

More help with the cost-of-living crisis

To help people pay their rapidly rising energy bills, the Government announced a wider package of support in April.

There will now be four extra grants during 2022-23 – paying some households up to £1,500 in total. These amounts will not count towards the benefits cap.

Support for everyone

If you have your own electricity meter (your supply is not communal), you will get a £400 grant this winter. This does not have to be repaid.

The money will come off your electricity bills between October 2022 and March 2023, or it will be added to your pre-payment meter. (You may get vouchers instead.)

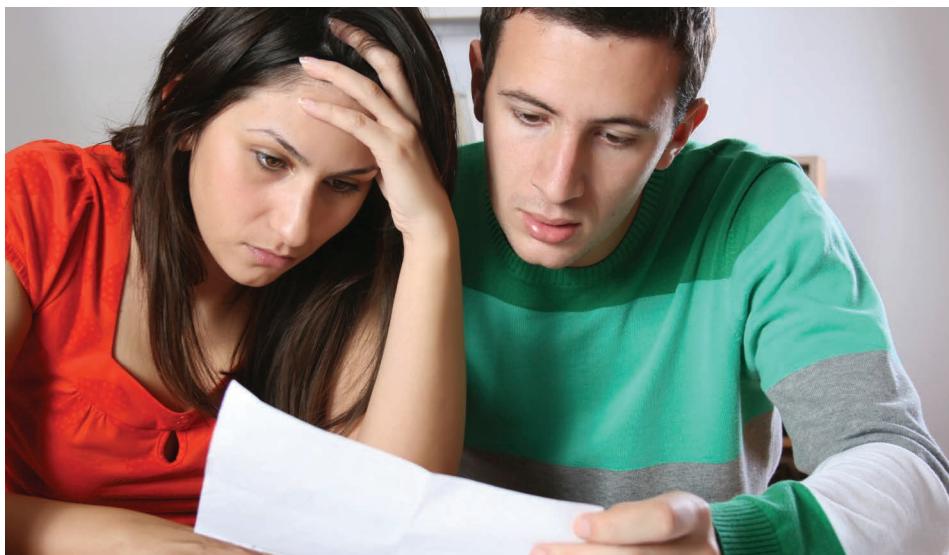
Pensioners

You will get an extra £300 on top of your normal Winter Fuel Payment of £100-300 – paid to you during November or December 2022.

People on benefits

You will also be given £650 if you claim any of the following:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax, Working Tax or Pension Credits
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support allowance, or Income Support.



The money is being paid in two amounts into the account your benefits are paid into. The first was paid in July and the second is due in the autumn.

People with disabilities

You will get an additional £150 in September if you claim:

- Attendance, Constant Attendance, or Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, or
- Scottish disability benefits.

Are your bills right?

If your monthly payments have already risen by a lot more than half, you should check why.

Large rises may be correct if:

- your cheap fixed deal ended
- you recently opted for an expensive fixed deal, or
- your provider expects your usage to rise.

However, if your provider is over-estimating your likely usage, you may be able to get your payments reduced.

Support from the Council

We can help you apply for the help you need.

Local Welfare Assistance

Vulnerable people in Waltham Forest have been claiming Local Welfare Assistance from the Council since 2013. You can ask for help to pay for:

- food
- fuel (such as gas and electricity)
- household items like furniture and white goods, and
- other essential items.

You can also ask for financial support if you cannot meet your immediate short-term needs, or if you need assistance to stay independent in the community.

Household Support Fund

Since October 2021, the Council has also made awards from its Household Support Fund, which was set up with funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. The scheme has been extended and will now run until 30 September 2022 (although it may need to close early if the budget is spent).

To claim, someone in your household must be vulnerable (have a disability or be unwell), or you must have suffered a serious setback that you cannot currently cope with.

If successful, you could be awarded up to £250 towards your energy or water bills, or to meet other essential costs, including pre-paid prescription charges or housing costs.



Worried about money?

Scan the QR code or visit walthamforest.gov.uk/worriedaboutmoney

Whether you need advice or support to...

pay your bills or heat your home,
get quality food that's right for you and your family,
access the right type of benefit for you

...we're here to help.

Citizens Advice logo

Waltham Forest logo

Some people might be eligible for awards from both funds. You use the same form to apply.

Contact us (see back page) if you would like our staff to help you to apply. We have referral forms from Citizens Advice, who are partnering with the Council in this scheme.

Telephone befriending service

Re-engage, the free telephone befriending group for older people, has launched a new service specifically for LGBT+ people over the age of 75.



You will be matched with a volunteer who is also LGBT+ and receive a friendly call every week or two.

Rainbow call companions love a good chat and they're great listeners too. You can get to know each other and share stories and laughter – for as long as you both want.

To find out more about Re-engage, go to their website at: www.reengage.org.uk

Re-engage works to help all older people stay socially connected and



Reengage

Rainbow call companions
for LGBT+ older people

organises other activities as well as call companions. They are always on the look out for volunteers.

