

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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GET HELP WITH COST OF LIVING

Help is available for those struggling due to the cost of living crisis in Wokingham borough. The council is working in partnership Age UK Berkshire, Citizens Advice Wokingham, First Days Children's Charity, Wokingham Foodbank and Wokingham United Charities to respond to issues locally.

The group, known as The Hardship Alliance, will be launching a range of initiatives in the weeks ahead to help residents from across the area.

Amy Garstang, chair of the Hardship Alliance and Manager at Wokingham United Charities, said: "The Hardship Alliance is bringing the borough together to help all those in need as we respond to the cost of living crisis.

"We're going to provide a helping hand to people through a variety of projects in the winter months. Financial pressures continue to rise and these schemes will use our well-established voluntary and community sector to step up once again to do what they do best – provide a lifeline to those who need one."

This will feed into the incredible support already offered across the area's voluntary, community and faith sectors. Residents are urged to come forward as soon as possible if they are struggling. Initial projects to help include:

- Providing support, reassurance and advice for those who are struggling
- Setting up places and activities people can visit to keep warm through the winter
- The alliance and council staff will work together in community locations to provide advice and guidance for anyone in the community that needs help
- Support for those in period poverty
- A new round of the [Household Support Fund](#), to help those in need of support with food and energy costs
- Created an online [cost of living help hub](#) to guide people to help available and to promote ways to get involved and support the community

More details on these and other schemes will be announced once they have been finalised.

Leader of Wokingham Borough Council Cllr Clive Jones said: “The cost of living crisis is putting many of our residents under enormous pressure and we are working with partners to alleviate problems as far as we can.

“We cannot do everything but, in collaboration with our excellent voluntary and community sector, we can offer help to those many people in increasing need.”

[Citizens Advice Wokingham is running a survey](#) to capture how people are finding the cost of living crisis already in the area. If you need help now you can contact One Front Door, a service led by Citizens Advice Wokingham that helps residents find the most appropriate support.

This could be from the council or across our local voluntary sector, depending on which organisation is best placed to assist. Use the Citizens Advice Wokingham [online referral form](#) or call [0808 278 7958](tel:08082787958), Monday to Friday.

Cllr Rachel Bishop-Firth, executive member for equalities, inclusion and fighting poverty, said: “Wokingham Borough Council and our voluntary and community sector partners are here to help all our residents to get through a very tough winter.

“If you need a helping hand in these difficult times, please reach out to One Front Door as soon as possible. Their team of experienced volunteers are speaking to many local people who are facing the same issues, including many people who haven’t had to ask for help before.

“They have enormous experience and will support you to find the best solutions to whatever it is that you’re facing.”

The Hardship Alliance was formed last year to help the borough work together to help those most in need.

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Further information:

1. More from contact the communications, engagement and marketing team via CEM@wokingham.gov.uk