

Moving forward & helping you in these times



**Cost of Living
Support**
Helping you through tough times

W lbbd.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

T [@lbbdcouncil](https://twitter.com/lbbdcouncil)

F [barkinganddagenham](https://www.facebook.com/barkinganddagenham)

**HELP WITH
COST OF LIVING,
ESSENTIALS,
WARM SPACES.**



Dear resident,

In these difficult times people are feeling the pinch. Whether you are renting or buying, travelling to work, or simply putting food on the table, everything has gone up except wages. When we stood on our doorsteps clapping for the nurses during the pandemic, we were determined to do every little bit to make things better. That is why we are making sure you know where help is now.

You'll find lots of information about the support we offer in the following pages – help we are providing along with our partners in the community based where you live. But we know you want us to do more as a council. And that is what we have done over the past few years.

That includes **helping more than 3,000 people find work** through our Job Shops, **supporting more than 10,000 people out of debt**, saving nearly £2m, through the advice on offer in our Homes and Money Hubs. And we have **helped more than 1,000 people save money** on their heating bills through our Cosy Homes scheme.

March is also a month when council tax bills drop onto people's doorsteps, and they rightly want to know where their money is going.

Our biggest priority is looking after the most vulnerable – whether it is the elderly, frail or those not able to cope without support in the community. **For every £10 we spend, £7 goes on caring for the most vulnerable people.** We will always respond to people in need. But while demand for our services has risen, funding we receive from the government has not. Nonetheless, we have managed to protect frontline services by being more determined and efficient, and by attracting inward investment.

Over the last decade **we've secured more than £4bn worth of investment.** That means for every £1 we are asking each household to pay for services, we have managed to secure around £500. This includes thousands of jobs, homes, and opportunities for people to gain new skills in the borough.

Once known for Ford cars, it will not be long before we will be known for film as work is completed on **two new film studios.** And speaking of our industrial past – we've put it to good use. We desperately need more housing. **Beam Park and Dagenham Green** are seeing new homes, parks and schools being built.

Today we are the biggest council housing builder in London – constructing **one in five of all affordable homes in the capital.** You once had to be born in Victorian times to see a new train station open. Unless you live in **Barking Riverside** where the new station opened ahead of schedule (unlike the trains) last year. Offering new schools, shops, leisure facilities, and riverside walks, it is London's newest neighbourhood. It even offers a **boat service** into the city and south of the river so you can leave your car keys at home.

We're already home to the **UK's largest data centre**, and a **research facility** that is designing the cities of the future. The World-famous markets of London – **Billingsgate, Smithfield, and New Spitalfields** –

are also relocating here. That's meat and three veg plus your favourite fish supper on a Friday night on our doorstep.

We have always celebrated our parks. But we have **planted more than 60,000 trees** and invested millions of pounds in improving them, in the last few years.

We all lead busy lives, but we also want to do our bit for the environment. Thanks to the investment in the way we collect your waste, **we're now throwing less into landfill and recycling more** – in fact, 250kg in every home – equivalent to a Ford Fiesta every four years! That's important for future generations. And it's a never-ending task with the cold winters and hot summers we get these days, but **we have invested £21.7m in repairing roads and pavements.** 189 miles of them – equivalent to the distance from here to Grimsby!

We have not sat on our laurels. We **fought plans to close Dagenham police station** and we saved it. We are fighting for a better police presence in Barking Town Centre and we will have **police reporting points** in some of the Community Hubs as we open them.

We were also the first council in the country to adopt a borough-wide private **landlord licensing scheme** that upholds standards for those renting, offering protection from rogue landlords, and we were the first to secure a ban on **illegal encampments** which cause havoc.

Our **free Summer of Festivals events** have been attended by 421,000 residents in the last few years. And we're proud of the part we played in our nation's history, as together, we celebrated the late **Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee** and honoured her life with our very own Proclamation and Memorial Service.

