

## Lewisham Council – Help and Support

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/benefits/get-financial-help-if-you-are-struggling-due-to-covid19>

### **You may be able to get a one-off payment to help you buy essential food and fuel**

It is the time of year where the most vulnerable of our claimants will need additional support to get them through this season, we can never predict just how cold it can get this winter.

Lewisham Council their Covid Winter Grant Scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over winter. The funding is ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, and will cover the period to the end of March 2021.

Staying warm in winter can help prevent some very serious health conditions.

### **Get help with your bills**

When it comes to your winter fuel bills, make sure you get the discounts and payments you are entitled to.

#### **Winter Fuel Payment**

If you were born on or before 5 August 1954 you could get a **tax-free payment between £100–300 to help pay your heating bills**. It's not means tested and you can get it if you're still working or claiming a benefit.

How much you get will depend on your circumstances. You should get the payment automatically if you get the State Pension or another social security benefit. If you don't get it automatically, you will need to make a claim.

#### **Warm Home Discount Scheme**

You could get £140 off your energy bills for winter if:

- you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- you're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme.

If you're an older person you will get a letter telling you how to apply for the discount. **If you're on low income, you should check with your supplier to see if you're eligible and how to apply.**

#### **Cold Weather Payments**

You may be eligible for a payment of £25 for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March if you get any of the following benefits:

- **Pension Credit**
- **Income Support**
- **income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **Universal Credit**

These payments are made automatically and you do not have to do anything in order to get them.

## Get free services from your energy supplier

You could get free services from your energy supplier, including a password protection scheme, regular meter readings and an annual gas safety check, if you:

- **are of pensionable age**
- **are disabled or have a long-term medical condition**
- **are in a vulnerable situation**
- **have children under five.**

Contact your energy supplier to be added to their priority services register or [apply online](#).

Reduce your energy costs - Keep the heat in by insulating your home, not only keeps you warm and healthy but will also help to keep your costs down.

Make sure that your loft has at least 10–11 inches (270 mm) of insulation. Any home with four inches (100mm) or less should have it topped up. If you have wall cavities, make sure that they are insulated too.

Energy suppliers sometimes offer financial support for insulation, call you energy supplier and ask about the [Energy Company Obligation](#).

## Save energy at home

There are also lots of small things you can do for free or at low cost around the home to save money on your energy bills. You can find out more by calling the Energy Saving Trust on 0300 123 1234 or fill out an [online home energy check](#) for suggestions on improving the energy performance of your home.

## Get more information

The [NHS](#) and the [Met Office](#) both have more information about effects of cold weather and advice on keeping warm.

If you're over 65 or on a low income and have a long-term health condition or disability, you can get [free advice on how to stay warm and healthy and save money on your energy bills](#) during the colder months from the South London Advice and Referral Network.

These are additional links depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for a loan and/or a grant.

Local Support Grant Scheme <https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/benefits/local-support-scheme>

- An [emergency loan](#) is intended to provide immediate, short-term financial support for people who need money urgently because of expenses they have incurred as a result of a crisis situation, disaster or other emergency. **The loan has to be repaid.**
- A [support grant](#) is designed to provide short-term support for people looking to stay in or return to their community. **The grant does not have to be repaid.**
- The [Starting Work Award \(SWA\)](#) is designed to assist our residents in returning to full time work. **This loan has to be repaid.**