

# Schools Planning Meeting

18th November 2022

# Agenda

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|--|--|-------------------|
| <u>Nigel Chapman</u><br><b>Corporate Director<br/>Children and Young People</b>  | Welcome and introduction               | 09:00am – 09:15am |
| <u>Thomas Cattermole</u><br><b>Director of Customer Access, Resident<br/>Services</b><br><br><u>Mohammed Jama</u><br><b>Head of Brent Hubs</b> | Brent Council's Cost of Living Support | 09:15am – 09:45am |
|  | Networking Break                       | 9.45am – 9:55am   |
| <u>Sasha Nelson</u><br><b>Principal Transformation Officer<br/>Resident Services</b>   | Cost of Living Outcomes Based Review   | 09:55am – 10:15am |
| <u>Shirley Parks</u><br><b>Director Safeguarding, Partnerships and<br/>Strategy</b>  | School Organisation and Place Planning | 10:15am - 10:25am |
| <u>Nigel Chapman</u><br><b>Corporate Director<br/>Children and Young People</b>  | Closing remarks                        | 10:25am – 10:30am |

# Brent Council's: Cost of living support

18 November 2022  
Schools Planning Meeting

**Thomas Cattermole**

Director of Customer Access

**Mohammed Jama**

Head of Brent Hubs



BUILDING A  
BETTER BRENT

# Background

Since late 2021, the UK has experienced a rise in the costs of living for individuals and businesses. This is due to:


- Increases in the costs of consumer goods
- Rising inflation
- Another important driver of inflation is energy prices, with household energy tariffs and petrol costs increasing.
- Government's Energy Price Guarantee (EPG)
- Energy, food and transport costs are rising faster than income

# What support is available to Brent residents?

[Home](#) > Cost of living help and advice

## Cost of living help and advice

If you are struggling with rising costs or just about getting by, remember you're not alone. There's lots of support available. Let's tackle the tough times together.



### Help with the rising cost of living

This hub contains information and advice to help you during this difficult period.

#### Money and debt

Find out if you're eligible for financial assistance and benefits, including Council Tax Support and the Resident Support Fund

#### Help if you are facing homelessness


If you are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, find out how we can help

#### Energy and water bills

Find out what support is available to help you pay for or reduce your electricity, gas and water bills


### Remember to look after your health and wellbeing

Money worries can have an impact on your mental health. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, it is important that you look after your health and wellbeing.




#### Places you can stay warm this winter

There are a number of local places offering a warm welcome as temperatures begin to drop, including your local library.



#### Mental health support

If you feel like you are struggling with your mental health, or you know someone else who needs support, there is advice and help available



#### Urgent help

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency there is support available for people of all ages, anytime day or night

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help-and-advice>

# Resident Support Fund

## Overview:

The Brent Resident Support fund is available to Brent residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances.

Brent residents can apply for financial support, for up to £1000:

## Eligibility Criteria:

- ✓ Brent Resident aged 18 or over
- ✓ have less than £6,000 in savings
- ✓ need support in meeting your day to day living expenses including food and utility bills
- ✓ are not seeking support to pay for an excluded item
- ✓ are willing to meet any reasonable conditions concerning the payment award, for example, support from advice agencies
- ✓ have not had more than two RSF awards in one financial year (except during exceptional circumstances e.g. moving house)

## How to apply:

You can apply for this fund using the online application form: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/benefits-and-money-advice/resident-support-fund#howtoapplyrsf>

# The Resident Support Fund can cover:

- Increased household expenditure such as food and utility bills
- Council Tax arrears
- Rent arrears if you are not already getting Housing Benefit or Universal credit (if you are getting Housing Benefit or Universal Credit already, you should apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment instead).
- White goods if you have moved into a new unfurnished rented property. (Please note that this is capped at £400 per application)
- Counselling and mental health services
- Access to the internet, a laptop or both
- Essentials linked to energy and water, including soap, sanitary products, winter clothing, blankets, boiler service/repair
- Increased costs for the winter such as food, fuel and other essentials

# Household Support Fund

## Overview:

The Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) has been used to provide support to Brent households with the cost of food and fuel in the form of food vouchers, grants, and financial support to food aid organisations.

£125k in grant funding provided to food banks operating in Brent to support them in meeting increased demand as a result of the Pandemic and cost of living crisis.

A proportion of the Household Support Fund has been used by Brent Council to issue a one-off £120 supermarket voucher to each household in receipt of Council Tax Support which has someone of state pensionable age residing there.

## How to apply:

- You can apply for this fund using the online application form: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/benefits-and-money-advice/resident-support-fund#howtoapplyrsf>



# Discretionary Housing Payment

Discretionary one off payment

- Rent shortfall
- Rent deposits
- Rent in advance if you need to move home

Eligibility requirement

- Live in Brent
- Have a liability to pay rent
- Receive Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit

## How to apply:

- You can make an application online through 'My Account' - <https://www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-support>

# Support paying your Council Tax

## What is it?

Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) provides the billing authority with discretionary powers to reduce the amount of council tax liability in exceptional circumstances where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.

