

**WIRRAL COVID-19 – SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS (updated 15/1/21)****INFORMATION FOR INTERNAL COUNCIL SERVICES & PARTNERS**

**This covers the period up to 31 March 2021**

**Wirral InfoBank**

The Wirral InfoBank website has details of local community support services including help available in local areas and up-to date advice and information about Coronavirus (COVID-19). Visit: [www.wirralinfobank.co.uk](http://www.wirralinfobank.co.uk).

**Help with food shopping delivery (e.g., if self -isolating)**

For residents who need with help with the delivery of food shopping, there are many local organisations who can support, which can be found at: [www.wirralinfobank.co.uk](http://www.wirralinfobank.co.uk).

For those self-isolating and/or vulnerable (including those written to by the government as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) there is also help available for arranging a priority supermarket delivery slot.

Applicants (or someone acting on their behalf) can call Wirral Coronavirus Helpline on **0151 666 5050** or complete a form online [www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport).

**Emergency food – cannot afford food and in crisis**

An emergency food hamper may be provided by Wirral Emergency Food Hub, this is a partnership between Wirral Council and Wirral Foodbank, and a range of other partners. Emergency financial support may also be available from Wirral Council for individuals and families in crisis who are in urgent need of food.

Applicants (or someone acting on their behalf) can call Wirral Coronavirus Helpline on **0151 666 5050** or complete a form online [www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport).

A wide range of local support with food, including social supermarkets (discounted food and essential supplies) can be found at: [www.wirralinfobank.co.uk](http://www.wirralinfobank.co.uk).

Additional help is available over the February half-term for school age children entitled to Free School Meals and nursery age children entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium/Two Year funding. The Holiday Food & Activities for Children Project is being co-ordinated by Neo Community on behalf of the Council, with schools, nurseries and Children's Centres identifying families that need extra help over the holidays. Any queries can be directed to: [fsm@neocommunity.org.uk](mailto:fsm@neocommunity.org.uk).

**Help with utilities**

Residents who are having problems topping up their gas and electricity as a result of financial hardship should contact their energy supplier in the first instance. More information is available about this online: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/housing/help-your-home/problems-topping-your-energy-supply-due-coronavirus-outbreak>.

Wirral Council can only help individuals with financial support for their gas and electricity if their need is urgent and they are on a pre-payment meter. If awarded, a referral for a £49 fuel voucher will be made to the Fuel Bank Foundation.

Applicants (or someone acting on their behalf) can call Wirral Coronavirus Helpline on **0151 666 5050** or complete a form online [www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport).

Citizens Advice Wirral, Energy Projects Plus and Involve Northwest can also provide more in-depth support, which may include referral to the Fuel Bank Foundation for non-emergency help with fuel.

In addition to other debt reduction options available, Citizens Advice Wirral and Energy Projects Plus can, in certain circumstances and in partnership with the Council, provide financial help to clear or reduce utility debt (including water) up to £500 per household. This is only an option as part of a case management approach, so clients cannot be referred for this in isolation.

Citizens Advice Wirral – Call **0808 278 7848** or refer here: <https://citizensadvicewirral.org.uk/partner-referral-form/>

Energy Projects Plus – Call **0800 043 0151** or refer here: <https://www.epplus.org.uk/referrals>.

Involve Northwest – Call **0151 644 4516** or refer via email: [connectus@involenorthwest.org.uk](mailto:connectus@involenorthwest.org.uk).

### **Help with heating loss or inadequate heating**

Energy Projects Plus, in partnership with the Council, can provide help for people in financial crisis who have a sudden failure in heating by funding the cost of an emergency call out by a heating engineer. Support can be requested by an individual or someone acting on their behalf.

If help is needed due to an issue with the boiler being highly inefficient and/or coming to the end of its life, support can be requested by an individual or someone acting on their behalf.

Energy Projects Plus – Call **0800 043 0151** or refer here: <https://www.epplus.org.uk/referrals>.

Any vulnerable household without heating or with unsafe or inadequate heating can be referred to Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service for a 'Safe & Well' visit which may include the provision of a temporary oil filled radiator and/or a 'Warm & Well Pack' (consisting of a blanket, warm outer clothing, etc.).

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service – Call **0800 731 5958** or refer via the attached **Vulnerable Persons Referral Form**.

### **Help with essential household items (furniture, white goods, etc.)**

Emergency financial support may be available from Wirral Council for individuals and families in crisis who need help with household items such as white goods, essential furniture and kitchen items, bedding, clothing and other items, due to an emergency situation or disaster. Whilst this does not include help with school uniform, it does include winter school shoes.

Applicants (or someone acting on their behalf) can call Wirral Coronavirus Helpline on **0151 666 5050** or complete a form online [www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport).

Community-based support is available for households that do not meet the criteria and/or level of financial crisis for support through the above scheme. The schemes below are also subject to assessment by the respective organisations; both have borough-wide coverage.

North Birkenhead Development Trust – Details can be found here:

[www.birkenheadreliefinsickness.com](http://www.birkenheadreliefinsickness.com) (this is not restricted to Birkenhead). Applications must be completed by a referrer; households cannot apply directly. Queries can be directed to: [bris@nbd.org.uk](mailto:bris@nbd.org.uk).

St Vincent de Paul Society, Wirral – Email: [PresidentF180805@svp.org.uk](mailto:PresidentF180805@svp.org.uk) (Rose Mullarkey) or Text: **07905952798** (requesting a call back). Applications from referrers are preferred but households can apply directly.

### **Help with loss of income for those employed/self-employed due to self-isolation (Test & Trace Support Payment)**

Residents who have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate will be entitled to a £500 support payment if they meet all of the following requirements:

- they comply with the NHS Test and Trace notification to self-isolate.
- they are employed or self-employed.
- they are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
- they are in receipt of Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-based Employment and Support Allowance, Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

Individuals who meet the criteria and are on a low income but are not in receipt of one of these benefits, and will suffer significant financial hardship, may still be entitled to financial support under a special discretionary fund.

Applicants (or someone acting on their behalf) can call Wirral Coronavirus Helpline on **0151 666 5050** or complete a form online [www.wirral.gov.uk/covidpayment](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/covidpayment). Applicants will need to register for a 'My Wirral' account, if they have not already, before applying.

### **Help with benefits, debt or housing advice and support with any other practical issue**

The 'Ask Us Wirral' service run by Citizens Advice Wirral can help. Call **0808 278 7848**. The service can also support with advice for people who have become unemployed, or are self-employed, and this has resulted in a change to income. Call the Citizens Advice Wirral 'Help to Claim' team on **0800 144 8444**. Further information can be found online: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-check-what-benefits-you-can-get/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-check-what-benefits-you-can-get/).