### **Food and Energy Support Schemes**

### Olio Food Sharing App

OLIO is a free app allowing neighbours to offer perfectly good, unwanted food to each other. Everything shared on OLIO is for free. They have also developed safe sharing ‘no-contact pickups’ in response to COVID-19. [For more information, please visit their website](http://www.olioex.com/).

Sustainable Food Places

Sustainable Food Places are supporting local convening and responses to the food emergency created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Their website shares examples of local food partnerships on the ground as well as sharing Government advice. [For more information, please visit their website](https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/coronavirus/).

The Trussell Trust – Food banks

Food banks are designed to provide short-term, emergency support with food during a crisis. They aim to relieve that immediate pressure by providing food, but also offer additional support so that people don’t need to use the food bank again in the future. Once someone has been referred, they can exchange their voucher at their nearest food bank for an emergency food parcel containing a minimum of three days’ nutritionally balanced food. If you’re in financial crisis and live in England or Wales, please call 0808 2082138 for free (open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) to talk confidentially to a trained Citizens Advice adviser. [For more information, please visit their website](https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/emergency-food/).

**British Gas Energy Trust**

[The British Gas Energy Trust](https://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/british-gas-energy-trust.html) is an independent charitable trust set up to support families and individuals facing financial hardship and fuel poverty across England, Wales and Scotland. There is help available whether you are a British Gas customer, or with a different supplier.

**Social Housing Provider**

If you are renting through a Housing Association some social housing providers have pots of funding for energy support. You could try contacting your social housing provider to see if they can offer advice and support.

**How to access the Energy Support Scheme**

The Energy Bills Support Scheme is an energy bills discount provided by the government to eligible households. [Find out more about the scheme from the UK government website](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount).

**The Trussel Trust**

**Help through Hardship helpline**

**If you’re worried about money and struggling to afford essentials, call our free helpline for personalised support.**

Our friendly advisers can help you get the support you need if you’re struggling to afford essentials like food, heating and toiletries. We can advise which benefits you’re entitled to, guide you through any claims, and help you with emergency issues.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope, we can also transfer you to [Mind’s Infoline](https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/help-through-hardship-helpline/#mind). Their advisers will provide support and information to help you take care of your wellbeing.



**Call now:**[**0808 2082138**](tel:08082082138)

Lines open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Closed on public holidays.

Harrow Council: Help with the cost of living

The Harrow council website has set up a webpage directing people to the right services for support as follows:

* [Gas, electricity and water](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#utilities)
* [Housing](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#housing)
* [Food](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#food)
* [Children](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#children)
* [Council Tax](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#tax)
* [Debt advice](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#debt)
* [Training and employment](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#training)
* [Mental health and wellbeing](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/costofliving#wellbeing)

**Benefits**

**Household Support Fund**

The Council's [Household Support Fund](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/benefits/household-support-fund) may be able to help through:

* **Help Harrow:** Access to food supplies as well as advice on energy, health, wellbeing and benefits
* **Application Scheme:**One-off payments that qualifying households can apply for
* **Vouchers for Low-income Households:**The council will contact eligible households who will be sent a voucher
* **Free School Meals during the Holidays:**Vouchers will be given to vulnerable households up to Easter 2023

Log onto their Household Support Fund page.

**Check your benefit entitlement**

Some people may not be getting the right amount of benefit support. It is worth checking if you are entitled to receive any benefits from either the government or the council by using their Benefits Calculator.

You may automatically get [Cost of Living Support Payments](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/benefits/cost-living-support) from the Department of Work and Pensions.

**Help with gas, electricity and water**

**Winter fuel payments**

If you were born on or before 25 September 1956 you could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills. For more details see [Winter Fuel Payment.](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

**Water tariffs**

You may qualify for a lower water tariff if you are:

* in receipt of certain benefits or have a household income below £16,480
* have a water meter and consume more water due to having a large family or medical condition

Harrow Council together with Affinity Water will work out your entitlement:

[Find out more from Affinity Water](https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/billing/struggling-to-pay)

**Warm Hubs**

Warm Hubs are warm, safe places where residents can expect a friendly and inclusive welcome. People can come along on their own, or with a friend, and talk to others over a hot drink.

[Find Warm Hubs in Harrow](https://harrowgiving.org.uk/warmhubs/)

**Energy efficiency**

Harrow Council have tips for all residents on [Energy Saving Advice.](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/environment-parks/energy-saving-advice)

Further information is also available from the [Energy Saving Trust.](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/)

**Seasonal Health Intervention Network (SHINE)**

Harrow Council has teamed up with SHINE, the Seasonal Health Intervention Network. SHINE is a fuel poverty referral network and free energy advice service for Londoners who are over 60, on a low income, have a disability or long term illness, or have children.

For further details visit [Shine-London.org.uk](http://shine-london.org.uk/)

**Help with the cost of housing**

If you are struggling with the cost of housing, you should first check that you are receiving the correct amount of benefits using the [Entitlement Calculator](http://harrow.entitledto.co.uk/home/start).

After checking you are receiving the correct benefits, if you are still struggling to pay your rent, you may be able to apply for a [Discretionary Housing Payment.](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/benefits/discretionary-housing-payments)

If you think are are going to become homeless, please read our information on [What to do if you think you will be homeless](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/homelessness).

For help with mortgage payments see [Mortgage arrears advice](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/mortgage-rent-arrears)

**HelpHarrow**

Help Harrow provides residents with access to food supplies as well as advice and information, on topics such as energy, health, wellbeing and benefits. Help Harrow allows residents in need of food to make food requests online.   
This winter, Help Harrow will also be opening ‘Warm hubs’ across the borough, more information will be added to this webpage soon. Help Harrow will also distribute ‘Winter Warmth Packs’, containing items such as, gloves, scarves, hats and blankets, to residents who may be struggling to pay their energy bills.

To find out more about the services they provide visit [HelpHarrow.org](https://helpharrow.org/)

**Healthy Start Card**

If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get [Help to buy healthy food and milk.](https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/)

**Hardship fund scheme**

The hardship fund scheme is for qualifying residents in extreme emergency situations. It provides awards of between £10 and £100 so long as this need cannot be met elsewhere.

Find out more about the [Hardship fund scheme.](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/benefits/hardship-fund-scheme)

**Children**

**Free Christmas Holiday Clubs**

Over 2,000 free places are available for children living or studying in Harrow who receive free school meals. Each space also includes a free nutritious meal per day. For details see [Free Christmas Holiday Clubs.](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/news/article/11171/thousands-of-local-children-to-enjoy-free-christmas-holiday-clubs-)

**STEP CHANGE**: is the UK's leading debt charity where you can get expert debt advice and fee-free debt management to help you tackle your debts.

**TURN2US** is a national charity that helps people in financial hardship to gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services. They have tailored advice for young people, older people, migrants, disabled people, people in the criminal justice system and many other groups.

Use their free and easy-to-use Benefits Calculator and Grants Search tools to check what benefits you might be able to claim and what grants you might be able to apply for. VISIT THEIR WEBSITE

**FAMILY FUND** is the UK’s largest charity providing grants for families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people. If you’re raising a disabled or seriously ill child, they might be able to help.