

# NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 6 December 2021  
Issued by: CEM team

Issue No: 286/15  
Version: 0.1

## HELP DOESN'T STOP HERE: ONE FRONT DOOR STILL SUPPORTING RESIDENTS THIS WINTER

Wokingham Borough Council is reminding residents that support is available for anyone who is worried about paying for essential costs, or who needs some extra help this winter.

One Front Door, a service led by Citizens Advice Wokingham, and delivered in partnership with many local voluntary sector organisations, is supported by the council, and is here to help residents find the most appropriate support that they're entitled to.

The service was set-up at the start of the pandemic to provide a single point of contact for advice and continues to be available to provide support on a range of different topics, including struggling with rent, bills or feeling overwhelmed. No matter what the problem is, contact One Front Door for:

- **Help with rising energy costs:** Help paying utility bills, access to fuel vouchers, energy efficiency packs, advice on changing suppliers and more
- **Support with accessing food and other essentials:** Foodbank referrals, household item grants, urgent food and toiletries, urgent prescription collection, and more
- **Support with loneliness and mental health:** Referrals to befriending charities, peer support groups, and more
- **Other assistance:** Practical help and advice on welfare checks, benefits and debt, employment, housing, and more

Residents can contact One Front Door by visiting the [website](#), emailing [contact@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk](mailto:contact@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk), or by phoning 0808 278 7958. The phone lines are open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

**John Halsall, Leader of Wokingham Borough Council, said:** "We know it can be really challenging for some people to make ends meet and that this has been further complicated by the impacts of Covid-19 and current rising energy prices. The winter months are already a source of financial worry for many residents, so we want to assure these individuals that on top of the support that the council can offer with things like housing and benefits, help is here through the One Front Door."

-MORE-

Since the start of the pandemic, One Front Door has helped lots of residents who have been impacted financially and emotionally by Covid-19. Between January and October this year, it has proudly supported over 4,000 people and worked through nearly 15,000 issues. The top areas covered include benefits and tax credits, universal credit, and debt. No matter what the problem is, the team will work with you to help identify the best individual support available to address the situation.

The council is working closely with the local voluntary sector to distribute the £525,573 Household Support Fund from Central Government. This is funding all councils have been awarded to directly help those who need it this winter. It is the first time the council has devolved the allocation of financial support directly to the voluntary sector, ensuring it will reach the most vulnerable households and help them cover essential costs in the coming months.

**John Halsall continued:** “Our residents have shown enormous resilience this year and we can only be proud of the way they have responded to the current crisis. It is our duty to support them in every way possible, and we welcome the grant money from Central Government to help us do this.

“We have worked closely with the local voluntary sector since the start of the pandemic and it’s fantastic to be strengthening our partnership by giving key organisations extra funding to support those most in need. When a resident calls One Front Door, the team will assess their needs and refer them onto the relevant charities and organisations, as well as ensuring there is ongoing support available. We feel this is the best and most effective way to ensure nobody gets left behind this winter.”

In addition, the Council has created an online [Local Support Hub](#) to pull together key information and to make it easier for everyone to find help and advice on issues such as welfare benefits, debt, council tax support, housing, relationship problems, mental health, unemployment, and more.

- ENDS -

**Further information:**

1. More from Cllr John Halsall on [John.Halsall@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:John.Halsall@wokingham.gov.uk)