

Electricity and gas companies

Each of the main energy companies has helplines through which its customers can get in touch and discuss options around making the payment of their bill more manageable. Companies also provide additional support for older people or customers who are particularly vulnerable, and energy efficiency advice.

If you have difficulties in getting in contact with a company, the Consumer Council's staff are able to assist. Please call 0800 121 6022 to ask for help from them.

Budget Energy
Tel: 0800 012 1177

Phoenix Natural Gas
Tel: 03454 55 55 55

Click Energy NI
Tel: 0800 107 0732

Power NI
Tel: 03457 455 455

Electric Ireland
Tel: 0800 313 4926

SSE Airtricity - Electricity
Tel: 0345 601 9093

Firmus Energy
Tel: 0330 024 9000

SSE Airtricity - Gas
Tel: 0345 900 5253

FOODBANKS

To contact your local food bank, call the Trussell Trust's Northern Ireland helpline on 0800 915 4604 or view the map at the following link: www.trusselltrust.org/find-a-foodbank

Food banks work with referral agencies (such as a local church or an organisation such as Advice NI) to issue food vouchers to people in need of food in times of crisis. Visiting a food bank might seem daunting but you'll get a warm welcome in a safe environment, a listening ear and a food parcel by showing your voucher to the trained volunteers.

OTHER HELPLINES

Helplines NI is a membership-led organisation consisting of over 30 different helplines operating across Northern Ireland.

The helplines provide a variety of forms of support including information, advice, counselling, a listening ear and befriending, and offer immediate support to people with a wide range of health and wellbeing needs. Many of the services are provided over the phone, but some can help via text message or online.

Please visit www.helplinesni.com where you can search for an issue about which you would like to speak to someone. The member helplines are run by public, voluntary and community organisations. Not all helplines are free to call, so it is best to check each website for more information before calling.

SUPPORT FROM DIOCESAN CHARITIES

Some dioceses have charitable welfare funds and educational funds that can help families in need. The best source of information about these will be your diocesan office.

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**COST
OF
LIVING**

**HELPFUL
INFORMATION**

NORTHERN IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

I hope that the information that is to be found in this booklet is helpful and useful. My plea is that, if you think it is going to be helpful, you use it as much as you need to.



The circumstances of everyday living are spinning out of the control, and indeed the grasp, of more and more people. Escalating prices mean escalating hardship.

Coping from month to month now means coping from day to day. These contacts are designed to help you, and anyone with whom you wish to share this information, in coping discreetly and on your own terms. People who never thought they would be in such a position as this are making choices to exclude essentials from their lives, not luxuries. If this is where you, or any of your friends and neighbours, find yourselves please seek help sooner rather than later. Help is there, and I hope that you will make the contact to connect with a source of help who will be ready to listen to and support you.

Archbishop Michael Jackson
Chair, Church and Society Commission

DEBT & PERSONAL FINANCES

Advice NI
Tel: 0800 915 4604

A trained adviser will take your call, listen to you and help you find debt and budget advice and support to maximise your income, navigate the benefits system, and identify any additional benefits to which you could be entitled.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP)
Tel: 0800 328 0006

CAP works with local churches to give free help for getting out of debt, budgeting, making your money go further, and/or help finding a job.

Make the Call
Tel: 0800 232 1271

A helpline provided by the Department for Communities to help you check if you are missing out on any benefits, services and support to which you are entitled.

Money Helper
Tel: 0800 138 7777

The MoneyHelper helpline and website (www.moneyhelper.org.uk), provided by the UK Government, seeks to help make personal choices around money and pensions clearer.

St Vincent de Paul
Tel: (028) 9035 1561

Through person-to-person contact, St Vincent de Paul considers how it may best help e.g. through financial support, or information or advice on other services or entitlements.

Step Change Debt Charity
Tel: 0800 138 1111

Step Change is a national debt charity (www.stepchange.org) which seeks to help people with debt problems to take back control of their finances and their lives.

ENERGY & HOUSEHOLD COSTS

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
Tel: 0800 121 6022

The Consumer Council provides free, independent support and advice for all consumers and businesses in Northern Ireland. Its website (www.consumerCouncil.org.uk) provides price comparison tools and advice guides on budgeting and managing the costs of living - including around transport, energy, food shopping, home heating oil, insurance, broadband and postage.

Northern Ireland Energy Advice Line
Tel: 0800 111 44 55

Free independent and impartial energy advice to domestic householders in the region - including advice about grants and other sources of help.

National Energy Action
Tel: 0800 304 7159

A national fuel poverty and energy efficiency charity, providing advice and support both to people in need, and to others working on their behalf.

