

Hackney Council Poverty Reduction and Cost of Living Newsletter - 31 May 2023

Dear colleagues

Thank you very much to those of you who attended our 'Poverty reduction: Tools for work with residents who are struggling' session on Thursday 18 May. A recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

As mentioned at the meeting, we are keen for these sessions to be shaped in partnership with attendees. If you or one of your colleagues wants to present or update the group on the support you can provide to residents, please let us know via john.davies@hackney.gov.uk.

The next meeting will be held on 1 June. You can join via [this link](#). That link will remain the same for all future meetings, which take place every fortnight on Thursday, 4 - 5.30pm. Please find the recording of the previous three sessions [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Cost of living payments and transition to Universal Credit

At the last meeting, Jakir Hussain presented to the group on transition of Hackney residents onto Universal Credit. If you have any questions about which residents will be moving onto UC and how they will be notified, please contact Jakir Hussain or Umme Begum at JAKIR.HUSSAIN1@dwp.gov.uk and umme.begum@dwp.gov.uk.

Jakir also spoke about the government's Cost of Living payments. The £301 payment for people on low income benefits and tax credits was paid between 25 April 2023 and 17 May 2023 for most people.

If you are working with a resident and think they should have had the £301 payment, but they cannot see it in their bank, building society or credit union account, they can report a missing Cost of Living Payment.

They can do this at the bottom of the page [here](#).

Universal Credit's maximum childcare payments increase

The government has announced that, from 28 June, they will raise the amount that parents can claim back monthly for their childcare costs on Universal Credit up to £951 for one child

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and £1,630 for two or more children. This is a rise of 47% from the previous limits of £646 for one child or £1,108 for two or more children.

More information is available [here](#).

Got a prepayment meter? Make sure you've claimed your energy voucher worth up to £400

Households that use prepayment meters are being urged to claim support from the government to pay their energy bills.

Vouchers have been sent to households that use these traditional meters. The vouchers allow residents to access discounts of up to £400 on their energy bills.

However, millions of pounds-worth remains unclaimed.

Residents should check any post they have at home to ensure they haven't missed the vouchers.

They are valid for three months. If they are expired, residents should contact their electricity supplier and ask for a new one to be sent.

Customers can redeem the vouchers at their local Post Office or PayPoint until 30 June.

More information is [here](#).

Council Tax collection and support

At a recent meeting, Jonathan Laing from the Council's Revenues team presented on the service's approach to Council Tax collection and how it is identifying and supporting residents who may be struggling with payment. The slides are available [here](#).

Hackney Giving & LBH Cost of Living programme

The increased cost of living is a problem for many people living in Hackney. We are inviting applications from not-for-profit groups working to support people with the cost of living in the second half of 2023.

Funding will be awarded for work towards the following outcome:

Reducing the impact of the rising cost of living on people living in Hackney.
£75,000 is available for distribution in July 2023. It is anticipated that a further £165,000 will be available for distribution later in the year. Grants will be £5,000.

Funding for this programme has been provided by the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund via London Borough of Hackney.

For full details and eligibility criteria, please visit this [website](#)

There will be three “how to apply” workshops. These workshops offer you the chance to hear a bit more about the funding as well as how to complete the application form. You can book your place on the [Hackney Giving website](#).

In addition, one-to-one support is available via to help you with your application. Get in touch to discuss your project idea and how to start your application, or if you have a draft application get in touch for feedback. [Book a one to one appointment](#).

The deadline for applications is 11am, 20 June 2023.

Social tariffs: Cheaper broadband and phone packages

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them ‘essential’ or ‘basic’ broadband.

They’re delivered in the same way as normal packages, just at a lower price. Amid rising living costs, Ofcom is encouraging companies to offer social tariffs to help customers on low incomes.

More information on the offers available is [here](#).

Hate Crime Champions

Hackney Council is creating a network of Hate Crime Community Champions to support witnesses and victims of hate crimes.

You don’t need any prior experience, you will be taught everything you need to know. You just need to be friendly, supportive and passionate about helping others.

