

Positive Energy

Winter Edition



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Welcome



Welcome to your Winter edition of 'Positive Energy', your seasonal newsletter.

In this edition we will be helping you through the colder months with details about where to get help and support with energy and water costs, details of local 'warm spaces' with a warm welcome, help with childcare costs and free school meals. We also have some helpful cooking hints, a competition for the kids and a whole lot more!



Important advice from our Housing team

Do you need help with your household bills?
Are you about to lose your home?



If so, contact your housing provider who can help you.

North Warwickshire Borough Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council have specialist officers that can help you with things like financial statements to help you reduce your debts, and they also work in partnership with other agencies to support you.

Agencies such as Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Warwickshire Welfare Scheme (available to everyone), Doorway Charity (for under 25 year olds) and P3 (People, Potential Possibilities)

Both local authorities have a dedicated Housing Solutions Service that can assist you with the prevention of homelessness, by supporting you with things like, Discretionary Housing Payments, Food Bank Vouchers, or assistance with Housing Benefit & PIP forms, or your UC Journal. They can also assist with applications for help with essential items, payment of debts, food bank referrals and Bond and Rent in advance payments. The message is to speak to the team as early as possible to prevent a crisis.

If you need help please contact your local authority as early as you possibly can to see what they can offer, for Nuneaton and Bedworth it is landlordsolutions@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk and for North Warwickshire Borough Council it is housingoptions@northwarks.gov.uk



Millions of low-income households to get new Cost of Living Payments from Spring 2023

Millions of the lowest-income households across the UK will get up to £1,350 from the Government in 2023/4 to help with the cost of living.



Find out more by clicking on the GOV.UK Logo

Millions of the lowest-income households across the UK will get up to £1,350 from the Government in 2023/4 to help with the cost of living.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has today announced more detail on the payment schedule for the next round of cost of living support unveiled in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, building on payments made to over eight million people in 2022.

The new £900 cash boost for over eight million eligible means-tested benefits claimants, including those on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and tax credits, starts in Spring and will go direct to bank accounts in three payments over the course of the financial year. There will also be a separate £150 for over six million disabled people and £300 for over eight million pensioners on top of their Winter Fuel Payments.

Exact payment windows will be announced closer to the time, but are spread across a longer period to ensure a consistent support offering throughout the year. They will be broadly as follows:

- **£301 – First Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2023**
- **£150 – Disability Payment – during Summer 2023**
- **£300 – Second Cost of Living Payment – during Autumn 2023**
- **£300 – Pensioner Payment – during Winter 2023/4**
- **£299 – Third Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2024**

[The Guidance](#) (link is external) on getting an extra payment to help with the cost of living if you're entitled to certain benefits or tax credits has been updated to include a link to information about Cost of Living Payments during 2023 and 2024.

For more information and to keep up to date with details regarding the Cost of Living payments please visit:

[Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK](#)
(www.gov.uk).

Family Information Service (FIS)



The Family Information Service produce regular weekly and also 'special edition' monthly newsletters with lots of information to help families

Many families are worried about the impact of the increasing cost of living, and many might struggle to make their incomes stretch to cover the basics.

The FIS newsletters will be published each week and at the start of every month to support and provide advice to you and your family throughout the cost of living crisis.

Please follow this link to the latest newsletters, along with past editions that you may find useful. You can also sign up to receiving the newsletters direct!

Children and families – Warwickshire County Council

For further advice contact Family Information Service helpline free on 0800 408 1558 or email fis@warwickshire.gov.uk



Important Fire Safety Information

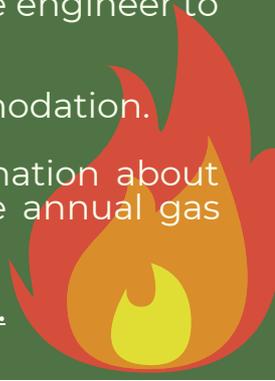
To help keep you safe, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and the National Fire Chief's Council campaign have some tips:

- Check any heating appliances are in good working order and not subject to a product recall by checking the Office for Product Safety and Standards website for any alerts or recalls
- Ensure flammable items such as furniture and drying clothes are placed well away from heaters and fires
- Ensure you use the correct fuel for woodburning stoves and open fires – to reduce the risk of toxic fumes, chimney fires and carbon monoxide poisoning
- Check your escape routes, make sure they are clear from clutter and items such as portable heaters are not blocking them.
- If possible don't skip servicing of boilers and gas appliances by a Gas Safe engineer to prevent gas leaks and CO poisoning.

