

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Working Families is a work-life balance charity, helping working parents and carers (and their employers) find a better balance between responsibilities at home and in the workplace, and provide free legal advice to parents and carers on their rights at work. They have produced a quick guide to benefits families may be able to claim if their income has changed because of the coronavirus outbreak, advice on the furlough process, redundancy and more. <https://workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/coronavirus-support/>

- Most of the London boroughs below have similar methods of assisting struggling families during the coronavirus outbreak. Most services are subject to application or referral.
- All offer advice about council tax payments, universal credit and other benefits, which schools are open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, and help for domestic abuse and vulnerable families.
- None are offering financial assistance for students (unless a student is not living at the family home and in their own accommodation), but all have links for families to apply for help with delays in mortgage or rent payments, universal credit, other benefits and how to access food banks
- The government has also launched an [emergency package with energy suppliers](#) to ensure people don't face any additional hardships when heating or lighting their home during the coronavirus outbreak.
- **StepChange** <https://www.stepchange.org/>
This is a national debt charity who offer free debt advice (either online or on the phone) that is based on a comprehensive assessment of individual situations, then provide practical help and support for however long it is needed. They have a dedicated webpage for those who suddenly find themselves in difficulty because of the coronavirus outbreak, which includes advice on managing finances, SSP and claiming benefits, and help with creditors.
<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/debt-and-coronavirus.aspx>

Croydon <https://www.croydon.gov.uk>.

- Residents may be eligible for a Discretionary Council Tax deferment (upon application).
<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/counciltax/requesting-a-deferred-council-tax-instalment>
- Help with benefit advice, form filling and benefit appeals (by email only).
- Croydon residents can claim Universal Credit if the coronavirus outbreak has caused a substantial change in their financial circumstances and they are now struggling (upon application).
- A Discretionary Housing payment may be available to top up housing-related benefit for a limited time to cover housing costs such as rent (upon application).
<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/discretionary-support/discretionary-housing-payment>
- A Discretionary Support fund is available if residents need help with essential goods items, rent (for those not currently in receipt of housing benefit), removals and emergency living expenses (upon application).
<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/discretionary-support/discretionary-support-fund>
- Croydon Foodbank <https://croydon.foodbank.org.uk/>

Lambeth <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/>

- Lambeth Larder Community Food Resource is a social enterprise based in South London who help connect local people to emergency food and other support. Access to foodbanks is by referral only.
<http://www.lambethlarder.org>
- Access to other food resources not requiring referrals or vouchers can be found at <http://www.lambethlarder.org/emergency-food.html> However, the majority (but not all) of these are for homeless and disadvantaged people.
- Lambeth Mutual Aid group – a Facebook page where people are offering unwanted items (nappies, incorrect food from a delivery, toys no longer needed), or recommend services (eg. places that will deliver roast dinners). They can point people in the right direction and a way of making friends!

- Financial advice: <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/get-support-for-yourself-or-a-vulnerable-person/financial-help-benefits-employment-support-housing-advice>
- Lambeth are offering help with deferred Council Tax payments and assistance with Universal Credit. They also offer an 'in-kind' support package, rather than cash grants, and may be available if residents 'are experiencing a crisis or an emergency'. Some of the things offered are high street vouchers, fuel payments, second hand furniture, refurbished white goods.
- Lambeth Foodbank <https://norwoodbrixton.foodbank.org.uk/>

Wandsworth <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/>

- Wandsworth Foodbank <https://wandsworth.foodbank.org.uk/> is delivering food to home addresses of voucher holders. All donations to be taken to St Mark's Battersea Rise during the pandemic
- Wandsworth Community Hub is working to help coordinate the support offered by the Council in partnership with Wandsworth's voluntary organisations. This is for residents, particularly the elderly and/or vulnerable without support networks, who need help to access medical, care services and food supplies to stay safe and well whilst at home. Contact is by phone or email only. <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health/coronavirus/community-hub/>
- Wandsworth Organisations - Directory of Support is a list of organisations and local charities offering help and support for families with babies and young children such as nappies and clothing. <https://wandsworthcarealliance.org.uk/coronavirus/wandsworth-organisations-that/>
- Wandsworth are offering help with deferred Council Tax payments and assistance with Universal Credit
- Catch 22 offers counselling for young people with mental health issues, domestic violence support, help for the elderly or simply someone to talk to.

