



# Tackling tough times together

Six tips  
to help with  
rising costs



SCAN ME

Find out more at:  
[www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving)

# We are in this together

Since late 2021, the cost of everyday things, including food and energy bills, has been going up. If you are struggling to make ends meet, it can be hard to know where to begin.

This guide can help with just that. It contains helpful information for all residents, whatever your circumstances, on the support available with money and debt, food and household essentials, energy bills, personal wellbeing and more.

In Brent, we promised to leave no one behind and we are doing everything we can to help local people find a way out of this crisis.

**My simple message is this.**

**If you are struggling - please ask for help.**

**Cllr Muhammed Butt**

Leader of Brent Council



## How to use this guide

This booklet is a summary of the information on our online cost-of-living hub:  
**[www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving)**.

To find out more, just scan the closest QR code or type the web address into your browser.

For help using the internet visit or call your local library on 020 8937 3400 to book an appointment with a Digital Champion.

## Share this information

Please support friends, family members or neighbours who do not speak English as a first language by offering to translate this information for them.

This information is also available at  
**[www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving)**  
in 90 languages and a number of alternative formats.

Sign up for regular updates at  
**[www.brent.gov.uk/stayconnected](http://www.brent.gov.uk/stayconnected)**  
or follow **@Brent\_Council**  
on Facebook, Instagram  
and Twitter.

1

## CHECK YOU'RE NOT MISSING OUT ON EXTRA MONEY

Take ten minutes to check our benefits calculator to make sure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

[www.brent.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.brent.entitledto.co.uk)



If you cannot work, or your wages do not support your family and running your home, financial help is available.

Help available	Who is eligible	Where to check
Extra benefits and support including Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Carers Allowance	Check if you qualify by completing our benefits calculator	<a href="http://www.brent.entitledto.co.uk">www.brent.entitledto.co.uk</a>
Winter full payment – £250-£600 to help you pay your heating bills	If you were born on or before 25 September 1956	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment">www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment</a>
Cost of living payment – an extra one-off payment to help with rising costs	People on low income benefits or certain tax credits	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment">www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment</a>
Council Tax discount – a reduction in your Council Tax	People living alone, some full-time students and apprentices, carers, people with disabilities, care leavers, people in detention and hospital or care home residents	<a href="http://www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax">www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax</a>
Council Tax support – help paying your Council Tax	People on a low income or benefits	<a href="http://www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax">www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax</a>
Resident support fund – can help pay for day-to-day living expenses including food and utility bills	Brent residents aged 18 and over with less than £6,000 savings	<a href="http://www.brent.gov.uk/residentsupportfund">www.brent.gov.uk/residentsupportfund</a>

**Stay scam aware:** Please be vigilant, there are pretend 'cost of living payment' scams doing the rounds. Please do not click on the links and visit the above webpages for information.

Find out more:

[www.brent.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.brent.gov.uk/benefits)



# 2

## GET THE BEST DEALS ON YOUR BILLS



A typical household should now pay an average of £2,500 a year on their energy bill until April 2023. This means that bills will be a lot higher this winter than they have been in previous years. Remember if you use more – you will pay more.

### Speak to your supplier

If you're struggling to pay your gas, electricity or water bills, speak to your supplier to make sure you're getting the best deal. Many suppliers have hardship funds to help their customers who are in debt.

### Energy saving tips

- You can save around £240 a year by turning your appliances off standby mode, turning your heating down by one degree (around 18°C is safest) and keeping your shower time to four minutes.
- Fabric draught excluders (from as little as £5) can help seal up any gaps around doors, windows or the floor to keep the heat in.
- Book a free appointment with a Green Doctor to find out how to make your home more sustainable and cheaper to run.



### Places you can stay warm this winter



If you're worried about the rising cost of bills or struggling to heat your home, there are a number of local places offering a warm welcome as temperatures begin to drop, including your local library. Visit [www.warmwelcome.uk](http://www.warmwelcome.uk) to find out more.

Find out more:

[www.brent.gov.uk/bills](http://www.brent.gov.uk/bills)



# 3

## FIND FREE FOOD SUPPORT

If you can't afford to buy food there are a number of local food banks where you can get free food for you and your family.