Landlords must arrange for an annual gas safety check in rented accommodation.

If you're a homeowner check your energy provider's website for information about their Priority Services Register – if you're eligible they often offer a free annual gas safety check along with other support.

For more fire safety tips visit: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/firesafety>.



LATEST NEWS

citizens
advice

North Warwickshire Citizens Advice are please to announce that they have received funding from the National Grid Electricity Distribution 'Communities Matters' Fund.

This is a short term project running until 31/3/23 which will enable our energy advisers to attend community venues to deliver energy advice.

Any groups that would like us to attend a session, please email either advice@nwcab.org.uk or lorraineverrall@nwcab.org.uk



NEW.... Out of hours Service

Citizens Advice in Warwickshire are now operating an out of hours phone service on Monday evenings from 5-7pm.

This is to enable access to our service for people who are unable to contact us during the day.

The freephone number is 0800 995 6047.



The
Electoral
Commission

Find out more at
electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

No ID? You can apply for free voter ID

You now need
photo ID to vote at
a polling station



Warm & Well in Warwickshire and COVID Benefit Support Project

Warwickshire CC, North Warwickshire BC and Nuneaton and Bedworth BC in partnership with Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service

Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service (WWRAS) is a charity established in 1986 and gives free, independent and confidential advice on welfare benefits.

£15 billion of social security benefits goes unclaimed in the U.K. every year. Over the past five years in the Nuneaton and Bedworth and North Warwickshire areas alone, our services have helped local people claim additional benefits totalling in excess of **£4.5 million**.

WWRAS is currently funded by Warwickshire County Council, to provide benefits advice to those in fuel poverty in the county. We also receive separate funding from the Warwickshire Social Impact Fund to help maximise the income of residents in North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth, who have been impacted by COVID-19.

Free Income Maximisation Advice

- We can advise clients affected by COVID 19 in North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth and check whether they are entitled to any additional benefits.
- We can advise any local residents struggling with fuel bills and check whether they are entitled to any additional benefits.
- If we find that someone is not receiving their correct entitlement we will assist with any additional benefit claims and form filling; you will not have to do anything else!
- We also work with a range of partners, so if there are other issues you need help with we can refer you to the most suitable organisation.

A quick enquiry could change your income dramatically!

If you want a free check to see if you may be entitled to additional benefits, then you can phone or email us quoting the **Energy Advice Newsletter** in the subject heading or mention this to our team on the phone.

Telephone: 024 7637 2069 or Email: info@wwras.org.uk



Jamie Oliver



We all know energy prices have gone up, and that means feeding ourselves and our families is also something we also need to think about.

What's the cheapest way to do this?

Jamie Oliver has put together some great top tips, along with advice on the cheapest way to cook and put together some cost efficient healthy recipes, that come in under £1 per portion.

Jamie's top-tips include:

- Plan your week
- Batch cook budget-friendly recipes
- Make the most of your freezer
- Be energy efficient
- Love your leftovers
- Reduce waste
- Look at best before and use by dates
- Cook with tinned foods
- Big legumes (beans and pulses)
- Use your store cupboard to maximise flavour
- Embrace wonky fruit and veg
- Make easy swaps
- Go seasonal
- Grow your own

To read more of the detail and to find some great £1 wonder recipes visit: [14 tips for cooking on a budget 2022 | Jamie Oliver](#)

You can also sign up to Jamie Oliver's Four weeks of free budget-friendly recipes to help you plan ahead, shop well, and boss your weeknight cooking, without breaking the bank.

Sign up here [Jamie's budget-friendly meal plan | Jamie Oliver](#)



Warm Welcome Locations...



If you'd like a warm place this winter, our libraries, museums and other community venues across Warwickshire are putting on additional events and offering extended opening hours.

- Warwickshire Libraries are open throughout the week, with coffee mornings, “crafternoon” tea and other events taking place – [find your local library](#) to see their opening times and upcoming activities
- Warwickshire County Council's mobile library service makes 250 stops across the county – [find your local stop](#)
- See a [list of warm hubs](#) available through the Warwickshire Rural Community Council

For more information visit:

[Warm Spaces | Cost of Living Help | North Warwickshire \(northwarks.gov.uk\)](#)

[Warm Welcome locations – Cost of Living \(costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk\)](#)

Are you worried about the rising cost of energy bills?

