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We've pulled information, help and support into one place on our [cost of living help hub](#) to make it easier to find what you need.

[Cost of living help hub](#)

A booklet with support will go through doors later this month and early in February to support residents who don't access online services.

I'm not struggling but want to help others

Donate

Thousands of families across the area are making a desperate choice this winter between buying enough food for the whole house or keeping their home warm.

Donating to this crowdfund will help local organisations support them.

We've teamed up with Wokingham United Charities and Berkshire Community Foundation to provide an extra £2 for every £1 donated by the public.

If the community gives £50,000, then £150,000 goes into supporting those who need help.

[Donate now](#)

Volunteering

As the cost of living crisis continues through this winter, the borough's groups need more people to help out.

[Sign up to volunteer](#) through the Wokingham Volunteer Centre, to look at roles working with the borough's community, voluntary and charitable groups.

To find out more on volunteering opportunities you can attend the [Wokingham Borough Volunteer Recruitment Fair](#) on Saturday 28 January at Wokingham Town Hall (RG40 1AS), open from 10am to 1pm.

Money support

Household Support Fund

This can be used for paying for food or energy bills.

[Apply now](#)

Help with council tax

Check if you're eligible for [Council Tax discounts, reductions or exemptions](#).

Preventing crisis

Our [Local Welfare Provision](#) is a scheme run by us to help people who are in a crisis or emergency situation. Apply to prevent a crisis or emergency from getting worse.



Citizens Advice help and support

Anyone who lives in the borough can get money, debt and budgeting advice from the team at Citizens Advice Wokingham. They've also got free online tools to help if you'd prefer to look in your own time:

- Use the [calculator to see how to maximise your income](#)
- Use the [budgeting tool to plan your spending](#)

Jake Morrison's (*pictured above, centre*) team run the One Front Door to help residents if they need support. You can call 0808 278 7958, Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm or contact them online.

[Contact One Front Door](#)

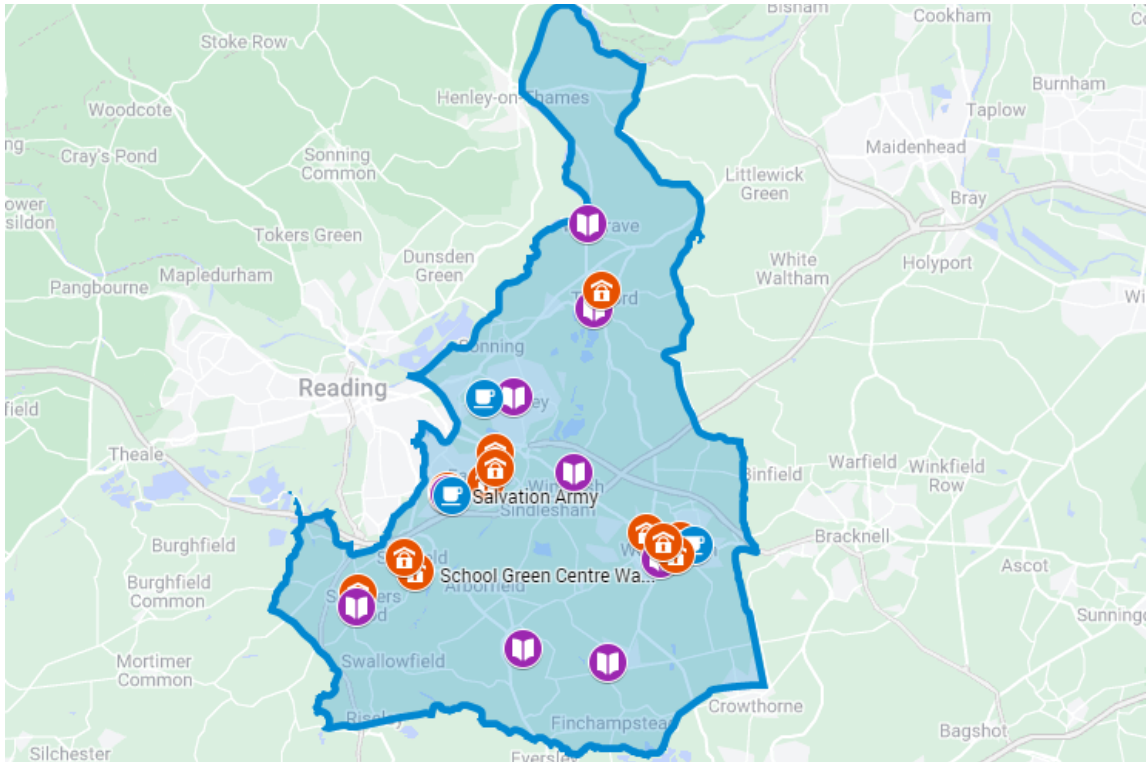
Other help and advice

- [Money Saving Expert](#)
- [Money Advice Service](#), call 0800 138 7777 8am to 6pm
- [National Debtline](#), call 0808 808 4000 9am to 8pm
- [StepChange Debt Charity](#), call 0800 138 1111, 9am to 5pm
- [Free school meals](#)
- [Pension credit](#), call 0800 99 1234
- [Childcare costs help](#)
- [Stop Loan Sharks](#), call 0300 555 2222

Community support

Warm spaces

Warm spaces are open across the borough to support the community, Find out where you can go near you to see a friendly face, have a chat and get a warm drink.



