

MONTHLY QE STAFF ADVICE BULLETIN

ISSUE 6: COST OF LIVING SUPPORT PACKAGE

A simple 5 point summary of the Government's Cost of Living Support Package.

At the end of last month, the Chancellor announced a support package for people in the UK in response to the ever-increasing impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Here's our 5 point summary of what you need to know about the support package, and how it might help you, members of your family, and your friends. Importantly you don't need to apply for these payments (other than the Household Support Fund) and they won't affect existing benefits awards if you receive them, or count towards the benefits cap, so there's no downside!

1. £400 energy grant for all households

Your household will receive £400 to help with rising energy bills and this does not need to be repaid, replacing the previously announced £200 energy rebate. Energy suppliers will pay the grant to households with a domestic electricity meter over six months from October. Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their account, and customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher.



The energy grant is in addition to the £150 Council Tax rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A-D, which was announced in February, and which millions of households have already received.

2. Extra £300 if you're over pensionable age to help with energy costs

A tax-free 'Pensioner Cost of Living Payment' of £300 will be paid automatically in November or December to pensioner households that receive the [Winter Fuel Payment](#) (homes with at least one person of pension age).

3. Extra £650 for households receiving ‘means tested benefits’

£650 will be paid tax-free in two instalments, July and in the Autumn, to households receiving means tested benefits (or you have started a claim for one of the qualifying benefits by no later than 25 May 2022). Payments from HMRC for people in receipt of tax credits will follow shortly after. Where someone claims a household benefit with their partner, they will receive one payment of £650 between them.



More than 8 million UK households receive ‘means tested benefits’, which means the benefit applies to them because their income and capital are below a certain level. Universal Credit is one example – you can view a full list of means tested benefits [here](#)

4. Extra £150 for people on qualifying disability benefits

People who receive qualifying disability benefits will receive a one-off tax-free payment of £150 in September, and where they also receive a means tested benefit this will be in addition to the £650 one-off payment. Again, you don’t need to apply for this payment, it will be paid automatically if you qualify, and it will not have any impact on existing benefits awards. A full list of qualifying disability benefits can be found [here](#).



Households on lower incomes who claim [pension credit](#) will also receive the £650 tax-free payment, and a small group of pensioners with disabilities will receive a total of £1,500 when all the new payments and discounts they are eligible for are added up if they are on Attendance Allowance or DLA.

5. Expansion of the Household Support Fund

Until March 2023 Local Authorities are able to support people with a grant from the Household Support Fund for costs such as food, energy and water bills, broadband, warm clothing and bedding, school uniforms and PE kit, electrical and white goods. Check with your Local Authority for eligible costs and distribution partners. For Gateshead residents it’s Citizens Advice Gateshead and Age UK.

For direct access to social welfare advice from your Citizens Advice Gateshead team, including help with your household budget, email gestaffswa@citizensadvicegateshead.org.uk or call 0191 490 4231 and we’ll be back in touch with you within 1 working day Monday to Friday.