

COST OF LIVING - Ten Top Tips of Help available

The Energy regulator Ofgem has today (Friday 25 August 2023) announced a further reduction in the energy price cap for the last quarter of 2023 (Oct to Dec). From 1 October to 31 December the cap will be set an annual level of £1,923 for a dual fuel household paying by direct debit. For those using a prepayment meter the figure is £1,949. Those paying every three months – known as standard credit will pay £2,052. This is £129 more a year than direct debit customers. The energy price cap for those on Economy 7 (electricity only direct debit) will be £1,298. It is important to note that the cap is on the unit price of gas and electricity, not the total bill so if you use more energy, you'll pay more.

But, with reduced government support and higher fixed costs many of us will see little difference in what we pay. Below is a list of national and local help for people in the Babergh district. Please check to see if there is anything you can claim to help with the costs of energy this coming winter.

Check if you are eligible for:

- 1) **GOVERNMENT GRANTS.** £300 paid during Autumn 2023, followed by £299 paid during spring 2024 for most people. www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2023/03/first-cost-of-living-payment-dates-2023-2024/
- 2) **PENSIONERS COST OF LIVING PAYMENT** - paid to pensioners who receive the **WINTER FUEL PAYMENT** and were born before 25th Sept.1957. You will get an extra £150 or £300 with your normal payment from Nov. 2023. You will be sent a letter in October or November telling you how much Winter Fuel Payment you'll get if you're eligible. www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment
- 3) **WARM HOME DISCOUNT** – £150 paid but eligibility conditions have changed. Tel 0800 107 8002, Mon to Fri 8am – 6pm. www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2023/02/warm-home-discount-energy-performance-dwp/
- 4) **COLD WEATHER PAYMENT** – for those on Pension Credit or receiving a means-tested benefit. Paid automatically if temperature is predicted to drop or falls to zero or below for 7 consecutive days. www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment
- 5) **HEALTHY START SCHEME** – for those at least 10 weeks pregnant or having at least one child under the age of four. Check criteria www.healthystart.nhs.uk/

- 6) **SURVIVING WINTER GRANT** – available to anyone 18 or over struggling with the cost of living and having an annual income of £20,000 if single, £24,000 if a couple. Apply online www.citizensadviceipswich.org.uk/surviving-winter/
- 7) **HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND** – administered by Suffolk County Council as the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme for anyone experiencing hardship. Apply online www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/suffolk-local-welfare-assistance-scheme Sudbury Citizens Advice can help you to make a claim – Tel 01787 321400.
- 8) **DEBT ADVICE** – if you are struggling to cover your daily living costs we can help. Call 01787 321400 or email advice@sudburycab.org.uk to speak to a specialist adviser
- 9) **OTHER HELP** – we can carry out a full benefit check and apply for other grants. Tel 01787 321400 or email advice@sudburycab.org.uk
- 10) **HELP YOU CAN GET YOURSELF**
- Priority Services Register – contact your energy provider
 - Ask your energy supplier if they offer any grants
 - Make your home more energy efficient energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/
 - Use a food bank if you need to; contact us if you need a referral. Tel 01284 321400 or email advice@sudburycab.org.uk
 - Use a food app such as Too Good To Go to get cheaper food, www.toogoodtogo.com/en-gb
 - Find a Warm Space or 'Meet up Monday' – venues including libraries and churches offering a drink and opportunity to meet others ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/news-warm-spaces/
 - Rural Coffee Caravan – meet for a drink and cake ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/