Our young people are our future. That is why I am proud that **95 per cent of our schools are rated Good or Outstanding** by Ofsted, and that **8 out of 10 young people now continue into higher education.**

We need to provide more things to do and places to go. That's why we opened **Future, London's first Youth Zone**, which has welcomed over 150,000 young people through its doors since it opened.

Community is our middle name. You could say we are proud of it. That's why we celebrated the **100th anniversary of the Becontree Estate** in 2021, and why we are opening a **museum** dedicated to the history, stories, and role of women in society. It's also why we fly the flag on important days in the calendar, like St George's Day, Black History Month and LGBT+ History Month.

Our new **£15m Community Diagnostics Centre** at Barking Community Hospital will make it easier to get a blood test as well as your CT, MRI, or ultrasound.

These are tough times, but we are in this together. I hope you find the information in the following pages helpful. I also hope you will feel proud of some of the things we have achieved together.



Councillor Darren Rodwell
Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council

Help and support available from the council and our partners

HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING

Hardship schemes

These funds provide support to vulnerable households in most need of short-term help with significantly rising living and energy costs.

In exceptional circumstances, you may be able to get help with housing costs where Housing Benefit, Universal Credit Housing element or DHP (Discretionary Housing Payments) awards are not eligible or applicable.

To apply for these schemes or support you must:

- be over 18 and a resident of Barking and Dagenham (or supported by the borough)
- be suffering financial hardship
- have had a significant change in your circumstances or life changing event that has placed you into hardship
- have taken all reasonable steps to maximise incomes available to you by claiming Council Tax Support and/or Housing Benefit/ Universal Credit Housing Element, Discretionary Housing Payment, Discretionary Council Tax Relief and/or Universal Credit
- have recourse to public funds.

You don't have to be receiving benefits such as Universal Credit or Housing Benefit to apply.

For more information, visit lbbd.gov.uk and search for 'hardship' where you can also submit a claim and required supporting evidence online.



BD Money

Barking and Dagenham Money (bdmoney.co.uk) offers free and impartial financial guidance, and can help you check your eligibility for benefits, and find grants that could be available and money support tools. Have a look at the benefits calculator, the budgeting tool, and the 60 second debt test. There's a range of support available, including information on homes and bills, family and care and dealing with debt.

BD Money is now also offering access to affordable loans and savings through its partnership with Leeds Credit Union – aiming to prevent people from taking out very expensive loans or using illegal loan sharks. It aims to keep more money in your pocket and help build your financial security.

Homes and Money Hub

Can't find what you need on our BD Money website? Our Homes and Money Hub may be able to help you with the financial problems you are having.

Get in touch by emailing homesandmoneyhub@lbbd.gov.uk or pop into Barking Learning Centre Community Hub or Dagenham Library Community Hub to see one of our trained advisors. Please visit our website and search 'homes and money' to see what you can expect from the team and also make an online self-referral directly into our Screening Team.

Our Homes and Money Hub has helped thousands of local people take back control of their finances since launching in April 2018.

Affordable Loans

We know it's difficult to make ends meet when unexpected costs crop up. But loans with high-interest rates can create bigger problems in the long term.



That's why we've partnered with Leeds Credit Union to offer affordable loan products to anyone who lives or works in Barking and Dagenham. This means you can access a range of loans at a lower interest rate, to help bring your finances under control.

Whether you need a Family Loan to help repair a broken washing machine, or a Consolidation Loan to combine several debts into one low-interest payment, there are options for you. Visit bdmoney.co.uk for more information.

Universal Credit

Find out what Universal Credit is, what benefits you could be entitled to and how you can apply at bdmoney.co.uk

Council Tax Support

From 1 April 2023, this could reduce your Council Tax bill by up to 85% if you are of working age, depending on your income, savings, household and circumstances. If you are of pension age your Council Tax bill could be reduced by up to 100%.

Find out what Council Tax discounts and exemptions you could be entitled to at lbbd.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-and-exemptions

Citizens Advice Barking & Dagenham

They offer free independent, confidential, and impartial advice on your rights and responsibilities, and a range of help and support services to help you deal with any problems you may have. They also have a free online advice service if you have concerns about benefits, debt and money, housing, law and courts, work, or consumer or immigration rights.

