



Get help with bills and other costs

As the cost of living rises, many people are struggling to find the extra money for essentials. **Help is available.** It's best to ask for help early before you get far into debt. Follow these tips and find contact details for the council at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/cost-living-support

1. Get what you're entitled to

Up to 7 million people in the UK are missing out on income-related benefits.

Visit www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/benefits to check if you're eligible for Housing Benefits or a reduction in Council Tax.

Visit www.gov.uk to check eligibility for:

- Universal Credit
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Tax Credits

Check your bank account to make sure you've also received these national payments:

- **Winter Fuel Payment** up to £300 for people born on or before 26 September 1955.
- **Cold Weather Payment** – £25 payment for people on certain benefits every week of very cold weather between November and March.
- **Warm Home Discount** – £140 discount for some people who get Pension Credit or are on a low-income.
- **£150 Disability Cost-of-Living Payment** – if you are entitled, you should receive this by end October

2. Help with childcare costs

Use www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator to check if you could receive free childcare for children aged between 2 and 4 or help if your child is under 16 (or under 17 with a disability).

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. Find out at www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Crisis support from your council

Apply for these current schemes at:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/cost-living-support

- Emergency funds for essential living costs eg food, repairs, school uniform (apply under **Household Support Fund**)
- Essential household goods, crisis food vouchers and fuel (apply under **Local Welfare Provision**)
- Extra help if you're on Housing Benefit and behind on your rent (apply under **Discretionary Housing Payments**)

Follow us on social media or look on our website for other ways we're supporting local people

 **Milton Keynes**
City Council

3. Apply for extra allowances

If you care for someone at least 35 hours a week, and they get certain benefits, you may be entitled to £69.70 in Carer's Allowance. www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

If you have a disability severe enough that you need someone to help look after you, Attendance Allowance can help with extra costs. www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) can help if you have a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability or find it hard to do certain tasks. www.gov.uk/pip

4. Get a water bill discount

If you're on a low income you could get a discount of up to 50% by switching tariffs. www.anglianwater.co.uk/account-and-bill/tariffs-and-charges/lite/

5. Talk to your energy supplier

Many energy companies offer help schemes and you don't always need to be their customer. Ask about being put on your suppliers' Priority Services Register, a free energy support service if you are vulnerable.

www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households has a list of help schemes, as well as energy saving tips. charisgrants.com and turn2us.org.uk list current fuel grants.

Food, clothes and other items

These local schemes can help:

MK Food Bank

Contact the helpline on **0300 303 4933** or text HELP to **07874 964 505** if you're struggling to afford food. Also offers a top up shop – 10 items for £2 cash.

MK Community Fridge

Saves quality food from going to waste. Visit www.mkcommunityfridge.org to find out when and where the food sharing fridges are open to donate or receive.

SOFEA community larders

Get £15 of food for just £3.50 – find out more and become a member at www.sofea.uk.com

Children and Family Centres

We have 17 Children and Family Centres in MK and they're hubs of activities and services for local families. Find out what's on at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-s-centres

Baby Basics MK

Offering essential items including clothing, toys, sleeping and feeding equipment, toiletries and baby food/formula. www.babybasicsmk.org.uk

MK Store House

Provides free donated clothing for adults and school age children to people who are struggling financially. www.mkstorehouse.org

Need someone on your side?

If you're in a vulnerable situation, someone at the Citizens Advice Extra Help Unit could take on your case. The Citizens Advice Energy Help Unit will also raise issues with energy suppliers. Call **0808 223 1133** or use online webchat. For textphone, dial **18001** first.