Well, you're not alone.

Everyone's bills have increased and are set to rise again during 2023.

But there is lots of support and advice available to help you.

Warwickshire have partnered with local energy experts, Act on Energy. Act on Energy is a local charity who have been helping people with their energy concerns for over 20 years.

They can offer expert advice on:

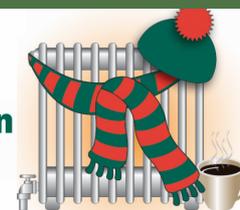
- Financial assistance to help with fuel bills
- Energy debt
- Billing issues
- Broken heating systems
- Energy efficiency tips to reduce your bills and keep warm
- Grants and funding for energy efficiency measures

Their team of expert advisors can give you free advice over the phone and tap into a host of grants and funds and even signpost other agencies who could help with household costs.

Simply call free on 0800 988 2881 for more information or email advice@actonenergy.org.uk



Warm and well in
Warwickshire



GIVEAWAY TIME



Do you want to help your house save energy and save money? Then why not make your own 'sausage dog' draught excluder!

Draught excluders are handy cushions that stop draughts from getting under the front door and into your home. You can also use them on internal doors. And they can help reduce the energy your home uses.

Making your own draught excluder can be very simple. We have listed below some things you will need and some ideas to get you started.... but this is yours, so just have some fun!

Things you could use:

- Old pair of woolly tights
- Wool
- Scraps of fabric
- Two buttons for eyes
- Needle and thread / elastic bands / iron on fabric tape
- Stuffing or old socks (clean!)
- Old mittens for ears
- Scissors - please make sure an adult is helping

To make a DIY draught excluder, you can even recycle old clothes.

For a quick version, cut the leg off an old pair of jeans or the arm from an old jumper and turn them into draught excluders.

Stuff them with filling and sew up the ends or pop an elastic band around the end.

Got some old tights or socks? You could stuff these with filling.

Just remember to add something to weigh them down and keep them in place. To do this, mix some dried peas or beans with the filler before sewing them up.

Remember you can always use iron-on fabric tape rather than sewing.



Photographs: Debbie Patterson/PR
From The Guardian

How to enter:

You must be 16 years or under and live in the North Warwickshire BC area. Please EMAIL a picture of your finished draught excluder, with your name, age, address, and a contact email and telephone number to: financialinclusion@northwarks.gov.uk by Tuesday 28th February 2023.

All entries received will be judged by a panel and the winner contacted by email. We will announce the winner in the spring edition of the newsletter, with their agreement.

Free School Meals...

Apply now - you may be missing out!



Why are free school meals important?

How the family and children benefit:

- Healthy balanced meals help children to concentrate and learn better
- Children have better results and grades when they have a full tummy and perform better in sport
- Eating around a table at school helps children to socialise
- Helps put more money into family pockets which also helps the local economy
- No need to worry about whether you have food in the house for school lunches
- Encourages children to develop healthy eating habits and reduce levels of obesity

How the school benefits:

- For every child that is entitled to a free school meal, the school is also entitled to extra funding
- This additional funding helps your school to provide more support, extra activities and opportunities for the students

Get a free school meal and benefit health check today, and you may get extra funding for your school.

We are working together with Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service (WWRAS) to help parents and carers identify if they are entitled to claim a free school meal for their child and to identify any additional benefit that the family may be missing out on. WWRAS will complete all the forms needed to help you claim what you are entitled to.

How to take part and get a FREE check today.....

Contact WWRAS:

EMAIL: info@wvras.org.uk

TEL: 024 7637 2069

If you want to find out more about Free School Meals you can also visit Warwickshire County Council webpages:

[Apply for free school meals – Warwickshire County Council](#)





Childcare support

There are lots of different options available to support you with childcare costs. Whether you have toddlers or teens, you could get support. The childcare choices website can help you find the right offer for you. Click on the link here: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Free Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](#)

You could get up to £2,000 per child of tax free childcare for children age 0 - 11, or 16 if disabled. This is for working families earning over £152 per week and up to £100k per year.