Call their free advice line on 0808 278 7870, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or visit bdcab.org.uk for up to date service information and help.

They also have a drop in service for issues including housing advice, if you owe rent/and or your landlord is evicting you. Drop in to Barking Learning Centre Community Hub, 2 Town Hall Square, IG11 7NB.

Energy Bill Support (EBSS) - Alternative Funding

The EBSS provides a discount on energy bills of £400 for most households in Great Britain. This scheme is being delivered through domestic electricity suppliers in six instalments, or through prepayment meter vouchers from October 2022 to March 2023.

The EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme is designed to help households that pay for their electricity in a different way i.e. through a service charge and therefore did not receive the original support as they have no domestic supply. It offers a one off £400 non-repayable discount to help eligible households with energy bills. It is open to applications from 27 February 2023 for households who have not already received support with their energy bills.

You cannot apply if you've already had Energy Bill Support Scheme payments.

You do not need to apply if you or your landlord has a domestic energy meter or you pay your bills directly to an energy supplier (such as British Gas or EDF).

To find out if you're eligible, please visit gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic for more details or call 0808 175 3287, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. This scheme is run by the government, not the council.

Benefits calculator

Do you know which benefits you're entitled to? Put your details into our online benefits calculator and find out what support might be available to you.

You'll also be able to apply to make a claim for any benefits identified to you. Visit lbbd.gov.uk/benefits-calculator



HELP WITH ESSENTIALS

Library of Things

Library of Things is open in Barking Learning Centre Community Hub, giving you the chance to borrow useful items like drills, sound systems and sewing machines. It offers over 30 useful household, DIY and gardening items you can borrow from as little as £1.50 per day.

You can reserve items online, ready to collect from a self-service kiosk in Barking Learning Centre Community Hub. People on low incomes will be able to sign up for a Concession Membership which offers 25 per cent off borrowing costs.

You can find out more at libraryofthings.co.uk/barking

Community Food Clubs

If you're on a low income or having money problems, our Community Food Clubs can offer you £20 worth of weekly shopping for free. Find out where they are and if you're eligible to become a member at lbdd.gov.uk/community-food-clubs

Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme

This programme is free to children and young people who live or go to school in Barking and Dagenham and are eligible for benefit-related free school meals, with paid places available for everyone. Visit lbdd.gov.uk/free-holiday-activities or email hafprogramme@lbdd.gov.uk



Food banks

There are a number of food banks in Barking and Dagenham that can provide emergency food parcels if you're temporarily unable to provide for yourself. To use some of them, you need to get a voucher to receive a food parcel, so check with them before you visit.

For more information about food banks across the borough go to: bdcollective.co.uk/food-network-4/

If you are pregnant or have a child under four years old, you could get Healthy Start food vouchers to help buy some basics. For details visit healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply

Free school meals

All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state funded schools in England are eligible for free school meals. If your child is aged 11 to 16, they are also eligible if you are receiving certain benefits. You can find out more at lbdd.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/free-school-meals-pupil-premium

School uniform swap shop

Need school uniform for your kids? Have your kids grown out of their uniform but it's still in good condition? Join the Barking and Dagenham uniform exchange on Facebook, which is a resident-led group where you can swap and exchange school uniform items for free.

Find and join the group by searching for 'Barking and Dagenham uniform exchange' on Facebook.



Free mobile data, calls and messages

This scheme can help if you are on a low income and have limited or no access to the internet on your phone or home broadband.

Known as the National Databank, this scheme can help you get online and receive digital skills training. If you're eligible, you can receive one of the following:

- 15GB per month of O2 data and free calls and texts for up to six months
- 20GB per month of Vodafone data and free calls and texts, for up to six months
- 24GB per month of Three data, for up to six months. Calls and texts are not included.

You need a compatible mobile or an unlocked mobile to use the data.

To be eligible, you must be:

- over the age of 18
- from a low-income household
- have limited or no access to the internet at home or when away from home
- unable to afford your existing monthly contract or top-up.