Please see the flyers, with information on how to apply, [here](#).

Sustainability Day

Join Hackney Council’s Sustainability Team at Hackney Town Hall for their annual Sustainability Day on July 2nd from 11am to 4pm. It’s a low waste, zero single-use plastic event packed with workshops, stalls, and activities for the whole family.

Don’t forget to bring your own mug for free coffee and hot drinks.

It’s a day filled with fun, learning, and positive actions for a greener future.

Visit [Hackney reduce-reuse-and-repair](#) for more information.

Free hire from Library of Things

Hackney Council is excited to announce its spring offer just for you! As we bid farewell to May, it's the perfect time to give your home that fresh and clean feeling.

We are extending a special offer to the first 20 residents who register.

Enjoy a FREE membership (usually £2) and hire our top-notch carpet cleaner for just £22.50 for a full 24 hours!

The first 20 residents to register will receive FREE hire from [Dalston Library of Things](#) and complimentary membership, so don't miss out!

[Register here.](#)

Woodberry Aid and Stokey Community Food Shops

[Woodberry Aid](#) and [Stokey](#) Community Food shops are available for residents struggling with the cost of food.

Cool spaces

The Greater London Assembly (GLA) will be providing a [map of cool spaces](#) open during the summer, which are indoor spaces and outdoor areas where Londoners can take respite on hot days.

Organisations can register as cool spaces [here](#), so that their provision is listed by the GLA.

Windrush Compensation Scheme support

Residents in Hackney who may have been affected by Windrush will be able to receive free and confidential advice about making an application for compensation from the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

The Windrush justice clinic partners Claudia Jones Organisation and the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit will provide free and confidential advice at the Hackney Service Centre, from 11am - 4pm, on:

- 19 June 2023
- 17 July 2023
- 21 August 2023

If residents you are working with might benefit from this, they can attend with or without an appointment. Please contact John Davies (john.davies@hackney.gov.uk) for more information.

A flyer is available [here](#).

Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg in Hackney

Hannah Dakin, from Alexander Rose, presented to attendees recently. Her slides are available [here](#).

If you have young children under 5 years old, or are pregnant, you may be eligible to receive Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg. You can spend Rose Vouchers on the fruit and vegetables of your choice with participating market traders and greengrocers in Hackney.

Families receive £4 of Rose Vouchers for each child every week, or £6 if the child is under one year old. Rose Vouchers are collected from local children's centres each week.

Rose Vouchers are available for families on low incomes, including those with no recourse to public funds.

To find your local participating children's centre, please visit: [Alexandra Rose Charity - children's centres](#).

Rose Vouchers can be spent with the market traders and greengrocers listed here: [Alexandra Rose Charity – Markets](#).

HENRY

Carol Wynter from HENRY recently presented to attendees. Her slides are available [here](#).

The Best Start with HENRY supports families with children under 5 in City and Hackney. It includes:

- Healthy Families Group Programmes
- Workshops including Starting Solids, Fussy Eating, Eating Well for Less
- Practitioner Training, Raising Engage Refer & Healthy Start in Childcare
- Healthy Start vitamins and national digital card scheme promotion

Visit their website and contact us for more information :

- hcsupport@henry.org.uk
- www.henry.org.uk/hackney
- 07519 109 876

Chatsworth Foodbank and Support Service

The Chatsworth Foodbank and Support Service runs from 11am - 3pm, at Clapton Park Methodist Church, 99 Chatsworth Road, Hackney E5 0LH.

Residents can receive free food parcels and help with emails, form filling, benefits assessments and applications, CV writing, signposting and referrals.

More information is available [here](#).

Better Leisure support for refugees

Better leisure centres, sports facilities, pools and gyms across England and Wales are supporting refugees resettling in England and Wales with a free Better Health Centre (Off-Peak) membership for a fixed six-month period.

The scheme is open to all refugees who have been granted refugee resettlement status in the last 12 months by the UK Government.

