

Cost of Living Crisis - We are here to help



We have developed a **'ONE STOP SHOP'** on the CCBC website where lots of cost of living support measures can be found in one place -

SCAN ME



Caerphilly county borough council is doing everything it can to help local people through the current cost of living crisis.

We appreciate how difficult it is for everyone at the moment and unfortunately things are likely to get worse as we enter the winter months.

This special edition of Newsline has been created to provide you with lots of useful help, information and advice. We want you to access the wide range of support that is available at the moment to help reduce the impact of the current financial pressures.



The Leader of Council, Cllr Sean Morgan is determined to do all he can to ensure the local authority - and other agencies - fully support the local community:

"The cost of living crisis is at the forefront of everyone's mind at the moment, especially as the coming colder months unprecedented levels. As Leader of the Council I want to reassure the whole community that this local authority is working hard to support everyone through this difficult time. Residents have told us that they need help to get through the winter, so we want to make accessing all the support available as easy as possible.

We have developed a 'one stop shop' on the CCBC website where lots of cost of living support measures can be found in one place -

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

Some of these schemes can be difficult to understand - so for that reason we recently held a number of cost of living roadshows across the county borough for local people to discuss eligibility face to face with council

officers and our partner organisations, including Citizens Advice.

We are also looking at a suite of further interventions to help you over the coming months and these will be communicated as soon as possible. In the meantime, please take time to read through this special edition of Newsline to ensure you are receiving all of the support you are entitled to or reach out to Caerphilly Cares to speak to a member of staff today."

Caerphilly Cares

Contact us by phone: **01443 811490**

Email: caerphillycares@caerphilly.gov.uk

The Caerphilly Cares team are available during office hours. Monday - Thursday (8.30am-5pm) and Friday (8.30am - 4.30pm).



Getting help with your energy bills

As a council we are committed to helping our residents reduce their fuel bills and keep warm and well.

There are several schemes now available to residents to remedy this, from UK Government support payments, free installation of central heating, switching energy supplier, support with fuel debts, energy saving measures, energy efficient appliances and more.



Age UK

You've probably noticed your energy bills going up. But it's important to know why this is happening and what you can do to stay on top of increasing costs. Age UK has a number of resources that can help you with your energy bills.

For more information call the Age UK Advice Line on **0800 678 1602** or go to **Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/debt-savings/energy**

Cold weather payments

You may get a Cold Weather Payment if you're getting certain benefits or Support for Mortgage Interest. The 2022 to 2023 Cold Weather Payment scheme starts on 1 November 2022. You'll be able to check if your area is due a payment in November 2022. **Website: www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment**

Energy Bills Support Scheme

The Energy Bills Support Scheme provides a £400 non-repayable discount to eligible households to help with their energy bills over winter 2022 to 2023.

All households with a domestic electricity connection in England, Scotland and Wales are eligible for the discount. You do not need to apply for the discount, and there's no need to contact your energy supplier. The discount will be applied to your monthly household

electricity bill for 6 months starting in October 2022. You'll get: £66 in October and November, £67 in December, January, February and March. You'll get the discount monthly, even if you pay for your energy quarterly or use a payment card.

Further info www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount

Nest Wales

Nest Wales provides free home energy efficiency improvements such as a new boiler, central heating or insulation to eligible residents. Visit the Nest Wales website or telephone

Nest Wales 0808 808 2244 nest.gov.wales/

Warm home discount scheme

Warm Home Discount is a one-off payment to reduce eligible customers' bills over the winter months. This winter (2022-23), it's rising from £140 to £150.

In winter 2022-23, most eligible households will get Warm Home Discount automatically.

This is different from previous years, when you had to claim the money from your supplier if you weren't claiming the Guarantee Credit portion of Pension Credit. The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Winter fuel payments

If you are already in receipt of a state pension or other welfare benefit paid by the Department for Work and Pensions, you will automatically receive the payment.

If not, you will need to make a claim. For more information call the winter fuel payment helpline **08459 151 515** or visit **Gov.UK**. **Website: www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment**

Energy and Utility suppliers

If you are struggling to pay your fuel bills, contact your energy suppliers in the first instance. Most offer reduced tariffs for low-income or vulnerable people.

