



# Cost of Living Help



Here are some ways you can get help if you are struggling to pay bills during the national Cost of Living crisis. This information is also available on the Council website [www.sefton.gov.uk/cost-of-living](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/cost-of-living)

If you don't have access to a computer or smartphone, there is **free computer and Wi-Fi access** at all Sefton Council Libraries. Visit your local branch to find out more.

You can also give us a call on **0345 140 0845** or visit one of our One Stop Shops for more information. But please remember our contact centre receive hundreds of calls every day, and this is only increasing as the Cost of Living crisis worsens; our staff are working as hard and fast as they can, but you may have wait a while before your call is answered.

## Help with Council Tax

You can get help with Council Tax if you receive the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Tax Credits
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

Even if your income and circumstances mean that you don't receive any of these benefits, please let us know if you are struggling to pay your Council Tax and we still may be able to help you with an affordable payment plan.

## Fuel Bills

If you are worried about keeping warm or paying your fuel bills you can:

- contact the Council's Affordable Warmth Service on 0151 934 2222
- call the local Energy Advice Freephone line on 0800 043 0151 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)
- visit [www.sefton.gov.uk/fuelbills](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/fuelbills)

## Your Rent

If you are on a low income and pay rent for your home, you may be entitled to financial assistance towards your rent through Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.

Find out more at [www.sefton.gov.uk/rent-help](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/rent-help)

## Food Banks

Across Sefton, there are foodbanks that can help if you can't afford the food, toiletries or household supplies you need, visit [www.sefton.gov.uk/foodbanks](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/foodbanks)

You may need a Foodbank voucher for some Foodbanks in Sefton, but not for all. Give us a call on **0345 140 0845** or visit one of our One Stop Shops for more information.

## Food Pantries

With the cost of living rising, you may be struggling to budget for food. Food Pantries will help you to manage your budget and still be able to have healthy meals at home.

You may need to be referred to a Food Pantry. Get in touch with us to find out more.

You can find more information on Food Pantries, including where they are located, by visiting [www.sefton.gov.uk/pantries](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/pantries)



## Free School Meals

Sefton residents receiving any of the following benefits qualify for free school meals:

- Universal Credit and have a net household income of less than £7400 per annum
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit ONLY (not entitled/receiving Working Tax Credit) and have an income of less than £16190.00
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Support as part of the Immigration & Asylum Act

Find out how to get free school meals or apply for them at [www.sefton.gov.uk/free-school-meals](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/free-school-meals) or call 0151 934 3263.

## Healthy Start Vouchers and Vitamins

Healthy Start is a government scheme to improve the health of low-income pregnant women and families on benefits and tax credits. Women who are at least 10 weeks pregnant and families with children under four years old qualify for Healthy Start if the family they claim certain benefits such as income support or universal credit. Find out more about Health Start at [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk) or by calling on 0345 607 6823.

## Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme (ELAS)

Sefton Council's Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme supports local residents who are experiencing severe hardship, a disaster or emergency.

It is there to meet one-off needs and not ongoing expenses by providing:

- Paypoint Credit
- travel warrants
- essential household goods
- a referral to a support service

You can find out more and apply at [www.sefton.gov.uk/elas](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/elas) or get in touch with us on 0151 934 3377, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.

## Jobs and Training

Through Sefton@Work, we offer information and advice to Sefton residents aged over 16 years on all aspects of jobs, education and training including self-employment.

Services include:

- One to one, confidential appointments with an Adviser
- Latest job vacancies and information non recruitment initiatives
- Pre-employment training programmes for employer vacancies
- Help with producing and updating your CV
- Advice and tips on interview techniques and skills
- Help with completing application forms and cover letters
- Access to the Internet, telephone, fax and postage related to jobs or training
- Access to specific training courses related to employability

For more information, please visit

[www.seftonatwork.net](http://www.seftonatwork.net) or call us on 0151 934 2610 or visit our office on Stanley Road, Bootle.

## Health and Wellbeing

Details of services and support available to help you deal with physical and mental health issues can be found at [www.sefton.gov.uk/health-services](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/health-services).

You can also get health advice by calling the NHS 111 service or visiting <https://111.nhs.uk> People with communication difficulties or impaired hearing can contact NHS 111 via a textphone by calling 18001 111.

We're lucky in Sefton that there are lots of Community Groups who might be able to help you through this difficult time. Have a look at [www.seftondirectory.com](http://www.seftondirectory.com) for information on your nearest Community Group.

