

Useful resources and information for the half term

We know that times are extremely hard at the moment, the pandemic is putting strains on many families and residents within Cheshire West and Chester, and beyond.

There is a wide range of support available to you as parents across the borough which can help you if you feel that you may need it. For those parents who have children that receive free school meals, there is also support available through the Community Food Offer for October Half Term, of which details can be found below.

How to get help – Cheshire West and Chester

The Cheshire West and Chester Council website has a dedicated area for how to get help. The Council is working with other agencies to support residents and businesses in west Cheshire. The pages cover:

- Dedicated helpline for people who need support
- Support and advice on council tax
- Support for vulnerable people
- Domestic abuse advice and support
- Support for businesses and employers
- Coping with coronavirus
- NHS bereavement advice and support
- Test and Trace support payment

For further information or for support:

- Visit: [How to get help](#)

West Cheshire Foodbank

If you are unable to buy food, then food aid is available from the Foodbank.

The most important step is to get a foodbank referral. You will need to get a referral by telephoning or emailing someone who can do this for you.

- [Find all of the referrers available](#)

If you cannot get out to collect your food, then please mention this to the person making your referral for you and they will make the arrangements for food to be delivered if this is at all possible.

If you have no food and cannot contact a referrer, please call the West Cheshire Foodbank office.

- Telephone: 0151 355 7730
- Email: info@westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk
- Visit: [West Cheshire Foodbank](#)

Mid Cheshire Foodbank

Covering Mid-Cheshire (South of M56) includes Winsford, Knutsford, Northwich and surrounding villages.

If you are unable to buy food, then food aid is available from the Foodbank.

The most important step is to get a foodbank voucher.

In order to provide the most appropriate help for the circumstances of your situation, Mid Cheshire Foodbank work with local agencies. If they feel you are struggling to put food on the table, they will issue you with a foodbank voucher. The local agency can also provide long term support if needed to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for your crisis. Agencies the foodbank work with include: Citizens Advice, housing support officers, children's centres, health visitors, social services and some local charities.

Get in touch with the foodbank via phone or email and they can talk through your situation and put you in touch with a relevant local agency to obtain a voucher. Once you are in touch with a local agency, they will discuss your situation and supply you with a foodbank voucher where appropriate.

- Telephone: 01606 590992
- Email: info@midcheshire.foodbank.org.uk
- Visit: [Mid Cheshire Foodbank](#)

Runcorn Foodbank (covering the Frodsham area)

If you are unable to buy food, then food aid is available from the Foodbank.

The most important step is to get a foodbank voucher.

In order to provide the most appropriate help for the circumstances of your situation, Mid Cheshire Foodbank work with local agencies. If they feel you are struggling to put food on the table, they will issue you with a foodbank voucher. The local agency can also provide long term support if needed to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for your crisis. Agencies the foodbank work with include: Citizens Advice, housing support officers, children's centres, health visitors, social services and some local charities.

Get in touch with the foodbank via phone or email and they can talk through your situation and put you in touch with a relevant local agency to obtain a voucher. Once you are in touch with a local agency, they will discuss your situation and supply you with a foodbank voucher where appropriate.

- Telephone: 07922 072906
- Email: info@runcorndistrict.foodbank.org.uk
- Visit: [Runcorn and District Foodbank](#)

Community Food Offer for October Half Term

The Welcome Network in partnership with West Cheshire Foodbank, Mid Cheshire Foodbank and community groups in Blacon, Ellesmere Port and Newton and Hoole, Winsford and Northwich has pulled together details of the food offer for families during the half term break.

There are a wide range of foodbank distribution points in Blacon, Lache, Newton and Hoole, Ellesmere Port, Elton, Tattenhall, Tarvin, Winsford, Northwich and surrounding areas.

For more information about local community groups who are providing additional food and activities for families please email hello@welcomenet.co.uk.

Help in Emergencies for Local People (HELP)

The HELP scheme is a discretionary scheme offering local welfare assistance including:

- support for exceptional needs
- limited payments for emergency funding in a crisis or;
- to help people moving out of care

Any awards which are made are conditional. With you accepting any support from us that we consider you need. All awards are subject to a means test, which means we will look at your income and expenditure. This includes income that is available to you, including income we usually ignore when looking at your claim for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction.

