

Housing Newsletter

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Housing Services e-newsletter December 2022

Welcome to the Housing Services e-newsletter

Welcome to the December newsletter, the last of the year! In this edition, find out the latest news on the information on pre-payment meters, the latest information on benefits. Have your say in the local plan public consultation. and find out where to get financial help and support this Christmas

If you have any comments or suggestions for future newsletter please get in touch by [emailing](#) us



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Pre-Payment Energy Meter

If you pay for your energy by topping up a traditional pre-payment meter, you should have already received your first Government Energy Bills Support Voucher of £66 either by post, text or email. These vouchers are paid in instalments every month between October and March 2023. They are only valid for 90 days and cannot be used once expired so make sure you don't lose out! Vouchers can be redeemed at PayPoint stores and your local Post Office.

If you've lost or not received your voucher, get in touch with your energy supplier as soon as possible to let them know.

For further information about the Energy Bills Support Scheme and how you will receive the support for more information click here [visit](#)

Benefit Changes.

Cost of Living Payments

With the rising costs of living, you might be wondering how long your household finances are going to be squeezed for. Here's what you need to

know about the Government's Autumn Statement 2022. For a more detailed report of the Autumn Budget and how it may affect you, visit [Money Helper web page](#)

The Cost of Living payments will be made in 2023/4. This will be £900 for households on means-tested benefits, £300 for pensioners, and £150 for recipients of disability benefits.

Housing Benefit, Income Related ESA, Income Support & Income Based-JSA

The allowances and premiums for Housing Benefit, Income-Related ESA, Income Support and Income-Based JSA will increase by 10.1% and be rounded to the nearest 5p.

Tax Credits

The main rates for Tax Credits will increase by 10.1% and be rounded to the nearest £5 – except for

- Family Element (abolished in 2017) which is fixed at £545 a year for those who still receive tax credits
- Childcare Element which will remain the same as it is currently (70% of eligible childcare costs for costs up to £175 a week for one child or £300 a month for two children).

Universal Credit

The allowances and premiums for Universal Credit will increase by 10.1% and be rounded to the nearest 1p – except:

- The higher rate of the Child Element (for the eldest child if born before 6.4.17). The amount is aligned to the sum of the Tax Credit Child and Family Elements.
- The Childcare Costs Element. The UC Childcare Element is also tied to Tax Credit. The limit to the maximum amount will remain the same as it is currently.

The UC Work Allowances and Housing Costs Contributions will also increase by 10.1%.

The Benefit Cap

The benefit cap will also see a 10.1%, increase from April 2023. The cap will go up from £20,000 to £22,020 for families nationally

State Pension and Pension Credit

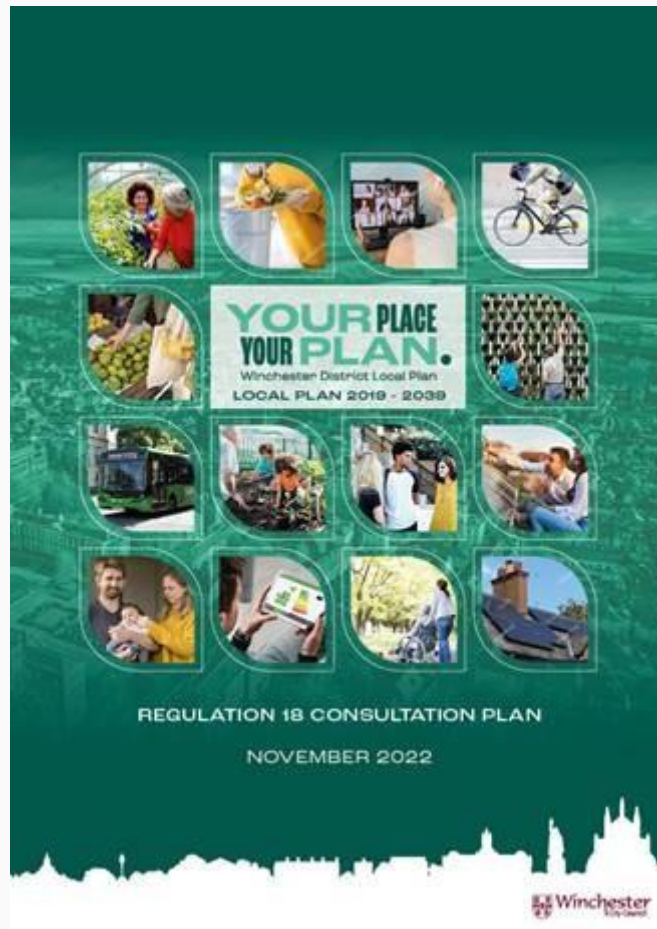
Both State Pension and Guarantee Pension Credit will increase by 10.1% in April.