The following energy and utility suppliers offer grants to their customers:

- British Gas Energy Support Fund **britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available**
- EDF Energy Customer Support Fund **www.edfenergy.com/PSR**

- E. ON Energy Fund **www.eonenergy.com/more-for-your-home/energy-fund.html**
- E. ON Next Energy Fund **www.eonnextenergyfund.com**
- Octopus 'Octo Assist Fund' **octopus.energy/blog/struggling-to-pay**
- Ovo Energy Fund **www.ovoenergy.com/help/debt-and-energy-assistance**
- Scottish Power Hardship Fund **community.scottishpower.co.uk/t5/Extra-Help/Hardship-Fund/ta-p/53**
- Welsh Water Helpu Tariff - **www.dwrcymru.com/en/support-with-bills/helpu-tariff**
- Western Power Distribution Priority Services **www.westernpower.co.uk/customers-and-community/priority-services**

Discretionary Assistance Fund

Welsh Government grants for essential costs such as gas and electricity, as well as food, clothing or emergency travel. For more information visit **Website: gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf**
Get in touch by e-mail: **DAF.Feedback@northgateps.com** or phone: **0800 859 5924**

Welsh Government Fuel Support Scheme 2022/23

Eligible households living in the Caerphilly County Borough can claim a one-off £200 payment from the council thanks to Welsh Government funding. This payment is in addition to the UK Government Energy Bill Fund and the Winter Fuel Payment normally paid to pensioners.

The payment is available to all eligible households (one payment per household) however they pay for their fuel, for example, on a pre-payment meter, by direct debit or by paying a bill quarterly and can be claimed regardless of whether they are using on or off-grid fuel.

Find out more <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Benefits-and-grants/Winter-fuel-support-scheme>

Caerphilly Cares

Contact us by phone: 01443 811490

Email: **caerphillycares@caerphilly.gov.uk**

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Managing your debts and budgeting

If you're struggling with debt, it can be hard to think about anything else. There is plenty of free help and advice available to help you manage your money effectively.

The following organisations and council services will give you the information you need to make the right choices, including help to deal with your debt problems, how to avoid losing your home and how to get your finances back into shape.



Support for tenants

If you have difficulty paying your rent and other bills and don't take action to deal with your financial difficulties, your debts will mount up and you may be at risk of losing your home, having important services cut off or losing your possessions.

We are here to help. We can arrange advice and support to maximise your income, lower your expenditure and make a referral for debt

advice. To arrange an appointment, contact the rents section **01443 811450** or text **RENTHELP** to **81400** and a member of staff will call you back.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Housing/Rents-and-benefits/Problems-paying-your-rent

Supporting People

Support for home owners, private or social renters, roofless or homeless please phone **01443 864548** or text **HOUSUPPORT** to **81400** direct referrals can be via **Website:** www.caerphilly.gov.uk/supportingpeople

Dewis Cymru

The place to go if you want local information or advice about your finances and well-being – or want to know how you can help somebody else.

Website: www.dewis.wales

Debt support organisations

- **Citizens Advice Bureau** - Find out how to start dealing with your debts. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/>
Adviceline Cymru: 0808 278 7935
- **Money Helper** - The Money Helper provides free and impartial money advice.

It can help you plan and manage your finances and is set up by UK government.
www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/

- **National Debt Line** - provides free confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems.
www.nationaldebtline.org
Freephone: 0808 808 4000
- **Step Change Debt Charity** - A registered charity offering free debt help to anyone in the UK who needs it.
www.stepchange.org/how-we-help/debt-advice.aspx
Helpline: 0800 138 1111
- Turn2Us website – budgeting calculator
benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

Credit Unions

Credit unions are community organisations owned and managed by the members who use them and are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Credit unions encourage members to save regularly, provide loans at low rates, and help members in need of financial advice and assistance.

