



**Cost of living:
We're here to help
2023/24**

Life continues to throw many challenges at us all. We want to make sure that you are aware of the help and support available from a range of services in your area.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council - we're here to help

Visit the online Cost of Living Support Hub at www.stockton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-hub to find resources in a 'one-stop shop'. It has information about all the support services available including energy saving schemes, welfare assistance and food banks, as well as health, housing and employment advice.



You can also call our main switchboard on **01642 393939** for assistance or call services directly which are generally open from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

- Back on Track (emergency welfare support) - **01642 524180**
- Benefits - **01642 393829**
- Blue badges - **01642 524441**
- Business rates - **01642 397108**
- Care For Your Area - **01642 391959**
- Change of address - **01642 397108**
- Children's Hub (Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees) - **01429 284284**
- Adult Services First Contact - **01642 527764**
- Community Transport (term-time) - **01642 527117**
- Council Tax - **01642 397108**
- Environmental health - **01642 526575**
- Homelessness and housing solutions - **01642 528389**
- Learning and Skills Service - **01642 527904**
- Private sector housing - **01642 527797**
- Public health - **01642 528474**
- Schools - **01642 526605**
- Warm Homes Healthy People - **01642 528215**
- Household Support Fund helpline - **01642 526070**



Our Customer Service Centres are open 9.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, for the collection of recycling equipment, digital assistance and face-to-face appointments. Library staff are also available in each venue to help you access our online services at:

Stockton Library and Customer Service Centre - Church Road, Stockton, TS18 1TU

Billingham Library and Customer Service Centre - Billingham Town Centre, TS23 2LN

Thornaby Library and Customer Service Centre - Pavilion Shopping Centre, TS17 9EW

Fuel, energy, utilities and housing

Community Spaces

Community Spaces are open across the Borough where residents can go to get warm, receive support, avoid social isolation and generally stay well. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/community-spaces to view the online directory or call **01642 393939** to find your nearest venue.

Stockton District Advice & Information Service

Independent advice on how to reduce energy costs and keep your home as warm as possible. Call **01642 626106** Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.



Energy Advice Service from Northern Powergrid

The service provides dedicated help to combat fuel poverty and gives advice to people experiencing difficulties with their energy costs. Call **0800 448 0721** Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

Heating emergencies

Cleveland Fire Brigade can provide heaters and other equipment in cases of emergency 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call **01429 874063**.

National Energy Action

National Energy Action works to ensure everyone in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is warm and safe at home. Call **0800 304 7159** Monday to Friday, from 10am to 12noon.

Northumbrian Water

If you are on a low income, Northumbrian Water may be able to reduce your bill by up to 50%. To find out more, call **0345 733 5566** or visit **www.nwl.co.uk/supportplus**

Warm Homes Healthy People

Warm Homes Healthy People helps people most at risk of the effects of cold weather with emergency heating, debt advice, and boiler servicing and repairs for eligible homes. Visit **www.stockton.gov.uk/warm-homes-healthy-people** or call **01642 528215** between Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm, or Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

The HIA offer a handyman service for low-level DIY jobs that help to reduce falls and accidents. They may also be able to assist with minor adaptations and applications for grants and loans. Eligibility criteria applies. Call **01642 526904** for more information.

Energy Helpline

A price comparison advice service that is focussed on putting consumers first and ensuring that energy switching is swift, simple and hassle free. Call **0800 074 0745** Monday to Friday, from 9am to 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday, from 9am to 5pm.

Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline

Independent advice on how to reduce energy costs and keep a warm home. Call **0808 223 1133** Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

Simple Energy Advice


Impartial and independent advice to help reduce energy bills, plus making your home warmer and greener. Call **0800 444 202** Monday to Friday, from 8am to 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday, from 9am to 5pm.

Priority Services Register


This free support service makes sure extra energy help is there for people in vulnerable situations (e.g. pensioners, disabilities, poor sense of smell etc.) and offer priority support in emergencies, power cuts and more. Contact your energy supplier or network operator and ask to be added to their register.

