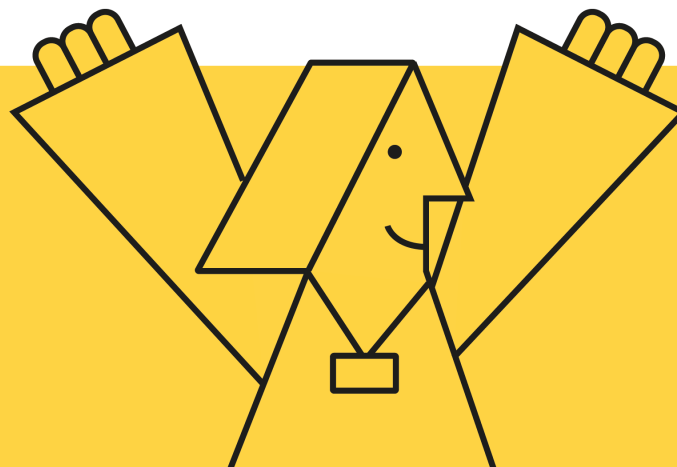


Our People

Here for You



www.wigan.gov.uk/hereforyou

Background

Our People

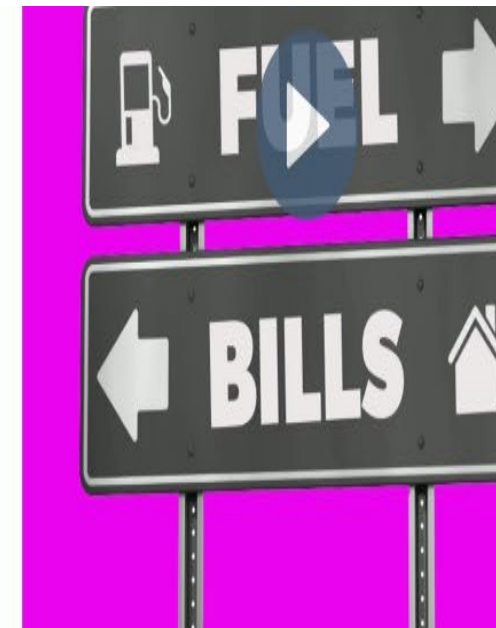
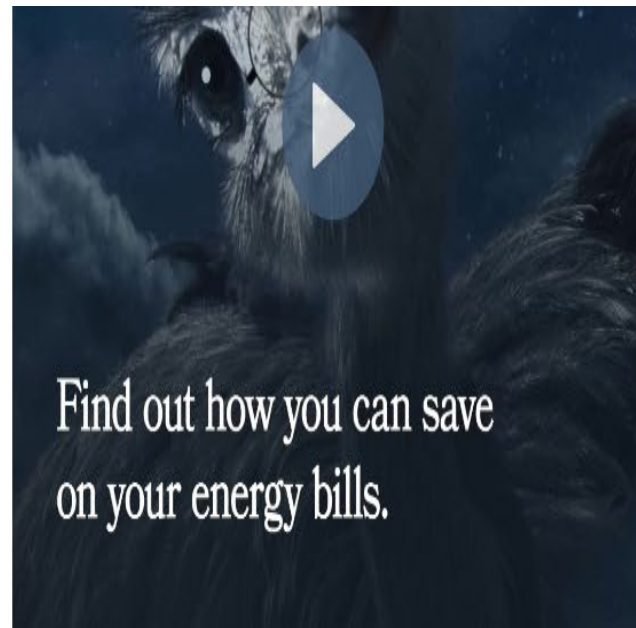
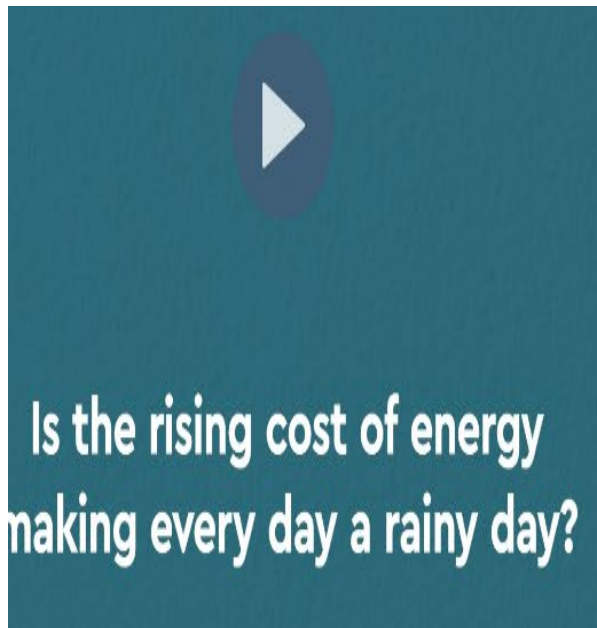
Here for You

