

Where to get help in the East area

Directory of Services

The guide provides Councillors, Partners and residents with useful information on what support and free specialist advice is available to residents across the East area who maybe face with financial difficulties.

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Advice on bills and energy checks

There are several organisations that can provide information and advice to help residents reduce their energy costs and tackle fuel bills:

Citizens Advice Sunderland

Advice on missed benefits, reducing and comparing tariffs, offer free energy checks, options with and help to reduce energy bills. Call 0191 415 8998 or email energy@citizensadvice Sunderland.co.uk

Green Doctor Service

Offer free practical energy or debt advice. Call 07515 327 185 or email GreenDoctorSunderland@groundwork.org.uk

National Energy Action (NEA) - action for warm homes

Free support service providing advice to householders in England and Wales on their energy bills and keeping warm and safe in their home. They can also help with benefits advice and income maximisation. For more information call for free on 0800 304 7159, or visit [National Energy Action - action for warm homes](#).

Simple Energy Advice

This provider gives government endorsed impartial and independent energy advice to help you:

- reduce your energy bills
- make your home warmer
- plan home improvements
- make your home greener

The [Simple Energy Advice](#) website contains a range of useful information and tools to help you, based on where you live. You can also contact them by calling 0800 444 202.

Warm Homes Discount Scheme

If you have a low income, you could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the [Warm Home Discount Scheme](#).

The scheme opens on 18 October 2021 and you should contact your energy supplier to see if you qualify. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October 2021 and March 2022.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out.

The discount will not affect your [Cold Weather Payment](#) or [Winter Fuel Payment](#).

Benefits, Debt and Employment Law

Sunderland Welfare Rights Service

Tel: 0191 520 5555

Email: welfare.rights@sunderland.gov.uk

Specialist and complex casework service offering advice and representation in relation to:

Benefits appeals and sanctions, Debt advice and Employment Law

Sunderland City Council Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

If residents have a shortfall in their rent and receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit with Housing Costs, they might qualify for a DHP. DHPs are meant to provide short term financial help enabling residents to improve their financial, or employment circumstances or look for cheaper alternative accommodation. For more information and a link to the application form visit www.sunderland.gov.uk/dhp

The council's Home and Money Team can also help residents to complete applications, call 0191 520 5551.

Citizen Advice Sunderland

Provides you with options if you have personal debts. Call 0300 330 1194, or for their dedicated debt line call 0191 415 8998. You can also email them at enquiries@citizensadvicesunderland.co.uk

Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre

Can help BAME residents in East with welfare rights
Abu Shama, e-mail abu.shama@sb-international.org.uk

Broadband

Sunderland City Council

Broadband has now become an essential item for most people. Check out the best deal by visiting

www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/19798/Finding-the-best-broadband-deal-for-you

Credit Union

Moneywise Credit Union

Most people will have been in a position at some point where they need to borrow money. There are a lot of credit options out there, but it is important to encourage people to do some research into the best option for them and their circumstances before committing to anything that might become unaffordable.

Residents can find out more about the different options available by visiting

www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/credit-and-purchases/deciding-on-the-best-type-of-credit-for-you

Information is also available at www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12661/Could-you-borrow-any-better

Payday lenders and people offering doorstep loans might seem like the easy option, people can end up paying back a lot more than they borrowed. Some of these people might not even be authorised to lend money. Moneywise Credit Union offers a local and ethical option for saving and lending. They offer a range of loans and interest rates, such as personal loans, family loans and saving plans, including payroll deductions. For more information visit www.sunderland.gov.uk/creditunion

If residents are worried that they've borrowed from a loan shark and would like support, they can call the Illegal Money Lending Team on 0300 555 2222 or visit www.stoploansharks.co.uk/who-we-are

Covid 19 / Pandemic Support

Self – isolation support, activities and (COVID safe) social contact to ensure residents are not alone and isolated during Christmas and the dark months of January, February and early March 2022. Also ensuring families have access to the basics and know where they can access help with food and fuel and other household essentials.

