

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

**Organisations, agencies and charities
that can help with your rising bills**



Introduction

Inflation is soaring, hitting hardworking people across Erith and Thamesmead. Food, fuel, and household bills are up, but wages and benefits are not keeping apace.

People are worried about how they will pay their bills, especially with the astronomical prices energy companies are expected to charge.

I know people are scared about getting through the winter. While there's lots of advice out there, it's not always in one place.



So, I have tried to gather information about all the agencies, organisations and charities that are out there and can provide you with help, information and support for managing your bills.

I hope the information in this booklet will be useful to you, and as ever, please do get in contact if I can be of help.

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Help with your finances

If you are experiencing financial issues, hardship or struggling with any other issues, then there are a number of organisations nationally and across Erith and Thamesmead who can help.

National Debtline provides free, independent debt advice.

 nationaldebtline.org  0808 808 4000



Help for Households shows what support is available to help with the cost of living.

 helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk


Entitledto is a benefit checker, to make sure you are getting all the benefits or financial help you are entitled to.

 entitledto.co.uk

Step Change provide help and advice for people who are in debt.

 stepchange.org  0800 138 1111

Turn2us is a free benefits calculator and information on benefits, grants and other schemes.

 turn2us.org.uk

MoneyHelper and Money Saving Expert offers free advice on guidance on money issues.

 moneysavingexpert.com  moneyhelper.org.uk



Help with your finances: Local support

Debt Free London provides free expert debt advice.



debtfree.london



0800 808 5700

Citizens Advice provides free, confidential, impartial advice and support.



greenwichcab.org.uk



bexleycab.org.uk/

Greenwich Welfare Rights Service provides advice on benefits, tax credits, and grants.



020 8921 6375

Plumstead Law Centre Service provides legal advice and effective advocacy for all welfare benefit appeal matters. Along with finances, they also offer advice on immigration, employment and welfare.



pclc.org.uk



info@pclc.org.uk



020 8853 9993



Help with your energy and bills: Government schemes

Government Advice for homeowners to make improvements that could make it cheaper to heat your home.

 [gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency](https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency)


Winter Fuel Payment is an annual payment for heating bills and is available to those born before 25/09/1956.

 [gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)


An **extra 'Cost of Living' payment** is available to those receiving certain benefits and those entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment.

 [gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment)

Warm Home Discount Scheme is a one-off discount on electricity bills for those on a low income or on the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit.

 [gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)

Cold Weather Payment is available to those receiving certain benefits or on Support for Mortgage Interest. You'll get £25 for each 7 day period of very cold weather.

 [gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment)



Help with your energy and bills

Energy Saving Trust provide advice on making your home more energy efficient and lowering your bills.



energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/

British Gas Energy Trust have free resources, including the Bounce Back Checklist, and grants to remove energy debt, fund emergency fuel credit, and provide boiler replacements.



britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/bounce-back-checklist/

National Energy Action offer free advice on fuel debt, switching suppliers, energy efficiency, and minimising energy bills.



nea.org.uk



0800 304 7159

LiveWell Greenwich offer advice and support for residents who may be at risk during cold weather.



livewellgreenwich.org.uk



0800 470 4831

Big London Energy Switch scheme to lower energy costs through collective energy switching.



biglondonenergyswitch.co.uk/greenwich

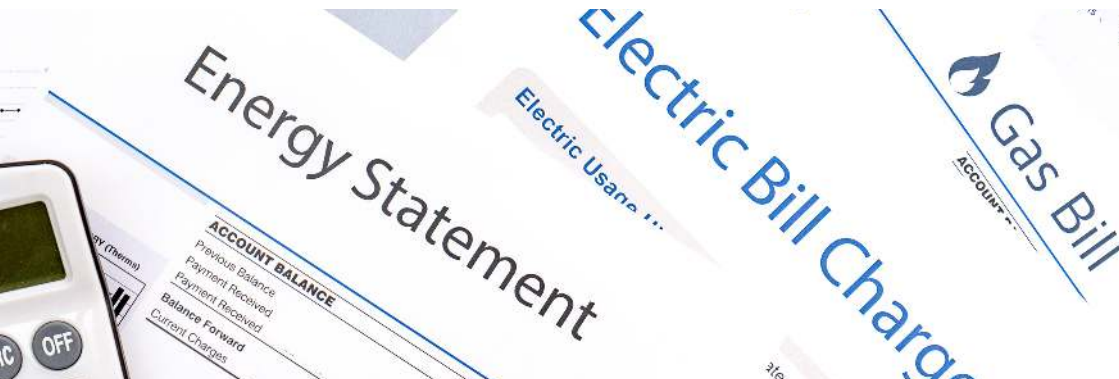
WaterHelp and WaterSure - Thames Water programme to give 50% discount on a household water bills. Available to low income households.



ecs@thameswater.co.uk



0800 009 3652



Help with food

Bexley Foodbank

Free 3-day emergency food supplies. Available to anyone with a food voucher.