For more details email libraries@lbdd.gov.uk or call or speak to a staff member at Barking Learning Centre Community Hub or Dagenham Library Community Hub.

Books, computers, free WiFi and more

Join our libraries and have access to adult and children books, online mobile apps, ebooks, audio and video books, journals, music, online courses, computers, FREE Wi-Fi plus so much more. Visit lbdd.gov.uk and search 'libraries' to find out more.



Not sure where to start?

If you are looking for cost-of-living support near you and are not sure where to start, contact one of our locality partners who can help:

DABD

Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5NU
Tel: 0330 054 2500

Kingsley Hall

Kingsley Hall Church and Community Centre,
Dagenham RM9 5NB
Tel: 020 8592 1708

Harmony House

Harmony House, Baden Powell Close,
Dagenham RM9 6XN
Tel: 020 8526 8200

Thames Life

Thames Community Hub, Bastable Avenue,
Barking IG11 0LH
Tel: 0782 725 8411

Al Madina Mosque and Community Hub

2 Victoria Road, Barking IG11 8PY
Tel: 020 8478 8526

For further information on help with the cost of living, visit lbdd.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support



Warm spaces for you

Together with our local partners, we've created a network of warm spaces across the borough for you, including in some of our Community Hubs.

They're places you can go to meet up with other people and have a cup of tea to stay warm, so you don't have to put the heating on at home. If you're struggling to heat your home, we'll give you a warm welcome at one of our warm spaces below.

Barking Learning Centre Community Hub 2 Town Square, Barking IG11 7NB Tel: 020 8724 8725 / 8722 Email: libraries@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Thursday 9am to 7pm Tea and coffee available from 9am to 3pm - Friday and Saturday, 9am to 5pm Tea and coffee available from 9am to 3pm - Sunday, 10am to 4pm Tea and coffee available from 11am to 1pm
Castle Point 163 Bennett's Castle Lane, Dagenham RM8 3YJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday, 10am to 2pm - Tuesday, 10am to 12pm - Wednesday, 10am to 3pm - Thursday, 12pm to 3pm
DABD Parsloes Avenue Annex site 42-48 Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5NU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10am to 3pm, until Thursday 30 March 2023. Tea and coffee is available.
Dagenham Library Community Hub 1 Church Elm Lane, Dagenham RM10 9QS Tel: 020 8724 3942 Email: libraries@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Thursday, 10am to 6pm - Friday and Saturday, 10am to 4pm
Heath Community Hub (previously known as William Bellamy Children's Centre) Frizlands Lane, Dagenham RM10 7HX Tel: 020 8724 1924 Email: heathcommunityhub@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday and Wednesday, 10am to 3pm
Marks Gate Community Hub Rose Lane, Chadwell Heath RM6 5NJ Tel: 020 8270 4165 Email: marksgatecommunityhub@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm
Northbury Community Hub at Al Madina Mosque 1st floor, The Hive, 2 Victoria Road, Barking IG11 8PY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9am to 7pm every day
Park Centre Rectory Road, Dagenham RM10 9SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday, Tuesday and Friday (Main Hall), 10am to 4pm - Wednesday and Thursday (Activity Room), 10am to 4pm
Robert Jeyes Library Chadwell Heath Community Centre, High Road, Chadwell Heath RM6 6AS Tel: 020 8270 4305 Email: libraries@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Thursday, 10.30am to 4pm
Thames Community Hub (previously known as Sue Bramley Children's Centre) Bastable Avenue, Barking IG11 0LG Tel: 020 8270 6619 Email: thamescommunityhub@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm
Valence Library Becontree Avenue, Dagenham RM8 3HT Tel: 020 8270 6864 Email: libraries@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm - Saturday, 10am to 3pm
Village Community Hub (previously known as Leys Children's Centre) Wellington Avenue, Dagenham RM10 9XW Tel: 020 8270 6864 Email: libraries@lbbd.gov.uk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm

Please note: Full details are available at lbbd.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support



www.fsc.org

MIX

Paper from responsible sources

FSC® C021017