

Financial help and support

Factsheet April 2023

(Information correct at time of publication)

If you are struggling with the cost of living, we may be able to help you. More information can be found at www.dudley.gov.uk/costofliving and <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>

Energy bills

Dudley Energy Advice Line (DEAL) supports people with energy issues. If you struggle with energy costs, if your heating breaks down, or need support with fuel debts, phone **01384 817086** or go to www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-advice-information-and-support/dudley-energy-advice-line/

Paying rent or council tax

If you are aged between 18 to 66 you could claim help for your housing costs from Universal Credit. Online help can be found at www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim

If you are a pensioner or live in temporary or supported accommodation you can apply for housing benefit at www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/make-an-application

Council tax rebate

The government recently announced a scheme to assist residents in receipt of council tax reduction. If you are in receipt of this, your bill will be reduced by at least £25. This will be awarded automatically and will show on your council tax bill. There will be more help available during the year. Please keep an eye on our website at www.dudley.gov.uk for more information.

Housing support

A telephone support service is open to any resident in the Dudley Borough. The service is free and can offer advice regarding rent arrears, Universal Credit, debt or furniture grant applications, help with forms and much more. Call **01384 812504** or alternatively visit www.dudley.gov.uk/housingtelephonesupport

Water bills

Local water suppliers operate schemes to help people struggling to pay their water bills. More information can be found here:

Severn Trent Water

www.sttf.org.uk/ and www.stwater.co.uk/my-account/help-when-you-need-it/help-with-paying-your-bill/big-difference-scheme/

South Staffordshire Water

www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/household/my-bills-and-payments/my-bill-explained/other-charges-and-tariffs/assure-tariff and www.sswct.org

Free school meals

If your child is in reception or years one or two, you will automatically be entitled for free meals. However, if your child is in year three or above then you will need to make a claim. More information can be found at www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals

Pleased to meet you helpline

The 'pleased to meet you' helpline supports people aged over 60, if they are feeling lonely or isolated, or need support to access essential supplies or medication, to find out about help in the local area. Residents can call the helpline on **01384 812761** from Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm, or email CommunitySupportServ@dudley.gov.uk

Carers

For benefits advice for carers telephone **01384 818723** for an appointment.

Black Country Foodbank

Black Country Foodbank helps vulnerable individuals and families in crisis. They offer the provision of emergency food and toiletry supplies while a longer-term solution is developed. To receive a parcel, you need to get a foodbank voucher from a partner agency. For those experiencing financial hardship and who need to find out more on how to get a voucher please contact them on **01384 671250** or visit www.blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk/

Welfare benefits support

Benefits advice is available from Dudley Council's welfare team on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9.30am to 1pm and 2 to 4.30pm. Call **01384 815002**

Citizens Advice Dudley and Wolverhampton

Citizens Advice provides free and independent confidential information and advice on a wide range of issues including benefits, debt, employment, relationships, and housing. If you need help, please contact them on freephone **0808 278 7919**.

Cost of living advice is also available face-to-face between 9.30am and 3.30pm:

Mondays at Provision House, 80-81 High Street, Dudley DY1 1PY

Tuesdays at Christ Church, High St, Stourbridge, DY9 8LF

Wednesdays at Halesowen Library, Hagley Mall Cornbow Centre, Halesowen B63 4AJ

Thursdays at Brierley Hill Methodist Church, 24 Bank Street, Brierley Hill DY5 3DA

Fridays at Provision House, 80-81 High Street, Dudley DY1 1PY

To access the Cost of Living Hubs book an appointment on Eventbrite.

Go to www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/cost-of-living-support-hubs/

Live 4 Less

Live4Less is a free course looking at budgeting, energy efficiency, reducing costs and how to make cost-effective meals. Courses are held across the borough in various venues or online. For more information, call Adult Community Learning on **01384 818143**, email acl@dudley.gov.uk or go to www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/mental-health-wellbeing/



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