Individual refugees can apply directly, while family hosts, charities such as RESET, the Red Cross and the Refugee Council and our own in-centre staff can also apply on behalf of a refugee by submitting an application via [this link](#). Further information is available [here](#).

Walkingtogether

Walkingtogether by Hackney Council provides free regular wellbeing walks from a structured walk in your local park to discovering something new in your neighbourhood. The friendly and sociable walks provide a great foundation for a healthy lifestyle as walking has many wonderful benefits. For example it can help to: reduce blood pressure, help maintain a healthy weight, strengthen bones, support you in the ability to perform daily activities

Further information on our walks can be found at www.hackney.gov.uk/walking Alternatively contact Darren English on 020 8356 4897 or email darren.english@hackney.gov.uk

Hackney New Age Games Programme

New Age Games is a free sport and physical activity programme for Hackney residents aged 50 and over.

New Age Games can help users increase and sustain exercise to recommended levels, which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Activities include: water aerobics, Pilates, yoga, soca aerobics, tennis, chair-based activity, badminton and more. A great way to socialise and learn new skills. The current term runs to 24 July 2023.

To be eligible to attend the scheme, you must be a Hackney resident aged 50+.

To view the timetable and guidance, as well as register visit:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/new-age-games> .Alternatively contact Darren English on 020 8356 4897 or email darren.english@hackney.gov.uk.

Fit 4 Health - Exercise after Stroke Scheme

Fit 4 Health – Exercise after Stroke/TIA scheme - is an established free community based service positioned at the final stage of rehabilitation and re-enablement in health and social care. It supports individuals in the maintenance of healthy lifestyle changes and the

subsequent transition to independent living. The programme is designed to meet the long-term effects of stroke and the varied and wide-ranging exercise needs of stroke and TIA sufferers.

To be eligible to attend the scheme you must be a Hackney resident or are registered to a City & Hackney based GP surgery. Participants must be health professionally referred.

For further information email helen.mcginley@hackney.gov.uk or darwin.english@hackney.gov.uk Telephone 020 8356 5285/4897/ Alternatively visit: www.hackney.gov.uk/after-stroke-programme.

Lightning Reach

Lightning Reach helps those struggling financially to find and apply for support from multiple providers. They are partnered with multiple organisations who provide help, meaning residents can be pointed in the direction of various forms of support via one portal. More information is available [here](#).

Domestic Abuse Intervention Service

At a recent meeting, Cathal Ryan from Hackney Council's Domestic Abuse Intervention Service presented to the group. The slides are available [here](#).

The slides include information on:

- The support available and how to make a referral
- Training available from the service
- What a victim or survivor can expect from the service

TaxAid

At a recent meeting, Geoffrey Sautner from TaxAid presented to the group. The slides are available [here](#).

TaxAid provides free advice to residents nationally on tax issues. The slides include information on:

- How to make referrals
- Eligibility for help
- The different services available
- Contact details

One Housing Affordable Warmth programme

At a recent meeting, Emmanuel Odunayo from One Housing presented on One Housing's help for residents with heating costs. The slides are available [here](#).

The slides include information on:

- How One Housing communicates with residents in need
- The questions it asks residents about their energy use and property

Carers Centre Tower Hamlets and City & Hackney Carers Centre - help with benefit appeals

The Carers Centre Tower Hamlets and City & Hackney Carers Centre are funded by Trust for London to support unpaid carers (and the people they care for) with benefit appeals.

If you work with carers and need any type of benefit support or are unsure what benefits they are entitled to, please contact 0208 533 0951 or info@hackneycarers.org.uk

You can also self-refer via their website: <https://www.hackneycarers.org.uk/advice>.

More information is available [here](#).

Help with managing finances and wellbeing

Are you worried about the cost of living crisis, green skills or your own health and well-being?

Would you be interested in identifying ways to manage your personal finances, live more sustainability or improve your mental well-being whilst gaining a FREE nationally recognised qualification?