Money, debt and benefits advice

Stockton District Advice and Information Service (Citizens Advice Bureau) are based in Wellington Square in Stockton and provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to anyone about debt, welfare benefits, energy, grants, housing and any other welfare problems.

 All enquiries: **01642 633877** or **0800 144 8848**

Energy advice: **01642 626106**


 Debt advice: **01642 626124** or

 **debtadmin@stockton-cab.co.uk**


 **support@stockton-cab.co.uk**

 **www.stockton-cab.co.uk**

Welfare Support is available by calling **01642 524180** Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 5pm, or Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

 **www.stockton.gov.uk/welfare-assistance** for crisis support, settlement support and 'Back on Track' information

Tees Credit Union provides convenient and easy access to basic financial services like savings accounts and loans to people who live or work in the Borough.

 **01642 941911**

 **info@teescreditunion.co.uk**

Stockton Welfare Advice Network (SWAN) provides free information on a range of issues affecting people including information on benefits.

 **www.stocktonadvice.org.uk** for more information

Christians Against Poverty provides debt advice to anyone regardless of their religious beliefs. Their free services offer practical and emotional support, including a Job Club which can help you gain the tools you'll need to find work.

 **0800 328 0006**

Stop Loan Sharks investigates and prosecutes illegal money lenders and provides support for borrowers. Anonymous calls and reports are welcome.


 **0300 555 2222**

 Access the live chat via **www.stoploansharks.co.uk**

Broadband help - Contact your broadband provider and ask about their social tariffs. It's also worth shopping around on comparison websites for cheaper deals.

 See the advice on **www.moneysavingexpert.com**


Age UK Advice Line provides reliable and up to date information for older people and their families.

 **0800 678 1620** every day between 8am to 7pm for support

MoneyHelper provides Government-backed advice available across benefits, everyday money, family and care, homes, mortgage support, work, savings, pensions and retirement.

 **www.moneyhelper.org.uk** for more information

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment issued by the Department of Work & Pensions for people in or out of work.

 **www.stockton.gov.uk/universal-credit** for more information and to get help with your claim

Mortgage help - if you're struggling to meet your repayments, you may be able to access government support schemes. Contact your lender as soon as possible.

Visit **www.moneyhelper.org.uk** for more information

Skills and employment

Stockton-on-Tees Employment and Training Hub

If you're over 16, our team of experts can help with anything employment or training related. Find the hub in Wellington Square, Stockton, open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm, call **01642 528392** or email **hub@stockton.gov.uk**

Stockton Learning & Skills Service

A new prospectus filled with lots of cost-saving and wellness courses is available at **www.slss.ac.uk** or you can call **01642 527916** for more information.

Food support



Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network

Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network (SFPN) is a group of foodbanks, pantries, eco-shops and charities working together to offer food support across the Borough.

Food banks operate on a referral basis and supply free emergency food parcels consisting of basic, everyday items for those in need. Referrals can be issued by organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, your GP or a social worker.

Community pantries and eco-shops offer affordable food as well as toiletries and household items at low prices. They do not require referrals and everyone is welcome.

Scan the QR code below or visit www.stockton.gov.uk/SFPN to access community food leaflets, which detail what's available and where across the Borough. These are also available in Arabic.



The Bread and Butter Thing

As part of the Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network, the Council's A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Team in partnership with Thirteen are bringing five mobile food hubs offering high-quality, low-cost food via The Bread and Butter Thing.

Prices range from £5 for a single bag, £8.50 for the standard three-bag package and £17 for a six bag 'family' deal. On average, you can expect to save around £25 versus buying the products you receive if you picked them up at a supermarket!

Membership is free of charge and with no obligation. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/the-bread-and-butter-thing for details on hub locations, service times and more information.



The bread and butter thing.



NHS Healthy Start

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. If so, the NHS will send you a Healthy Start card with credit to be used in some shops which is topped up every 4 weeks. Visit www.healthystart.nhs.uk for more information and to apply.

