**District Dispatch**

If you’re struggling with issues such as being in rent arrears, or not being able to pay your household bills, then our Supporting You Team is here to help. Our team of specialist trained advisors work alongside our other council teams. Their role is to help people access a wide range of help including maximising income; debt signposting; employment advice; budgeting support; food provision, helping to pay bills, plus signposting clients to our health and wellbeing team.

The team was established in 2022 in response to the cost-of-living crisis, to help those who were struggling. Since launching, they have helped thousands of people across the district with support and advice through their holistic approach. We’ve been able to help many people get back on an even keel and feel more in control of their financial situation. The team often look after cases where several different issues are involved, resulting in a complex and often distressing situation for the resident. This could be a housing problem compounded by financial issues, which can then go on to have a huge impact on their general health and wellbeing.

The team can take an overview of their situation, helping with all the different issues. Their role means that they have more time to really talk with a client and find out about what they are going through. Most people don’t know the level of support they are entitled to and it’s amazing how a few changes can transform someone’s life and their outlook. People often say they feel more empowered and can breathe easier following our support.

If you’re struggling, then here are our top five tips to ensure that you or a loved one are claiming what you are entitled to. It’s firstly worth having a look at our benefits and budgeting calendar: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/benefitsandbudgetingcalculator**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/benefitsandbudgetingcalculator).All you need to do is to fill in the details, then generate an estimate of your benefits entitlement. If you need further advice and support, you can choose to share your information with one of our Supporting You advisors who can provide further support and tips on how to make savings in your budget.

Secondly, if you are eligible for the State Pension, then it’s also worth checking to see whether you’re entitled to Pension Credit which is one of the most under-claimed benefits by visiting: [**www.gov.uk/pension-credit**](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit). The scheme can also provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with housing costs — from housing benefit (if you rent the property you live in), to support for mortgage interest (if you own the property you live in). It can also help you claim help with council tax, heating bills and for those aged 75 or over, a free TV licence. If you or your partner receive certain benefits you may also qualify for the Winter Fuel Payment: [**www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment**](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment) which is designed to help you cover your costs over the winter months.

If you have a disability or health condition that means you need someone to help look after you, and you are of state pension age, it is worth checking if you qualify for Attendance Allowance: [**www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance**](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)**.** This helps with extra costs to help someone look after you. If you are on a low income or someone in your household receives mean tested benefits, then it is also worth checking with your utility provider if you qualify for a reduced tariff on your utility bills.

Finally, if you are on a low income, you could access support through housing benefit and council tax reduction. You can find out more about this at: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction)

You can make an appointment with a member of our Supporting You team or access more information by visiting: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyouteam**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyouteam)or you can email: **supportingyou@chichester.gov.uk**or call: 01243 534860.

Best Wishes

Cllr Oona Hickson

Cabinet Member for Housing, Revenues and Benefits at Chichester District Council

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| A logo with text on it  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | **Terri Foster**Senior Communications OfficerCommunicationsChichester District Council |

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