Other benefits

Other benefits that will increase by 10.1%

- Disability benefits (i.e. PIP/DLA/AA/IIDB)
- Carer's Allowance
- Statutory payments (i.e. Statutory Maternity Pay, Adoption Pay, Sick Pay etc)
- Child Benefit
- Guardian's Allowance

For further information and advice around money and benefits visit our [benefits webpage](#) . Here you can find useful links to benefit calculators, where to get help with Debt, and information about support available if you are struggling financially.



Winchester District Local Plan 2039 - Regulations 18 Consultation

Winchester City Council has published a new draft Local Plan which is open for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks from Wednesday 2 November 2022 until 23:59 on Wednesday 14 December 2022.

The Local Plan is the long-term plan for parts of the Winchester district outside the South Downs National Park. Focussing on development until 2039, the plan addresses a range of matters: the climate emergency, the highest standards possible for environmental design for homes and for commercial development, affordable housing, low carbon methods of transport and the natural and historic environment.

The council is looking for your views on a range of policies and sites that have been allocated for future development. We want as many organisations and people as possible to be part of this process to help us create the new Local Plan that will set out the future of the district.

The draft Local Plan, the Integrated Impact Assessment and other evidence

documents can also be viewed online at the new local plan website www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk

Your input in this next stage of your Local Plan process is extremely important and we look forward to hearing your views. Have your say in the public consultation at: www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk – it's your place, your plan!



Stay Safe this Christmas

We know the lead up to Christmas can be a busy one and we all want you to enjoy the festivities safely. If you are concerned about anything that doesn't feel right when you're out and about, please speak to someone about it, or in an - emergency call 999.

It only takes a couple of minutes to report anything that doesn't feel right, all you need to do is simply tell security or a police officer. If it's not urgent you can report it later at gov.uk/ACT to share your concerns with us. Don't forget to call ☎ 999 in an emergency. You won't be wasting our time.



#SleighNoToLoanSharks

STOP LOAN SHARKS
Intervention . Support . Education

Say no to Loan Sharks

The cost-of-living crisis has left many people struggling to make ends meet. One consequence is that loan sharks are taking advantage of this hardship. With Christmas fast approaching and festive spending in full swing, we want to warn you about the risks of illegal money lending. Learn how to spot a loan shark and avoid falling into their clutches.

- When borrowing money, check that your lender is genuine, loan sharks operate illegally and without permission from the Financial Conduct Authority. Check the firm is registered on the Financial Service Register.
- Never send money, give financial or personal information or copies of documents to people you don't know or trust.

- If you are worried that you, or a friend or family member is being taken advantage of by a loan shark contact the Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 support line on 0300 555 2222. Find help here www.stoploansharks.co.uk
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Planning for Christmas

For top tips and advice please visit www.winchester.gov.uk/Christmas

If you have any questions or concerns about your rent account, please contact the Housing Rent Accounts Team on [email](#), or send a message via [My Winchester Tenancy](#) or telephone 01962 848 205.

Other useful websites to help you

[Cost of living](#)

[Winchester City Council Tenancy Support](#) services

There is never any excuse for Domestic abuse – it can take many forms and is not always physical, an abuser may restrict how you make or spend your money, or control other areas of your life including housing, food and clothing. The cost of living crisis is making it more difficult for people to leave abusive relationships but there is help at hand.