- Biggest cost of living crisis in 40 years with prices rising by 10.1%
- 1 in 4 or 5 people in poverty
- Half a million workers walking out over pay disputes
- Huge energy rises leaving a typical annual bill of £2,800 - placing many in fuel poverty
- Food prices increased by 5.9%
- Rising costs of childcare to an average of £138 per week
- 4% wage rises and 3.1% benefit increases
- Many who could have previously coped will experience difficult choices when paying their bill



Westco – Cost of Living resources

Three creative concepts – Be more owl, Umbrella Concept and Empowering – Free resources available to download!



Mission: Create a data driven, targeted Cost-of-Living campaign signposting residents to the right information at the right time.

- Residents feel supported while they navigate cost-of-living crisis
- Equip frontline staff and VCSE partner organisations with the right information at the right time to support residents with the most up to date advice and information
- Raise awareness of the 75+ network of warm spaces during the winter months to reduce pressure on energy bills
- Highlight range of benefits available to increase number of eligible residents accessing benefits
- Support residents to manage their money and look after themselves to avoid referrals to mental health services and to avoid homelessness
- Respond to the changing political and economic environment to ensure information is useful and relevant

Tactics:

- Develop suite of materials (leaflets, posters, webpages, social media toolkit, pull up banners) for staff and frontline partners to enable them to signpost residents to services to a one stop shop for advice and support
- Utilise Experian Household Income dataset to develop targeted approach
- Develop a Tone of Voice based on organisational brand values, behaviour and culture
- Utilise non-judgemental, simple and friendly language, using down to earth ambassadors to create familiarisation for example, Jo in the Know – Cost of Living Facebook live Q&A with Jo and special guests
- Identify range of methods to target audience – leaflets, council tax letters, rent statements, outdoor advertising based in low income locations

Here for You

Feeling the pressure of rising costs?
It's hard to know where to turn.
We're here to point you in the right direction.

**Wigan[♥]
Council**



What we're here to do

We're here to help point you in the right direction to get the advice and support you need



Benefits and childcare costs

Maximising your income and making sure you get what you're entitled to



Being energy savvy

Advice on heating your home affordably and keeping down fuel costs



Borrowing wisely

Don't find yourself buried in bad debt - advice to help you borrow from trusted sources for lower costs



Money management

Tips to look after your day-to-day budget to keep costs down



Feeling overwhelmed?

Tips to keep your mental health afloat when money worries are getting you down



Crisis support

Where to turn if you're facing a financial or mental health crisis



Feeding your family

Healthy, affordable, fuel efficient food ideas for when you're feeling the pinch



Warm Welcoming Spaces

If you're struggling to stay warm this winter, we have open doors across our borough waiting to welcome you

Warm, welcoming spaces

Earlier this year, Wigan Council opened its network of warm, welcoming spaces, a key part of our Here For You programme. Keen as always to get the inside track on what is on offer, Borough Life paid a visit.

A heavy mist hangs in the air this morning, autumn is giving way to winter and the first signs of frost.

With details of rising energy costs dominating the news agenda recently, the annual fall in temperatures will bring with it a sense of trepidation for many of us.

It isn't unusual, therefore, for residents to be facing more difficult choices when it comes to keeping your home – and family – warm.

That's where the idea for Wigan Council's Warm, Welcoming Spaces came from.



And it's a lightbulb moment that has been shared across the borough.

"I don't think there's any hiding from the fact that we all have a challenging winter ahead of us," explains Peter Hughes, the local authority's customer services manager.

"That's why we want to remind all our residents that our public buildings – and many sites run by community partners – will be open, providing a place to stay warm throughout the day with the added bonus of providing access to our wide range of services.

"These are places that have always been here, you just may not have viewed them as a space to keep warm, charge your phone, have a brew or find a friendly face for a chat before."

From our vintage post nestled among the books at Leigh Library, there's a low buzz of children checking out their favourite books and characters. The services on offer at libraries down the years has changed significantly, but one thing has remained constant here in the borough; they're free to join. As well as books, you can also borrow audio books, e-books, e-magazines and comics and access computers and free WiFi.

The council is not the only organisation to pioneer this approach this winter. Many of our wonderful community partners are opening their doors too.

"From Fur Client to Bookcycle, we've got a real network set up across the borough," explains Peter.

"Throughout Covid, the strength of our borough's community spirit shone bright and we're so proud to see the strength and kindness being shown as we tackle this new challenge.