- **Credit Unions of Wales**
creditunionsofwales.co.uk/
- **Smart Money Cymru**
smartmoneycymru.co.uk/

Jobs, skills and employment support

Jobs, skills and employment support

Team Caerphilly has more than 8,000 staff who support communities to thrive. We are a large and diverse workforce working at the heart of public service delivery. If you are passionate about making a difference join **Team Caerphilly – We are better together.**



Adult community learning and employment support

We offer a wide range of courses for adults in the community and other programmes to help improve your skills and work prospects.

- **Adult education courses**
- **Bridges Into Work 2**
- **Community regeneration employment support**
- **Inspire 2 Work**
- **Nurture Equip & Thrive (NET)**
- **Working Skills for Adults 2**

More information **Website:** www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/cost-of-living-support/jobs-skills-and-employment?lang=en-GB

Further Support is available from

- **Careers Wales** - help you to plan your career, prepare to get a job, and find and apply for the right apprenticeships, courses, and training.
Website: careerswales.gov.wales/
call **0800 028 4844**.
- **Job Centre Plus** – **Website:** www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus
- **Find a job** - Find full or part-time jobs in England, Scotland and Wales. This service has replaced Universal Jobmatch.
Website: www.gov.uk/find-a-job

Browse our jobs: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/jobs

Get help paying for food

Find your nearest foodbank

If you're struggling to feed your family your local foodbank can provide emergency food and support in a crisis. Trussell Trust Food Banks all require referrals through approved organisations such as social services, housing associations etc.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Managing-your-money/Foodbanks

Food vouchers

You can get vouchers from Citizens Advice, JobCentre Plus, GP surgeries, health visitors and social workers which can be used at your local food bank.

Free School Meals

Free school meals are available to eligible pupils who attend school full-time. Check if you are eligible and apply online.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Schools-and-learning/School-dinners-and-breakfast-clubs/Free-school-meals
Telephone - **0300 330 7010**

FareShare

FareShare organisations do not require referrals and are available for those in need, there is a small charge per bag to cover petrol costs usually about £3 per bag.

- Abertridwr FC FareShare - **07896 227197**
bishoc@caerphilly.gov.uk and tighart22@gmail.com
- Bargoed FareShare - **01443 836600**
miriam@stgwladys.org
- Holy Trinity Church FareShare, Ystrad Mynach - climer@live.com
- RCV Fare Share (Risca) - **01633 848899**
tara@rcvuk.org
- TLC Fare Share (Risca) - **01633 601199**
tlc_risca@outlook.com



Local food Banks

Work with referral agencies to issue food vouchers to those in need of emergency food in times of crisis.

- Aberbargoed Foodbank - **07944 354175**
info@rhymneyvalley.foodbank.org.uk
- Blackwood Foodbank - **07971 668547**
info@blackwooddistrict.foodbank.org.uk
- Caerphilly Foodbank - **029 2086 8151**
info@caerphilly.foodbank.org.uk
- CARE Project Foodbank (Caerphilly) - **029 2188 0212**
dean.roberts@bmmr.church
- Pink Pantry by HCT Foodbank - **07507 630014** info@hcteam.cymru
- New Tredegar Foodbank - **07944 354175**
info@rhymneyvalley.foodbank.org.uk
- Newbridge Foodbank - **07949 943139**
geoffrey_champion@sky.com
- Panside Foodbank - **07815 554759**
adrianhussey69@aol.com
- Rhymey Foodbank - **07944 354175**
info@rhymneyvalley.foodbank.org.uk
- Risca Food Bank - **07976 973961**
info@risca.foodbank.org.uk
- Taff Bargoed, Nelson Foodbank - **07496 710984**
info@taffbargoed.foodbank.org.uk

Healthy Start - Get help to buy food and milk

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. We'll add your benefit onto this card every 4 weeks.

