



**Luke  
Pollard MP**  
Member of Parliament  
for Plymouth Sutton  
and Devonport

# COST OF LIVING ADVICE GUIDE SUMMER 2023



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# A MESSAGE FROM LUKE



The cost of living crisis is the biggest issue facing our country. With food prices increasing, heating bills going up and taxes rising, I know this is a very difficult time for many families in Plymouth and up and down the country.

If you are struggling to keep up with rising costs, angry about the lack of support, or are confused about what measures are available to you: **You are not alone.**

There are some fantastic organisations across Plymouth that are working their socks off to provide help on a number of cost of living issues such as access to foodbanks, advice on energy bills, affordable clothing and more.

Details of this brilliant support can be found in this booklet, and I hope you find it useful.



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# PLYMOUTH ONLINE DIRECTORY

The Plymouth Online Directory is a great hub for links to organisations that can **provide support for struggling households in Plymouth.**

Their dedicated **Cost of Living support page** provides a wealth of resources and information for those who need help and support during this difficult time.

## Areas of Support:

The image shows a screenshot of the Plymouth Online Directory website. A red circle with the number 1 points to the 'HEATING & ENERGY' link in the top navigation bar. A red circle with the number 2 points to the 'FOOD & SHOPPING' link. A red circle with the number 3 points to the 'MONEY & FINANCES' link. A red circle with the number 4 points to the 'HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS' link. A red circle with the number 5 points to the 'MENTAL HEALTH' link. A red circle with the number 6 points to the 'EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING' link. A red circle with the number 7 points to the 'TRAVEL & TRANSPORT' link. A red circle with the number 8 points to the 'CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES' link. A red circle with the number 9 points to the 'FREE INTERNET/WIFI ACCESS' link. The main content area shows the 'Cost of living support' page, which includes text about the rising cost of living and a link to the 'help from the government page'.

**1 HEATING & ENERGY**

**2 FOOD & SHOPPING**

**3 MONEY & FINANCES**

**4 HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS**

**5 MENTAL HEALTH**

**6 EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING**

**7 TRAVEL & TRANSPORT**

**8 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES**

**9 FREE INTERNET/WIFI ACCESS**

The Plymouth Online Directory's Cost of Living support page also provides information on all **government help and support schemes**, **tips to help you save money**, **crisis support** and **help and support for carers.**



[www.plymouthonlinedirectory.com/costoflivingsupport](http://www.plymouthonlinedirectory.com/costoflivingsupport)

# HELP WITH ENERGY BILLS

## Energy Saving Trust

For advice on staying warm, lowering your energy bills and support available:  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/save-money-energy-bills/](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/save-money-energy-bills/)

## Money Saving Expert

For tips to counter the cost of soaring gas and electricity bills:  
[www.moneysavingexpert.com/energy/](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/energy/)



## Citizens Advice

If you're struggling to afford your energy bills or top up your prepayment meter, there may be certain **benefits, grants and help** offered by the government and energy suppliers.

Citizens Advice can also help if you are **struggling to pay your energy bills**.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/get-help-with-the-cost-of-living/>

## Plymouth Energy Community

The Energy Team offer advice and support for Plymouth residents.

Email: [energyteam@plymouthenergycommunity.com](mailto:energyteam@plymouthenergycommunity.com) or Phone: **01752 477117**

They also have useful **advice guides** on a number of topics like what to do when you have debt, understanding gas and electricity bills and energy saving tips:  
[www.plymouthenergycommunity.com/residents/advice-guides](http://www.plymouthenergycommunity.com/residents/advice-guides)

## HOW I CAN HELP

If you've been struggling to access support with your energy bills, or you're having problems with your energy supplier please get in touch. As your MP I can contact the companies on your behalf to establish the status of your case and help to resolve your issues.

It is important to remember that **you are not alone**.



# HELP WITH HOUSEHOLD BILLS

## Discretionary Housing Payments

These extra payments can **help with rent or housing costs** for those who receive Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit.

