Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Money saving and sustainable ideas for Christmas

Christmas can be an expensive time of year and we often end up spending more than we need to. Over spending can cause stress and debt. Many presents end up in landfill creating more waste. It's easy to get swept away by the glitter, twinkly lights, wine and food. Why not try saving money, helping the environment or a good cause? Family and friends will appreciate a small thoughtful gift. Or you could plan some new traditions or festive fun instead?

Whatever your income, plan what you want to buy and **make a budget**.

Avoid waste

When choosing a present think about what the person you're buying for needs or likes. The most useful presents are something to:

1. wear
2. read
3. eat

Other ways to give

You don't have to buy presents. You can:

- make or recycle something
- do something together
- offer your time to help someone

Cheap or free gift ideas

Home made gifts or cards

Can you sew, knit, paint or write? A handmade gift is extra special

You could: Save old jam jars to fill with sweets, bath salts, coffee, hot chocolate. Decorate the jars to give them an extra special touch. Make your own flavoured oils or bake a gift.

Make your own Christmas cards: Get crafting, reuse bits that would have otherwise ended up in the recycle bin. Saving time, money and paper.

Find local arts and crafts groups in Newcastle where you can learn a new skill.

Kirstie's handmade Christmas 10 years of inspirational ideas on Channel 4

BBC Good Food has lots of recipes for meals, home made sweets, gifts and ways to use your leftovers

Pinterest has great ideas and tutorials

Buy second hand gifts

Visit charity shops to see what gems you can find: you can find some unique and thoughtful presents. They're the perfect place to pick up a special secret Santa gift too

Recyke y'bike offer good quality refurbished bikes.

Use online shops such as Gumtree, Ebay, Facebook Market Place and Vinted to find bargains.

Make your own gift vouchers

Pledge to do a **kindness or service** for someone. Give them a home made voucher that they can cash in when they want to use it.

Re-gift presents

Re-gift presents that you have been given to charity or someone who would like it instead.

Make memories

Spend time together with your friends or loved ones.

Plan a day or night out instead of exchanging presents or give the gift of passes for places that can be used at a later date. You could go:

- **to the cinema**
- **for a walk in the woods** with a flask of hot chocolate
- **visit a museum** or **art gallery**
- **share a meal together where everyone brings a dish:** This means the cooking and buying of all the food isn't left up to one person
- **enjoy the Christmas lights in Newcastle City Centre** or in your local area
- **buy gift vouchers for activities** such as National Trust, a spa, a coffee voucher, theatre tickets or sports membership

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6. Shop local

Buy gifts from local shops, arts and crafts fair to support your community, church or school. Find local **events and activities near you on InformationNOW.**

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7. Buy gifts after Christmas

You could wait until the January sales begin before buying presents: controversial, but so many items are reduced in January. Could you agree with family and friends to exchange gifts in January instead?

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8. Spend wisely

Try not to over spend where possible. But if you do need to make a big purchase, make sure that you can repay any loan or credit that you have taken out.

Affordable credit options are available. When you do decide to spend some money, make sure you find the cheapest interest rate

Moneywise Credit union offer a number of services for people in Newcastle. Apply for a Christmas loan by 11 December

Try to save money for next year.

Charitable gifts

1. **Create a reverse advent calendar at home:** Buy an item of food that your local foodbank needs each day and then donate them in January when they receive fewer donations
2. **Check if your local charities are collecting donations for Christmas:** Charities are often looking for dontations of small gifts , toiletires or toys at Christmas that they can pass on to people who need them. Such as **Children North East**, **Salvation Army,** or **Mission Christmas.**
3. **Buy gifts from charities online:** Money spent with charities goes to help others in need. You can buy thoughtful gifts online from charities such as **Refuge, Oxfam, Crisis** and **Shelter**
4. **Dedicate a tree or sponsor a dog or animal:** and the person you gift will receive a gift certificate, photos and updates
5. **Send digital Christmas cards:** from charities such as **Shelter**, where you can pick a design, add your message, donate and send

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Sustainable Christmas

An affordable Christmas can go together with a sustainable Christmas. Here are a few things to consider:

Christmas trees If you have bought an artificial tree then you need to use it for ten years to lower its environmental impact, but it will also save you a lot of money. If you are buying one for the first

time, then look out for one made of recycled materials or a pre-owned one.

