

27th January 2023 InfoNOW News

Household Support Fund update

Newcastle City Council is distributing money from the government Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people and families and is being used to fund different schemes.

It has been used for Free School Meal Vouchers for eligible children during school holidays so far this school year, and will be used again during February half term school holiday, these will be distributed by the schools.

Cost of living “top up” payments have now been paid for people who receive housing benefit who were not entitled to the Government’s Cost of Living payment.

Since beginning of January hardship payments for food and or utility bills for householders who are in financial difficulty through a supported application process has been available. This funding however is limited. In order to be eligible, applicants need to be a resident and householder (i.e. responsible for the household bills) in Newcastle upon Tyne, have a budget deficit (have more money going out than coming in) and have sought advice from one of our partner agencies to address the issues causing the budget deficit. If the resident meets the criteria, the agency can make a referral for a £200 one off payment.

More information about the scheme including a full list of agencies who can give advice and make referrals, if eligible can be found on [Newcastle City Council website](#)

Ostara helping people to live independently at home

[Ostara](#) provide a 24-hour alarm and response service to help people in Newcastle to live safely and independently in their own home. If you fall or feel unwell when out and about in Newcastle, our team of first responders can be with you in under 30 minutes when you sound your alarm to help you, giving you and your family peace of mind.

One Ostara customer, said: “I don’t know what I would do without Ostara – they are my lifeline.”

For more information about Ostara, visit Ostara.org.uk or ring 0191 277 7470 to speak to one of the team.

- [Personal alarm systems and telecare](#)
-

New Cost of Living Payments from Spring 2023

Low income households across the UK get up to £1,350 from the Government in 2023/4 to help with the cost of living. 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 Cost of Living Payment – **during Summer 2023**
- **£300** – Second Cost of Living Payment – **during Autumn 2023**
- **£300** – Pensioner Cost of Living Payment – **during Winter 2023/4**
- **£299** – Third Cost of Living Payment – **during Spring 2024**

Those eligible will be paid automatically, and there will be no need to apply. For more information, please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Winter Fuel Payment new video

The [Winter Fuel Payment](#) is a tax free payment to help older people keep warm during winter. It is provided by the government to those who are eligible. You could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills.

[Watch the new video from Help for Households](#)

[Read more on InformationNOW about Winter Fuel Payments](#)

Catching more cancers earlier than ever before

Over the last 18 months, staff have been working hard to recover the shortfall in cancer referrals.

[The NHS are diagnosing more patients with cancer at an earlier stage than ever before.](#) Last year, over 100,000 patients were diagnosed with cancer at stages one or two when it is easier to treat – the highest proportion on record. More than a fifth more people with suspected cancer are being referred every month compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Potentially life-saving breast cancer drug

Triple-negative breast cancer affects around 8,000 women a year – accounting for 15% of all breast cancer cases.

Following a deal between the NHS and the drug manufacturer, Pembrolizumab will be the 25th breast cancer treatment fast-tracked to patients through funding from the Cancer Drugs Fund.

The [potentially life-saving treatment](#) for one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer will benefit up to 1,600 women a year.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Cancer and local support available](#)The [Winter Fuel Payment](#) is a tax free payment to help older people keep warm during winter. It is provided by the government to those who are eligible. You could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay

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[Watch the new video from Help for Households](#)

[Read more on InformationNOW about Winter Fuel Payments](#)

TEDxNewcastle Videos Now Live

The inspirational and educational TEDxNewcastle talks are available to watch on YouTube. Talks include..

- Kathryn Mannix on [“What Happens When We Die?”](#)
- Bobby Duffy on [“How Labels Like Boomer, Millennial or Gen Z Misdemean Us”](#)
- Sophie Scott on [“This Talk is Literally Brain Science!”](#)
- Fuschia Sirois on [“The Real Reason You Procrastinate”](#)
- Nick Wright on [“Is Zero Emission Air Travel Possible?”](#)
- David Alwick on [“Why Magic Should Frighten You”](#)
- Heather Mills on [“Transforming Challenges Into Solutions”](#)
- Kevin Brewerton on [“A Journey from White to Black; Fighter to Artist”](#)
- Sam Conniff & Katherine Templar Lewis on [“Turning Fear Into a Superpower”](#)
- Rohin Francis on [“The Greatest Medicine in the World”](#)
- Sabine Hossenfelder on [“The Other Side of Physics”](#)
- Katherine Copeland on [“When Winning an Olympic Gold Isn’t Enough”](#)

The next TEDxNewcastle is scheduled for Saturday, 25 November 2023

VitaMinds Free Community Wellbeing Day

[This February half-term, the team at VitaMinds have worked on putting together a special event to bring Newcastle City’s community together to help you look after your wellbeing. VitaMinds Community Wellbeing Day](#)

Join your local NHS mental health service on the 17th of February at Brunswick Church for a FREE day filled with wellbeing support, welfare advice and fun activities. Free tea, coffee, treats and goodie bags will be available!