For more information: [www.plymouth.gov.uk/discretionary-housing-payments](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/discretionary-housing-payments)

## Council Tax Support

Plymouth City Council operate a local means-tested scheme for people on low incomes to **help them pay their Council Tax**.

How to apply: [www.plymouth.gov.uk/council-tax-support](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/council-tax-support)

## School Uniform

Many families struggling with the rising cost of living are worried about school uniform costs. Through donations of good quality school uniform they give the items to those in need, **free of charge**. The service is open to anyone to use and **no referral is needed**.

93 New George Street, Plymouth City Centre  
Open Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 10am – 1pm.



## Broadband 'Social Tariffs'

Social tariffs are **discounted broadband and mobile deals** for people on Universal Credit and other benefits. These tariffs are delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a **lower price**.

For further information and to explore the options available for those eligible, please visit Money Saving Expert's website: [www.moneysavingexpert.com/compare-broadband-deals/broadband-social-tariffs/](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/compare-broadband-deals/broadband-social-tariffs/)



# HELP WITH FOOD & ESSENTIALS

## Foodbanks in Plymouth

If you can't afford food, you can call **01752 668000, option 6**, to speak to Plymouth City Council about getting a voucher and a referral to Foodbank for support. They may be able to help you with food, clothes for job interviews, cooking classes and budgeting advice.

For information on how to get help from **Plymouth Foodbank**:  
[www.plymouth.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/how-to-get-help/](http://www.plymouth.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/how-to-get-help/)



**Food Plymouth** have a useful resource for those seeking help to access food:  
[www.foodplymouth.org/do-you-need-information-about-how-to-access-food/](http://www.foodplymouth.org/do-you-need-information-about-how-to-access-food/)

## Plymouth Soup Run

Plymouth Soup Run endeavour to deliver food and hot drinks to the homeless and vulnerable at stops across Plymouth **7 days a week, 365 days of the year**:

- 8:45-9:15pm The Money Centre, Mayflower Street
- 9:20-9:30pm The Hoe
- 9:35-9:45pm Martin Street
- 9:50-10:00pm King's Road

The Soup Run also provides a takeaway soup kitchen service on **Sunday evenings from 7.15pm at Shekinah, Bath Street, PL1 3LT.**

For full details: [www.plymouthsoupun.org.uk/](http://www.plymouthsoupun.org.uk/)

## Healthy Start Vouchers

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**. If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops.

For information on how to apply: [www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/)

# HELP WITH BENEFITS & MONEY SAVING

## Benefit Entitlement

If you're struggling with the cost of living, you should check if you can claim benefits or increase your current benefits. A **benefits calculator** can help you find out what benefits you are entitled to claim.

Turn2Us: [www.benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/](http://www.benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/)

EntitledTo: [www.entitledto.co.uk/](http://www.entitledto.co.uk/)

## Citizens Advice

Provide support and advice with your benefits claim. Their dedicated Help to Claim advisers can also help with the early stages of a Universal Credit Claim.

Advisers are available **8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Phone: 08001 448444**

## Improving Lives Plymouth

Working in partnership with Citizen's Advice Plymouth to deliver the Advice Plymouth partnership. Their Drop In team provide information and signposting for a variety of issues such as benefits, debt, employment and utility issues. They also provide specialist benefits information, advice and support.

Drop In Services available **9am to 4:15pm, Monday to Friday.**

Ernest English House, Buckwell Street, Plymouth, PL1 2DA

## Money Saving Expert

Provide guides and tools to help **boost your income and cut costs for your household.**

Access their website for useful resources on managing your income and budgeting: [www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/)



## Borrow Don't Buy

With their 'Library of Things', you can borrow the items you need every so often but that you don't need to own.