If you qualify you get:

- £4.25 each week of your pregnancy from the 10th week
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to 1 year old
- £4.25 each week for children between 1 and 4 years old

The money will stop when your child is 4 years old or if you no longer receive benefits. Check your eligibility via email - healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk Telephone - **0300 330 7010**
Website: www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/

Food Shopping Tips

Before you go shopping:

- Check your cupboards, fridge and freezer to see what you have
- Plan meals you are going to have for the week and think about using up leftovers.
- Make a shopping list... and stick to it! set yourself a target budget.
- Do not go shopping on an empty stomach.
- Remember to take your old carriers or bags for life.

When you are shopping:

- Downshift your brands. If you normally buy premium brands, try shifting to a 'regular' brand or supermarket own brand.
- Buy loose items. Pre-packed and prepared items can often cost more. Save yourself some money and buy loose fruit and vegetables in the quantities you will use.
- Look at price per unit. Do not assume 'offers' are good deals. Always look at the price per unit and work out which represents the best value for money.
- Don't be tempted by promotions. Check if end of aisle displays and promotions yourself if you really need them. Remember, it is only a good deal if you need it.

At home:

- Check before throwing away. More than half the food we throw away can be eaten. Eating anything past the 'use-by' date can be risky, but 'best before' date is just for guidance. Use taste, sight and smell to decide but if in doubt - throw it out.
- Reuse and recycle. Consider buying refills to cut down on price and waste.

You can more hints and tips and recipes for your leftovers on the Love Food Hate Waste Website: www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

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Help with benefits, rents, and other bills

It is important that you get all the benefits, tax credits and other financial help you are entitled to.

Council tax reduction

Check your eligibility and apply to get money off your council tax bill if you're on a low income or claiming housing benefit or Universal Credit.

Website: [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Council-tax/Council-tax-reduction-scheme-\(1\)](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Council-tax/Council-tax-reduction-scheme-(1))



Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) provide claimants of housing benefit and Universal Credit housing costs with further financial assistance to help meet their housing costs.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Housing-benefits/Discretionary-housing-payments

Making a claim for Housing Benefit

A new claim can be made for Pension age claimants or those in Supported Living accommodation / Sheltered Housing.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Housing-benefits.aspx

Housing grants and loans

Information on grant assistance available to help homeowners and, in some circumstances, tenants, repair, improve or adapt your home.

Website: <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Housing/Housing-grants-and-loans>

Universal Credit

Find out if you're eligible for Universal Credit, make an application and get advice on solving any problems you have. Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Housing-benefits

Social Care benefits and grants

The UK Government provide a number of health and social care benefits to citizens who qualify for them including:

- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance for under 16's
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- Personal Independence Payment

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Benefits-and-grants/Social-care-benefits-and-grants

Claim what's yours

Rent, shopping, heating... it all adds up. Families across Wales are feeling the strain on their household budgets due to the rising cost of living, making that extra bit of help more important than ever. If you are unsure about what benefits you can claim, Advicelink Cymru can help you check and claim what's yours.

Call the free helpline: **0808 250 5700** or visit Website: <http://gov.wales/claimwhatsyours>
Thousands of people in Wales are entitled to more benefits.

Benefit calculators

Depending on your situation, you can use the Turn2us or Entitledto benefit calculators to check which benefits you can get.

Website: benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

Website: www.entitledto.co.uk

You can also get advice from these national help lines:

- Help to Claim Universal Credit - **0800 024 1220**
- Consumer Advice Help Line - **0808 223 1133**
- Pensionwise - **0800 138 3944**
- Adviceline Wales - **0344 447 2020**

Support in our libraries

Our libraries are warm and you're welcome to use their IT equipment and enjoy **free internet access**.

Working or studying at your local library can reduce your electric, gas and water usage as well as commuting costs.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/libraries



Cost of Living Support £150 Payment - Main Scheme

Caerphilly County Borough Council have paid 62,934 households a total of £9.4m, 93% of the Welsh Government funding for this scheme.

Registrations for this payment closed on 2 September 2022. If you are a household that appears to satisfy the qualifying conditions explained on our website but have not registered your details by the above deadline, we are now working with the Post Office to issue a letter containing a Payment Voucher that can be redeemed in any Post Office. Simply take the letter with one of the IDs shown in the letter to any Post Office by 30 November 2022 to receive your payment.