[View the map on our warm spaces pages](#), as well as opening days, times and activities on offer.

Food and other essentials

Local groups can help you with food, warm clothes or accessing essentials items like a cooker if yours breaks and you can't afford a new one.

[Get essentials](#)

You can also [try the OLIO app](#), which connects neighbours with each other and with local businesses so surplus food can be shared, not thrown away.

Foodbanks

- [Wokingham Foodbank](#)– providing support to people across Wokingham borough and beyond
- [Woodley Foodbank](#)– open to all in and around Woodley daily
- [Crowthorne Foodbank](#)– open to all in and around Crowthorne, including Wokingham Without and Finchampstead

Warmer winter project

The [warmer winter project](#) can get you energy efficient items for free through our partners SHARE Wokingham, First Days Children's Charity and [our Hardship Alliance partners](#).

There is a supply of slow cookers, air fryers, heated clothes dryers and more (subject to availability) at no cost. These will help bring energy bills down.

Help with energy costs

Warm home discount scheme

You could get £150 off your electricity bill. To find out if you're eligible, click the button below.

[Check eligibility](#)

Home energy saving tool

The online home energy saving tool to find ways to save on energy such as through home insulation or boiler upgrades.

[Save energy](#)

Sustainable Warmth Grant

Paying for improvements to properties if you have a lower income and an energy inefficient home.

[Apply now](#)

Help to heat

See if you can get help making your home warmer with Help to Heat, heavily subsidised home improvements to reduce your energy bills. Includes improvements like cavity wall or loft insulation. Click the button below.

[Apply now](#)

Energy Bills Support Scheme – Alternative Funding

This [Government scheme is due to open in the next few weeks](#). Applications will be through the Government, not the council.

The scheme means that households who didn't receive the original energy bills support, such as those without a direct relationship to an electricity supplier, can receive a £400 support payment.

This might include people who live in care homes or park homes, residents of caravans and houseboats, as well as some private housing tenants. Check the link above for updates on this scheme if it applies to you.

Keep well this winter

Keeping yourself and your family well this winter is hugely important, but knowing what to do for the best can sometimes be challenging.

If you are concerned about going to the right place for advice, it is reassuring to know that there is lots of help and support already available through [NHS 111 Online](#).

This includes help with symptoms, mental health support and advice on a prescription. The website can also advise when you should call 111 instead to speak to someone.

A well-stocked medicine cabinet is essential. You can ask your pharmacist for advice on this and many over-the-counter medicines are available to relieve the symptoms of common winter ailments.

NHS keep warm, keep well advice

Cold weather can make some health problems worse and even lead to serious complications, especially if you're 65 or older, or if you have a long-term health condition. Advice from the NHS is:

- [Get your Covid-19 and flu vaccines](#) if you're eligible
- Heat your home to least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. This is particularly important if you have a health condition
- Check in on vulnerable neighbours and relatives

A full summary of the [keep warm advice](#) can be found on NHS website. It's also available in:

- [Stay well this winter - Easy Read](#)
- [Stay well this winter - large print leaflet](#)
- [Stay well this winter - watch the British Sign Language \(BSL\) video](#)
- [Stay well this winter - listen to the advice as audio](#)

Top NHS Winter health tips:

- [What to do if your child or baby has a cough](#)
- [Medicines for babies and children](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Coronavirus](#)
- [Norovirus](#)
- [Checking if you have flu](#)

Share this information

- [View this newsletter as a webpage](#) and share the link
- Forward this email to friends or family
- Share in your local community Facebook group or WhatsApp chat



Why you're getting this update

You're getting this cost of living update as a resident of Wokingham Borough.

We want everyone to know how they can get help, with the response being coordinated by [The Hardship Alliance](#). This partnership was formed in January 2022 between us and local organisations to tackle poverty in the borough.

We're sending it to everyone as it's in everyone's interest to know how to get help and support on the cost of living crisis.

We send weekly updates on many topics including local news and updates on services like waste, leisure, what's on and more. You can sign up for these using the button below.

[Sign up](#)

Stay Connected with Wokingham Borough Council

