

Your guide to cost of living support



merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving
or call 020 8066 4086



SUPPORT IN TOUGH TIMES

My number one priority since becoming Leader of Merton Council last year has been to help residents through the current cost of living crisis with real, practical support. It has been a challenging time with high energy bills, high inflation, high mortgage rates and rents pushing up day-to-day costs. Too many people are struggling to make ends meet – and that's simply not acceptable.



We acted quickly to help those most in need by setting up a £2 million Cost of Living Fund. This included targeted payments to those most in need; access to emergency grants, food and supermarket vouchers; as well as free school meals over the school holidays.

We have also given funding to support local foodbanks, provide debt advice services, and help for people to make their homes more energy efficient. Plus, our libraries opened as Warm Spaces, and now Cool Spaces, for people worried about using energy at home, providing activities, information, and support.

In this booklet, you will find details of a wide range of support available locally. With the backing of the Council, community organisations have come together to make sure help is available. Please take a look through and reach out if you need advice and support with the cost of living. These are difficult times for everyone, but you don't need to face it alone.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ross Garrod".

Councillor Ross Garrod
Leader, London Borough of Merton



DO IT ONLINE

Every effort has been made to make sure the information in this guide is current.

For the latest cost of living support and events, visit:

merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving
or call **020 8066 4086**.

STAY TUNED



Subscribe to receive our regular cost of living e-newsletter.

 merton.gov.uk/newsletter

 [Facebook@Merton Council](https://www.facebook.com/MertonCouncil)

 [@Merton_Council](https://twitter.com/Merton_Council)

 [@whatsoninmerton](https://www.instagram.com/whatsoninmerton)

 [youtube.com/mertoncouncil](https://www.youtube.com/mertoncouncil)

Contents

The London Borough of Merton is taking action on the cost of living emergency.

If you are struggling to afford bills and make savings as prices rise, advice and support is available for you and your family.

This guide includes information about support from the council and community organisations.

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MONEY, BILLS AND DEBT SUPPORT

There is support available from Merton Council and our community partners who can provide expert advice to help with your personal finances and budgeting.

“This voucher will take away some of the pressure from my house bills and current money worries. Thank you so much.”

Zekia* on receiving support from

Wimbledon Guild

*Name changed

Get support with money, benefits, debt, housing, immigration and more:

Age UK Merton

ageukmerton.org.uk, 020 8648 5792

Support for people State Pension age or older, or a family member or carer of a pensioner

Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth

caml.org.uk, 0808 278 7831

Speak to the cost of living team in-person at Colliers Wood Library on Mondays, Wide Way Medical Centre on Tuesdays, Wimbledon Library on Thursdays and Pollards Hill Library on Fridays

South West London Law Centre

swllc.org, 020 8767 2777

Speak to the Money Advice Team or get independent legal advice on a range of issues

Springfield Advice and Law Centre

springfieldlawcentre.org.uk, 020 8767 6884

Get in-person debt and benefits support at Wilson Hospital, Mitcham Library, and Morden Hall Medical Practice





Get financial support:

Council Tax Support

merton.gov.uk/cts, 020 8274 4903

If you are on a low income or certain benefits, your council tax could be reduced or removed

CroydonPlus

croydonplus.co.uk, 020 3468 8568

Get support in managing your personal finances, saving and access to affordable loans

Discretionary housing payments

merton.gov.uk/housingbenefit, 020 8274 4903

Receive rent support payments during financial hardship if you are on certain benefits

Local Welfare Support Scheme

merton.gov.uk/benefitsadvice, 020 8274 4908

Emergency grants for short term severe financial difficulty where there is a risk to health or safety

Support for care leavers

Contact your personal assistant or
020 8545 4293

Support for care leavers, special guardians and in-house foster carers. An automatic support payment will be made in late 2023

Wimbledon Guild

wimbledonguild.co.uk, 020 8946 0735

One-off grants to help with household costs if you have no other access to money



Come to our cost of living events for free advice on debt, benefits, saving money on bills and energy, and much more. Stay updated – merton.gov.uk/events

merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving or call 020 8066 4086

FOOD SUPPORT SERVICES



“Food prices are very high and it’s not an easy life at the moment. We’re living very economically. I really appreciate this service, they respect everyone.”

Prabha on using the Community Fridge

Get support and a warm welcome at one of Merton’s food services. Some are drop-in, others require registration or a referral voucher. Find out more on our timetable overleaf, or contact Merton Community Hub on 020 8066 4086.

