

Financial support and benefits

Connexus works with a number of partners and support agencies to help customers who may be struggling with money, so if you're worried please get in touch. We've also gathered together some useful information on benefits and financial help.

Have questions or need support?
Contact us.

More info

Help with rising energy costs

As energy costs rise, you might need to know where you can get support.

If you live in Herefordshire, you may be able to access support from [Keep Herefordshire Warm](#) which offers energy advice on using efficient appliances, timing on heating controls and washing at lower temperatures. The team at Keep Herefordshire Warm accept self-referrals online or over the phone.

If you live in Shropshire, you can get in touch with [Marches Energy Agency](#), a specialist charity which is able to complete home energy checks to advise on options and can fit small measures to aid energy efficiency. Marches Energy Agency accepts

and can take small measures to aid energy efficiency. Many energy agency accept self-referrals online or over the phone.

Shropshire Council also has a [Local Support and Prevention Fund](#) which those living in the area can apply to for support with living costs.

The [British Gas Energy Trust](#) is a charity that provides independent energy advice to customers of any utility provider who have gas or electric debt.

Your energy provider may also have their own funds and support schemes that can be accessed to help with debt or increasing energy bills.



Independent financial help and Benefits

Are you claiming everything that you are entitled to? If you are finding it difficult paying all of your bills and rent, or if your circumstances have changed recently, there might be benefits you can get that will help out.

The Government website has a list of [independent benefits calculators](#) that can help you check your benefit entitlement:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [entitledto](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)

The [Money Helper website](#) can also help make sure you're [getting the right entitlements](#).

And [Citizens Advice](#) have lots of [help on financial matters](#), including [pages on benefits](#)

[StepChange](#) is a debt advice charity, helping people take control of their finances.

For older customers, [Age UK](#) and [Independent Age](#) both provide advice, including money advice and benefits calculators.

If you would like to speak to someone instead, our tenancy sustainment team can go through which benefits you can claim and help with applications. You can call on [03332 31 32 33](tel:03332313233) or email them at tenancysustainmentteam@connexus-group.co.uk

Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

If you have a long term disability or health condition which makes every day tasks more difficult you might be entitled to [PIP payments](#) to help with some living costs.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

If you have a child with a long term disability or health condition who requires more looking after than a child of a similar age without a health condition you might be entitled to DLA payments, you can find out more on the gov.uk site.

Attendance Allowance

If you are 66 or over and have a long term disability or health condition that means you might need some help from someone with daily tasks (this could include help from friend or family member rather than a carer), you may be entitled to [Attendance Allowance](#).

Benefit capping

There may be a limit on the total amount of benefits you can get. You should check the [Government website information on benefit caps](#).

Housing and Council Tax Benefit

If you are claiming Universal Credit, the [Shropshire council](#) or [Herefordshire council](#) websites have information on what you can claim.

You may also be able get extra help from your Local Authority called a *discretionary housing payment* (DHP) if your benefits (Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit) don't cover your rent.

Council Tax Debt

We work with Shropshire Council's debt recovery team to try and make sure that circumstances are taken into account. The council might delay any actions, including

sending bailiffs, to allow our tenancy advice officers time to work with tenants to arrange realistic repayment plans.

2022 Council Tax rebates

To help with fuel bills the Government has announced that council tax bill payers who live in a property banded between A-D will be entitled to a £150 rebate on their council tax in 2022. This will come by way of a payment rather than a reduction in your council tax bill.

If you live in Shropshire find out more on the [Council Tax section of Shropshire Council website](#). If you live in Herefordshire, the [council's Council Tax page](#) has more information about the rebate.

Under occupancy

Since April 2013 the Government reduced the amount of housing cost paid to people of working age who have 'spare' bedrooms in their homes. The criteria mean that any working-age household deemed to be under-occupying will lose a percentage of what can be claimed for housing costs. For more information [download this fact sheet](#) from the Department of Work and Pensions.



Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single system for claiming benefits for people who are out of work, or in work but on low wages.

You can only apply online for Universal Credit, and the process will take at least half an hour. If you need better access to a computer (perhaps you're viewing this on a 'phone), we have a [get online page](#) that can help you find one.



Unsure about whether you should claim Universal Credit or what you will need to do?

The [Universal Credit Helper tool](#) is a step-by-step guide through the Universal Credit claim process. If you are still unsure, speak to one of our Tenancy Sustainment Team on [03332 31 32 33](tel:03332313233) or email them at tenancysustainmentteam@connexus-group.co.uk

Other support available

Cost of Living Payments

The Government are making cost of living payments to some people on means-tested benefits, as part of a £37 billion government package to help families with cost-of-living pressures.

If eligible you will receive the first of two cost of living instalments totalling £650 from 14 July 2022

The first £326 instalment for qualifying low-income households in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be paid by your usual payment method from 14 July 2022, continuing to the end of the month. The rest will follow in a second instalment

in the autumn. People receiving tax credits and no other eligible benefits will receive their first payment from HMRC in autumn and the second in winter.

You can check your eligibility for the payment [here](#).

There is also helpful information about further support available on the [Cost Of Living campaign website](#).

Free School Meals

If you have dependant children and are in receipt of certain benefits, you may be able to access [free school meals](#).

Help with prescriptions or other health costs

You might be able to get free NHS prescriptions, dental treatment, eye tests and help with other NHS costs if you're on a low income or in receipt of certain benefits. You can check whether you're entitled to any help with these on the [gov.uk website](#).

Water bill support

Some water companies offer cheaper tariffs for low income households. The major suppliers in Connexus areas are [Welsh Water](#) and [Severn Trent Water](#).

Worrying About Money?

The *Worrying About Money?* cash first referral leaflets are designed as straightforward resources for people facing financial crisis, and support workers, to quickly check which local agencies are best placed to help with available cash first options. There's an [online version for Shropshire](#) and one that's good for [the whole of the UK](#).

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