Cost of Living Support – Caerphilly CBC Discretionary Scheme

Households not eligible for the Main Scheme may be eligible for some assistance under the Council's Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme.

For more information, visit our website: / bit.ly/3DliP5a

Supporting People



Help finding housing and work. Support with form filling, debts, benefits, eviction notice, rent/mortgage arrears.

Contact Supporting People:

01443 864548

Text: housupport to 81400

Email: supportingpeople@caerphilly.gov.uk

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/supportingpeople

cefnogipobl
supporting people
supporting independence
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School and childcare expenses

Universal Primary Free School Meals

Thanks to Welsh Government funding, councils across Wales are extending the availability of free school meals, beginning with their youngest learners. The aim is that every primary school pupil will be able to have a free school meal by 2024.

From September 2022, Caerphilly will be offering free school meals to all pupils in Reception and Year 1 in local authority-maintained schools.

From 7th November 2022, Year 2 and all registered, nursery age pupils, attending a maintained school for a full-time session i.e., attends nursery both AM and PM, will be eligible for a free school meal when in attendance on those days.

Children who already receive free school meals will not be affected by the roll-out. Find out more about Universal Primary School Free Meals on our website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/schoolmeals or call **01443 864055**.

Free School Meals

If you are claiming certain benefits, you could save money by claiming free school meals for your child. Free school meals are available to eligible pupils who attend school full-time.

This includes:

- Younger children who attend nursery for full days
- Sixth form school pupils

Check your eligibility on our website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/schoolmeals or by calling call **01443 864055**



Extra support to buy school essentials – PDG Access Grant

Eligible learners in Caerphilly County Borough can now apply for additional financial support from the Welsh Government School Essentials scheme (Pupil Development Grant Access) which helps with the cost of uniform, sports equipment, stationery, and devices. This is in addition to Free School Meals.

Children whose families are on lower incomes and qualify for certain benefits (linked to existing eligibility criteria for free school meals) can apply for the grant of £225 per learner, and £300 for those learners entering year 7, recognising the increased costs associated with starting secondary school. The additional £100 is for this year only.

All looked after children qualify for the grant, whether they receive free school meals or not. Pupils who receive Free School Meals due to transitional protection arrangements do not qualify for this funding. Apply on our website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk or call the helpline number **01443 863052**.

Extra support for school essentials



Support with childcare costs

The Childcare Offer for Wales provides up to 30 hours of government-funded early education and childcare to eligible working parents of three and four year olds for 48 weeks of the year. Read more detailed advice about the Childcare offer for Wales and other help towards paying for childcare that may be available to you here. Website: gov.wales/help-paying-childcare

Your local Family Information Service (FIS) can also provide information about financial support with childcare costs.

Website: www.caerphillyearlyyears.co.uk/family-support/fis

Further and higher education student finance

Student Finance Wales are responsible for processing, assessing and paying student finance for all further and higher education applications.

For details on how to apply for student finance visit Website: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

If you have a query about your student finance account, you should now contact Student Finance Wales on **0300 200 4050**.

The SFW Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SFWales>) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/SF_Wales) pages can also provide information and regular updates.

Period Dignity

Free period products are available in schools, libraries, youth and community centres as part of the Council's Period Dignity initiative, which aims to remove barriers for residents in accessing period products and reduce the stigma associated with periods.



School Travel Passes

This information applies to children aged 4 - 18 (Reception Class to year 13). Check your eligibility and apply for a free travel to school pass.

Website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Schools-and-learning/School-transport/School-travel?lang=en-GB or call **01443 864841 / 01443 864912**

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Mental Health and wellbeing support

Is the rising cost of living causing you stress?

We're all feeling the impact of the current rise in the cost of living. For many of us, this has become more than a cost-of-living rise- it's become a cost-of-living crisis. No one should have to choose between heating or eating, but this is becoming the daily reality for many.

Money and mental health are often linked- worrying about money can affect your mental health, and poor mental health can make managing your money difficult. Worrying about money may lead to feelings of anxiety, stress, depression, anger. There are a lot of support services available to help if you're struggling.

