

# Help and advice

**Citizens Advice** and **Age UK** (for over 55s) offer free, independent, and confidential advice and support. If you need to talk to someone, whatever problems you are facing, do contact them first.

Find out more and how to apply for everything in this leaflet, online at [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help) or use the links and telephone numbers below.

## Accessing food

Don't skip meals to pay bills. Find your nearest foodbanks, community fridges and affordable food.

Visit [helpandkindness.co.uk/food-projects](http://helpandkindness.co.uk/food-projects) or call 01305 595958  
Call Citizens Advice 0800 144 8848 or visit your local Citizens Advice office

## Benefits

Claim benefits for the first time or check if you are getting everything you are entitled to.

Visit [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/benefits](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/benefits) or call 01305 211970

## Council Tax

Problems paying your Council Tax or check if you can claim Council Tax Support.

Visit [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/counciltax](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/counciltax)

If you live in East or North Dorset, call 0345 034 4569

If you live in Purbeck, West Dorset and Weymouth or Portland, call 01305 211970

## Extra money for older people

Apply for the **Household Support Fund** if you are a pensioner and have savings of less than £10,000.

Visit [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/household-support-fund](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/household-support-fund) or call 01305 221027

If you are on a low income, check if you can claim **Pension Credit**. It helps with Council Tax, NHS treatment, heating costs and more.

Visit [gov.uk/pension-credit](http://gov.uk/pension-credit) or call Pension Service helpline 0800 731 0469



## Housing

Homelessness support, housing register (social housing) and general housing advice.

Visit [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/homelessness](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/homelessness) or call 01305 211000

## Managing your money

Budgeting and managing debts or unpaid bills.

Visit [citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money) or call 0800 144 8848 or visit your local Citizens Advice office

## Mental health and wellbeing

Tips on wellbeing and support if you need to talk.

Visit [publichealthdorset.org.uk/mental-health](http://publichealthdorset.org.uk/mental-health) or call Connection (NHS) available 24 hours a day 0800 652 0190

In a life-threatening situation always call 999.

## Support for children

Check your eligibility for free school meals, healthy start vouchers and childcare funding.

### Free school meals

Visit [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/free-school-meals](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/free-school-meals) or call 01305 221090

### Healthy Start vouchers

Visit [healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply](http://healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply) or call 0300 3307010

### For childcare funding

Visit [dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/childcare-funding-options](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/childcare-funding-options) or call 01305 221066

## Utility bills

Contact your supplier for help in the first instance if you can't pay your gas, electricity, phone/broadband or water bills, and for information about lower tariffs for eligible people.

For advice and guidance on energy call Citizens Advice Energy Unit 01929 775500 or email [energy@edpcitizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:energy@edpcitizensadvice.org.uk)

## Work worries

Advice on your employment rights if you worried about your work.

Visit [citizensadvice.org.uk/work](http://citizensadvice.org.uk/work) or call Citizens Advice 0800 144 8848 or visit your local Citizens Advice office