



Cost-of-living support

Find out what support is available to help you and your family get through the cost-of-living crisis.

Let us know if you're in financial difficulty

We know that many families are going through a tough time and we want to do everything we can to help you and your family, in the same way that we are supporting our staff and families. If you're struggling with your finances, please get in touch to let us know, as there may be things we can suggest which will help.

The Valley School

Broadhall Way

Stevenage

SG2 9BN Telephone: 01438 747274

Emails – Office: admin@thevalley.herts.sch.uk

Family Engagement Worker: louise.casey@thevalley.herts.sch.uk

SENCo: elaine.mcwilliams@thevalley.herts.sch.uk

Check if your child is entitled to free school meals (FSM)

If your child is eligible for FSM you need to get them registered. This will allow them to get a free meal at school, and we'll get extra funding (known as the pupil premium) to support your child's learning.

Go to [this government website](#) to check if your child is eligible. If they are, fill in the online application form and this will generate a code. Contact the school office and pass on the code to us.

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Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

You don't have to be a UK citizen to get support from your local CAB, you just need to be a resident of the local area. The CAB can help you with:

- Getting benefits or organising other financial support
- Accessing support for essential costs (food, bills, rent)

Visit the [Citizens Advice](#) website or contact your local branch to book an appointment.

Stevenage Citizen's Advice Bureau - Daneshill house, Danestrete, Stevenage SG1 1BY.

Tel: 0800 144 8848

Letchworth Citizen's Advice Bureau - 49 Station Rd, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3BQ. Tel: 0344 411 1444



Family Centres

Contact your local Family Centre to get help accessing all the support you might need as a family – this is available to families with children/siblings under the age of 5. [Find your local hub](#) here:

Baldock: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/holly-blue-family-centre>

Hitchin: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/bluebell-family-centre> and

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/york-road-family-centre>

Letchworth: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/icknield-family-centre> and

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/lime-tree-family-centre>

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/chestnut-tree-family-centre#19bb5007-3d1a-724d-8ba0-17d8e89f5dab>

Stevenage: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/strawberry-fields-family-centre>

Royston: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/hertfordshire-county-council/access-guides/royston-and-villages-family-centre>

Check you're paying the right amount of tax

Make sure you're on the right tax code. If you aren't you might be due a refund. Use the [Money Saving Expert's](#) free tax code calculator to find out.

Claim any benefits you're entitled to

Use 1 of these benefits calculators to determine whether there are any benefits you could be claiming:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)
- [Support for migrant families](#) – use this calculator if you are a migrant family, or if you have no recourse to public funds (meaning you're not entitled to the majority of welfare benefits)

You may be able to get benefits paid early if you need cash urgently – this is known as ‘a short-term benefit advance’. You will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office that’s dealing with your claim.

Stevenage Job Centre - The Forum, 38-44, Stevenage SG1 1EZ. Tel: 0800 169 0190

Letchworth Job Centre - 2 Station Rd, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3AZ. Tel: 0800 169 0190



Through the Herts Local Offer, families can register for a ‘HAND’ card. This entitles bearers of the card to discounts in participating Hertfordshire businesses.

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/courses-and-activities-in-hertfordshire/hertfordshire-additional-needs-database.aspx>

Check you’ve received all the government’s cost-of-living payments

The government’s [cost-of-living payments](#) are available for those receiving certain benefits or tax credits. You don’t need to apply for these – if you’re eligible the money should go straight into your account.

If you think you’re due a payment but haven’t received one, [report a missing payment](#) to the government here.

Be aware of scams! If you receive any emails, texts or phone calls asking you to fill in an application form or asking for your bank details to receive a cost-of-living payment, **do not talk to them or send a reply**. Get more information on [cost-of-living scams](#) on the Money Saving Expert’s website.

Find out what help you can get with your energy bills

Take a look at these resources from the [British Gas Energy Trust](#) and the [Money Saving Expert](#).

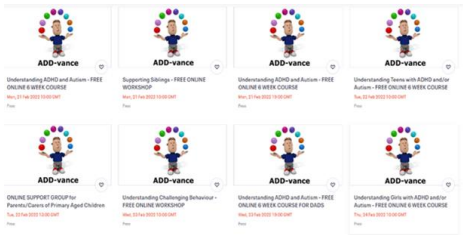
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See what other support you can get from your local authority

Hertfordshire Local Offer is a great resource for all of our families, as it contains advice and support around all things SEN. This includes links to make self-referrals for respite and access to workshops. There are also links to Wellbeing activities for the whole family.



<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx>

Local authorities have many schemes that you might be eligible for, including:

- The [Holiday Activities and Food Programme](#) – access to food and activities over the school holidays. Note that if your child is eligible for free school meals (see above), they'll also qualify for this programme
- [Help with transport to school](#)
- [Help with school uniform costs](#)



Get free or low-cost food

If you're worried about not having enough food to feed your family, you're not alone. There are a number of places offering support.

- If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to [healthy start food vouchers](#)
- Contact our Family Engagement Worker for details and referrals from school to local foodbanks - <mailto:louise.casey@thevalley.herts.sch.uk>
- Find your local food bank here: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/food-providers-north-herts;> <https://directory.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Services/8458>
- [Bankuet](#), [The Independent Food Aid Network](#), the [Trussell Trust](#), or your local [community fridge](#)
- Use food waste apps and websites like [Olio](#) (for free food and household items from your local community), [Too Good To Go](#) (for low-cost food from local restaurants), or [Low Price Foods](#) (food that has passed its best before date, but is still safe to eat)
- Get more tips on free and cheap meals from [Which](#)



Free hygiene products

- In school, we keep a stock of feminine hygiene products for students using in school and can supply students with products to take home. Students can ask whoever they feel most comfortable asking, or go directly to Mrs Casey, our Family Engagement Worker.

-  **Morrisons** stores run a discreet service where customers can ask at the Customer Services desk for a 'package for Sandy' and they will be given an envelope containing what is needed.

- Find the cheapest disposable sanitary products on [Sanitary Saver](#)
- The Valley School have teamed up with The Hygiene Bank and we are hoping to be able to access most hygiene products in the near future. Please contact Mrs Casey to have your name added to the list.

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Replace or repair household items at a low cost or for free

Check if you can get broken household goods replaced or repaired by your local community.

- Get free household goods on [Freecycle](#)
 - Get help with DIY repairs at a [Repair Cafe](#)
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Find a warm space to beat the chill

Some community spaces open their doors to provide a safe and warm space for a few hours. Many also offer hot drinks and wifi.



Communities 1st

Working with you to make a bigger difference

<https://www.communities1st.org.uk/warm-hubs>



<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/stevenage-warm-spaces-network>

Find a warm bank on:

- [Warm Welcome](#)
 - [Warm Spaces](#)
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Further information

- Contact [StepChange](#) for debt advice
- Contact [Shelter](#) if you're having issues related to housing
- Contact the [Salvation Army](#) for emergency assistance
- See if you're eligible for [grants from Turn2us](#)
- Single parents can get support from [Gingerbread](#)