



Cost of living

Last updated August 2024.

This document contains Durham-specific information on how to get help with the cost of living.

For UK-wide support, [Citizens Advice](#) may be able to assist you.

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General support

- **County Durham Citizens Advice** (info/phone/live chat/drop-in/referrals) is a charity which can provide advice and help on how to manage a number of difficult situations, such as debt, poverty, managing tenancies and being unable to afford the cost of living. They can also refer to organisations such as food banks.

<https://www.citizensadvicecd.org.uk/>

- Phone: 0808 278 7821
 - Available Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00
- Live chat: <https://www.citizensadvicecd.org.uk/webchat/>
- Drop in: 54 North Road, Durham, DH1 4SF
 - Open Tue & Fri 10:00-13:00
 - You can also pre-book an appointment by calling the above number

Food support

- **Durham SU Student Pantry.** (food available, no referral) A free-to-use store of non-perishable food items and toiletries that any student can access, and take what they need without the need for a referral, to prevent students falling into food poverty.

<https://www.durhamsu.com/cost-of-living/student-pantry>

- Students' Union Building
 - Available Mon-Fri 10:00-17:00, 19:00-23:00; Sat 16:00-23:00 during term time
 - For access during the Summer vacation, email abigail.a.lewis@durham.ac.uk



- **County Durham Foodbank.** (food available, referral required) Run by the Trussell Trust, the UK's national foodbank charity, helping to provide emergency support to people unable to afford their basic food needs, and find longer-term support to help clients move on. Please note a referral (from an organisation such as a GP, mental health support or faith organisation) is required to access food parcels.
<https://durham.foodbank.org.uk/>
 - Waddington Street: United Reform Church, Waddington Street, DH1 4BG
 - Open Mon 12:30-14:30; Wed & Fri 11:30-14:30
 - Elvet: Elvet Methodist Church, 8 Old Elvet, DH1 3HL
 - Open Tue 13:30-15:00
 - Gilesgate: Durham City Baptist Church, Edge Court, DH1 2JY
 - Open Sat 09:30-11:30
 - Help through Hardship helpline for those unable to get a referral: 0808 208 2138
 - Available Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00
- **Sherburn Community Fridge.** (food available, no referral) A shared fridge available to anyone who wishes to take fresh and frozen produce or donate it. Food is donated by local people as well as supermarkets whose produce has passed its sell-by date, but is still fresh enough to eat.
<https://www.communityfridgemap.org.uk/profile/sherburn-community-fridge-sherburn-community-fridge-rGRWnSZYy8UMESGpkt16>
 - Sherburn Community Centre, Front Street, Sherburn Village, DH1 1HD
 - Centre open Mon-Sat 08:30-11:30

Energy support

- **County Durham Foodbank** (fuel voucher) can provide people in need with a £49 fuel voucher to help them top up their pre-payment meters. The service is helped run by npower, but you can use the service regardless of which company supplies your energy.
<https://durham.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/more-than-food/fuel-bank/>
 - Waddington Street: United Reform Church, Waddington Street, DH1 4BG
 - Open Mon 12:30-14:30; Wed & Fri 11:30-14:30
 - Elvet: Elvet Methodist Church, 8 Old Elvet, DH1 3HL
 - Open Tue 13:30-15:00
 - *This service is not available at the Gilesgate centre.*



- **British Gas Energy Trust** (grants) can provide people in need with grants to reduce or clear their debts with energy providers, particularly if they have already sought advice from an agency such as Citizens Advice. You do not need to be a British Gas customer to use this service.
<https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/>
- **Energy Suppliers.** (info/grants) Many energy suppliers have help available to their customers. Support from some of the bigger suppliers:
 - **British Gas Energy Trust:** <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/>
 - **E-ON Next Energy Fund:** <https://www.eonnextenergyfund.com/>
 - **Octopus Energy Octo Assist:** <https://octopus.energy/blog/octo-assist/>
 - **EDF Support:** <https://www.edfenergy.com/about/support-for-customers>

Water support

- **Northumbrian Water financial support** (info/grants/discounts) Northumbrian Water can provide customers with discounted bills, payment breaks and free advice on how to pay their bills. They also have an eligibility checker which allows users to check to see what help they might be able to get.
<https://www.nwl.co.uk/services/extra-support/financial-support/>

Renting support

- **Durham Tenants' Union** (info/advice) provides lots of information on how to navigate the rental process, such as creating inventories, claiming back deposits, and managing disputes. They also offer advice sessions that students can attend to ask questions about their tenancies.
<https://www.instagram.com/durhamtenantsunion/?igsh=eWlpbjRxNGpvZDB5>



- **Durham County Council** (info/phone/email) provides information on how to go about the rental process, as well as what rights and responsibilities tenants have during their tenancy. In some limited circumstances, they can also provide Discretionary Housing Payments. They also provide a Housing Solutions helpline and email service, which can advise on housing situations and refer to other agencies.
<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3372/Renting-a-property-from-a-private-landlord-tenants-advice>
 - Phone: 03000 268 000
 - Available Mon-Thu 08:30-17:30; Fri 08:30-16:30
 - Email: housingsolutions@durham.gov.uk
- **Step Change** (info) provide a wide range of information on what help tenants can get if they are struggling to pay their rent, or are facing rent arrears.
<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/rent-arrears.aspx>