- ▶ Avery Hill Christian Fellowship (Tues 10am-12pm, Thur 12-3pm)
- ▶ New Community Church (Mon 11am-1pm, Tues 12:30-3pm)
- ▶ Queen Street Baptist Church (Wed 10-12pm, Sat 10am-12pm)
- ▶ Trinity Baptist Church (Mon 1-3pm, Fri 10:30am-12:30pm)

Greenwich Foodbank

Free 3-day emergency food supplies. Available to anyone with a food voucher.

- ▶ East Plumstead Baptist Church (Mon 4:30-6:30pm)
- ▶ Emmanuel Baptist Church (Tues and Thurs 10am-1pm)
- ▶ St Peter's Catholic Church (Wed 5pm- 7pm)

If you are struggling to afford groceries and food, consider joining a **local food pantry**. It costs £3.50 a week for £20 worth of food, so you can feed your whole family for much less.

✉ Londonfoodclubs@family-action.org.uk

Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA) supports communities to be healthy through training programmes at community hubs. Run at Abbey Wood Community Centre, Glyndon Community Centre, and Trinity Methodist Church, Plumstead.

✉ cookeryclubs@gcda.org.uk ☎ 0800 470 483

The **Healthy Start** scheme is a prepaid card to buy milk, formula, fruits, vegetables, and pulses. Available to those more than 10 weeks pregnant or with a child under 4.




healthystart.nhs.uk




Support for children and families

Government scheme to provide 30 hours of free childcare. Available to eligible households with a 3 to 4 years old.

 [gov.uk/childcare-calculator](https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator)



Tax-Free Childcare: Up to £2000 a year per child (or £4000 a year, if the child is disabled) to help with the costs of childcare. For every £8 paid for childcare, the government will pay £2.

 [gov.uk/tax-free-childcare](https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare)

One-off Sure Start Maternity Grant of £500 towards the cost of having a child. Available to those expecting their first child or a multiple birth who receive certain benefits.

 [gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant](https://www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant)

The Families Information Service gives help and advice on a range of issues affecting families.

 fis@royalgreenwich.gov.uk  020 8921 6921

Support through **children's centres**. Free or low-cost activities for families with children aged under five.

 better.org.uk/what-we-offer/activities/activities-for-children

Bexley Voice is a voluntary organisation of parents and carers of children and young people (age 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

 [bexleyvoice.org.uk](https://www.bexleyvoice.org.uk)



Mental Health

I know that the cost-of-living crisis will be very stressful for many people as you try to manage your daily finances. If this is affecting you, there are a number of services that can offer help advice and support.

Samaritans offer emergency help for anyone struggling with mental health. 📞 116 123

Mind provide support for anyone struggling with mental health or anyone supporting someone who is. 📞 020 8853 1735

Re-instate Bexley helps improve employment opportunities, quality of life and well-being for those who experience mental ill-health, those with learning disabilities or autism.



re-instate.co.uk

Health

Free prescriptions are available to a range of people, including anyone over 60 or under 16, and anyone with a valid maternity or medical exemption certificate. 📞 0300 330 1349

The **NHS Low Income Scheme** helps with prescription costs, dental costs, eyecare costs, healthcare travel costs, wigs and fabric support.



0300 330 1343

The **British Heart Foundation** offers cost of living tips for saving money and staying well.



bhf.org.uk/information/support/cost-of-living

The **Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse Service (GDVA)** offer free support to victims of domestic violence.



gdva.org.uk

Solace in Bexley provide safe and suitable refuge accommodation, a Domestic Violence Advocacy service, an outreach service and resilience building group programmes.



solacewomensaid.org/news/solace-bexley

Bexley Women's Aid provide support and refuge to women and their children affected by domestic abuse.



bexleywomensaid.org.uk

Transport

Transport for London offer a range of free or discounted travel options for eligible users. Available to under 18s, over 60s, disabled users, and students, among other groups.



tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel

National Rail have a range of free or discounted travel options for eligible users through railcards. Available to under 18s, over 60s, and disabled users, among other groups.



railcard.co.uk

Housing

Shelter provide free, expert housing advice.



england.shelter.org.uk/get_help



0808 800 4444

Greenwich Housing Rights offer specialist housing advice in Greenwich.



general@grhr.co.uk



020 8854 8848

Bexley Council help with rent or council tax payments



bexley.gov.uk/services/benefits-and-financial-help/benefits/help-rent-or-council-tax

Discretionary Housing Payments are financial payments to help with rent or housing costs. Available to those on Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. Contact your local authority for more information.



