



# HOUSING NEWS

Lower Oldpark

Special Cost of Living Edition

Don't throw this away.  
You might need it in  
the future.

November 2022. Lower Oldpark Community Association, 9-23 Avoca Street, Belfast BT14 6EN. Tel: 028 96928293. Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com

## Cost of Living Crisis Help

This special issue of Housing News contains information that will hopefully help Lower Oldpark residents cope a bit better with the current cost of living crisis.

It offers information about services that can help with benefits, managing money and debt, accessing free food, energy costs, housing costs and more.

Lower Oldpark Community Association encourages local people to contact the services if they are having problems.

Also, if you know someone who needs help but isn't able to make the contact themselves, give them a hand.

If you need support with contacting a service, you can also get help from the Lower Oldpark Housing Project Worker Gary Hughes on 028 96928293 or 07713990976 or 028 90351334 or Facebook message @loweroldparkhousing

## Ark Church Food Bank

(12 Cliftonpark Avenue)

### Type of Help Available

Drop-in and provision of no charge food parcels for those in need. A range of non-perishable food is available.

### Who Can Receive Help?

Anyone who needs it.

### When Is It Available?

Tuesdays 11.00am to 1.30pm.

### Where Is It Available?

Address: Ark Church, 12 Cliftonpark Avenue, Belfast BT14 6DQ.

## Trussell Trust Foodbank

(Immanuel Presbyterian Church – Agnes Street)

### Type of Help Available

Provision of no charge food parcels. A typical food parcel includes breakfast cereals, soup, pasta, rice, pasta sauce, tinned beans, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, tea or coffee, biscuits and snacks.

### Who Can Receive Help?

Anyone in need, but you will need a foodbank voucher. You can check your foodbank voucher entitlement with your social worker or project worker.

You can also be referred by e.g. an advice agency, a social housing landlord, a health professional, a charity or a political party.

Once you have been issued with a voucher, you can exchange this for a minimum of three days of emergency food at the foodbank.

### When Is It Available?

A walk-in service is available Mondays, 2.00pm to 3.30pm.

### Contact Details/ More Information

Mob: 079 0209 9840. Email: [info@northbelfast.foodbank.org](mailto:info@northbelfast.foodbank.org)

Address: Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 35 Agnes Street BT13 1GG.

More Information: <https://northbelfast.foodbank.org.uk/contact-us/>

## (Ekenhead Halls – North Circular Road)

Trussell Trust also provides a food bank service at Ekenhead Halls on the North Circular Road in North Belfast. The service is basically the same as Immanuel above but the day of operation and address are different.

### When Is It Available?

A walk-in service is available Tuesdays, 2.00pm to 4.0pm and on Thursdays 6.30pm to 8.00pm.

### Contact Details/ More Information

Mob: 079 0209 9840. Email: [info@northbelfast.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@northbelfast.foodbank.org.uk)

Address: Ekenhead Halls, 19 North Circular Road, Belfast BT15 5HB

More Information: <https://northbelfast.foodbank.org.uk/contact-us/>

## **Haven Foodbank (133 Shankill Road)**

### Type of Help Available/ Who Can Receive It?

Free emergency food parcels for anyone in need. Walk-in service.

### When Is It Available?

Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday, 11.00am to 2.00pm.

### Where Is It Available?

Address: 133 Shankill Road BT13 1FD.

### Contact

Phone: 028 95142029.

## **TDK Hub Foodbank (Girdwood Community Hub)**

### Type of Help Available

Free emergency food supplies to cover daily meals for six days.

### Who Can Receive Help?

Anyone in need.

### When Is It Available?

Walk-in service available Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday, 10.00am - 1.00pm.

### Where Is It Available?

Girdwood Community Hub, 16 Girdwood Avenue BT14 6EG.

### Contact Details

Phone Rosemary on 077 34801604 or Mary on 077 73568776.

## **Are You Getting All the Benefits You're Entitled To?**

### Type of Help Available

The Department for Communities 'Make the Call Service' provides free, confidential support to people to access benefits and help they are entitled to but have not been claiming.

### Who Can Use the Service?

Anyone who wants to find out if they can receive some additional household income through the benefits system. This benefit check service is available to those who aren't in employment and those who are.

### Using the Service

Call 0800 232 1271. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (excluding public holidays). You can also Text ADVICE to 67300 or email [makethecall@dfcn.gov.uk](mailto:makethecall@dfcn.gov.uk).

### More Information

Search online: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/unclaimed-benefits>.

## **Help With Benefits and Debt**

### Type of Help Available

The Vine Centre on the Crumlin Road offers free, confidential welfare benefits advice including a benefits' check service, and debt and budgeting advice.

### Who Can Use the Service?

This service is available to anyone who needs help.

### Using the Service

It is necessary to make an appointment to use the service.

### Making An Appointment

Phone: 028 9035 1020 or email [info@vinecentre.org](mailto:info@vinecentre.org)

Or call into the Vine Centre, 193 Crumlin Road, Belfast BT14 7AA.

### More Information

Search online: [http://www.vinecentre.org/advice\\_services.html](http://www.vinecentre.org/advice_services.html)

## **If You're Struggling To Pay Your Energy Bills**

You should contact your energy supplier as soon as possible if you think you might have a problem paying an energy bill.

Based on individual circumstances, your supplier may offer support such as:

Reassessing or reducing debt repayment and bill payment for domestic customers

in financial distress.

Referring customers who are struggling to pay bills to organisations that offer a free, independent debt advice.

If you are worried about debt or have already missed a payment, you should consider getting free, confidential and

independent debt advice. This newsletter contains details of a number of organisation that can help with this. (Information source:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/advice-if-youre-struggling-pay-your-energy-bills> ).

## NIHE 'Making Your Money Work' Service

### Who Can Use the Service?

NIHE tenants.

### Type of Help Available

Free benefits' checks, help with making a budget and tips with making the most out of household income.

### Contact Details

You can speak to a Financial Inclusion Officer by calling 03448 920 900.

### More Information

Search online NIHE Making Your Money Work.

## Debt and Money Advice

Advice NI provides free, confidential and impartial debt and money advice. Areas covered include:

- Benefits
- Debt and money
- Business debt.
- Tax credits and HMRC products.
- EU settlement scheme.

### Using the Service

Phone: 0800 915 4604. Email: [advice@adviceni.net](mailto:advice@adviceni.net)

## Step Change Debt And Money Management

Step Change Debt Charity offers free and impartial advice on debt and money management.

### Who Can Use the Service?

Anyone in need.

### When Is It Available?

Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 8.00pm.

### Contact Details

Freephone: 0800 138 1111.

## Dealing With A Financial Crisis

Advice NI provides a free and confidential helpline for anyone coping with a financial crisis.

### Using the Service

Call 0800 915 4604 or email [advice@adviceni.net](mailto:advice@adviceni.net)

### When Is It Available?

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.

### More Information

Search online: <https://www.adviceni.net/>

## Savings and Loans

Court Credit Union is a community based profit sharing financial organization.

### What Is Available?

Court Credit Union offers a convenient savings option and low cost borrowing.

### Who Can Use It?

Anyone who lives or works within the BT areas BT13, BT14 and BT15.

All new members must be sponsored by a current member of Court Credit Union.

To join, call into the Shankill Road office and ask an application pack.

### When Is It Available?

Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday 11.00am to 4.00pm.

Saturday 9.30am to 2.00pm.

### Contact Details

Phone: 028 9058 0530. Email: [info@courtcreditunion.co.uk](mailto:info@courtcreditunion.co.uk)

Address: 271 Shankill Road, Belfast BT13 1FT

More Information: <https://www.courtcreditunion.co.uk/>

## Struggling With Your Rent Payments

Housing Executive and housing associations tenants who struggling to pay their rent should contact their landlord. For Lower Oldpark residents, contact details are set out below.

### NIHE

Andrea McAleenan. Phone: 028 95982749 or mobile 0781 8427225.

### Radius Housing

Phone: 0330 123 0888 (Option 3 –

Housing) or ask for the housing officer for your street.

### Clanmil Housing

Phone: 028 90876000 (Option 2 – Rents).

### Choice Housing

Phone: 0300 111 2211 (Option 2 – Rents) and ask to speak to a Rents Officer.

## Repossession And Mortgage Arrears Help

People buying their home and facing repossession or struggling with mortgage arrears can receive help from the Housing Rights Service.

### Contact Details

Helpline: 028 9024 5640.

### When Is It Available?

Between 09:30 and 16:30 Monday to Friday.

## Private Landlord Rent Arrears Help

If you are the tenant of a private landlord and are struggle with rent arrears or even face eviction, contact the Housing Rights Service.

### Contact Details

Helpline: 028 9024 5640.

### When Is It Available?

9:30am to 16:30pm Monday to Friday.

## Help With Energy Costs

NI Energy Advice offers free independent and impartial energy advice to domestic householders in Northern Ireland.

### What Is Available?

NI Energy Advice can help you with:

- Managing your fuel bills.
- Heating your home.
- Making energy cost savings.
- Energy efficiency for your home.
- Switching your fuel provider.
- Energy efficiency grant advice.
- Joining your local Oil Buying Club.
- Renewable energy.

### Who Can Use It?

All householders.

### Contact Details

Phone: 0800 111 4455 Monday to Friday.

Email: [NIenergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:NIenergyadvice@nihe.gov.uk)

Online form:

<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Energy/Energy-Query>

### More Information

<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Community/NI-Energy-Advice>

## Home Energy Saving Tips

Follow the guidelines below and start saving energy.

### In the Kitchen

Only use the water you need when boiling a kettle (cover the element of an electric kettle).

Put lids on pots and turn down the heat when the water starts to boil.

Steamer pots cut hob usage.

Where possible, use the oven for more than just one item and remember you can cook at a higher temperature at the top of the oven, and at the same time at a lower temperature at the bottom.

Remember every time you open the oven door to check cooking you lose 20 per cent of the accumulated heat.

Defrost your fridges/ freezers regularly. Don't put hot food in the freezer.

Never leave the fridge door open

Research shows that using a microwave rather than a normal oven to heat up a small amount of food may save energy.

### Washing Clothes

Washing clothes at 30 degrees can be just as good for a normally soiled load.

Run your washing machine or dishwasher with full loads.

Avoid tumble drying – dry clothes outdoors or on indoor driers when possible to save money and energy.

### Heating and Hot Water

Turning your central heating down by one degree could cut your heating bills by up to 10 per cent.

Turn down your immersion heater temperature by one degree – you will save energy and you're unlikely to

notice the difference.

Close curtains at night.

Don't block radiators with furniture.

Don't leave hot water taps running.

Use the shower, if you have one, rather than the bath.

### Lighting

Use energy efficient light bulbs.

Switch the lights off every time you leave a room.

Use 'task' lighting rather than whole room lighting when only a small amount of light is needed.

### Appliances

Never leave mobile phones on charge overnight.

Switch off and unplug computer equipment when not in use.

Electrical appliances on standby cost money. Switch off on the appliance or turn it off at the plug.

### Save Electric With A Home Energy Monitor

A home energy monitor lets you see how much electricity you're using, as you use it, and its cost.

There are a number of retailers selling monitors with different functions from £30 to over £100. You can find a retailer by searching online for 'home energy monitor'.

### More Information

NI Energy Advice. Phone: 0800 111 4455.

### Advice Source

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/energy-efficiency-tips> .