To use their services, call freephone: 0800 716 543, email: info@reengage.org.uk, or contact us to help you get set up.

Health and safety advice

Asbestos

Our asbestos management policy is designed to manage asbestos safely in your homes.

When we identify asbestos, or if asbestos we know about is damaged or disturbed, we take steps to keep you safe.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material, mined in a number of countries, which was used in a large number of building products before it was completely banned in the UK in 1999. Blue and brown asbestos were banned in 1972 and 1985 respectively.

Homes built between the 1950s and the early 1980s are the most likely to have asbestos. It was used to give added strength to building materials, for electrical and chemical insulating, and for fire protection.

When is asbestos dangerous?

If asbestos remains undisturbed and it is in a good condition, it does not present a health risk. This is why it is sometimes safer to leave the material in place than to remove it. The risks from asbestos occur when the material becomes



damaged or disturbed, if asbestos fibres become airborne.

What we ask of you

You should contact us as soon as possible if any asbestos is damaged or disturbed. Do not attempt to clean up or repair any damaged asbestos or debris. Using a brush or vacuum cleaner could potentially make the asbestos fibres airborne.

Please call the Asset Services Team if you are planning to carry out works in your home, so that we can check if there is asbestos present. You are also welcome to call with any questions, or for an information leaflet.

Phone us on 020 8524 6987, option 1, or email us at repairs@wfha.org.uk



Stay safe: Who called me?

In the spring issue, we focused on staying safe from scams. We now have an additional tip to share.

Unwanted phone calls are a nuisance – and can be a threat. If you are unsure about any call, it can help to check the number that is calling you.

'Who called me' is a free, web-based service that allows people to share what they know about particular phone numbers. By typing in a phone number in the search box, you can find out what other people have reported. This can warn you if the number is known to be selling, harassing, safe or dangerous, and can tell you if it is based in a call centre.

For details go to who-called.co.uk

Polite notice: No dog fouling, please

We appreciate that the majority of dog owners are very respectful and clean up after their pets, but unfortunately, there have been several instances where dogs have fouled within the communal areas and their owners have not cleaned up after them. This is unacceptable.

Please remember to:

- keep a supply of bags near your dog's lead, so you never forget them on your walks, and
- bag your dog's waste and dispose of it at home, or in the communal domestic bins.

Thank you for your co-operation. Help us keep things clean and safe for everyone.



Health and safety advice

Electric scooter fire risk

We regularly remind you not to leave any personal belongings in corridors, stairwells, meter cupboards and other communal areas.

These items are a fire hazard, because they can feed a fire and get in the way of people escaping a fire. They can also make it more difficult for fire fighters to tackle a blaze.

Some items, including mobility scooters and e-scooters, are even more dangerous, because they use lithium-ion batteries.

Lithium batteries that are faulty or damaged can reach temperatures of up to 375°C. They can then



self-ignite within just three minutes, releasing huge amounts of toxic smoke.

If you leave personal belongings, including electric scooters in shared areas, we will need to remove them.

Health and safety advice

Water hygiene

Be aware that water can cause people to get sick, if it is not kept fresh.

Harmful Legionella bacteria can build up in your taps or on your shower head. If you breathe in this bacteria, it can make you sick, or give you Legionnaires' disease.

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia that can affect anybody. It can be very dangerous and potentially cause death. You are more at risk if you:

- are a smoker or heavy drinker
- are over the age of 45
- have lung or heart disease, or
- have diabetes.

Keeping your home safe

To reduce the risk of bacteria and legionnaires' disease in your home, you can take a number of steps.

- If you have taps or showers you don't use regularly, run them for five to 10 minutes at least once a month to clear the pipes.
- Try to clean the outside of taps and shower heads at least once every three months.
- Make sure there are no places in your home where water can stay still and build up harmful bacteria.

If you have questions, please phone 020 8524 6987, option 1, and ask to speak to a member of our Asset Services Team. Or email them at repairs@wfha.org.uk



Waltham Forest Housing Association

The Energy Centre, 31 Church Hill
Walthamstow, London E17 3RU

Email us at:

- info@wfha.org.uk (general queries)
- repairs@wfha.org.uk, or
- complaints@wfha.org.uk

During office hours (weekdays, 9am to 5pm), call us on 020 8524 6987, then select:

- Option 1 for repairs
- Option 2 for housing management (to pay your rent, talk about benefits or other housing issues)
- Option 3 for finance (to set up or change a direct debit and pay your rent)
- Option 4 for governance (for enquiries about the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and tenant surveys).

For a non-gas emergency outside office hours, call our emergency contractors on 020 8524 2822.

Out of hours, if your gas heating system fails in severe weather and you have no alternative, call Swale Heating on 01795 503 365.

 [walthamforesthousingassociation](#)
 [@walthamforestha](#)

Safety first – visiting head office is by appointment only

We are still limiting the number of people at head office, so visits to our offices are by appointment only. Please call us on 020 8524 6987 for an appointment.