The Trussell Trust	Vestry Hall Neasden Lane, (Church End roundabout) NW10 2TS	0203 7455 972 <a href="http://www.trusseltrust.org">www.trusseltrust.org</a>
Sufra NW London	160 Pitfield Way, Stonebridge, NW10 0PW	020 3441 1335 <a href="http://www.sufra-nwlondon.org.uk">www.sufra-nwlondon.org.uk</a>
Ansar Youth Project	Wembley Youth and Community Centre, London Road, HA3 7EU	0208 903 0300 <a href="http://www.ansaryouth.org.uk">www.ansaryouth.org.uk</a>
Granville Community Kitchen	The Granville 140 Carlton Vale, NW6 5HE	<a href="http://www.granvillecommunitykitchen.org.uk">www.granvillecommunitykitchen.org.uk</a>
London's Community Kitchen	Christchurch Ave, Harrow, HA3 5BD	07366 088811 <a href="http://www.londonscommunitykitchen.com">www.londonscommunitykitchen.com</a>

If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be eligible for Healthy Start Vouchers, which help towards the cost of some fresh foods. School-aged children may be eligible for Free School Meals.

Find out more:

[www.brent.gov.uk/householdessentials](http://www.brent.gov.uk/householdessentials)



# 4

## TAKE ACTION ON DEBT

**If you are struggling to make ends meet or your debt is increasing, please ask for help. Ignoring it will only make it worse.**

Always avoid Loan Sharks. Illegal money lenders take advantage of people struggling who feel they have nowhere else to turn. If you are offered money with little paperwork but high charges, say no and get free help from a debt advice charity.



You are not alone and there is lots of support available:

Apply for breathing space	Get temporary protection from your creditors while you get debt advice and make a plan.	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/options-for-paying-off-your-debts">www.gov.uk/options-for-paying-off-your-debts</a>
Get free local advice and support	<p>Advice for renters Address: 36-38 Willesden Lane, Kilburn, NW6 7ST Phone: 0207 624 4327</p> <p>Citizens Advice Brent Address: 270-272 High Road, Willesden, NW10 2EY Phone: 0208 438 1249</p> <p>The Sherriff Centre Address: Various locations Phone: 0780 680 7730</p>	<a href="http://www.brent.gov.uk/moneydirectory">www.brent.gov.uk/moneydirectory</a>
Join your local credit union	A credit union offers low interest loans and its aim is to promote saving, careful money management and help those dealing with debt.	<a href="http://www.londoncb.co.uk">www.londoncb.co.uk</a>

Find out more:

[www.brent.gov.uk/moneyanddebt](http://www.brent.gov.uk/moneyanddebt)



5

## FIND HELP GETTING A NEW JOB

If you need to find work or are looking for a new job to boost your income, there is lots of local support and training available.



**Brent Start** - our Adult Education college has more than 500 brilliant courses available to help you on your career path. From Health and Social Care to Maths and Digital Skills – there's something for everyone.

Find out more:

[www.brent.gov.uk/brentstart](http://www.brent.gov.uk/brentstart)



**Brent Works** - the council's employment service provides job and apprenticeship opportunities for local people, along with 1:1 personalised career advice.

Find out more:

[www.brentworks.brent.gov.uk](http://www.brentworks.brent.gov.uk)





# 6

## LOOK AFTER YOUR WELLBEING

**If you are experiencing financial difficulties, it is important that you look after your health and wellbeing.**



Things may still sometimes feel overwhelming, but please remember that you are not alone.

There are lots of mental health support services available to residents in Brent, including talking therapy and various drop-in services.

## WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

**If you don't feel yourself and want to talk to someone about how you're feeling, you can get free help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling:**

- The Samaritans - a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you - 116 123
- The NHS - urgent mental health helpline if you need help for a mental health crisis - 0800 023 4650

**If you need urgent support, if you have seriously harmed yourself or might, call 999 for an ambulance or go straight to A&E.**

Find out more:

[www.brent.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing](http://www.brent.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing)



## BRENT HUBS

Our seven hubs across the borough work with a range of brilliant local organisations to provide support with:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Employment
- Digital support
- Emergency assistance (including fuel and food vouchers)



Find out more:

[www.brethubs.com](http://www.brethubs.com)



# Useful contacts

## Brent Council

[www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.brent.gov.uk/costofliving)

020 8937 1234

## Brent Hubs

[www.brenthubs.com](http://www.brenthubs.com)

## Government services

[www.helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk](http://www.helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk)

## Homelessness

If you are homeless, please call 020 8937 2000 (option 3) Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Outside of these hours 020 8937 1234.

If you see someone sleeping rough, please call 0300 500 0914.