You can find out more about childcare, including a helpful animation and a post code search for childcare options available in Warwickshire here: [Help with childcare costs – Warwickshire County Council](#)

If you would like to speak with someone about your childcare options in Warwickshire, please contact the Family Information Service on freephone 0800 408 1558 or email fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

Help with Childcare Costs in Warwickshire

You may be entitled to support with childcare costs. There are a number of different options available, details, and how to apply can be found here:

[Childcare – Warwickshire County Council](#) along with links to Warwickshire's childcare search where you can enter your postcode and do a local search for all Ofsted registered childcare in Warwickshire.

If you are struggling to find what you are looking for, or need further support please contact the Family Information Service

Freephone: 0800 408 1558 or email: fis@warwickshire.gov.uk



Be prepared, be part of a Credit Union

Citysave Credit Union is your ethical loans and savings provider.

Citysave provide saving plans to protect against financial shocks and longer-term plans, alongside ethical, fair priced loan options for the real people of Warwickshire and Birmingham.

- Helping you save for your tomorrow
- Savings are protected to the same level as any bank or building society
- Save online and mobile account access 24/7
- Free text balance service
- Affordable loans tailored to your needs with no hidden charges
- Choice of repayment methods
- Member owned and Yearly dividends



To find out more and to apply visit www.citysave.org.uk

Have you got a question?

Visit our FAQs and find out
more on our website!



If you've got questions about who Citysave are and how their loans and savings accounts work, visit their website to read their FAQ's - visit [Borrowing - Citysave](#)

If you still need your question answered, get in touch with one of their helpful team on 0121 616 6200.

Many people up and down the country are feeling the stress of an increase in bills. If you're worried about bills and repayments, Money Helper have some great online resources to help break down your top priorities and make things more manageable.

Take a look here

[Help with bills and payments | MoneyHelper](#)



Energy Savings Club

Help to pay your energy bills with a FREE £25 savings bonus! *



How does it work?

- Join Citysave Credit Union <https://citysave.org.uk/>
- Save £2 per week for a minimum of 12 weeks
- You can take up to 25 weeks to do this!
- Get a £25 'free bonus' paid into your account

The Benefits

- Easy to join
- No fees
- Use the £25 bonus to pay towards your energy bills
- Build financial resilience
- Saving for your future

***BE QUICK.... THE OFFER IS ONLY OPEN TO FIRST 50 APPLICANTS WORKING WITH A MONEY ADVISER**



MORE INFORMATION

www.northwarks.gov.uk/help



'helping you to help yourself'



STOP LOAN SHARKS
Intervention . Support . Education

Energy Savings Club

Citysave Credit Union are working with the Illegal Money Lending Team and North Warwickshire Borough Council to tackle illegal money lending, otherwise known as 'Loan Sharking'.

Citysave is a safe and secure way to save money and borrow at competitive rates. Citysave have over 30 years experience supporting the people of Birmingham and Warwickshire. You can become a member too and joining could not be easier. Simply visit their website <https://www.citysave.org.uk>

Why not take advantage of our great offer to become a member of the Energy Savings Club? You can start your savings pot and get an extra £25 free bonus on us! You can use this extra money to help towards paying your energy bills.

Please note: To ensure that your account is connected to the scheme, please select 'Energy Savings Club' from the 'How Did You Hear About Us?' section

Contact Details

<https://www.citysave.org.uk/>

Tel: 0121 616 6200

If you are worried you may have borrowed from a loan shark you can speak to the Illegal Money Lending Team in confidence on the 24 hour hotline 0300 555 2222 or us the 'live chat' on

[websiteHome - Stop Loan Sharks](#)

Struggling with your water bill? Here are 5 ways we can help



The Big Difference Scheme

We can offer a reduction of water bills to any Severn Trent customer with a household income below £16,480. You can now also apply online!



Severn Trent Trust Fund

This is an independent Charity. They can provide help through grants to customers who are unable to pay their bill.



Water Sure Scheme

If you are a Severn Trent customer, have a water meter in the property, and are a large family with 3 or more children under the age of 19, or have a medical condition meaning you need to use more water, you may be eligible for this scheme.



Water Direct

We can help you pay your water bills directly through your benefits saving the stress of having to remember to make the payments and organise your bills.



Matching Plus

This scheme works by Severn Trent fully, or partially matching your monthly payments to help reduce your account balance!

For more information about each of these schemes, please scan the QR code.



or visit our website
www.stwater.co.uk

Alternatively you can give us a call on 03457 500 500.

We also have different ways to pay your bill such as spreading it over the year at no extra cost.

WONDERFUL ON TAP