All welcome, including children. There will be fun, free activities for children in half term. No need to sign up, just join turn up on the day from 10:30am until 3:30pm. Free unlimited popcorn included!!

This half-term, the team at VitaMinds have worked on putting together a special event to bring Newcastle City’s community together to help you look after your wellbeing. VitaMinds Community Wellbeing Day

Come down and see how local organisations can better support you and your loved ones in 2023. You’ll be able to speak to professional wellbeing support services, social support groups and employment advice on the day.

Find out more [Vita Health Group](#) on InformationNOW

Lift someone out of loneliness

Feeling lonely is something that all of us can experience at any point

Loneliness can have a huge impact on our wellbeing, but there are lots of simple actions you can take to help lift yourself or others out of loneliness.

Recent research that shows that people aged 16-34 year olds are at higher risk of feeling lonely compared to other age groups, but less likely to seek advice and support.

[Every Mind Matters loneliness webpage](#) gives advice on how to help yourself or others who may be feeling

[The new and updated campaign toolkit for 2023](#), is available to download with updated key messages, posters and draft social media copy for you to use from 30th January.

For more information contact campaigns@dcms.gov.uk

Read more on InformationNOW about what you can do if you're [feeling lonely](#)

Adult Social Care Users Survey 2022/23

The annual Adult Social Care Survey has just started, beginning on Monday 16 January. Newcastle City Council are asking adult social care users about their quality of life and their experience of the care that they receive.

Anyone who receives a questionnaire for it and needs support to complete it can contact the Social Care Direct Team by email scd@newcastle.gov.uk, or phone 0191 278 8377.

[Full findings from previous Adult Social Care User Surveys can be found on the Council's website here:](#)

Read more on InformationNOW about [Care and support for adults](#)

Buy nothing new this month

Buy Nothing New Month is a new campaign organised by environmental charity [Keep Britain Tidy](#) which embraces buying nothing new for the whole of January, to save your pennies and protect your planet. This excludes essentials such as food, medicine and toothpaste. They will give you tips on how to repair versus replace and rent, borrow or buy second hand.

Save your pennies, protect your planet

Read more on InformationNOW about [Support for people with low incomes](#)

Recycling and the planet

When we recycle right, it helps to reduce the amount of waste entering our natural environment. Why wouldn't we all work together to help our planet and help ourselves. A lot of the extra waste created during the festive season can be recycled. Most of us recycle lots at this time of year, but are we getting it right? Visit the [Recycle Now](#) pages w to find out more about what can and can't be recycled over the festive season.

Remember we can help each other during the cost of living crisis and help the planet – items you don't want or need, can be donated through [Freecycle](#). Just create a listing, take a photo and someone may come and collect your item. From bricks to tiles, from unwanted presents to pipes, cables, outdoor furniture and toys.

Want to know more about how recycling works in Newcastle or other strategies you can take in your day to day living?

Read more on InformationNOW about [recycling and reusing](#)

How to get your voice heard on patient safety

[The Patient Safety Commissioner for England is a new role set up through the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021](#). The Commissioner will operate as an independent statutory office holder, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care and appointed by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

The Patient Safety Commissioner for England, Dr Henrietta Hughes, is a GP by training and previously a medical director at NHS England.

Her work will begin with looking at avoidable cases of harm and her role is to act as a champion for patients and lead a drive to improve the safety of medicines and medical devices. On appointment she said "Patients' voices need to be at the heart of the design and delivery of healthcare. I would like to pay tribute to the incredible courage, persistence and compassion of all those who gave evidence to the First Do No Harm report, their families and everyone who continues to campaign tirelessly for safer treatments."

Read more on [how to contact the Commissioner with your views on gov.uk](#)

Read more on InformationNOW about [Having your say about health and care services](#)

Free online training from Ageing Better Camden

Ageing Better Camden are offering free training and support to staff and volunteers based in Liverpool, Newcastle and Partnership and Places projects, across the county. To help others develop their own outreach approach/practice.

They have a series of free, one-hour, zoom workshops with a 'how-to' practical focus around areas of their outreach learning and practice to find and engage older people less likely to access formal groups, activities and support. Book your place using the links below.

