



# 'Cost of Living Crisis' - Quick Links

## December 2023

### Contacting Citizens Advice:

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

National website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)      AND:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/get-help-with-the-cost-of-living/>

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 4      DORSET next opens 3 January 2023:

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

BCP opens 15 January - 9 February 2024: <https://www.bpcouncil.gov.uk/Communities/Cost-of-living-help/Household-Support-Fund.aspx>

**Dorset - Alternative Fuel Grants:** contact Citizens Advice on 0800 144 8848

Also search for **grants for individuals** in need on **Turn2Us:** <https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/>  
and locally: <https://www.dorsetcommunityfoundation.org/apply-for-a-grant/grants-for-individuals/>

**Government support** for cost of living: For overview of help and support go to the **Help for Households** campaign: <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

**Govt Support from April 2023 - Cost of living Payments:**

Low income payment of £299 due in February 2024: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#low-income-benefits-and-tax-credits-cost-of-living-payment>

Disability: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment>

Pensioner: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#pensioner-cost-of-living-payment>

**Help with Energy Bills:** Overview: <https://www.gov.uk/get-help-energy-bills>

Energy Price Cap: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-support/energy-bills-support-factsheet-8-september-2022)

[support/energy-bills-support-factsheet-8-september-2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-bills-support/energy-bills-support-factsheet-8-september-2022) [updated 24 November 2023]

**Energy Efficiency:** Healthy Homes Dorset <https://www.healthyhomesdorset.org.uk/>

### **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/>