

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT



www.halton.gov.uk

#StrongKindSafe

This guide gives quick and easy ways to save money. You may already be doing these tips and more. Please do share with family and friends.

On Page 8 of this leaflet you will find details of organisations that can provide support and advice if you are suffering from hardship.

You can also visit our website:

www.halton.gov.uk/costofliving

You can also visit the web page

by scanning this QR code with your phone:





Energy (Gas and Electric)

1	Switch to LED lightbulbs which use less power. You can get LED lightbulbs in many local supermarkets, DIY and discount stores. Switch off lights when you leave the room.
2	Unplug any devices that you are not using including phone and laptop chargers. Even when you are not charging, they can be drawing some power if you don't unplug.
3	Turn off screens and monitors when you're done using them. Set your computer to 'sleep' when not in use and shut it down completely if you've finishing using it.
4	TVs – don't leave on standby, turn off at the plug before you leave the room or fall asleep. Can you reduce the amount of time the TV is on?
5	Kitchen appliances that you plug in can use a lot less power than your oven and hob. Use your microwave, kettle or toaster if it will do the job.
6	You can turn down thermostats on heating and boilers, they are often set higher than you need. – just a one or two degree difference in temperature can make a difference to how much you pay, but take care not to reduce too much or you could risk health problems.
7	Make sure second hand items have been tested and are safe before buying.
8	Ask your energy company about getting a smart meter so you can easily monitor electricity usage.
9	Batch cook – if you are having your oven on for a meal, think about cooking extra portions or putting in other bakes such as biscuits, bread or cakes. Could a meal plan help you make better use of energy and time?
10	Use timers to ensure devices switch off when you don't need them. Set timer alarms on your phone or kitchen timers to remind you if a device or cooking equipment is on. It is easy to get distracted and use more energy than you need.



Food and Groceries

11	Buying a store's own brand can typically save you up to 30% and is one of the easiest ways to save on groceries. See if you can tell the difference and if not, stick with the cheaper one.
12	Try not to shop when you're hungry – you're more likely to buy more or be tempted by offers and food you don't really need.
13	Do your research, check out retailer offer leaflets and on their websites to check prices. Plan your meals around the things that are on offer.
14	Know your unit prices – as well as the price of the item, there will be a price per kilo or 100g shown also. Always double check as it's not always cheaper to buy larger packets.
15	If you can, shop at the right time of day – different supermarkets tend to reduce items at certain points of the day. It may be worth asking a shop assistant what time the store usually marks down their prices.
16	Remember your bags so you don't have to buy more.
17	Look out for wonky fruit and veg, reduce waste boxes and other reductions to ensure food isn't going to waste. You could end up with some really good bargains, nutritious food and helping to reduce food waste.
18	Freeze everything that can be frozen – see www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for advice on what you can freeze – bananas, butter, bread, cakes and even sandwiches can all be frozen. Make the most of reduced items and freeze them as soon as you get home.
19	Organising your cupboards will ensure that you know what you already own. Have a 'use up' day, week or month. Look out for books in the library or on websites such as Jack Monroe – www.cookingonabootstrap.com and BBC Good Food www.bbc/food for easy budget recipes.



Washing

20	Run full loads of washing – cutting just one load of washing per week, even if you're already using cold water only will save money.
21	Wash clothes on a lower setting – using warm water instead of hot can cut a load's energy use in half. Most washing detergents will work on 30 degrees.
22	Check with your supplier to see if there is a time when it is cheaper to run your appliances – some offer lower tariffs between 10pm and 5am.
23	If you have a tumble dryer and must use it, aim to have it about three-quarters full. It'll mean fewer loads over time, and help your dryer work more efficiently. You can also get dryer balls that can help dry clothes quicker.
24	If you have a dishwasher, wash only full loads as you will use the same amount of water whether it's half-full or completely full. Most dishwashers heat water between 140-145° Fahrenheit. If you can, turn the water temperature to about 120°, (low to medium heat setting) to get clean dishes with less energy.
25	Do you need to wash clothes after just one wear? Most of us wash our clothes too often instead of airing it or spot cleaning. Clothes wear out much quicker if we over wash them.



Water

26	Never boil more water than you need. If you're making a drink for one then only use enough water for what you need.
27	Store cold water in your fridge – instead of running the tap until it goes cold, you could keep a jug of water in the fridge at all times – you can avoid wasting water each time you have a drink.
28	Have shorter showers. ...this will save on both water and electricity. Cutting by just one minute can make a difference over time.
29	Turn water off when shaving, washing hands, brushing teeth.
30	Check on the Save Water Save Money website (www.savewatersavemoney.co.uk) for free water saving gadgets – these are not means tested.
31	If you can, replace leaky dripping taps.
32	Use rainwater to water your plants – some water companies offer a water butt at a reduced rate.
33	If you've fallen behind with your water bill, call your water company and ask for help. Some water companies will offer you a repayment or 'restart' plan, whether you're on a meter or not.
34	Could you benefit from a water meter? Generally, the rule of thumb is that you will save money by having a water meter installed (done free of charge by your water company) if there are more bedrooms in your home than people.
35	Fill jugs, kettle or buckets of water whilst you're running the tap and waiting for warm water to come through. If you have a garden, you can then use it to water the garden and plants.