Funding will be made on a one-off basis and will be restricted to one award in any 12 month period. Normally awards will be restricted to provide help with food vouchers or recycled goods.

For information on who can apply, and how you can apply, visit:

- [Cheshire West and Chester HELP Scheme](#)

For further information on meals, food shopping and other practical support

- Visit: [Live Well Cheshire West](#)

Employment and benefits support

If you are affected by coronavirus or its effect on the economy, there is a wide range of support available.

The Understanding Universal Credit website provides information about the changes the government has brought in to support people who are already claiming benefits, need to claim benefits, or are at risk of losing their job as a result of coronavirus. To find information you need about Universal Credit and other benefits:

- Visit: [Understanding Universal Credit website](#)

Benefits and Job Centre Plus

Universal Credit (UC) – If you have any queries please use your UC journal to make contact, if you have a change in circumstances please report this on your home page. If you are unable to access your digital account, please contact 0800 328 5644. There may be a longer waiting time than usual on the telephony service as they are experiencing high call levels.

Legacy benefits – If you claim Job seekers Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) please contact your relevant benefit on 0800 169 0310 if you have any queries. Please listen carefully as the options may have changed since you last rang.

You can contact your local jobcentre by ringing 0800 169 0190 and you will be put through to/or a message passed to your local jobcentre. Jobcentres are limiting the number of people allowed in the offices during Covid-19 so please only attend a jobcentre if you have a booked face to face appointment or have no other way of contacting Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Local jobcentres can support with both ensuring you receive the correct benefit to support you whilst you are looking for work and if your circumstances mean you are currently unable to look for work. They can provide advice and sign posting to local support organisations. They work closely with both partners and providers to offer a range of training that is relevant to the local economy and is most likely to enable customers to gain skills to return to work.

Support with finding work – Jobhelp

The Department for Work and Pensions new website aimed at getting Britain back to work.

The aim of the website is to highlight the range of support and advice on offer to help jobseekers find jobs, and employers get the people they need, all in one place.

Jobhelp is a good place to start if you are looking for work. Despite the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak, there are still jobs out there to apply to. Jobhelp are there to help you get started.

Their website provides a range of support.

You can also find [hints and tips on applying for jobs](#) and ideas about jobs you may never have thought of. And for the latest vacancies, [check our Latest Jobs page](#) or search the [Find a job \(external website\)](#) service.

- [Jobhelp](#)

Virtual Jobs Fair - CheshireWorks4U – Jobs Live

Hundreds of companies are recruiting in Cheshire.

CheshireWorks4U is the largest Virtual Jobs Fair to come to Cheshire and Warrington and takes place for the third time on Wednesday, 28 October.

Job seekers from across the region can log on to a live four-hour broadcast where they will view short videos from over 80 companies with vacancies spanning many industry sectors.

Organised by the Cheshire & Warrington LEP and Cheshire East Council and with the support of local MP's and Chambers of Commerce, the third "CheshireWorks4U" event promises to be bigger and better than ever.

The broadcast starts at 10am. To join:

- Visit: [CheshireWorks4U](#)

Money matters

The Live Well Cheshire West site provides a range of support for a range of different money related matters, including:

- Budgeting, banking and managing money
- Money and benefits
- Paying for care
- Grants and funds
- Debt
- Help in a crisis

For further information:

- Visit: [Live Well Cheshire West](#)

Citizens Advice Cheshire West

Free, impartial advice and information on a range of issues. Advice is independent and completely confidential. Information to help you make the right choices if you are in debt. Such as how to avoid losing your home and how to get your finances back into shape. Help can include:

- working out how much money you owe and the debts you should pay back first
- budgeting your bills
- getting a bank account
- starting a pension
- dealing with creditors
- gambling advice and/or problems with tax

For further information:

- Visit: [Citizens Advice Cheshire West](#)
- Telephone: 03445 766111 (phone lines are open Monday-Friday 10am to 4pm).

Domestic Abuse

Some children and adults could be facing increased risks as we all asked to stay at home due to COVID-19. We are here to help you. It is important you know you're not alone. The Council is continuing to work with other agencies to offer you support and encourage you to make contact when out on an essential trip (like shopping) to ask for help.

[Open the Door](#) signposts to local and national help, encouraging people to start a conversation about domestic abuse and bring it out from behind closed doors.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call 999.

For advice and support:

- Visit: [Domestic abuse](#)