

Cost of LIVING

support booklet



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OVERVIEW

The cost of living crisis is going to affect everyone. Every single one of us will feel it impact us somewhere in our lives – whether that’s heating our homes, thinking about what we can or can’t eat, or planning ahead for the future. For those who are already facing the toughest challenges within society – feeling marginalised and isolated, experiencing discrimination or inequality, finding that they cannot participate as easily in opportunities – this rise in the cost of living will exacerbate further those barriers. For some, this may be one crisis too many.

The VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) sector in Bristol already provides essential spaces, services and programmes that focus on helping or empowering people in these situations. However, the VCSE sector is tired – really tired – after rising so expertly and with such innovation to the trials of the Coronavirus pandemic. People – staff, volunteers, trustees – gave so much of themselves to keep organisations going and to find ways to answer emerging needs at a time of intense societal change. The cost-of-living crisis is not allowing room for the decompression space that most people feel they need.

However, with further investment in the sector – involving many different types of resources – and by building on these excellent foundations with increased partnership working, the sector is ideally placed to expand, develop and respond to the cost-of-living crisis. Many of the answers to the challenges that lie ahead of us, as we as a community consider how to combat the economic problems ahead, are already there: the VCSE sector is providing these solutions.

This booklet brings together some of the resources for people or organisations that Voscur, working with key partner organisations, has identified. We encourage you to tell us more about what resources or information you need, and to contact us if you’d like to take part in shaping our understanding of working together to reduce the impact of this crisis.

- Rebecca Mear, Voscur CEO



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

MONEY

A £400 discount on energy bills, which you don't need to repay, is available to all households with a domestic electricity connection in England, Scotland and Wales via [The Energy Bills Support Scheme](#).

You can check your eligibility for any benefits via Bristol City Council's [benefits calculator](#).

For specific benefits, the below websites will show you how much you may be able to claim:

- [Bereavement benefits](#): 0845 606 0265
- [Carers allowance](#): 0845 608 4321
- [Child benefit](#): 0845 302 1444
- [Disability and sickness benefits](#): 0800 882 200
- [Housing benefit and council tax reduction](#)
- [Pension credit](#): 0800 991 234
- [Tax credits](#): 0345 300 3900
- [Jobseekers allowance \(unemployment benefits\)](#): 0800 055 6688

ADVICE

The following organisations offer guidance in navigating debt:

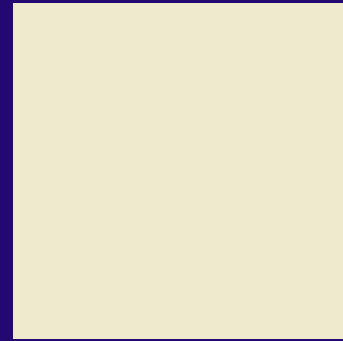
- [Citizens Advice Bristol](#)
- [North Bristol Advice Centre](#)
- [South Bristol Advice Services](#)
- [St Pauls Advice Centre](#)
- [Talking Money](#)

BROADBAND

Virgin Media offers low-cost Broadband for those on Universal Credit. [Eligible customers can get online for £12.50 per month on their new Social Tariff](#).



WELCOMING SPACES



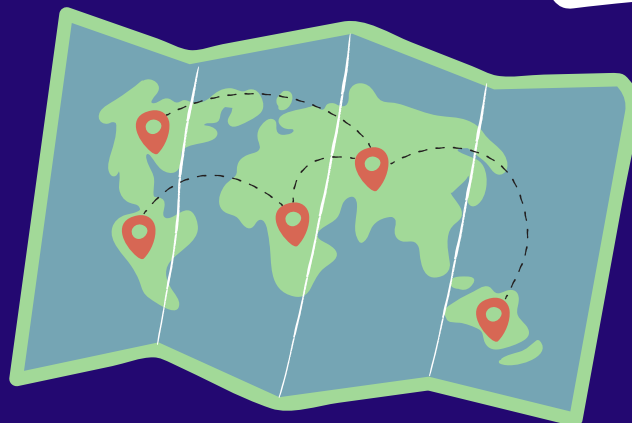
A Welcoming Space is a communal area where people can access cost of living support. These spaces provide a range of services, from foodbanks to activities, and have been set up in already-established spaces of connection within communities.

Welcoming Spaces are split into two tiers. Tier 1 spaces are 'community living rooms', where people can socialise, share resources and seek advice relating to the cost of living.

Spaces that fall into Tier 2 have more restricted opening times, and may have activities targeted toward a specific community.

