

## District Dispatch



Over the past few years, many households across Chichester District have faced increasing financial pressures. While inflation has eased, the cost of everyday essentials, from food and energy bills to housing costs, continues to place a strain on many family budgets. That's why ensuring residents can access the right advice and support remains one of

the council's key priorities.

I'm pleased that Chichester District Council has agreed a further £20,000 grant for Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice to continue delivering its highly successful Energy Advice Service.

Since launching in September 2023, the service has supported more than 4,700 residents, providing free, independent advice on energy costs, benefits, budgeting and debt management. The figures speak for themselves. The service has helped secure more than £500,000 in financial gains for local people through energy savings, successful grant applications, benefits support and income maximisation. It has also helped more than 500 residents access emergency food or fuel vouchers and assisted over 1,000 people in accessing support through the Household Support Fund.

While energy costs remain one of the biggest concerns for many households, we know that financial difficulties rarely exist in isolation. Often, people who are worried about their utility bills may also be struggling with debt, budgeting challenges, rising

living costs or uncertainty about what financial support they may be entitled to. Having access to expert advice can make a significant difference and help people regain control of their finances before issues become more serious.

Importantly, I want residents to know that help is available and that they do not have to face these challenges alone. Alongside services such as Citizens Advice, the council's Supporting You team can help residents access a wide range of support and connect them with organisations that can assist with financial difficulties, housing concerns, benefits advice, cost of living support, wellbeing services and other practical help. Sometimes people are unsure where to turn or may not realise what support is available to them. Our team is there to listen, understand individual circumstances and help point people in the right direction.

We know that reaching out for help can feel daunting, but seeking advice early can often prevent problems from escalating and open up access to support that people may not know exists. Whether someone is worried about paying their energy bills, struggling to manage household finances, concerned about debt, or facing other challenges, I would encourage them to get in touch and explore the assistance available.

The continuation of the Energy Advice Service reflects our commitment to supporting residents through difficult times and ensuring that practical help is available when it is needed most. The success of the service demonstrates the real difference that good advice can make, helping people reduce costs, increase income and improve their overall wellbeing.

No one should feel they have to choose between heating their home and paying for other essentials. By working with trusted partners such as Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice, and through the work of our own Supporting You team, we are helping residents access the support they need to stay financially secure and live

well.

If you are struggling or are worried about someone you know, please don't hesitate to seek advice. Help is available, and a conversation could be the first step towards finding the support you need.

To find out more about the Energy Advice Service, please visit the Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice website at: [www.arunchichestercab.org.uk](http://www.arunchichestercab.org.uk) or call 0800 145 6879. If you want to contact our Supporting You Team please visit: [www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyou](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyou)

Best Wishes

Councillor Rhys Chant, Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at  
Chichester District Council