You can get food support:

The Commonsense Trust

commonsense.net, 020 8764 9582

Food support including a low-cost lunch club

Dons Local Action Group

donslocalaction.org, 020 3301 4511

Free food parcel deliveries with a referral voucher

Merton’s Community Fridge

sustainablemerton.org/communityfridge,
020 3417 0476

Free food parcels while reducing food waste

Merton Community Hub

mertoncommunityhub.org.uk, 020 8066 4086

Helps connect you to support in your community including a foodbank voucher, emergency food parcel or local lunch club



“These last two years have been tough. I was linked in through the social prescriber at my GP surgery. I was worried about coming but everyone treats you so nicely, they have become like family now.”

Alvi on food support from Community Fridge

Merton Growbaby

mertongrowbaby.co.uk,
mertongrowbaby@gmail.com

Food, formula and other items for children under five years old

Power Centre Church

facebook.com/PowerCentreChurchUk

A weekly foodbank based in Mitcham

NHS Healthy Start Scheme

healthystart.nhs.uk, 0300 330 7010

Support for pregnant women or young families with healthy food

Wimbledon Foodbank

wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk,
020 8544 0126

Emergency food support with a referral voucher

Polish Family Association

polishfamily.org.uk, 020 3649 8260

Food support for Eastern European and Ukrainian families mainly

MERTON FOOD SUPPORT TIMETABLE

(V) = A referral voucher is required from a local agency.
Please contact the organisation directly.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
12–1pm Wimbledon Foodbank, Elim Pentecostal Church Wimbledon, 76 Kingston Road, SW19 1LA (V)	12–1pm Wimbledon Foodbank Elim Pentecostal Church Wimbledon, 76 Kingston Road, SW19 1LA (V)	11am–1pm The Commonsides Trust, New Horizon Centre, South Lodge Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 1LT
4.30–5.30pm Merton's Community Fridge, Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane, SM4 5BL	12–1pm Merton Growbaby, 42 Graham Road, Mitcham, CR4 2HA (V)	12–1pm Wimbledon Foodbank, Pollards Hill Baptist Church, Wide Way, CR4 1BN (V)
		1–2pm Polish Family Association, New Horizon Centre, South Lodge Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 1LT (A)
		4.30–5.30pm Merton's Community Fridge, Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane, SM4 5BL
		5–6pm Wimbledon Foodbank, Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane, SM4 5BL (V)

(A) = An appointment is required to access the service.

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10am–12 noon Power Centre Church Auditorium, 238–240 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3HD	12–1pm Wimbledon Foodbank, Pollards Hill Baptist Church, Wide Way, CR4 3BN (V)	12.30–1.30pm Wimbledon Foodbank, Elim Pentecostal Church Mitcham, Love Lane, CR4 3AU (V)
12–1pm Wimbledon Foodbank, Elim Pentecostal Church Wimbledon, 76 Kingston Road, SW19 1LA (V)		
12–1pm Merton Growbaby, 42 Graham Road, Mitcham, CR4 2HA (V)		
1.30–2.30pm Merton's Community Fridge, Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane, SM4 5BL		

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AND CARERS

“Thanks for providing a great summer camp. The kids were able to explore a completely new space that we knew nothing about, despite it being so close by.”

Parent

The Commonside Trust

‘Step Forward’ programme

commonside.net, 020 8764 9582, ext 203 or 204

Support for every step of family life, from children’s health, money worries, and housing difficulties to family relationships

Free school meals

merton.gov.uk/freemeals

Check if your children are eligible for free school meals and a payment to fund resources at their school under the ‘Pupil Premium’

Holiday food voucher

merton.gov.uk/freemeals

If your family gets free school meals, you will automatically receive a supermarket voucher to help with food over the holidays





Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) clubs

merton.gov.uk/HAF

HAF clubs run in the main school holidays and are free if you're on certain benefits

Merton Growbaby

mertongrowbaby.co.uk, 020 8544 0126

Access items such as milk formula, wipes, nappies and toiletries as well as clothes, toys, and prams, if you have children under five years old

NHS Healthy Start Scheme

healthystart.nhs.uk, 0300 330 7010

Support for pregnant women or young families with healthy food

“Some of our families are quite big and have to spend that bit extra to make sure everyone's fed. Even a small voucher to support with that is massive for them and they really appreciate it.”