LGBT+ Support

The Outside Project offer a Community Shelter, Centre and Domestic Abuse Refuge for those in the LGBTIQ+ community who feel endangered, who are homeless, 'hidden' homeless and feel that they are on the outside of services due to historical and present prejudice in society and in their homes.



lgbtiqoutside.org

African Rainbow family support LGBTIQ people of African heritage and the wider Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups.



africanrainbowfamily.org

Micro Rainbow offer temporary accommodation for LGBTQI people awaiting the outcome of asylum claims.



microrainbow.org

akt supports lgbtq+ young people aged 16-25 in the uk who are facing or experiencing homelessness or living in a hostile environment.



www.akt.org.uk/



Support at Work

A trade union is an organisation with members who are usually workers or employees. It looks after their interests at work by doing things like:

- ▶ negotiating agreements with employers on pay and conditions
- ▶ discussing big changes like large scale redundancy
- ▶ discussing members' concerns with employers
- ▶ going with members to disciplinary and grievance meetings



You have a legal right to join a union and the **Trade Union Congress** can help you find the union that is right for you - www.tuc.org.uk/join-a-union



Community is a union for workers in all industries and sectors - www.community-tu.org/join/



GMB is an organising and campaigning union for all workers - www.gmb.org.uk/join-gmb



UNISON represents workers who provide public services, whether they are employed in the public or private sector - join.unison.org.uk/



Unite is a democratic and campaigning union with members across the private, public, and voluntary sectors - join.unitetheunion.org



USDAW is the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers - www.usdaw.org.uk/join-us

Member of Parliament

As your Erith and Thamesmead MP I represent you in the House of Commons. The House of Commons is responsible for making laws in the UK and for overall scrutiny of all aspects of government.

You could contact me:

- If you feel you have been treated unfairly by a Government office or agency
- To let me know about a problem affecting people in your local area
- To ask me to support a particular campaign that you feel strongly about

There is a strict protocol that dictates that elected representatives can only deal with casework on behalf of their own constituents. You can check who your elected representatives here: www.writetothem.com



Abena Oppong-Asare MP

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01322 342991

www.abenaoppongasare.com

London Assembly

Your London Assembly Member represents you on the London Assembly. Areas covered include the Mayor's budget, culture, sport and tourism, health, planning, transport, and trunk roads.



Len Duvall OBE
Greenwich and Lewisham
len.duvall@london.gov.uk



Peter Fortune
Bexley and Bromley
peter.fortune@london.gov.uk

Contact your Councillors - Bexley

Your councillors represent you on Bexley Council. Bexley Council is responsible for local services, including planning, housing, rubbish collection, local roads, social services, parks and public spaces.

Ward	Councillor	Email address	Contact number
Belvedere	Cllr Esther Amaning	esther.amaning@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
	Cllr Daniel Francis	daniel.francis@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
	Cllr Sally Hinkley	sally.hinkley@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
Erith	Cllr Chris Ball	chris.ball@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
	Cllr Nicola Taylor	nicola.taylor@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
Northumberland Heath	Cllr Baljeet Gill	baljeet.gill@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
	Cllr Wendy Perfect	wendy.perfect@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
Thamesmead East	Cllr Zainab Asunramu	Zainab.Asunramu@Bexley.gov.uk	07927 594663
	Cllr Larry Ferguson	Larry.Ferguson@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
	Cllr Mabel Ogundayo	Mabel.Ogundayo@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 3633
West Heath	Cllr John Davey	John.Davey@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 5280
	Cllr Philip Read	philip.read@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 5280
	Cllr Peter Reader	peter.reader@bexley.gov.uk	020 3045 5280

Contact your Councillors - Greenwich

Your councillors represent you on Greenwich Council. Greenwich Council is responsible for local services, including planning, housing, rubbish collection, local roads, social services, parks and public spaces.

Ward	Councillor	Email address	Contact number
Abbey Wood	Cllr Peter Baker	Peter.Baker@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5045
	Cllr Ann-Marie Cousins	Ann-Marie.cousins@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5045
	Cllr Denise Hyland	Denise.Hyland@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5047
Plumstead Common	Cllr Nas Asghar	Nas.Asghar@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5663
	Cllr Issy Cooke	Issy.Cooke@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5663
	Cllr Matthew Morrow	Matthew.Morrow@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5663
West Heath	Cllr Adel Khaireh	Adel.Khaireh@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5663
	Cllr Jit Ranabhat	Jit.Ranabhat@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5663
	Cllr Sandra Thomas	Sandra.Thomas@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5663
Thamesmead Moorings	Cllr Olu Babatola	Olu.Babatola@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5045
	Cllr Averil Lekau	Averil.Lekau@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5062
West Thamesmead	Cllr Chris Lloyd	Chris.Lloyd@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5047
	Cllr Lade Olugbemi	Lade.Olugbemi@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	020 8921 5047

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