



1 June 2022

Summary of support available to help with the cost of living crisis:

Malvern Hills food bank works on a voucher system. Someone needing a voucher should contact one of the local referral agencies such as Citizens Advice, the local housing associations, Age UK, the Octagon Centre, Maggs Day Centre, the Sunshine Children's centre, health visitors or social services and ask for a referral. The referral agency will ask about your circumstances to make sure you are receiving all relevant benefits and offer budgeting help etc if needed. Customers are encouraged to collect parcels from the Food Bank premises at Spring Lane on Monday 10.15-12.45, Tuesday 1-3pm or Thursday 10.15-12.45. Deliveries are available but would take longer than collection. There is a maximum allowance of 3 vouchers in a rolling 6 month period.

Community fridges / Pantry. These can be accessed without a referral - they are aimed at reducing food waste so are open to anyone to visit.

- The Octagon Centre, Brookfarm Drive - Community Pantry open Fridays 9.30-11am, £2 donation requested if possible but not essential.
- St Mary's Church Pickersleigh - Community Fridge open Wed-Fri 9am-12noon.
- Church of the Ascension Somers Park Avenue - Community Fridge open 10.30-1pm Mondays in the Church hall.

Household Support Fund. Citizens Advice South Worcestershire is administering some local hardship funding. Help is available with food, fuel and clothing vouchers if eligible. People can be referred or they can self refer by contacting Citizens Advice on 0808 278 7891 (Adviceline) – available Monday-Friday from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm or 01684 563611 (Option 1) or email enquiries.malvern@citizensadvice.org.uk.

Community Lunch. Organised by Malvern Green Space every second and fourth Friday of the month, 12-2pm at URC Church Hall, Worcester Road, Malvern Link. Using food which would have otherwise been thrown away (but is perfectly good). You are very welcome if you can pay nothing, or just a little, or more. You are also very welcome if you are able to help set up/clear away, and if you are not able! Come with a friend, or come on your own and meet new friends.

<https://www.malverngreenspace.com/event-details/food-for-change-community-lunch-2022-05-27-12-00>

Fuel costs. The charity Act on Energy can advise on tariffs and any available grants to help with fuel costs or fuel debt. <https://actonenergy.org.uk/> 0800 988 2881.

Benefits. Check you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to by using an online tool like <https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/> or contact Citizens Advice for a benefits check.

Grants. There are benevolent funds connected to many occupations so if you have worked in a particular sector it is worth checking if there is a charity associated with it. You can search for other sources of grant funding here <https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/>

Bills. If you are on a means tested benefit you may qualify for a low cost phone and broadband package through BT Basic. Check what help is available with your bills. If you are struggling to pay, most organisations should be able to help you by reducing your payments or giving you more time to pay. If you are struggling to pay back your overdraft, contact your bank who may be able to help by not charging you interest or setting up a repayment plan.

Budgeting and reducing expenditure. Use an online budgeting tool like the one at <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/budget-planner> to help keep track of your finances. If you have a smartphone there are lots of budgeting apps you can download for free or a small fee. Consider taking cash instead of using a card because you are less likely to spend more than you have budgeted for.

General tips.

- Walk or cycle to work when the weather is good, or arrange a car share if possible.
- Don't shop when hungry - you're likely to buy more if you do.
- Find out when items are reduced at your local supermarket.
- Consider supermarket own brands.
- Look at your subscriptions. Do you need or make use of them?
- Look at your direct debits and cancel anything unnecessary.
- Take lunch to work instead of buying it.
- Make a meal planner for the week and only buy what you need.

There is more information available at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/help-if-on-a-low-income/if-youre-struggling-with-living-costs/> or call Malvern Citizens Advice on 0808 278 7891 (Adviceline) – available Monday-Friday from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm or 01684 563611 (Option 1). Please note availability of the option 1 local advice service is limited and callers may wish to use Adviceline in the first instance.