"You'll receive a warm welcome at all of them and get access to the wide-range of support services available."

Having hopped across to Wigan town centre, we visit another of our sites at the Museum of Wigan Life. The Gernonmside rugby league exhibition is still in full flow and receptionist Debbie is greeting visitors with a friendly smile, interrupted on occasion by the roar of crowd noise that accompanies the exhibits.

It's another great, free and warm place to enjoy, right in the heart of one of our town centres, inclusive too.

"In the name suggests, our staff are here for you and can offer advice whatever your circumstances," adds Peter.

"If you've been struggling for a long time or this is a new challenge you are facing, please call in and start the conversation."

Our promise to you

Whichever of our spaces you visit, you'll receive a warm Wigan Borough welcome. Wigan Borough's people are well known for our strong and kind community spirit, and our warm spaces are no different. We promise that staff and volunteers will treat you with kindness, warmth and a friendly smile.

Our warm spaces are a place for everyone, and you'll be met with no judgement. Whoever you are and whatever your background is you are welcome. We don't judge anyone, and you will be treated equally and with respect.

If you need help, just ask – we can point you in the right direction. We know times are hard and it can be tough to ask for help. But if you do choose to start the conversation, our teams can point you in the right direction of the organisations, services and support that might be available to you.

You can trust us to listen. We are here to lend an ear if you'd like us to listen, but we won't tell anyone else unless you give us permission to, unless it's a safeguarding issue.

"We'll play our part, but we'd like kindness to be mutual. We've explained how you can expect to be treated, but we would like everyone we meet to be warm, everyone we meet to be mutual. Please treat our visitors, staff and volunteers – how you would expect to be treated.



Jo is in the know!

We know many of you are feeling the pinch, but our cost-of-living expert, Jo Mitchell, is on hand to bring you the answers you need to help make things a little easier.

Jo, our interim assistant director for customer experience and support, lives at home with her family and two dogs.

Farrah asks: Hi Jo, how can I keep my house warm through the winter months when bills are now so high?

I have heard from a lot of people who are in the same situation as you. There are the usual tips like heating yourself in your own home with plenty of jumpers or even an electric blanket, which are cheaper than heating your car. But if you struggle to keep warm at home and are living on a low income, with high energy costs or a health condition/circumstances affected by being in a cold damp home, support might be available through the Wigan's service. Call the team on 01942 404201 to find out more.

Find out more by visiting findyoucreationsite.co.uk

She enjoys going out for walks and going to her local gym to burn off calories from her favourite snacks, she loves watching movies especially horror although she watches most of the film with her hands over her eyes!

Tom asks: I'm feeling really stressed and overwhelmed at the moment. I don't know where to turn. Do you have any advice?

Looking after your mental health is especially important at the moment. Reach out to friends and family so you aren't struggling alone, and if your worries are beginning to affect your daily life, you can also contact Healthy Routes 5-12 for free local support. Visit a library to find out more.

Sonia asks: I've noticed that food prices have been rising recently and I am worried about how I will be able to feed my family regularly at Christmas, what can I do to ease the financial pressure?

If you're worried about being able to afford your weekly food shop, one alternative to the mainstream supermarket would be to become a member of your local food pantry. Some do have membership criteria, but others are open to anyone as they're set up to prevent food waste as well as provide affordable food to those in need. They're a great way of ensuring you can still purchase fresh healthy food.

Meal planning can also be a great way to make sure nothing goes to waste, as well as buying supermarket own brand products being the cheapest option.

Melanie asks: I've always gone all out at Christmas, it's my favourite time of year. But this year, I'm really worried this year about whether I can afford Christmas presents for my loved ones. What can I do?

Christmas is one of my favourite times of year and spending time with family is really wonderful. Now might be the year to go back to basics and enjoy spending time with each other. You could get out early to make presents or start a family secret Santa to lessen the burden of buying gifts for everyone.

For financial support, you might consider a credit union. A lot of people are unaware of these but they can be a great option if you need to borrow money. They are a self-help co-operative whose members pool their savings to provide each other with credit at a low interest rate. To be part of a credit union you have to have a common bond with other members, like where you live.

Q&A

Have fun for free

1. Get outdoors
2. Be a tourist in your own Borough
3. Look out for FREE local events

4. Check out your library
5. Get creative to have fun at home

How to spot an illegal money lender or loan shark.



Did they...

- £ Offer a loan in cash?
- £ Not give you any paperwork?
- £ Charge huge interest rates?
- £ Threaten or harass you?
- £ Make you feel scared of people finding out?
- £ Make it impossible for you to pay the loan off?
- £ Want to take your bank card, passport or other valuables from you?