Thursday 9 February (10 -11am)

[Understanding and addressing 'not for me' barriers to participation through comms.](#)

Thursday 16 February (10-11am)

[Hosting informal pop-up events in neutral spaces as a steppingstone to meeting and engaging older people less likely to access formal groups and activities.](#)

Thursday 23 February (10-11am)

[Identifying and responding to isolation during everyday conversations with people less likely to access formal groups and activities.](#)

You can download their [practitioner guides, project reports and resources including a Warm Welcome toolkit, available from their website](#)

This week's Events & Activities

[Visit our Events & Activities section](#) to see what's happening near you this week on our calendar. Or search by location or postcode.

Pop-up community market

[Vinnie's Pop-Up Market at St. Vincent's Centre Newcastle \(Blackfriars Centre\)](#), every Thursday 12.30pm to 3.30pm with a warm space with some free or cheap items. Clothes and shoes available from £1. Any 12 grocery items for £5. There's a tombola, hot drinks, soup and snacks.

[Read more on help with clothing on Information Now](#)

Young at Heart Club

[Walker Parish Church](#) Young at Heart Club for people over 50. It's a friendly support service. A place to meet and socialise with a quiz, bingo and lunch. 12pm to 2pm on Fridays. Ran by [Chain Reaction](#) and [YMCA Newcastle](#)

[Food and Friends – Information Now](#)

Closer to Home dementia clinics

Face-to-face appointments with a specialist nurse 7th, 8th, 9th, 14th and 16th February

[Dementia UK, in partnership with Leeds Building Society](#), is bringing specialist dementia support closer to home with face-to-face clinics in Newcastle city centre.

If you care for someone who has dementia, or live with the diagnosis yourself, you can book a free 45-minute appointment with a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse.

The Admiral nurses offer advice and support with any aspect of dementia. They offer advice to families and carers about dementia symptoms and progression, guidance on how to support someone living with the condition and manage changes in behaviour, advice on navigating the social care system and legal issues or simply provide emotional support to family carers.

[See the events on InformationNOW](#)

[Visit the Dementia UK website for more details about the clinic offer and how to book](#)

Writing opportunities

[New Writing North](#) is the health literacy agency for the North East. Encouraging children and adults to become creative, enabling writers to share their work in open mic nights and finding space to write. Events are online and interactive and some are face to face. You can join writing workshops and academic programmes as well as book groups or conversations with an author. There is a [new programme for 2023](#) including the Writing Hour.

Why not give the [writing sessions at Newcastle City Library](#) a try?

[Read more on InformationNOW about hobbies](#)

Handing On, Holding On: Finding and keeping our LGBTQIA+ history

Saturday 11 February, 11.30am – 3pm. Free, booking required. Discovery Museum, Great Hall

For LGBTQ History Month 2023, [Curious Arts](#) and [Discovery Museum](#) present an event focussing on how we can preserve LGBTQIA+ history, including items like newsletters, leaflets and posters, as well as badges, t-shirts and the other objects that form a part of all our personal and wider social history.

It will also be an opportunity to discuss the creation of an LGBTQIA+ archive for the North East.

There will be ideas and help on how to preserve your own items, how to create digital records to add to a local collection, as well as tours of the stores of Discovery Museum.

[Find out more and book your place here.](#)

Big Garden Birdwatch, 27 to 29 January

Every year, the [RSPB](#) runs the Big Garden Birdwatch and there's still time to sign up online.

Just spend one hour between Friday 27 and Sunday 29 January 2023 counting the number and variety of birds. It's free, fun, and a great way to keep an eye on your local wildlife.

Remember to submit your results.

InformationNOW has an article on [gardening and health](#), [hobbies](#)

New and updated organisations

New befriending service available at St Martin's Centre

[St Martin's Centre in Byker](#) have a Befriending and Wellbeing Project. They can arrange for a volunteer to visit you regularly or help you to take part in activities at their Centre or the local community.

[Read more about finding friends on Information Now](#)

The Carents Room

[The Carents Room](#) is a free online resource for people supporting and caring for older parents. It has a range of information and resources to help you keep your parents safe and well.

[Read more on InformationNOW about being a carer](#)

North East Drive Mobility

[North East Drive Mobility](#) help people with a medical condition or disability that may affect your ability to drive or use a vehicle as a passenger. To help you retain or regain your independence as a driver and passenger. They can assess your driving ability and give advice. They offer:

- independent assessment of your driving ability: This takes place on their purpose-built driving track, as well as on the public highway
- advice on vehicle adaptations
- advice on getting in and out of a vehicle, and wheelchair stowage
- specialist driving tuition
- information and advice service, including advice on possible alternatives to using a car. For example, community transport services

Self referrals are accepted.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Driving as you get older](#)

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Best Wishes

Lauren

Lauren Hoy: Prevention, Information and Advice Lead at Newcastle City Council

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