Hackney Adult Learning Service has a range of FREE online courses available for residents such as:

- Managing Personal Finances
- Healthy Living for Well-being and Mental Health
- Personal Well-being
- Personal Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Preventing Plastic Pollution

What's more, we can support you in accessing projects to reduce your costs in broadband packages and mobile contract costs in addition to offering access to electronic devices to help you study.

To find out more please contact Yola Burgo at yola.burgo@hackney.gov.uk or telephone 07517910394.

Carib Eats

Ali Kakande, from Carib Eats, presented to a recent meeting for frontline staff. Her slides are available [here](#). Carib Eats provides free Caribbean meals to residents in need, but also provides a space for people to connect, chat and be with others.

The slides include information on:

- Carib Eats' story and purpose
- How you can help
- Plans for the future

Bag of Taste

Bag of Taste delivers free food and recipes, for three meals, to residents' doors. You can find their flyer, with contact details and information on how to refer, [here](#). You can also read their [Impact report](#).

Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding

Eligible households can apply for £400 of support under the Government's Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS AF).

The scheme is aimed at those without a direct relationship to an energy supplier, including self-funded care home residents and people living in park homes, as well as households who get their energy through a commercial contract or who are off grid.

To check eligibility and apply, please search for "Apply for energy bill support if you do not get it automatically" in the search bar on [GOV.UK](#) or search engine. Those who need additional support, or do not have internet access, can call a dedicated helpline on 0808 175 3287.

Payments will be made by Local Authorities, who may also request additional information – but only once an application has been made via the secure portal or helpline.

Citizens Advice training on advice

Citizens Advice in Hackney is providing Advice First Aid (AFA) training.

It aims to support people in non-advice roles to:

- Develop core advice skills (confidentiality, listening, impartiality)
- Spot advice issues (covers main advice areas)
- Provide information and signposting assistance
- Know when and how to refer to our services, and other relevant local and national services.

AFA is delivered face to face and is normally a 2 day course but can be tailored to individual agency needs.

It is participatory with people encouraged to ask questions and give examples of need in their community. Participants are introduced to online resources, and supported to use them when responding to case studies e.g. CA national site, turn2us, National Debtline.

Importantly, the course contains information about local sources of support – and how to access them. Participants also gain from meeting each other and learning about each other's services.

If you are interested in this offer, please contact Florence Acen at facen@eastendcab.org.uk.

St Giles Trust Food Pantry

St Giles Trust runs a food hub in Stamford Hill. The address is Stamford Hill Community Centre, Hackney, N16 6RS.

It offers healthy food with a healthy shopping experience. Expert advice and personal face-to-face support is on hand from trained Peer Advisors, who help address the underlying issues leading to poverty. People using the Pantry pay a weekly subscription of £3.50 and in return are able to access an abundance of affordable, nutritious food and added support to help them move towards independence.

More information is available [here](#).

Bump Buddies

Bump Buddies is a free service for women in Hackney who are pregnant, or who have recently given birth. Bump Buddies can offer:

- peer support through your pregnancy,
- information to help plan your pregnancy and labour,
- support at antenatal appointments,
- breastfeeding support,
- help to access low cost and free baby equipment and clothing,
- details of local children's groups,
- opportunities to influence services in Hackney by getting involved in focus groups and committees.

They offer extra support for women who are parenting alone, women struggling with homelessness or accommodation problems, women who have health problems and women facing immigration issues or who are new to the UK.

More information is available [here](#).

Groundswell - health resources for people who are homeless

At a recent session of the fortnightly Thursday meetings, Martin Murphy and Becky Evans presented on the support available via Groundswell, who work to improve the health of people who are homeless. The slides from their presentation are available [here](#). They include information on:

- Health guides designed for people experiencing homelessness
- Groundswell's resources hub, which provides accessible information for people experiencing homelessness and those supporting them
- Groundswell's ongoing research

Hackney Council support with digital inclusion

Attendees of a recent meeting also received a presentation on digital inclusion support available via Hackney Council, from Jackie Eastham, ICT Curriculum Manager. Her slides are available [here](#). They include information on:

- Digital inclusion buddies
- Digital drop in sessions at libraries
- Online budgeting
- Free sim cards and Amazon Kindles

DWP cost of living pack for East London residents

The DWP has produced a [guide](#) to support for residents struggling with the cost of living in East London. It includes information on:

- Help with your bills and income
- Support near you
- Help for deaf and disabled people
- Help in a crisis
- Food and supermarket schemes
- Benefit calculators
- Benefit contact details

Cost of Living Support Fund from Together for Short Lives

Families caring for a seriously ill child, who is dependent on vital equipment to stay alive, may now be able to receive much needed support from the Together for Short Lives Cost of Living Support Fund.