All Welcoming Spaces are wheelchair accessible with an accessible toilet.

**CLICK
MAP TO
SEARCH**



FOOD

Food support is available to you from across the city.

[FareShare](#) offers two options for getting food – a paid for service with a FareShare Community Food Membership or the opportunity to collect free surplus food from your local supermarket through FareShare Go.

The [Feeding Bristol website](#) provides recipes and details of the [Holiday and Food \(HAF\)](#) programme, where children eligible for free school meals can get free food and take part in activities.

Visit the [Family Action FOOD Club website](#) to access food at a reduced cost.

Visit your local food bank websites for information on how to get food parcels if you're eligible:

- [North Bristol](#)
- [North West Bristol](#)
- [South and East Bristol](#)

[Local crisis and prevention fund](#) can make food bank referrals.

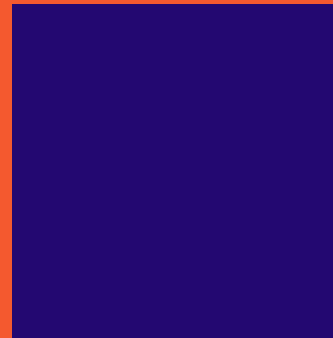
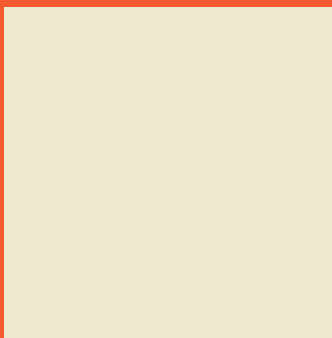


MENTAL health

Bristol Mental Health provides a range of NHS mental health support services including therapy, rehabilitation, dementia support, and wellbeing advice, also crisis support including Women's Crisis Centre, which provides a safe place for women in mental health crisis to stay.

VitaMinds is a talking therapy service designed to support individuals by providing the tools needed to get things back on track. It's a free service.

Bristol Mind is a local mental health charity offering information and signposting, counselling, and a telephone helpline. Also hosts a variety of mental health self help groups.



Off the Record provides mental health services, a mental health movement mobilised to support, promote and defend the mental health, rights and social position of young people.

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgmental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including thoughts of suicide.

EMPLOYMENT

One Front Door can help you find work and training. They give priority to unemployed residents. Call them on 0117 922 3440 from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday or email onefrontdoor@bristol.gov.uk.

Clean Slate Training and Employment supports people to manage their money better, find work (and better paid work) and get online.

Employment Plus by the Salvation Army can support with CV writing, interview skills, job searches, advice and guidance. They also have a training website that is free to access.

The Ways2Work Network is a community of employment support and training organisations sharing information about opportunities to help you find work.

The National Careers Service:

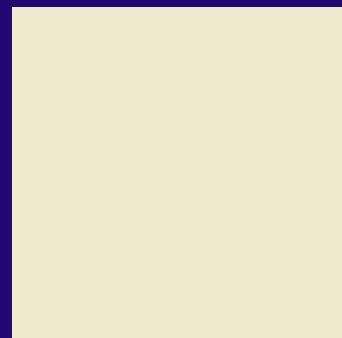
- gives advice and guidance on learning, training and work at all stages in your career
- helps you match your skills to potential new careers

Future Bright offers free, one-to-one coaching and support to help you take your next step at work.

Bristol Community Learning offers free courses to improve your confidence and skills for life and work, including:

- English
- maths
- digital skills

Thrive at Work provides free tools and resources, including free e-learning, to help create a mentally healthy workforce and mentally healthy workplaces.



HOMELESSNESS

Shelter offer support and advice with a range of housing problems including homelessness, evictions, renters' rights, repairs, and navigating the council housing system. They exist to defend the right to a safe home.

Citizens Advice are able to offer housing related advice.

Second Step are a mental health charity who also have homelessness services.

CHAS are a Bristol-based organisation that offers community-based housing advice, support and advocacy service and free, independent and confidential support to anyone in and around Bristol with housing issues, big or small.

Caring in Bristol have produced a Housing Support Handbook.

ARA can provide housing support for people struggling with substance misuse.

1625ip specifically supports young people, aged under 25, who are homeless or are (or deemed as) at risk of homelessness.

There are night shelters and advice for people currently rough sleeping.

Move in, Move on, Move up is a service from One Front Door for anyone with a history of rough sleeping or living in temporary or unsettled accommodation. They give one-to-one support to help people get a job and earn more money.





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Company limited by guarantee number 3918210 | Registered charity number 1148403