

Looking for ways to save money? We share our tips



Setting aside enough money for retirement is everyone's plan. However, life can bring about unexpected changes that can adversely affect your finances, including health issues, redundancy or taking on caring responsibilities.



Unforeseen or unplanned events in our lives can make it very difficult to save money as before. Here are some of the key tips we share with carers through our Helpline:

TIP 1: Get a benefits check

It is always worth arranging a benefits check to ensure that you are receiving all the help that you are entitled to.



In advance, you may find it helpful to have to hand details about your existing income, such as benefits, savings, earnings, pension and childcare payments (if you have a partner, include theirs too).

You can email us at advice@carersuk.org to arrange one, or contact the benefits charity, [Turn2us](https://www.turn2us.org).

TIP 2: Are you entitled to Pension Credit?



As many as 1.3 million people who are entitled to Pension Credit, don't claim it, according to the charity Independent Age¹. Pension Credit is for older people on lower incomes. If you are eligible, it can provide further income and may help you qualify for other benefits.

You can find out more about Pension Credit here: gov.uk/pension-credit

TIP 3: Arrange a carer's or needs assessment



You might have realised that you need extra support – for example, to adapt your home if the person you live with, and care for, has care and support needs.

It is a good idea to contact your local council's social services department, or your local health and social care trust if you're based in Northern Ireland.

The first step is to arrange an appointment to carry out an assessment. The assessor will explore possible forms of support with you, such as home adaptations, food deliveries, laundry services or replacement care. If you are unsure where to find your nearest council or trust, try using our local directory [here](#). For more information about assessments, see our [webpages](#).

TIP 4: Are you entitled to a Council Tax discount / rates relief?

If you are on a low income and struggling to pay your Council Tax bill, you may be able to get support from your local council towards paying your bill.

¹Source: <https://www.independentage.org/news-media/press-releases/13-million-people-arent-claiming-pension-credit-they-are-entitled-to-says>

To apply for a Council Tax Reduction (CTR) you should contact your local council's benefits department, who will assess whether you qualify for a reduction based on your income and savings. You can apply for this irrespective of whether you own your home or rent.

In Northern Ireland, people on low incomes, including pensioners, may receive a reduction in their rates through the Rate Relief Scheme. For more information, you can refer to our webpage [here](#).

If you are finding it very difficult to keep up with payments and are struggling to pay your rent, you may be able to apply to your local council for a Discretionary Housing Payment, which is a one-off payment given to residents towards paying rent. It's important to provide full details about your circumstances and how being a carer affects your finances.

TIP 5: Work out a budget

If you are finding it hard to manage your money, you could try using a budgeting tool.

It might be helpful to see what you have coming in and where your money is being spent, so that you can keep a similar amount aside every week or month without having to worry that you are overspending.

It is also an incredibly useful way of seeing where your spending could be cut, in case you need to meet an unexpected cost.

There are several budgeting tools available online, but we recommend using either the [Money Advice Service's Budget Planner](#) or [Citizens Advice's Budgeting Tool](#). Having your most recent utility bills, bank statements and shopping receipts to hand before you start will make the process quicker to complete and the results more helpful.

TIP 6: Check if you can get help with your energy bills.

If you need support to pay your utility bills, you might be able to get grants, benefits or assistance from your energy supplier or the government.

Those who were born on or before 26 September 1955, may also be entitled to a 'Winter Fuel Payment' of between £100 and £300. This is usually paid automatically if you receive a State Pension, but will be reclaimed via HMRC if your income is above £35,000.

You may also be able to apply for the Warm Home Discount Scheme if you are on a low income or get certain means-tested benefits. See the You Gov website to find out if you meet the conditions to qualify for this discount: <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme> or contact the Warm Home Discount Team through your energy provider.

For more information and tips on savings money on your energy bills, see our webpage: [saving on fuel costs](#).

TIP 7: Get help from charities and trusts

There are several charities and trusts that offer grants. These are often a one-off payment that don't have to be paid back and may be particularly helpful when you are finding it hard to make ends meet or if you need to cover unexpected costs.

- A good starting point is to use the [Turn2us grants search tool](#) to find grants. Grants are available based on where you live and your personal circumstances, such as your income and age.
- It may also be helpful to contact your local carers' organisation to see if they give grants or know of any local grants that you may be able to apply for. We have a directory of carers' services on our website [here](#).
- We have more detailed information about grants and schemes on our [information page](#).

►►Note: You can contact our Carers UK Helpline Team by emailing advice@carersuk.org. Our advisers cannot offer financial advice but can provide detailed information and guidance.

This information is designed to provide helpful guidance. It is not an authoritative statement of the law. We work to ensure that our information is accurate and up to date, but this guidance is subject to change over time. We would recommend contacting the Carers UK Helpline or visiting our website for the latest information.