliers from October 2022 onwards. This is known as the [Energy Bill Support Scheme](#).

You can save money on your energy bills by reducing the amount of energy you use. Visit the [Energy Saving Trust](#) to find out how you can save money on your energy bills.

Help with household costs



Emergency support

If you need emergency money or food, you may be eligible for a budgeting loan or grants and charitable funds.

Find out what [emergency support](#) is available to you.

Discounted broadband

Broadband providers are offering [discounted social tariffs](#) to help people who receive benefits to stay connected.

These deals can save eligible households up to £144 a year on their broadband bills.

Funding towards household costs

You can get help with your essential household costs.

The Essential Living Fund can help pay for:

- general living expenses such as groceries, nappies, toiletries and money for pay-as-you-go fuel meters
- clothing and footwear, including school uniforms in exceptional circumstances
- white goods
- furniture
- household furnishings

You must live in Essex and [apply through Southend Borough Council](#) who are managing the fund for the county.

You can also get advice and support from Citizens Advice and other voluntary and community organisations.

Read more about the [Household Support Fund](#).

Borrow household items

If you have an Essex Library card, you can borrow various household items from the Essex Library of Things. Items include tools for home repairs and

decorating, home appliances, sports equipment, musical instruments and gardening tools.

Find out more about the [Essex Library of Things](#).

Freegle

Give and get stuff for free in your local community with [Freegle](#).

Find out more about [Freegle and other reuse options available in Essex](#).

Help to support your wellbeing



A warm welcome awaits you this winter at your local library

Our libraries are hosting various events this winter where you can keep warm, meet people and have fun. Find a [Warm Welcome event](#) at your local library.

We're also looking for volunteers to help our libraries with coordinating more activities and support. Apply to be a [Warm Welcome volunteer](#).

Free and low-cost financial wellbeing courses

Access free and low-cost financial wellbeing courses with ACL Essex. From cooking on a budget to learning to manage your money.

Find a [financial wellbeing](#) course for you.

Help with childcare costs



Childcare costs

You could get help with childcare costs, including:

- [funded childcare for 2-year-olds](#)
- [funded childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds](#)
- [early years pupil premium](#)

You may be eligible for more help, including national funding.

Check your [eligibility for more help with childcare costs](#).

Essex ActivAte holiday activities and food programme

The Essex ActivAte programme offers free holiday activities and food clubs for young people who are eligible for benefits-based free school meals.

You can book clubs from Wednesday 23 November for the winter holidays.

Find out more about [Essex ActivAte](#).

Help with transport costs



Unlimited bus travel

Get unlimited bus travel in Essex for £10 a day with the [Essex Saver ticket](#) and £4.30 a day with the [Sunday Saver ticket](#).

Discounted season ticket for secondary education pupils

The discounted, pre-paid, [Scholar's Season ticket](#) is available to under 19s who are in secondary education.

Free school transport

We offer free home to school transport for children of compulsory school age. That could be for a contract bus, a ticket for a public bus or train, or fuel allowance.

Find out if your child is eligible for [free school transport](#) and how to apply.

Older or disabled persons bus pass

If you live in England and are of retirement age or an eligible disabled person, you are entitled to an English National Concessionary Bus Pass.

Find out how to apply for a [older or disabled persons bus pass](#).

Help with finding work



Expert career advice

Essex Opportunities is the go-to portal in Essex to find out about:

- career path options
- apprenticeships and work experience
- skills development and professional qualification programmes

Search for [opportunities in Essex](#).

Qualifications and skills for employment courses

ACL Essex have a range of courses and funding support opportunities available.

Find a [qualifications and skills for employment course](#).

Cost of Doing Business



We will be providing support and guidance for business via our business e-newsletter. Whatever size your business is, please [sign up to get help with the cost of doing business](#).

Useful links

We have set up a [cost of living hub](#) on our website where we will house all the support available to you.

Visit the Government's [Help for Households campaign](#) website for national support.

Help for Households