Marc, Pastoral Lead,
Melrose School



USING ENERGY AND WATER

Cool Spaces

apps.london.gov.uk/cool-spaces

See the location of water stations and places to keep cool across London, which include Merton libraries

Energy support

energyadvice.london.gov.uk, 0808 196 8260

Free and impartial advice on saving energy and water, reducing bills, financial support and more

Thinking Works

thinkingworks.co.uk, 0800 118 2327

Home energy efficiency assessments and referrals if you are on certain benefits

Warm & Well in Merton

warmandwellinmerton.co.uk,
020 8946 0735

Access advice and support on staying warm and well whatever the weather

Warm Spaces

warmspaces.org

You are welcome in Merton's Warm Spaces, which are heated and free to enter

WaterHelp and WaterSure

thameswater.co.uk, 0800 009 3652

Access help if you are struggling to pay your water bills



HEALTH

Health and wellbeing zones

merton.gov.uk/libraries,

020 8274 4901

Attend fitness classes in Merton libraries

Merton Moves

mertonmoves.co.uk, **020 8946 0735**

A free 6-week fitness pledge for over 50s to stay active and healthy

Merton Uplift

mertonuplift.nhs.uk, **020 3513 5888**

Support if you have a mental health or wellbeing need as a result of emotional difficulties

One You Merton

oneyoumerton.org, **020 8973 3545**

A local service offering free support and advice on eating well, moving more, stopping smoking, drinking less and mental wellbeing

EMPLOYMENT

Employment support through Merton Council

merton.gov.uk, **020 8274 4901**

Access services to help you get into work, gain skills while you work and earn as an apprentice, improve your skills and qualifications, or find a better job

Jobcentre Plus

gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Access jobs listings and training opportunities

Merton Adult Learning

merton.gov.uk/adultlearning,
020 8918 7777

Gain skills with full and part time courses and apprenticeships (concessions available)

WAYS TO HELP OUT IN MERTON

Donate, volunteer, fundraise and support

Local charities and food services are busier during the cost of living crisis, and they depend on community support. Any food, fundraising or time you can give to local causes will go a long way. You can also donate food via the supermarket

The Commonsense Trust

commonsense.net, 020 8764 9582

Become a Lunch Club volunteer to support up to 30 older people. Flexible opportunities are available on weekdays

Dons Local Action Group

donslocalaction.org, 020 3301 4511

Volunteer or donate unwanted laptops, furniture and white goods in good working order to the Dons Local Action Group to be distributed to community members in need

Merton's Community Fridge

[sustainblemerton.org/
communityfridge](https://sustainblemerton.org/communityfridge),
020 3417 0476

Donate food to keep the Community Fridge stocked with good quality surplus food to distribute to the community, or become a 'Fridge Friend' volunteer!

Merton Connected

mertonconnected.co.uk,
020 8685 1771

Make a difference with community volunteering opportunities through Merton Connected

Merton Giving Fund

mertongiving.co.uk,
hello@mertongiving.co.uk

Your donations and fundraising will support local charitable organisations supporting the community

Wimbledon Foodbank

wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help,
020 8544 0126

Help provide emergency food support to local people. You can donate food, money, volunteer or fundraise

Wimbledon Guild

wimbledonguild.co.uk, 020 8946 0735

Volunteer or donate to help make sure that no one in Merton has to face life's challenges alone



merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving or call 020 8066 4086



DIRECTORY OF SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

- **Age UK Merton:** ageukmerton.org.uk, 020 8648 5792
- **Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth:** caml.org.uk, 0808 278 7831
- **The Commonsides Trust:** commonsides.net, 020 8764 9582
- **Croydon Plus:** croydonplus.co.uk, 020 3468 8568
- **Dons Local Action Group:** donslocalaction.org, 020 3301 4511
- **Merton's Community Fridge:** sustainablemerton.org/communityfridge, 020 3417 0476
- **Merton Community Hub:** mertoncommunityhub.org.uk, 020 8066 4086
- **Merton Connected:** mertonconnected.co.uk, 020 8685 1771
- **Merton Council services:** merton.gov.uk, 020 8274 4901
Benefits, advice and local welfare: 020 8274 4908
Council Tax Support line: 020 8274 4903
Homelessness: 020 8770 5000
Housing Benefit: 020 8274 4903
Libraries: 0333 370 4700
- **Merton Uplift:** mertonuplift.nhs.uk, 020 3513 5888
- **Polish Family Association:** polishfamily.org.uk, 020 3649 8260
- **South West London Law Centres:** swllc.org, 020 8767 2777
- **Springfield Advice and Law Centre:** springfieldlawcentre.org.uk, 020 8767 6884
- **Sustainable Merton:** sustainablemerton.org, 020 3417 0476
- **Thinking Works:** thinkingworks.co.uk, 0800 118 2327
- **Wimbledon Foodbank:** wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk, 020 8544 0126
- **Wimbledon Guild:** wimbledonguild.co.uk, 020 8946 0735