Staying Well

ABB Healthier Together - Here to help you and your family stay well. The cost of living can take a toll on you and your family. ABB Healthier Together is here for you and your family, with a variety of health and wellbeing advice for parents, young people and pregnant women.

Website: abbhealthiertogether.cymru.nhs.uk

Melo Cymru

Melo contains a wide range of free self-help resources approved by experts. We can all benefit from improving our mental health and building our mental resilience. Melo provides information, advice and resources which help you learn practical skills to manage difficult feelings/situations, which may help reduce the risk of becoming mentally unwell. It also contains expert advice on what we can all do to improve our wellbeing and feel happier.



Website: <https://www.melo.cymru/>

Public Health Wales

The Public Health Wales campaign called 'How are you doing?' aims to support the people of Wales to look after their wellbeing.

There is information on:

- Why is my mental wellbeing important?
- How to look after your wellbeing
- How to access support

Website: phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/how-are-you-doing/

MIND - Money and mental health

Poor mental health can make earning and managing money harder. Worrying about money can make your mental health worse. It can start to feel like a vicious cycle.

Find out more about organising your finances, claiming benefits when you have a mental health problem, dealing with services, and looking after your mental health when you're worried about money on the MIND website.

Website www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/money-and-mental-health

Mental health and money advice

Go to the Mental health and money advice website for clear, practical advice and support for people experiencing issues with mental health and money.

Website: www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/wal

Dewis Cymru

Dewis Cymru is THE place to go if you want information or advice about your well-being – or want to know how you can help somebody else.

When we talk about your well-being, we don't just mean your health. We mean things like where you live, how safe and secure you feel, getting out and about, and keeping in touch with family and friends.

No two people are the same and well-being means different things to different people. So Dewis Cymru is here to help you find out more about what matters to you.

We've got information that can help you think about what matters to you, and we've also got information about people and services in your area that can help you with the things that matter to you.

Website: www.dewis.wales/the-place-for-wellbeing-in-wales



Dewis Cymru

Have choice and take control



Live Fear Free

Live Fear Free provides easy to access, confidential information and advice to all victims and survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence and those close to them, including family, friends and colleagues on a variety of matters which may be relevant to your situation. It is open 24/7, is free and will not show up on phone bills.

By phone: **0808 80 10 800** (Croesawir galwadau yn Gymraeg / Calls are welcomed in Welsh)

Text service: **07860 077333**

E-mail: info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

Website: gov.wales/live-fear-free

Help with NHS healthcare costs

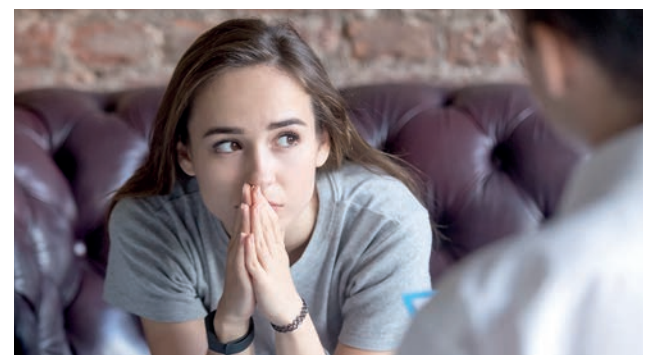
Eligible persons can get free dental treatment, eye tests and help with other NHS costs. Find out more: Get help with NHS healthcare costs - gov.wales/check-what-help-you-could-get-pay-nhs-costs

Low income scheme: help with NHS health costs - Website: <https://gov.wales/low-income-scheme-help-nhs-health-costs>

Get help with NHS travel costs - Website: gov.wales/get-help-nhs-travel-costs

C.A.L.L. Helpline

The C.A.L.L. Helpline is a dedicated mental health helpline. It provides confidential support to help you find support available in your local area. This includes voluntary and charitable organisations. Contact **0800 132 737** or text 'help' to **81066** (Croesawir galwadau yn Gymraeg / Calls are welcomed in Welsh).



