



# **Cost of Living Crisis**

**Scrutiny briefing  
11 October 2022**

# More money in your pocket – online hub

MMIYP is our local version of 'Money Saving Expert'. It's a one-stop shop for help from up-to-date information on support available.

It only contains information about **free** or **discounted** support.

It pulls in information from across lots of other websites and directs people to other sources of help.

There are ten tiles on the homepage and we've designed them to direct people to the most pressing issues relating to the cost of living pressures.



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# Barnsley's Welcoming Places

Promotion of existing service offers in available public buildings – no additional resource burden

Permission that people can use our buildings – they won't be asked to leave

Initially libraries, museums but also looking at BPL sites, Berneslai Homes and Family Centres

Increased promotion when the weather turns colder

**Warm and  
welcome spaces  
in Barnsley**



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**BARNSELEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

# Government assistance package

Government has committed to a £37 billion assistance package, £7 million received to support Barnsley to date since April 2022, comprising of:

- **£3.2 million** in £150 Council Tax rebate for those in bands A-D – **90% of households in Barnsley**.
- **£562,000** Discretionary Council Tax rebate - paid out £150 Post Office vouchers, supporting **23,175 households**.
- **£2 million** Household Support Grant - paid out £150 Post Office vouchers supporting **11,208 households**.
- **£318,000** Household Support Grant paid to community groups to support various initiatives, supporting **8,557 households**.
- **£1 million** healthy activity and food programme to support children and families who access free school meals during non-term time.
- A further **£2.3 million** Household Support Grant has been committed to cover the period October 2022 – March 2023



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# How we've used the Household Support Grant

- Support for unpaid carers and low-income carer employees - food vouchers, household grants and one-off energy payments.
- Interest-free loans for Credit Union members.
- Pre-loved uniform service given funding for underwear, sanitary products, water bottles and wider items.
- Support college students with wider essentials and cooking on a budget.
- Funding to increase and support Good Food Barnsley community pantry initiatives.
- Breakfast clubs and activity provision.
- Access to Healthy Holiday Clubs for children and families who don't get free school meals.
- Food, energy and wider essentials via other charities such as the Salvation Army.
- Funding for the Rose Voucher scheme that gives households free vouchers for fruit and vegetables.



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# Household Support Grant: Oct 22 to Mar 23

**£960,000** has been allocated to provide direct cash support to residents who have not been able to access other government funding:

- **Energy Rebate Scheme:** £150 discretionary payment to households not entitled to the government council tax scheme who became eligible for council tax after 1 April or can demonstrate financial hardship.
- **COL payment Pt1a:** £326 payment to people who became eligible for qualifying benefits between 26 May and 31 August.
- **COL payment Pt1b:** £150 payment to people in receipt of a disability benefit between 26 May and 31 August.
- **COL payment Pt2:** £650 Post Office voucher paid in 2 instalments (Oct and Jan) to people in receipt of Housing Benefit.



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# Household Support Grant: Oct 22 to Mar 23

**£1.3 million** allocated to support other discretionary schemes:

- **Support to residents: £500,000** grants via community groups, aimed at those in most need, to help with essential household spendings such as food, fuel, clothing, and white goods.
- **Christmas holiday clubs: £60,000** to extend the Healthy Activities Fund so it's available to children who are not eligible for a free school meal.
- **Local welfare assistance: £64,000** top-up funding to extend this scheme to March 2023, providing crisis support with the cost of essential bills and white goods.
- **Free school meals: £15 voucher** to support families with the cost of food during the October and February half-terms.
- **Affordable warmer homes: £380,000** contribution towards this scheme (subject to a separate report).



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# Stronger Communities work

- The six Area Councils are continuing to fund their welfare advice services in each of their local areas.
- We're delivering cost of living community events in each of the areas, for example interactive sessions on cooking on a budget, top tips for energy saving, information, advice and guidance on money-saving for families, and encouraging the take-up of free school meals.
- We're working with our partners in the voluntary and community sector to understand what their offer is in local communities and how we can support those.
- We'll be delivering winter warmer packs and delivering winter warmer events with support from our commissioned services.





# Warm homes

- There have been several government grants to directly help with energy bills – a £140 Warm Homes discount to low-income households, a £400 discount to all households and the recent announcement of the energy cap for all households (capped at £2,500 - this will still push families into fuel poverty this winter).

## **Our Warm Homes Service:**

- Provides advice and guidance on warm homes, energy debt, grants and benefit maximisation (with partners).
- Manages the delivery of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) programmes – grants for fabric first insulation measures and renewable heating (£7 million programme) to those in fuel poverty.
- Manages our Affordable Warmth Grant – providing new boilers and low-cost insulation measures for qualifying residents (in fuel poverty). This has an additional council resource of £3 million for 2022-2025.



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# Affordable Warmth Charter

The **Affordable Warmth Charter** will be launched in autumn.

Barneslai Homes is supporting tenants via the Tenant First Support Team with champions across cost-of-living, food, benefits, and energy.

They have implemented:

- a pilot hardship fund to provide financial help with essentials, where there's no other support.
- Cost-of-living information and toolkit – as well as promoting more money in your pocket hub.
- Tenant First European Social Fund funding for 'Achieve' - improving skills for training and finding employment.
- Working with the council to deliver the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.



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# Cost of Living Crisis – B2030 Board

The Barnsley 2030 Board met on 12 September and held a workshop to look at partner contributions. The meeting noted:

- Individual partner responses have been comprehensively mapped and were shared amongst partners.
- Partners agreed to share the More Money In Your Pocket hub as the go-to source of support
- Communication to front-line officers was identified to support appropriate referrals to be made for advice and support.
- Partners agreed to maintain a watching brief over the winter period for changing government guidance and opportunities that might arise that we can work on together.



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# Forward plan strategy

## Five themes

- Food and everyday essentials
- Keeping warm
- Managing money
- Supporting people who need help the most
- Health and wellbeing

## Approach

- Borough-wide commitment
- All partners involved – public, businesses, voluntary and community
- All information in one place – More Money in Your Pocket website
- Communications and engagement plan to reach people
- Partner workforce all involved



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# Communications and engagement

- Detailed segmentation of audiences, their points of contact and how they like to receive their information.
- Adopt a similar approach to our COVID-19 work with an identified brand with local stories promoting community action. Focused on the benefits to people in taking action rather than focusing on the crisis.
- Clear messages on the council's role and our borough-wide commitment.
- Promotion of more money in your pocket hub to audiences including residents, partners and businesses across the borough.
- Supporting our employees, members and partners to engage in conversations with people and signpost to support. Looking at engagement activities out in our local places.
- Link existing planned campaigns and activities, such as Stoptober, winter well and, Alrightpal weaving in key messages and links to support.



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