To access this service, become a member on their website then make a reservation to collect the item you need. For further details:

[www.borrowdontbuy.co.uk/](http://www.borrowdontbuy.co.uk/)

# HELP WITH MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

## IN PERSON SUPPORT

**Plymouth Options** offers a free confidential NHS talking therapy service for people (aged 16+) in Plymouth. The service aims to help you feel better, and give you the tools and techniques to improve your mental and physical wellbeing. Phone **01752 435419** or **self-refer online**.

**Livewell Southwest's First Response Service** is a 24/7 crisis line providing advice, support and signposting for people experiencing mental health difficulties. If you feel worried about your mental health or that of a loved one or a friend, you can call the crisis line on **0800 923 9323**.

**Andy's Man Club** runs free, peer-to-peer support groups for men, aiming to help men through the power of conversation and offer a judgement-free, confidential space. Plymouth group meet on **Mondays at 7pm at City College**.

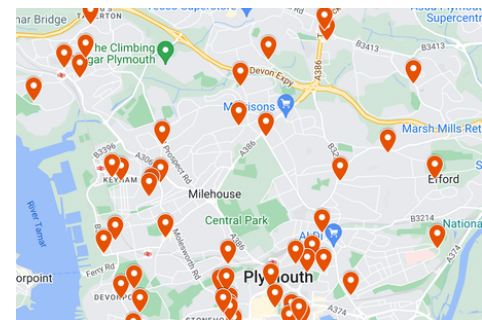
**Devon Mind** supports people in Devon experiencing a variety of mental health challenges, helping you to learn skills and strategies to stay well for longer. Their support offer includes groups, courses and counselling.

**Head Space** offers an out-of-hours service for people who feel they are approaching a mental health crisis. They provide a safe and calm environment and access to peer support. **Open 7 days a week, 6pm to midnight**.

## Plymouth's Warm, Welcoming Spaces

If you're looking for a warm, safe space to spend time in during the cold weather, many organisations, charities and libraries in Plymouth will be happy to welcome you.

Map: [www.plymouth.gov.uk/warm-welcoming-spaces](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/warm-welcoming-spaces)



**LiveWell South West** provides support on taking care of yourself physically. Their team of specialist wellbeing practitioners deliver the '**One You**' Plymouth programme, providing free advice and support to local people on how to improve and maintain their mental and physical wellbeing.

For more information: [www.oneyouplymouth.co.uk/](http://www.oneyouplymouth.co.uk/)



# HELP WITH MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

## ONLINE SUPPORT

**Shout** is a 24/7 anonymous crisis text messaging service - every conversation is with a real person. It's also silent, and won't appear on your phone bill. Just text **'SHOUT'** to **85258**.

**Kooth** provides a free, safe and anonymous online wellbeing service to support children and young people aged 11-18. They provide friendly counsellors that you can talk to, as well as useful articles and forums on their website.

**QWELL** is an online digital mental health support offer for adults (18+). It offers activities, content and a peer support community with self-articles, forums and discussion boards that are monitored by medical experts.

**Papyrus** is a young suicide prevention society, providing free help and advice to those who need it. If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact **HOPELINEUK** for confidential support and practical advice. Call **0800 068 4141** or Email **pat@papyrus-uk.org**

**Samaritans** are here for you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can get in touch about anything that's troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue feels, with no judgement and no pressure.

Call **116 123**, Email **jo@samaritans.org**, or use their online **self-help app**.

The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) is taking a stand against suicide. That means standing against feeling rubbish, standing up to stereotypes and standing together to show life is always worth living. The helpline is open from 5pm to midnight, 365 days a year on **0800 585858**.



## EMERGENCY SUPPORT

In an emergency, always call **999**.

Livewell Southwest's First Response Service is a **24/7 crisis line** providing advice, support and signposting.

If you feel worried about your mental health or that of a loved one or a friend, call the crisis line on **0800 923 9323**.



I am here to help. As your Member of Parliament I can provide support and assistance on a number of matters.

Please get in touch with me if there is anything that I can do to help.



01752 717255



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