We're Here for You

If you think you've lent money from an illegal lender, you've done nothing wrong. It's important to protect yourself and others.

Report a loan shark anonymously:
Phone 0300 555 2222 (24hrs)
Text **LOAN SHARK** and the lender's details to 07860 022116

58%
of loan sharks are known to their victims.

For tips on safe ways to lend money visit www.wigan.gov.uk/hereforyou

Proactive media approach

Our People

Here for You

People

Network of spaces dedicated to keeping Wigan residents warm this winter has been unveiled

Warm spaces in public buildings and a range of information for residents are among the options being considered by town hall bosses to help people in Wigan cope with the rising cost of living.

By Sian Jones
Published 8th Sep 2022, 15:45 BST - 2 min read

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People

Wigan residents urged to 'just ask' as council looks at support during cost-of-living crisis

Warm spaces in public buildings and a range of information for residents are among the options being considered by town hall bosses to help people in Wigan cope with the rising cost of living.

By Sian Jones
Published 8th Sep 2022, 15:45 BST - 2 min read

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Thirteen welcoming spaces to keep Wigan residents warm this winter

As the cost-of-living crisis continues to surge, community organisations and council buildings across the borough have opened their doors to keep residents warm throughout the winter months.

By Sian Jones
Published 26th Nov 2022, 12:30 BST

The scheme run by Wigan Council offers a network of warm, welcoming spaces, each offering different activities and support. These are 13 of the warm hubs that are available across the borough.

[f](#) [t](#) [m](#)

Politics

Thousands helped by Wigan Council's cost of living crisis support scheme

Wigan Council's flagship cost-of-living support scheme is helping thousands, new figures have revealed.

Charles Graham
Published 20th Mar 2023, 04:55 BST - 2 min read

[f](#) [t](#) [m](#)

People

The warm space in Wigan that has transformed lives

John Williams had been suffering through loneliness since the Covid-19 lockdown and faced a harsh and bitter winter alone until he got a surprise leaflet through the door.

By George Lythgoe
Published 16th Dec 2022, 04:55 BST - 4 min read

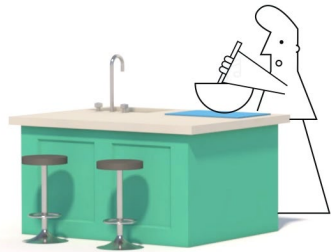
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Wigan Council



A Problem Shared...



Feeding Your Family

Wigan Council



Get on top of your money

Wigan Council

Here for You

Wigan Council



Tackling the cost-of-living crisis | Inside Wigan Borough's thriving arts scene

Tue, 06 Dec 2022

On this episode of BoroughLife Podcast, James and Rosie talk to Joanne Mitchell on the Here for You cost of living campaign. We also have Wigan's very own poet Louise Fazackerley discussing Wigan culture, poetry and arts, plus a special performance of her poem "We've got a lot".

▶ 0:00 / 0:00

[Download](#)

Out Of Home



- Telephone box wraps
- Community engagement – library sessions, tenant engagement
- Staff engagement

Wigan Council

Our People

Here for You

Worried about your cost-of-living?

Get face to face help at one of our pop-up events

- Support to reduce your bills
- Tips to maximise your income
- Help to reduce fuel and water use and keep your home warm
- Advice on dealing with damp and mould
- Pointers to get the best deals on your food shopping

Dates
Friday January 27th 10am-12 noon
Shevington Methodist Church, Gathurst Lane WN6 8HA

QR code: New dates are being added all the time across the borough. Visit www.wigan.gov.uk/hereforyou for more online support and to see details of future events.

If you have any questions or you are a community venue and would like to host an event please email: thedealforcommunities@wigan.gov.uk

Our People Here for You

Our People

Here for You

Are you feeling the pressure of rising costs and would appreciate a nudge in the right direction?

So that's our big message; **Wigan Council is Here For You.** To signpost you to these services, organisations and resources.

From support with working out your eligibility for benefits to borrowing wisely and keeping warm and keeping well, there are plenty of options available and friendly faces to chat to.

You aren't alone and there are lots of organisations spread across our wonderful borough that are ready to help.

Campaign Outcomes

Our People

Here for You

- 2,000 applications and professional referrals for welfare support processed each month
- 3,000 visitors to Warm Welcoming Spaces
- 1.5m visits to Here for You webpages
- 85 Warm Welcoming Spaces set up with support from the voluntary sector
- 9,300 pensioners are now in receipt of a council tax reduction
- 5,000 food pantry vouchers have been given to 3,800 families
- 15,000 children have access to free school meals