Merton <https://www.merton.gov.uk/>

- Merton Council has a webpage listing help available for different groups eg. the elderly, disabled, vulnerable people, as well as offering services like legal advice, good quality second hand clothes for babies and young children, and community transport and food collection (mainly for those with a physical or sensory impairment, or those in poverty). <https://news.merton.gov.uk/covid19/#gethelp>
- They also have a Local Welfare Support Scheme to help support residents with short term severe financial difficulties. They will consider applications for grants, which do not have to be paid back. However, funding is very limited and, once distributed, no further funds will be available so the Council will have to exercise considerable discretion. <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-tax-benefits-and-housing/benefits/money-advice/local-welfare-support-scheme>
- Merton are offering help with deferred Council Tax payments and assistance with Universal Credit
- Merton Foodbank <https://wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk/>

Hammersmith and Fulham <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/>

- Residents may be entitled to support through a local support payments fund if they have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and need financial support. There is also guidance and help for residents facing hardship or difficulties <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/help-residents-facing-hardship-or-difficulties>
- They have a volunteer community aid network launched by the council to support residents in need during the coronavirus pandemic, offering support to residents who don't have friends or family close by to help them <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/hf-community-aid-network-can-freephone-0800-145-6095>
- Hammersmith and Fulham are offering help and advice with Council Tax payments and Universal Credit
- Hammersmith and Fulham Foodbank <https://hammersmithfulham.foodbank.org.uk/>

Lewisham <https://lewisham.gov.uk/>

- Lewisham Council offers information and guidance on issues such as internet safety and looking after children's wellbeing. <https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-parents>
- They have a webpage offering links to resources to support residents' mental health during the outbreak <https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/coronavirus-covid-19/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-covid19-outbreak>

- They have a webpage listing all the food donation points in the borough and how to access them. <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/community-support/communityledprojects/food-bank-donation-and-distribution-points>
- They offer advice about council tax deferred payments, universal credit and other benefits.
- Lewisham Foodbank <https://lewisham.foodbank.org.uk/>

Southwark <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/>

- Southwark Council is offering a debt recovery suspension, help and advice with council tax deferrals and help with rent payment if already on universal credit/other benefits. <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-the-public/coronavirus/financial-support-for-residents>
- They are offering help if residents are unable to afford food, or are self-isolating due to the outbreak, and lack other resources to meet their household's basic needs for short periods. <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-the-public/coronavirus/food-access>
- They are providing community grants to registered charities in the borough to provide relief and support to local people at risk of vulnerability and hardship because of the outbreak
- Southwark Foodbank <https://southwark.foodbank.org.uk/>

Sutton <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/>

- Sutton Council offers advice on council tax deferrals and benefits on their website
- They have a webpage with details of help and support from charitable organisations in the borough. It signposts who to contact for help for the elderly, children/babies/family support, unpaid adult and young carers, support for loss and bereavement and how to apply for foodbank vouchers (upon application/referral) https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200588/health_and_wellbeing/2099/covid-19_how_to_ask_for_help
- There is a Facebook link to the Sutton Coronavirus Support and Action Group, giving residents a chance to talk online with others.
- A webpage about how Sutton will be safeguarding children during this period, including distance learning, welfare calls, a duty helpline, virtual support from school nurses for parents and children regarding mental health, a virtual youth club twice a week for secondary school children, and a link to resources to help support families https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200588/health_and_wellbeing/2101/covid-19_children_and_families
- Sutton Foodbank <https://sutton.foodbank.org.uk/>