The funding will offer families who are struggling with energy costs a grant of £250 to help pay the running costs of essential medical equipment that keeps their child alive. The fund isn't currently open for direct applications from families or other palliative care professionals,

referrals can be made by authorised referral agents working across the children's palliative care sector. [Visit their website for more information.](#)

Affordable meals at St Peter's Church, De Beauvoir

The cafe at St Peter's Church, De Beauvoir provides affordable (free or by donation to those without means) meals the last Friday of the month, from 12 noon to 2pm. The meals are cooked and served by local volunteers.

All are welcome. For more information contact debeauvoir.community.cafe@gmail.com.

They are also looking for volunteers to cook or help out on the day. Expenses are reimbursed. Please also get in touch if you are interested.

Fair For You - support with essential household items and loans

At a recent meeting for frontline staff, Chris Bennett from Fair For You presented to attendees. Fair For You, which operates nationally, helps the most financially vulnerable in society to buy essential items for their homes such as large and small appliances, furniture, soft furnishings, clothing and shoes, electronics and computing through innovative, tailored and flexible lending solutions. They have also launched a Food Club, where residents can apply for credit to spend on food online or instore.

You can view the slides [here](#).

Money and Pensions Service

Attendees at a recent meeting for frontline staff also received a presentation from Monica Kaur, who is the East London regional manager for the government's Money and Pensions Service (MaPS). She provided information on the service's [Money Helper website](#), which provides guidance and tools for residents who need help managing their finances. There are a range of videos, tools and calculators available, all of which are free.

For example, it includes a money manager tool for those on Universal Credit and credit card and loan calculators.

Monica also presented on the Money Advice Network, which is a new virtual contact centre (VCC) that simplifies how organisations can direct people in financial difficulty to free regulated debt advice.

You can view the slides [here](#).

Working with residents without bank accounts

At a recent meeting, Shahidul Islam, Financial Inclusion Team Leader at Hackney Council, presented to attendees on working with residents who do not have bank accounts. This

explained the problems and loss of income that this can result in, as well as how to encourage these residents to open bank accounts, and the easiest to use accounts that the most popular banks offer.

We know that not having a bank account is often a barrier to residents receiving support, so please do take a look at Shahidul's slides [here](#).

The Council also has a [dedicated page](#) for residents on setting up a bank account. The Council also provides a c/o address at [The Greenhouse](#) for single homeless and rough sleepers to enable them to open a bank account.

Good Things Foundation

If you're a community organisation in London that is supporting or wants to support your community members to get online and access the benefits of digital - then joining the Good Things Foundation's London Digital Inclusion Service will help you do that. It is free to join and offers a range of services, including access to the National Databank.

The [National Databank](#) is giving **free mobile data** to people who can't afford their internet connection. By signing up to the network, you will be eligible to join and start giving data vouchers to your community members. You'll also get lots of other benefits such as:

- Free training and resources
- Networking opportunities
- Funding opportunities
- Access to the online learning platform, [Learn My Way](#)

The [London Digital Inclusion Service](#) aims to help tens of thousands more Londoners get online by bringing together organisations who support digitally excluded Londoners. If you're an organisation that wants to embed digital inclusion support, participation is free, you just have to [join its network](#).

If you would like to include any information in the next newsletter, or present/update at a future 'Tools for work with residents who are struggling' session, please contact john.davies@hackney.gov.uk.

Best wishes

Jenny Zienau and John Davies