Hendon Only: Back on the Map, Craig Richardson, e-mail crichardson@backonthemap.org

Continued support as a Community Hub assisting with Welfare Rights advice, fuel payments, prescriptions and online shopping etc. Also run an extensive program of activities including art, woodwork, games, singing, befriending calls, activity packs for those isolating, face to face Christmas activities, and cinema night

St Michael's Only: Blue Watch Youth Centre, Susan Ferguson, e-mail bwyc.main@gmail.com

The project will continue to provide support as a Community Hub partner assisting with shopping requests, picking up prescriptions and carrying out welfare calls, along with social inclusion and support vulnerable households by carrying out welfare calls, delivering virtual sessions, outreach and detach sessions to young people, making Christmas cards and decorations, provide access to emergency food bags and weekly food parcels.

Hendon Only: CHANCE, Julie Maven, e-mail Info.chance.1993@gmail.com

Continue to support residents with shopping, paying bills and collecting prescriptions etc. Provide hot meals, various activities, deliver hampers to elderly and families where needed along with befriending support both over the phone and face to face
Delivery: December 2021 to March 2022

East: Impact NE, Sharon Boyd, e-mail sharon@impactnortheast.co.uk

Community support to reduce the impact of winter poverty and reduce stress throughout any COVID Isolation periods, by running a series of free online groups and activities to reduce isolation, including Bingo, family fitness videos, befriending calls, craft packs and healthy ingredients meal packs. Delivery across all of the East Area.

Delivery December 2021 to March 2022

East: More Than Grandparents, Melanie Nichols, e-mail sharon@impactnortheast.co.uk

Supporting and provide activities for kinship families across Christmas and beyond by hosting various activities including music workshops with We Make Culture bringing music and joy to families, telephone support and access to referrals for food and fuel, afternoon tea, quiz afternoons, music sessions, knit and natter and craft sessions, walking therapy sessions. Delivery across all of the East Area.

Delivery December 2021 to March 2022

Ryhope ONLY: Ryhope community Association, Robert Surtees, e-mail ryhopeca@aol.com

The project will provide social inclusion and support vulnerable households in the Ryhope ward by carrying out welfare calls, online shopping, collection of prescriptions etc, family Christmas hampers to those in need, activity packs, Christmas dinners and a virtual Christmas carol service

East: Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre, Abu Shama, e-mail abu.shama@sb-international.org.uk

This project will support BAME residents across the East Area providing essential support of welfare rights, housing, employability support. In addition, through their volunteers they will provide befriending support both face to face and telephone and provide weekly activities such as, health and wellbeing, information advice, community social gatherings and fitness wellbeing, Christmas activity packs etc. Delivery across all the East Area.

Delivery December 2021 to March 2022

Doxford: The Box Youth & Community Project, Denise Barna, e-mail theboxyouthproject@gmail.com

Continue to provide essential covid-19 support to residents and increase social inclusion and support to vulnerable people by delivering welfare calls, help with fuel payments, hot meals, coffee mornings, help with basic DIY jobs, online bingo/quizzes, and support with digital skills.

Delivery: December 2021 to March 2022

East: Young Asian Voices, e-mail ram@youngasianvoices.co.uk

Continue to support young people and residents across the East by providing youth engagement sessions, arts and creativity, multisport, training to tackle digital isolation to allow engagement virtually, 1:1 phone calls/virtual meetings/crisis support, translate information into many languages in relation to COVID-19, messages health services and help distinguish symptoms in order to access NHS support while being able to confidently manage health concerns. Delivery across all of the East Area.

Delivery December 2021 to March 2022

Financial Resilience Checks

Citizen Advice Sunderland

Know your rights. East area residents can receive a free Financial Resilience Check from Citizens Advice Sunderland, the council's contracted advice provider for the East area. Call 0300 3301194 or email enquiries@citizensadvicesunderland.co.uk This free service offers information, advice and guidance on welfare benefits, debt, employment, and housing matters.

Food

There are several crisis food providers in your area. Providers and opening times may be subject to change. Please contact 0800 234 6084 or 0191 520 5551 for details or for them to make a referral on your behalf.

Food Banks

Sunderland Foodbank - Bethany City Bede Tower, Burdon Road, Sunderland SR2 7DZ

Monday to Thursday 4–5pm

Agency referral including council Tel: 0800 234 6084 or Tel: 0191 520 5551

Sunderland Foodbank - Millfield City Life 170 Hylton Road, Millfield, Sunderland SR4 6EX Wednesday 1–3pm

Friday 10am–12pm

Sunderland Foodbank – ELIM New Durham Road, Sunderland SR2 7PD

Tuesday and Thursday 10.30am–12.30pm

Sunderland Food Heroes YMCA, Silksworth Terrace, Silksworth SR3 2AW

Appointment only Saturday 1–4pm

Agency referral including council Tel: 0800 234 6084 or 0191 520 5551 Self-referral via Facebook

Salvation Army

Austin House Family Centre, Shakespeare Street, Southwick, Sunderland SR5 2JX

Monday to Friday 9am–12pm

Swan Lodge, High St East, Sunderland SR1 2AU Saturday to Sunday 9am–4pm

Agency referral including council Tel: 0800 234 6084 or Tel: 0191 520 5551

Citizen Advice Sunderland

Call 0300 3301194 or email enquiries@citizensadvicesunderland.co.uk

Sunderland City Council, Local Welfare Provision

Contacted 24/7 to support residents who require emergency food support, and that can't access local foodbanks for specified reasons.

Further information can be found www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/17327/Crisis-support call 0191 520 5551

Self-Isolation Food Support

Up to March 2022 Help with online shopping, food bags and parcels.

- Hendon Only: Back on the Map, Craig Richardson, e-mail crichardson@backonthemap.org
- St Michael's Only: Blue Watch Youth Centre, Susan Ferguson, e-mail bwyc.main@gmail.com
- Hendon Only: CHANCE, Julie Maven, e-mail Info.chance.1993@gmail.com
- East: Impact NE, Sharon Boyd, e-mail sharon@impactnortheast.co.uk
- East: More Than Grandparents, Melanie Nichols, e-mail sharon@impactnortheast.co.uk
- Ryhope ONLY: Ryhope community Association, Robert Surtees, e-mail ryhopeca@aol.com
- East: Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre, Abu Shama, e-mail abu.shama@sb-international.org.uk

- Doxford: The Box Youth & Community Project, Denise Barna, e-mail theboxyouthproject@gmail.com

Company Shop

Company Shop in Washington sells food and household brands at low prices through its member-only superstore. The discount is often up to 70%. Free membership is open to people in a wide range of jobs. However, due to Covid-19 temporary membership had been extended. To find out if you can join visit www.companysshopgroup.co.uk

Free school meals

Children may be able to receive free school meals if their parent(s)/carer(s) are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

If parent(s)/carer(s) are unsure of eligibility, they can call 0191 561 1417 or email freeschoolmeals@togetherforchildren.org.uk and one of the team will try to help.

Parent(s)/carer(s) can also check eligibility and apply online by visiting www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/parents-carers/free-school-meals

Fuel Payments (Gas / Electricity)

Sunderland City Council, Local Welfare Provision

Contacted 24/7 to support residents who require emergency fuel support, have prepayment meters. Further information can be found www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/17327/Crisis-support call 0191 520 5551

Citizen Advice Sunderland

Can provide fuel vouchers for those in need
Call 0300 3301194 or email enquiries@citizensadviceunderland.co.uk

Up until March 2022

The Box Youth & Community Project

Can help residents in Doxford by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.
Denise Barna, e-mail theboxyouthproject@gmail.com

Back on the Map

Can help residents in Hendon by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.
Craig Richardson, e-mail crichardson@backonthemap.org

Blue Watch Youth Centre

Can help residents in St Michaels by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.
Susan Ferguson, e-mail bwyc.main@gmail.com

Ryhope Community Association

Can help residents in Ryhope by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.

Robert Surtees, e-mail ryhopeca@aol.com

Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre

Can help BAME residents in East by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.

Abu Shama, e-mail abu.shama@sb-international.org.uk

Healthy Start Voucher - help to buy food and milk

If a resident is more than 10 weeks pregnant or has a child under four years old, they may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. They may be able to receive free vouchers or payments to spend on cow's milk, fruit, vegetables, and infant formula milk, as well as free vitamins, if they are in receipt of a qualifying benefit. To check if they are eligible, residents can contact the Healthy Start helpline 0345 607 6823 and an application form can be sent out in the post. Residents can also ask a midwife or health visitor for an application form.