Shop and restaurant offers

MoneySavingExpert regularly update their handy listings of supermarkets, cafes and restaurants offering free and low-cost deals, often aimed for families with children. Visit www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/food-and-drink

Free School Meals

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if they are in key stage 1 or if you receive certain benefits. Depending on the school your child attends, you can either apply via the school directly or via the Citizen Portal. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/free-school-meals for more information.



Health and wellbeing

Living well and living longer

The Council's Public Health Team have important health advice and commission a range of services which you may find useful.

Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/public-health-and-wellbeing for more information.

Social isolation and loneliness

Community Connect Stockton-on-Tees offers one-to-one or group sessions to help you access local groups, activities and services in the community. You can meet new people, attend hobby and social groups, improve your digital skills and make lifestyle changes. For more information contact **01642 647770** or email communityconnectston@pcp.uk.net

Domestic Abuse

Everyone deserves to, and should, live without fear. If you have any reason to think someone is in immediate danger, or your life may be at risk, call **999**. If it's not safe to speak, press 55 when prompted if calling on a mobile and your call will be transferred to the police. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-support for more information.

Gambling support

Is gambling damaging your finances and relationships? There is help out there. Visit the health and wellbeing section of the Cost of Living Hub at www.stockton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-hub or call GambleAware's freephone 24-7 helpline on **0808 8020 133**.

Change, Grow, Live (CGL)

If you are struggling with drugs or alcohol, CGL are here for you. They'll work with you to explore treatment options and help take care of your health and wellbeing. Together, you can make a tailor-made plan to help you achieve your goals - whatever they may be. To refer yourself, or someone else, call **01642 673888** or visit www.changegrowlive.org/recovery-service-stockton/info

Stockton social prescribing link workers

Hartlepool and Stockton Health's staff provide free support connect people to community groups, access financial support, befriending services, carer's support, home safety and more - call **01642 061047**.

The Halcyon Centre

This day service is for adults and older people, including those with dementia. A place can only be offered following a social worker assessment. Contact the First Contact team on **01642 527764** or firstcontactadults@stockton.gov.uk

LiveWell Dementia Hub

This community-based service provides dementia information, support and training for those living with dementia, their carers and families. Visit the hub at Thorntree Road, Thornaby, TS17 8AP, call **01642 527363** or email livewell-hub@stockton.gov.uk

Age UK Teesside

A free, personalised service to help people 65 and over to improve their lives and finances. Call **01642 805500** Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm.



Mental health support

Feelings of stress, anxiety or low mood can affect everyone but there is support available. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/public-health-and-wellbeing to see what's on offer, including:

- **Impact on Teesside** - a free, confidential service for anyone aged over 16 with self-referral available. Call **01642 573924** or email enquiries@impactonteesside.com
- **Middlesbrough & Stockton MIND** - a confidential service for people with emotional or mental health needs and their families. Call **01642 257020** or email info@middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk
- **CRUSE Bereavement Service** - support for people dealing with the challenges arising from a bereavement. Call **0808 808 1677**.
- **NHS Every Mind Matters** - offers wellbeing tips, advice on mental health issues, supporting others and urgent help. Visit www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters
- **Samaritans** - phoneline open 24/7 and free to call for a one-to-one conversation, whatever you're going through and if you are struggling to cope, on **116 123**.



Adult and Children's Support Services

Worried about a child?

If you have concerns that a child or young person is being abused or neglected, or that they may be at risk of harm, contact (in office hours) The Children's Hub on **01429 284284** or email **childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk**. To report a concern outside of office hours, call the Emergency Duty Team on **01642 524552**. In an emergency, contact the police on **999**.

Safeguarding adults

Everyone has the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. If you feel uncomfortable about something, contact us to discuss it. In an emergency contact the police on **999**, or call **101** if you think a crime has been committed related to abuse or neglect. If you are still worried about something but you don't think it is a crime, contact our First Contact Team on **01642 527764** or (out of hours) call the Emergency Duty Team on **01642 524552**.