How we've helped support residents during 2022

- £1.2million in additional annual welfare benefits for eligible residents.
- 350 residents were assisted to claim the one off cost of living main scheme payment £150.
- 102 unpaid carers grant applications completed.
- 163 referrals to Citizens Advice for formal debt advice.
- 210 residents assisted to claim council tax reduction.
- 170 applications to the Welsh Government discretionary assistance fund for white good and cash grants.
- 102 residents given energy advice.
- 220 food bank referrals.
- 560 residents support to claim Discretionary housing payment to assist them to pay shortfalls in rent.

Caerphilly Council staff make every contact count, all the team are trained in providing basic benefits advice to support our most vulnerable residents receive all the benefits they are entitled to. The case studies below demonstrate the impact our support has had on individual lives.

Resident 1

Tenant rang concerned about the benefit cap and was not managing their rent with arrears building up. A discretionary housing application was completed to assist with the shortfall income maximised.

Conversation broadened to child's mental health issues and the daily struggles, child Disability Living Allowance form completed and subsequently awarded leading to the removal of the benefit cap. On-line Carers Allowance application form completed. Tax credit contacted and disabled child element awarded. £15,000 a year additional income was achieved.

Comment from resident

"You've helped me with everything... forms, calls, when I've been upset, and in need of reassuring... anything to do with my rent.. and worries I've had. I could not have done any of it without your continued support. Receiving pip is literally life changing for me and my children and I can't express how grateful I am...I really hope you get to continue to help people, your

exceptionally good at it. I couldn't have done any of the forms or deal with the calls I've had if it wasn't for you THANK YOU"

Resident 2

Resident had started engagement with numerous support agencies but had never continued with the engagement. One of the our team contacted him and was very persistent never giving up on the tenant and persevering over several months. The team member managed to persuade the judge that the tenants ill mental health had led to the lack of engagement. This week they have awarded the tenant over 25k backdated benefits and an extra £15,000 income per year.

Resident 3

Private tenant made contact for a food parcel. The Caerphilly Cares team recognised the resident's need for additional support, a referral was made to our welfare benefits team. The private tenant was in arrears and had been issued with a section 21 notice by her landlord which meant she was at threat of losing her home. Tenant's initial DHP application herself was unsuccessful. A detailed review of expenditure and was completed and submitted - arrears were in excess of £2000. Tenant received £1400, reducing arrears to £600 and received further payment for 13 weeks.

Resident 4

Resident rang to enquire about Discretionary Housing Payment after viewing a CCBC Facebook post. lives in a three bedroom private rented house and is struggling since having to give up work.

- DHP application form completed and awarded.
- Benefits check completed and Attendance Allowance applied for and granted, SDP and pensions credit also applied for.
- Old income was £173.49 per week.
- New income £334 per week.
- £154.40 per week better off. Over the year she is £8,028 better off.

Resident was over the moon and so grateful for our service as she explained she has always worked and doesn't understand the benefit system and what is available to her.

Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice. That's why Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent is here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.

We provide free, confidential, independent and impartial advice online, over the phone or in-person. In-person advice is available at:

- Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent office (1 - 2 Church Place, Bargoed) - Wednesdays from 10:00am to 1:00pm
- Bedwas Council Chambers - Wednesday from 9:30am to 12:00pm
- Caerphilly Library - Fridays from 9:30am to 1:00pm
- Rhymney Integrated Health & Social Care Centre - Fridays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm

You can contact an experienced adviser via our Advicelink service on **0800 702 2020** for advice on any issues you may be facing.

Advicelink is available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday and calls are free from mobiles and landlines.

To talk to us online, visit us at:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us/

You can also get advice from these national helplines:

- **Help to Claim Universal Credit - 08000 241 220**
- **Consumer Advice Helpline - 0808 223 1133**
- **Pensionwise - 0800 138 3944**

Caerphilly Cares

Contact us by phone: **01443 811490**

Email: caerphillycares@caerphilly.gov.uk

The Caerphilly Cares team are available during office hours. Monday - Thursday (8.30am-5pm) and Friday (8.30am - 4.30pm).