Residents can also check eligibility, and print an application form by visiting www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Home Improvements

0800 Repair/Pacific Group: ECO-Flex

The council also promotes the ECO Scheme and its own ECO-Flex schemes to residents facing fuel poverty and living in energy inefficient homes. These schemes can provide free or heavily subsidised replacement boilers and free insulation to help save money on fuel bills as well as cutting down on energy usage. For information visit www.sunderland.gov.uk/eco-flex

Email: keepwarm@pacificgroup.co.uk Email: ecoflex@arktek.co.uk

Tel: 0191 379 1279 Tel: 0191 516 6910

The Box Youth & Community Project

Can help residents with small jobs around the house, fees will be charged for this service.

Denise Barna, e-mail theboxyouthproject@gmail.com

Homelessness

Shelter

Tel: 0808 800 4444

Web: https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice

Free advice, support, and legal services to help residents who are struggling with bad housing or homelessness and issues with landlords.

Sunderland City Council: Homelessness and Homeless Prevention

Tel: 0800 234 6084

Web: <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/homeless-and-housing-advice>

Support to help residents with homelessness, homeless prevention, rough sleeping, children leaving care and under 18 years old who could be homeless,

Household Items: Community Care Support Scheme

This scheme is primarily intended to help vulnerable individuals/families to:

- Enter or re-enter the community, and/or
- Develop or maintain their independence within the community by contributing towards the cost of the key household items needed when setting up home

Help is normally provided by way of a contribution towards the costs of essential household items such as beds, furniture, white goods, and small household items.

More details can be found at www.sunderland.gov.uk/community-care-support

Housing, General Advice

If you are seeking general housing advice and are not at risk of homelessness within 56 days, please speak to your local advice provider.

The [Citizens Advice Sunderland](#) website or phone 0300 330 1194

The [Shiney Advice and Resource Project \(ShARP\)](#) website or phone 0191 385 6687

The [Sunderland West Advice Project](#) website or call 0191 514 2930

Shelter website shelternortheast@shelter.org.uk or call Mon-Fri 9am-5pm 0344 515 1601

Mental Health

The following organisations provide a range of support services, each one is different.

Sunderland MIND: Trish Cornish trish@sunderlandmind.co.uk

CHANCE: Julie maven julie.maven.chance@gmail.com

Sunderland Headlight sunderland.headlight@hotmail.co.uk

Impact North East Sharon Boyd sharon@impactnortheast.co.uk

Andy's Men Club John Campey Johncampey@live.co.uk

Betsy Jenny Counselling Steven Lynn betsyjennycounsellingcafe@gmail.com

The Little Company of Calm Liz McEvoy hello@tlcoc.co.uk

Sunderland Counselling Services Angela Dinsdale
angela@sunderlandcounselling.org.uk

Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre Abu Shama abu.shama@sb-international.org.uk

Money

Money Advice and Pension Service

Tel: 0800 138 7777

Emergency Helpline: 0808 164 4660

Web: www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk

Free information to help residents make the most out of their money and pensions.
Information includes: Budgeting, Saving and Debt and borrowing

Illegal Money Lending Team

Tel: 0300 555 2222

Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk

Web: www.stoploansharks.co.uk

Confidential help and advice to investigate and prosecute illegal money lenders while supporting those who have borrowed money from a loan shark

Gentoo Money Matters Teams

Tel: 0300 123 2004

Email: moneymatters@gentoogroup.com

Gentoo tenants only. Offers free money and debt advice, as well as help with benefits

Citizens Advice Sunderland (Money Advice Service Contract)

Tel: 0191 415 8998

Offers free, impartial debt advice with a specialist money advice worker

Social Inclusion

Up until March 2022

The Box Youth & Community Project

Can help residents in Doxford by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.

Denise Barna, e-mail theboxyouthproject@gmail.com

Back on the Map

Can help residents in Hendon by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.

Craig Richardson, e-mail crichardson@backonthemap.org

Blue Watch Youth Centre

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Susan Ferguson, e-mail bwyc.main@gmail.com

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Can help residents in Ryhope by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.

Robert Surtees, e-mail ryhopeca@aol.com

Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre

Can help BAME residents in East by paying energy/fuel bills to prevent the household going into debt or being disconnected.

Abu Shama, e-mail abu.shama@sb-international.org.uk

Water

Northumbrian water offers a range of schemes to help and support residents which include:

- Fixing a leaking toilet for free no matter what their income
- Discount of up to 50% on their water bill if the household income is less than £16,385

For full details of all available schemes please visit www.nwl.co.uk/services/extra-support

Please note: This information was correct at the time³ and may need updating.
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