

Heads-Up

Welcome to the Heads-Up **COST OF LIVING SPECIAL!**

We know that times are hard at the moment, and that many people across our services and living in our homes are worried about making ends meet because of the cost-of-living crisis.

With that in mind, Look Ahead has prepared this bite sized edition of Heads Up with plenty of useful advice, information, and signposting to help you to save money and find any additional support that you may need.



Helpful links and QR codes

This newsletter has links to helpful websites that you can easily reach on your smartphone or tablet through the QR codes provided.

All you need to do is:

1. Open the camera app.
2. Select the rear-facing camera in photo mode.
3. Centre the QR code you want to scan on the screen and hold your phone steady for a couple of seconds.
4. Tap the notification that pops up to open the link. You will need to be connected to the internet to do this.



Help with your energy bills

There is a range of government programmes to support people with energy costs at the moment. Some of this money will be automatically paid to you if you are entitled to it.

However, if this support still isn't enough Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) rules mean suppliers must offer payment plans you can afford, and you can ask for emergency credit if you use a prepay meter and can't top up. So if you are struggling to pay for energy or think you may get into difficulty, you should contact your supplier.



More information and helpful links are available on the OFGEM website [ofgem.gov.uk](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk)

If you're in debt to your energy supplier, you might be able to get a grant to help pay it off.

We've put links to the government and all the main suppliers' support pages on our website. Visit lookahead.org.uk/costofliving to find out more (or see page 4 for a QR code).



7 things you can do to save money on your energy bills



Switch off standby and turn lights off when you aren't in a room. You can save around **£40** a year just by turning your appliances off, instead of leaving them on standby mode when you are not using them.



Think about how to cook your food – did you know that cooking two chicken breasts in the electric oven costs **84p** at the moment compared to cooking on a gas hob at **33p** or **4p** in a microwave.



Be careful with your laundry. Using your washing machine on a 30-degree cycle instead of higher temperatures, and reducing your washing machine use by one run a week for a year, can help you save around **£34** per year. Avoiding the tumble dryer and using drying racks instead can help you save an extra **£77** per year too.



Have a quicker shower. Showering for just 4 minutes can save you around **£40** per year.



Avoiding overfilling the kettle can save you **£13** a year.



Turn down your thermostat. Almost half the money spent on energy bills is absorbed by heating and hot water costs. Turning your heating down by just one degree could save up to **£80** a year.



Add layers and blankets rather than turning the heating on straight away where possible.



Help with food

If you need help finding a food bank, you can check your local council website or go to trusselltrust.org and use Find a food bank.



Some food banks accept self-referrals, but you need to have a voucher for help from others.

If you're in financial crisis, please call the **Trussell Trust's free helpline on 0808 208 2138 (open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)** to talk confidentially to a trained Citizens Advice adviser. They can talk to you about the problems you're facing and provide support to help you manage your money, navigate the benefits system, and identify any other grants you might be entitled to. If you need one, they'll issue you with a food bank voucher so you can get an emergency food parcel.

You can also visit our cost of living web page for links to recipes for delicious, healthy, and affordable meals.

Help from your local council

Each council has approached the cost-of-living crisis differently, so the kinds of assistance available may vary.

Council Tax

You may be able to get a council tax reduction if you are struggling to pay. You can contact your local council to make a request for this.

Other support

Local councils also usually have a cost-of-living web page with information, advice, and signposting to other services that can offer various kinds of support. You should be able to find this on your council's website if they have a dedicated page, it should still be possible to find the right information though, even if your council doesn't have a single cost-of-living page.

We've saved you a job by adding the pages of many of the councils we work with onto our website. Please see page 4 for more information on how to find them.

Accessibility



If you need **Easy Read** materials, help and advice you can visit Learning Disability England and Mencap's cost-of-living web pages on the addresses below (you can also find these links on Look Ahead's cost of living page, see page 4):

- Learning Disability England: learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/cost-of-living-resources/saving-money-and-staying-warm-and-well/
- Mencap: mencap.org.uk/help-with-food-energy-and-money

Money & Legal Advice

When it comes to certain matters, such as support with benefit entitlement, employment, or immigration issues among others, you may decide to seek free legal advice from your local Citizens Advice or Law Centre.

You can find your local branch or centre on these websites:
lawcentres.org.uk
citizensadvice.org.uk

Access to grants and benefits

Turn2us has a grants and benefits eligibility checker and can support you through application processes.

You can call their helpline on:

0808 802 2000

9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Monday - Friday.

Turn2us can help you to:

- complete a benefit calculation.
- find grants.
- find an adviser to help with benefits, debt, housing & legal issues.



If you need help with accessing any of this assistance, please speak to your Support Worker or contact us at gettingintouch@lookahead.org.uk

You can also find a range of information about support and advice available on Look Ahead's own cost-of-living webpage: lookahead.org.uk/for-our-customers/costofliving/



Call the Customer Contact Centre on **0333 010 4600** for help with:

- Repairs & maintenance
- Gardening & communal cleaning
- Facilities & security
- Complaints
- Housing & rent
- General enquiries



If you're reporting an emergency outside of office hours, please call us on **0333 010 4600** where our out of hours contact centre will be able to assist.

Customer Contact Centre hours

Monday – Friday – 9 am to 5 pm customer contact centre open, out of hours service available for emergencies

Saturday – Sunday – Out of hours service available for emergencies

Outside of normal business hours you can contact Look Ahead through our out of hours service by calling **0333 010 4600** where you will be put through to our out of hours service provider.