More Tips

36	Check the tyre pressures on your car, low tyre pressures creates a drag on your car which uses more fuel.
37	If you are driving at low speeds turn off your air conditioning – it uses more power and therefore fuel to run it.
38	Combine trips in the car or on public transport. Try and arrange to do shopping, appointments etc. in one trip.
39	You can join the local library for free and can get books including latest titles, films, music, internet/Wi-Fi, online magazines and audio books all for free. Why not pop in and find out more?
40	There are many local parks, museums, historic sites and nature reserves that are free to use – check out the Council’s libraries, parks and leisure section – www.halton.gov.uk – plan free days out and stay local.
41	Borrow, hire or swap things for any equipment that you need. Can you ask a neighbour or friend if you need tools, clothing (such as formal wear) or other expensive items that are only used occasionally?
42	Don’t auto renew on things like mobile phones, insurance etc. Use cost comparison sites to get the best deal. Put a reminder in your phone or on your calendar.
43	Do you need to upgrade? Really think whether the extra cost will give you value – on phones, services, memberships. Don’t be pressured into decisions.
44	Do a budget. Having a simple written plan can help you feel more in control and make better spending decisions – find out more at www.moneysaving-expert.com or www.moneyhelper.org.uk
45	If you are worrying about money and it is affecting your sleep, health and wellbeing, please ask for support. Search for the Mental Health Info Point on www.halton.gov.uk for information and support. If you have a bank, it may also be useful to contact them as they may be able to offer support.



Crisis/Urgent Support

Halton's social supermarkets are open to all, offering reduced priced food and household items:

- Queens Pantry: Queens Avenue, Ditton, WA8 8GR (Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm)
- The Route Café: Grenfell House, 116 Widnes Road, Widnes, WA8 6AX (Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm)
- Community Pantry: Palacefields Community Centre, WA7 2UA (Weds, 10am-12 noon)
- Halton Royal British Legion: British Legion, Castle Road, Runcorn, WA7 2BE (Tues, Weds & Fri, 1-2pm)

The **Community Shop** offers reduced price food and household items. To access the shop you must receive some form of benefit. Join for free by visiting

<https://www.companysshopgroup.co.uk/Profile/CommunityMember>

Location & opening times: Priors House, Northway, Palacefields, Runcorn, WA7 2FS (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm, Sat 8am-3pm).

Free School Meals

All children in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to receive a free school meal under the Universal Free School Meal entitlement.

Free school meals may also be available for your child if you receive means tested benefits. Find out more and apply for free school meals [here](#).

Local food banks

If you are struggling to get enough food due to hardship, you can be issued a voucher for use at a local food bank. Vouchers can be issued for 3 days' worth of food.

You need to be issued with a voucher from a referral agent to be able to use one of the food banks.

In the first instance, please get in touch with Halton Citizens Advice – **0151 257 2443**;
Wellbeing Enterprises Community Interest Company – **01928 589799**

To find out how to use the local foodbanks please find more information at:

Widnes – widnesfoodbank.org.uk

Runcorn – runcorndistrict.foodbank.org.uk

Discretionary Support

In urgent need, you can also apply to the **Council's discretionary support team** who may be able to help with food, energy and other items. Telephone **0800 952 0016** (Freephone from landlines) or e-mail **Discretionary.Support@halton.gov.uk**. Open 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4:30pm on a Friday.

Energy Projects Plus (EPP)

EPP's Save Energy Advice Line provides free and impartial help and advice on reducing your energy bills and keeping warm at home – including managing fuel debt and help with broken heating systems. They can also help you identify and apply for suitable support schemes that you may be eligible for (e.g. replacement white goods or fuel vouchers). Call 0800 043 0151 or visit www.epplus.org.uk

Cheshire Green Doctor (operated by Groundwork Cheshire)

Call free on 0330 1740 863 or email Greendoctor.CLM@groundwork.org.uk If you live in privately rented accommodation or own your own home, Cheshire Green Doctor can help you with finding the best energy tariff, installing energy saving measures and more.

For more information:

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This leaflet has been produced by the Public Health Team, Halton Borough Council. For more information please contact by e-mail to public.health@halton.gov.uk or call **0151 511 5200**.

