

# How to Keep Warm this Winter

*Wellbeing area: Social / **Money** / Home / Health / Positivity / Independence / Work*  
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[Sources include: Age UK National "Age UK Winter Wrapped Up" Guide]

## Introduction

Spending more time at home this winter could mean higher bills. Check you're getting all the support you're entitled to with this guide. There's also additional tips and guidance about "keeping warm and well this winter" in the Age UK National "Winter Wrapped up" guide later in this guide.

## Help with heating costs

- **Warmth in Winter Fund** This fund is to help people stay as warm as possible during the cold weather, and is for items which can help achieve this. Previous funds have been given to help with current or outstanding fuel bills/payments, blankets/bedding, warm clothing, thicker curtains, food, hot water bottles and appliances such as heaters. The fund is for Islington residents who are aged 60 or over, and whose financial circumstances are affected by health conditions such as heart problems, poor circulation, mobility and joint problems.

Each applicant is considered individually by Age UK Islington, and funds are given at the discretion of the organisation on the basis of personal eligibility on a first come first served basis. Applications are limited to one per person, couple or household (eg. only one application can be made even if both partners are in a marriage, or civil partnership or living together).

For more info & to apply: Contact Age UK Islington Helpline 020 7281 6018 / [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk).

- **Warm Home Discount.** You may be entitled to a Warm Home Discount if you receive the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit or if you're on a low income. The money is not paid to you, it's a one-off discount on your electricity (or occasionally gas) bill, usually made between October and April. If you have a prepayment electricity meter, you can receive the discount as a voucher to top up your meter. Not all suppliers participate in the scheme, but we can provide more guidance.

For more info: Contact Age UK Islington's Helpline 020 7281 6018 / [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk).

- **Winter fuel payment.** Most people born before 5 October 1954 are entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment in 2020-21 to help with heating costs. This is a tax-free payment of between £100 and £300 paid to you.

You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you receive the State Pension or another benefit, such as Pension Credit (but not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support or Universal Credit). If you qualify, but don't get paid automatically, you'll need to make a claim. If you've received the payment before, you should get it automatically this year.

For more info: If this is the first year that you're eligible, or if you think you should have received it and haven't, call the government Winter Fuel Payment helpline on 0800 731 0160.

- **Cold Weather Payment.** If you receive Pension Credit or other income-related benefits, you're automatically paid a Cold Weather Payment when the temperature is at 0°C/32°F or below for seven days in a row between 1 November and 31 March.

For more info: If it's been freezing for a week or more and you think you should have received this payment, please contact Age UK Islington's Helpline on 020 7281 6018 / [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk).

## **Saving money on your energy bills**

- **Getting a better energy deal.** It's worth shopping around to see if you can get a better energy deal. You may not even have to change supplier to save money – speak to your supplier to find out whether they can offer you better rates. You can compare different companies using price comparison websites, e.g. [moneysupermarket.com](http://moneysupermarket.com) or [USwitch.com](http://USwitch.com).
- **Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) scheme.** You could be eligible for financial help from the ECO scheme if any of the following apply to you: you receive certain benefits such as Pension Credit or Attendance Allowance; you're a tenant living in social housing that's not energy efficient; your local council assesses you as needing financial support.

For more info: you can call the On Energy, Energy Advisors at Islington Council, on 0300 555 0195. They provide the service SHINE (Seasonal Health Intervention Network).

## **What to do if you're struggling to pay your energy bills**

- **What to do if you can't pay your bill.** If you're finding it difficult to keep up with your energy bills get in touch with your supplier. You might be able to set up a repayment plan or have a prepayment meter installed. Energy companies are required to work with all pensioner households over the winter months to help them to maintain their energy supply.

- **Boosting your income.** Are you sure you're claiming everything you're entitled to? You could be missing out on more than you think. Contact Age UK Islington to arrange a check.

## Getting help from your energy supplier

- If you're of pensionable age or vulnerable, your energy supplier should be able to provide additional free help and (non-financial) support in helping you with your energy supply. To get this support, you'd need to make sure that you're registered on your energy supplier's Priority Services Register.
- For more info: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register>

Or contact Age UK Islington's Helpline on 020 7281 6018 / [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk).

## More information

- You can find additional information about "keeping warm and well this winter" in the Age UK National "Winter Wrapped up" guide: [https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig27\\_winter\\_wrapped\\_up\\_inf.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig27_winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf)
- For more information about how to apply for the Winter Fuel Payment, go to the gov.uk site: <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/eligibility>
- For more information about the Cold Weather Payment, go to the gov.uk site: <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>
- For more information about the Priority Services Register, please see the Ofgem website. <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register>

## Still need help?

### Call the Age UK Islington Helpline

- Call our Helpline on 020 7281 6018 Mon to Fri 9 – 5pm / [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk).
- If you still need further help with anything to make sure you keep warm this winter, including help with accessing winter warmth funds and discounts that you might be eligible for.
- **Paying bills / managing debt** – we can help you to identify priority debts, help you with budgeting and signpost or refer you to specialist partner organisations.

- **Benefit advice** – we can review the benefits that you're receiving and signpost or refer you to specialist partner organisations to provide an indepth benefits check
- **Making applications for benefits** – we can help clarify what the supporting documents are that you need, help provide guidance around what some of the questions mean so that you can then complete the form yourself. We can also signpost or refer you to specialist partner organisations where needed.

### **Contacting On Energy, Energy Advisors (SHINE)**

- If you're not sure if you're eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment or ECO scheme, you can check with On Energy, Energy Advisors at Islington Council, by calling 0300 555 0195. They provide the service SHINE (Seasonal Health Intervention Network).
- See the SHINE website: [www.energyadvice.islington.gov.uk/energy-advice-team/shine/](http://www.energyadvice.islington.gov.uk/energy-advice-team/shine/)

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*Please note we cannot recommend or endorse. Information provided is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publishing. If you find any inaccuracies, please notify us [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk)*

**What can Age UK Islington help with?** *Age UK Islington provides adults (16 yrs+) in Islington with information and guidance about anything to do with your wellbeing, e.g. debt, housing issues, bereavement, support for unpaid carers (Islington Carers Hub) and much more. We can also help you get the most of the local area, e.g. finding affordable social groups or training. Our staff are experts in finding the best way forward, and have lots of knowledge about local specialist partners.*

**Contact Age UK Islington Helpline: 020 7281 6018 (Mon to Fri 9 - 5pm) / [gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk) / [info@islingtoncarershub.org](mailto:info@islingtoncarershub.org)**