First Contact Team

The team provide advice and information relating to adult social care. The team can help you access services that support you and your needs. These services aim to help you maintain your independence and access care and occupational therapy, if required, as well as creating links with the voluntary sector and your local community. People living with disabilities, as well as those caring for them, can access support. Call **01642 527764** or email **FirstContactAdults@stockton.gov.uk**

Emergency Duty Service

The service provides out-of-hours response to emergency situations involving child protection, childcare, mental health and other adult service matters. It is a contact point for advice and, where necessary, immediate service to individuals and families who are experiencing crisis. Call **01642 524552**.

Homelessness Team

We can help most people who are homeless or at risk of losing their home. Call **01642 528389** during normal opening hours, otherwise call the Emergency Duty Team on **01642 524552**.

Stockton Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART)

The team identify help for families requiring additional support, regardless of need. The SMART coordinators, social care officers, health, Department for Work & Pensions, Harbour (domestic abuse service) and Eastern Ravens (young carers service) will help you access the support you need. Any parent, carer or child can contact the team, or an organisation or agency currently involved with a family can make a referral with a parent or guardian's consent. Contact **01642 528808** or **SMARTAdminMailbox@stockton.gov.uk**

Support in Your Community

Stockton Information Directory (SID)

The SID provides details of services, advice and support for adults, children, young people and families living in Stockton-on-Tees. Visit www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org for more information.

Family Hubs

The Stockton-on-Tees Family Hubs are here to help. The four hubs are based in Thornaby, Central Stockton, Billingham and Redhill - to find details of your nearest hub, call **01642 393939** or visit www.stockton.gov.uk/family-hubs

Libraries

Libraries offer a warm communal space, internet access, book-lending and more. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/libraries for more information.

Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees

Catalyst provides the voice of the VCSE sector in our area and run a wide range of projects for the betterment of the Borough. From their Community Hub to Stockton Volunteers, from Reducing Inequalities to Social Lights and from the Wellbeing Hub to the Holiday Activities & Food Programme – there's so much you can benefit from and get involved with. Visit www.catalyststockton.org/projects to learn more.

Clothing Banks and School Uniforms

Clothing banks and school uniform exchanges are a great way to cut costs when it comes to children's clothes. We maintain a list of venues offering high quality items that are clean and ready for use. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/clothing-banks to find your nearest venue or www.stockton.gov.uk/school-uniform-support for help with school uniform costs.

Holidays are Fun (HAF)

School-age children, from reception to year 11, who are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals are eligible for a HAF place to enjoy holiday activities and a meal. A wide range of activities including sports, arts/crafts, cooking, games and more are on offer. All sessions are run by experienced organisations where children will have fun and can make new friends. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/haf for more information or call **01642 527752**.

Databank

The Fairer Stockton-on-Tees team work with vulnerable families and individuals to provide free mobile data, calls and texts. Digital exclusion means people cannot access vital public online services, stay connected with family and friends, or get the health, housing, education or employment material they need.

Email fsot@stockton.gov.uk or call **01642 526098** for more information.

Refugee & Asylum Seekers

We are very proud of our longstanding track record of supporting vulnerable people who are in need of a safe place to rebuild their lives.

Visit www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org and search 'asylum' to view available support.

Concessionary Bus Passes

This pass allows you to travel free of charge anywhere within the Tees Valley between 9.30am and 11pm on weekdays and anytime at weekends.

Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/concessionary-bus-pass to check eligibility or call **01642 526662** for more information.

Community Transport

The Council operates several free community transport bus services for people who are unable to access, or have difficulty accessing, local bus services. View route maps and timetables at www.stockton.gov.uk/community-transport

For more information and to apply for a membership card, call **01642 528499**.

Here to Help events

Working with the Stockton-on-Tees Community Partnerships and Catalyst, the Council is offering sessions once a month with many different agencies available to provide support for all things. Whether you're worried about finances or health, just drop in - visit www.stockton.gov.uk/here-to-help for your nearest session and time.



For more information about this booklet or if you require any further copies, please email FSOT@stockton.gov.uk



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL