

COVID-19 Support Available

Current and Up to date information

<https://www.achieveinbathnes.co.uk/news/>

Local Welfare Provision

The Welfare Support team can help by providing help with food in emergency situations if you are on a low income. Assistance is usually through the provision of shopping vouchers and referrals to the foodbanks in the region. For further details including how to make an application please visit the following page on the council's website;

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/apply-welfare-support>

Please note that the council does not provide cash through this service.

Tressel Trust Food Banks- up to date information about what they can offer is below.

Information about Food Banks in Bath is here <https://bath.foodbank.org.uk/coronavirus/>
01225 463549 info@bath.foodbank.org.uk

Information about Food Banks in Somer Valley
<https://somer valley.foodbank.org.uk/2020/03/19/foodbank-continuity-plan/>
07729523986 info@somer valley.foodbank.org.uk

Council Tax Support

If you are on a low income you may be able to claim Council Tax Support. Council Tax Support is a means-tested reduction scheme available to all residents who are liable for council tax. Further details of the scheme and application forms can be found on the council's website here;

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-support>

New Claims

Those most vulnerable will still be able to access JCP services in person. They have seen a spike in claims so lines are busier than normal at present

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/claimants-are-asked-to-apply-online-as-jobcentres-limit-access?utm_source=0b62277d-0c8b-401d-a8cd-e22745cdbc9f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Universal Credit guide finder

Information about Universal Credit can be found on GOV.UK. There are lots of detailed guides covering specific topics which provide additional information to help claimants, landlords, stakeholders and advisers who support our claimants.

It's not always easy to find the information you need, so we've published a 'Universal Credit guide finder' which provides links to all the current guidance available to make it easier for you.

You can find it on the first page of the [Helping someone claim](#) section on the Understanding Universal Credit website.

Advice for those claiming a health related benefit.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-update-benefit-reviews-and-reassessments-suspended?utm_source=f383f421-fe4d-42e5-82fd-dae352eec8b4&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Tax credit increases

As part of a [number of measures](#) to support the country during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Working Tax Credits payments will be increased by £1,045 to £3,040 per year from 6 April 2020 until 5 April 2021.

The amount a claimant or household will benefit from will depend on their circumstances, including their level of household income. But the increase could mean up to an extra £20 each week.

If you claim Working Tax Credits, you don't have to take any action or contact HMRC - the increase in your payments will start from 6 April 2020.

Advice for businesses This page has a range of information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

Money and Pensions advice

The Money and Pensions Service have added specific pages to our website which will be constantly monitored and updated which will provide direct guidance to the public about money in general and then more specific financial guidance and actions that people can take to help themselves as this situation develops.

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.gov.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money>

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.gov.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you>

Debt advice

<https://www.stepchange.org/>

<https://www.businessdebtline.org/>

Housing Information

Just a quick note to say that Housing Benefits Face to Face service will be postponed until further notice from Monday 23rd March.

The phone lines will remain open during our standard times.

Residents can inform the council of changes in their circumstances by using our web forms via our website; <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/tell-us-about-change-circumstances-0>

Residents can also contact us by emailing; benefits@bathned.gov.uk

Housing Benefit for Pensioners or for working-age residents in specified (supported) accommodation

If you are of pensionable age or live in supported accommodation and rent your home you may be able to claim Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit is a means tested benefit and details of the scheme, including how to apply can be found here;

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/apply-housing-benefit>

Please note that if you are of working age and do not live in specified accommodation then you will need to claim help with your rent through Universal Credit.

Discretionary Housing payments

If you receive Housing Benefit or the Housing costs element of Universal Credit and you require further financial assistance in order to meet your Housing costs you might be able to claim extra help through the council's Discretionary Housing Payment scheme. For further details including how to apply please visit the following page;

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/apply-discretionary-housing-payment>

Grants

St John's have changed their criteria for grants (see below). Though people need to apply through professionals – so perhaps we shouldn't put it on a document for the general public

Where individuals and families are experiencing crisis and hardship which is linked directly to the Covid-19 outbreak, and this can be clearly demonstrated in the application, we will:

- Disregard any support St John's has previously awarded as part of our assessment process, meaning a full allocation of funding can be awarded even if support has previously been given in the last three years;
- Ensure that any funding awarded now does not impact on an individual or family's ability to secure a full allocation of funding from St John's in the future, meaning applications linked directly to Covid-19 will be treated as 'one-offs';
- Be flexible around our usual definition of 'low income' (which we usually take to be a monthly disposable household income of £215) and the documentation we require as supporting evidence;
- Be open to funding a wide range of goods and services which may be requested.

Please do share this with your colleagues and any other partner organisations who are supporting vulnerable and isolated people during this crisis.

For more information about St John's Individual Funding Programme, please visit <https://stjohnsbath.org.uk/what-we-do/funding-support/individual-funding/>.