All Local Authorities must have a Section 13A scheme through which any person can make a request for an amount of Council Tax to be reduced or written off. The award is discretionary. The local authority must have a system in place to allow a person to make the request.

## When considering an application, the following factors will be considered:

- There must be evidence of financial hardship or unforeseen, exceptional circumstances to justify any reduction.
- All other eligible discounts/reliefs must have been explored prior to an application being made.
- The Council Taxpayer does not have access to other funds/assets that could be used to pay the council tax.
- All other legitimate means of resolving the situation have been investigated and exhausted by the liable council tax payer. If they have not been, it is unlikely that an award will be made.
- The payment record history of the Council Taxpayer.
- The amount outstanding must not be the result of wilful refusal to pay or culpable neglect.
- Relief will only apply to council tax payer's primary home.

# Council Tax

## The Council Tax Support scheme:

- Living in the property as your main home and have less than £6,000 in savings
- Level of support based on household income

## How to apply:

- You can make an application online through 'My Account' - <https://www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-support>

## Council Tax Rebate:

- £150 council tax rebate for households in bands A-D
- If you pay Council Tax by direct debit will receive automatically in the spring
- If don't pay by direct debit will need to complete the online energy rebate from: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-rebate-to-help-with-your-energy-bills#propertiesinbandsetoh>
- Bands E to H – discretionary element in development
- If you pay less than £150 in Council Tax still entitled to support i.e. council tax support

**Non discretionary payments have already been made. All other payments will be made by 31 October 2022**

# Brent Hubs



## Overview:

Brent hubs can provide support and advice to Brent residents who are struggling to pay their utility bills this winter. Support includes:

- Assistance with completing funding applications for support from local and national schemes, including the Brent Resident Support Fund
- Referral routes to other advisory agencies who specialise in energy support such as Green Doctors and SHINE
- Referral routes to food banks and emergency supermarket vouchers
- Urgent support with topping up pre-payment gas and electricity meters

## How to access support:

Brent Hubs operate a drop in service: <https://www.brenthubs.com/>

Alternatively, to speak to someone from the Brent Hubs team, residents can call 020 8937 1234. Telephones are open Monday to Friday, from 11am to 3pm.

# Food aid and vouchers

- Supporting the families / carers of approximately 12,000 eligible children and young people with supermarket vouchers during each of the school holidays since December 2020.
- This includes approximately 20,339 vouchers which were sent out from the Council to support families with children aged 0-4 years old who are not attending school.
- The most recent vouchers to the value of £60 per eligible child were issued to cover the duration of the 2022 summer holidays.
- A one-off payment of £50 in February 2021 was made to families with eligible children to contribute towards the cost of gas and electricity bills.

# Support with Debt

A standard breathing space is available to anyone with problem debt. It gives them legal protections from creditor action for up to 60 days. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors and freezing most interest and charges on their debts.

A mental health crisis breathing space is only available to someone who is receiving mental health crisis treatment. It lasts as long as the person's mental health crisis treatment, plus 30 days (no matter how long the crisis treatment lasts).

- Affordable Credit - Credit Unions
  - [Hillingdon Credit Union](#)
  - [My Community Bank](#)
  - [London Capital Credit Union](#)
- Support agencies
  - [Step Change](#) - For advice on all debt matters
  - [Debt Free London](#) – Free Debt Advice Night or Day 24/7
  - [Citizens Advice Brent](#) - Advice on benefits, debt, housing and more
  - [Money Helper](#) free and impartial advice, in-depth guides, tools and calculators to help improve finance

# Signposting for energy support

## Green Doctors

- Expert energy advisors
- Provide free phone consultation/home visits
- Support includes, switching energy tariffs, applying for national financial support schemes, advise on energy saving measures, and priority services register
- To make a referral call 0300 365 3005, or email [greendoctorsldn@groundworks.org.uk](mailto:greendoctorsldn@groundworks.org.uk), or complete this [online form](#)

## Other Support Agencies

- The [Seasonal Health Intervention Network \(SHINE\)](#) provides a free energy advice service to help reduce utility bills and tackle energy debt
- [Advice for Renters](#) support people living in private rented accommodation to access legal advice and holistic, person centred support, including advise on heating your home and managing money
- [Citizens Advice Brent](#) helps people to resolve their money, legal and other problems

# Thank you

- Any questions?
- Email: [customer.services@brent.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@brent.gov.uk)
- Thank you



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, ask a family member, friend or caregiver. You can also visit or call your local library on 020 8937 3400 to book an appointment with a Digital Champion.