If you or someone you know is affected by domestic abuse, please call [Hampshire Domestic Abuse](#) Advice Line 03300 165 112, they can provide both advice and support.

If you are concerned about your behaviour towards someone else, help is

also available. Call the [Hampton Trust](#)'s advice line on 02380 009 898.

[The Samaritans](#) provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day. They can help people who are experiencing feeling of distress or despair.

Fire Safety

Candles at Christmas, to scent a room and to give a winter's night a warm glow, but left unattended, an open flame can destroy your home in minutes. For more information visit [Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue services](#)

If you have any concerns about fire safety we are here to help you.

- Report it through [My Council Services](#) – you don't need an account you can report concerns using the guest option at the bottom left
- If you're unable to report your concern online contact Housing on 01962 848 400 or email: housing@winchester.gov.uk.
- If you'd prefer to discuss your concern with a TACT (Tenants and Council Together – the council's formal consultation group) tenant representative. Call the Tenant Involvement Team on Freephone 0800 716 987.

Christmas Waste Collections

Over Christmas and New Year please remember there may be changes to your normal bin collection dates. This includes refuse, recycling, glass, garden waste, clinical, bulky waste and bin deliveries. To find out when your bins will be emptied visit: [Christmas waste collections - Winchester City Council](#)

Recycle your real Christmas trees

We can also collect real Christmas trees from all properties. Please remove from the pot and strip it of all decorations and tinsel. Place your tree out on the garden waste collection day of the week's commencing **9 and 16 January 2023**. Large trees over five feet tall will need to be cut into smaller pieces to enable them to fit in the collection vehicle.

Please keep the communal areas clear

Even at Christmas time it's important that the communal areas of flats are kept clear of any rubbish and personal belongings including Christmas decorations. This is to ensure that residents, staff and contractors are able to move around and work in these areas unhindered. Keeping corridors and landings clear is key for the safety of all as they are escape routes in case of emergency. We would also like to remind residents not to put any screws or nails in their front doors

E-bikes and E scooters

When thinking about Christmas gifts for friends and family we would like to remind residents that E-bikes and E-scooters cannot be stored or charged in communal areas including gardens at blocks of flats.

Waste Calendars

The new waste calendars for 2023/24 are now available on our website. Simply enter your postcode and a calendar will be available to download [here](#).

ABOUT WINCHESTER OUT NOW



About Winchester

The second edition of this year's About Winchester is here! Our bi-annual magazine is filled with exciting news and updates, including an immersive experience, for which we are funding partners, delving into [Anglo-Saxon Winchester](#) that ties into the new Assassin's Creed Valhalla game. Read about it here [About Winchester newsletter - Winchester City Council](#)



Merry Christmas from Gillian Knight (Corporate Head of Housing)

As 2022 draws to a close I would like to thank everyone who has paid their rent and service charges on time – this ensures we can invest into your homes and neighbourhoods and deliver our services, and we really do appreciate it. We look forward to the year ahead when we plan to deliver on

ambitious plans for the future including making further improvements to homes and neighbourhoods, building more affordable properties and enhancing support for local residents. I would like to personally invite you to get involved with us in 2023 so that you can play a role in shaping our priorities. Feedback from tenants and leaseholders is essential in helping us to ensure our services meet your needs, so if you're not already involved with the Council please do get in touch to find out how you can be.

I look forward to meeting more of you in 2023, and in the meantime please enjoy the festive period.

Christmas and New Year opening hours

The council offices will be closed from **5pm on Thursday 23 December 2022** until **8.30am on Tuesday 3 January 2023**.

Over this time, in the event of an emergency, you can call 01962 865 407. For housing repair emergencies, call 01962 865 405. You can also continue to report any issues online: www.winchester.gov.uk/report All non-urgent enquiries will be dealt with from 3 January 2023.

If you have any feedback on this E-newsletter please [email](#) us

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