If it is a real tree that you want, The **British Christmas Tree Growers Association** advises you to choose one grown nearby. If it has been grown on a local property then it doesn't have lots of mileage related to the transport. You could also buy a potted tree and maintain and use it year after year. **Chopwell wood** sells trees each year. You could also support Forestry England and buy a sustainably grown tree at **Rothbury** **or** **Hamsterley** **.**

You can take your real Christmas tree to a **Household waste and recycling centre in Newcastle**.

Christmas Cards most cards are paper based and can be recycled, along with their envelopes, either in your home recycling collection, at local recycling points such as household waste recycling centres or at banks or supermarket car parks. Any extras such as ribbons, glitter or bows cannot be recycled and need to be removed by tearing off that part of the card.

E cards each e card leaves a carbon footprint of 0.3 grams of CO2. You could consider donating to charity instead.

Fairy lights and glass or plastic baubles can be recycled at household waste centres.

Wrapping paper buy recyclable wrapping paper which means that it is unbleached, vegan friendly and biodegradable. Use natural twine. Not sure? do the scrunch test. If it does not spring back then it is non-foil based and can be recycled. Remove sticky items or sellotape. **RSPB** has recyclable gift wrap options.

Christmas crackers many retailers have stopped selling plastic toys and ditched the glitter so that everything is recyclable.

Food only cook what you are going to eat. You can do your bit to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill or other more costly forms of treatment by composting your food and garden waste at home. Donate to food banks.

Useful websites

Recycle Now's Plan for a less wasteful Christmas

Recycle and reuse on InformationNOW

TerraCycle is an international recycling and reuse company. You can drop off hard to recycle items to their free recycling programmes locally or order a Zero Waste Box to fill and be collected at a cost.

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Useful Organisations

Mental Health Matters

Email: info@mhm.org.uk

Website: www.mhm.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 273 4614

Address: MHM Central Office, Avalon House, SR5 3XJ

Blue Cross – Animal Charity

Email: info@bluecross.org.uk

Website: www.bluecross.org.uk

Dogs Trust

Website: www.dogstrust.org.uk

Telephone: 01325 333114

Address: 17 Wakley Street, EC1V 7RQ

Recyke y’bike

Website: www.recyke-y-bike.org

Telephone: 0191 265 4197

Address: Recyke y' bike, NE6 2AR

Recycle Now

Website: http://www.recyclenow.com/

Reuse Network

Email: info@reuse-network.org.uk

Website: https://reuse-network.org.uk/

Telephone: 0800 085 8339

Address: 48 -54 West Street, BS2 0BL

Nil Living

Email: info@nilliving.com

Website: https://www.nilliving.com/

Telephone: 07875 624 296

Address: Unit 106/107 Alley 3, NE1 5QN

Moneywise Credit Union Ltd

Email: admin@moneywise.org.uk

Website: www.moneywise.org.uk

Telephone: 0330 165 5337

Address: 187-189 Shields Road, NE6 1DP

Refill

Website: https://www.refill.org.uk/

Address: Studio 5 York Court, BS2 8QH

TerraCycle

Email: customersupport@terracycle.co.uk

Website: https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB

Telephone: 01465 915 018

Address: Sabichi House, UB6 7JD

Crisis Skylight Newcastle

Email: enquiries.newcastle@crisis.org.uk

Website: https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-help/newcastle/

Telephone: 0191 222 0622

Address: City House, NE1 2AF

Shelter

Email: shelternortheast@shelter.org.uk

Website: www.shelter.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 4444

Address: Shelter North East, NE1 5PG

Oxfam

Email: heretohelp@oxfam.org.uk

Website: https://www.oxfam.org.uk/

Telephone: 0300 200 1300

Address: Oxfam House, OX4 2JY

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