

## **Guidance for families suffering financial hardship**

The council website has full details regarding help available for individuals and families who may find themselves in hardship during this unprecedented time:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/covid-19-coronavirus-advice-and-guidance/>

### **Help for families who have had Changes to income:**

If families have been working and their income has been reduced then they will need to contact the DWP to see if they are entitled to universal credit. The claim needs to be made on line with the DWP.

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>

If their income has decreased but they are not entitled to universal credit then they may still be entitled to local council tax support or free school meals. The form can be found at the link below.

[www.barnsley.gov.uk/benefit-claim-form](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/benefit-claim-form)

### **Council Tax, Local Council Tax Support and Free School Meals.**

If families are struggling to pay their council tax they can contact the council on 01226 787787 and press opt 2. The lines are busy but we have put extra staff on the lines.

For anyone in receipt of local council tax support and free school meals and their income has changed they will need to complete a change in circumstances form as they may be entitled a further help with their council tax:

[www.barnsley.gov.uk/benefit-change-in-circs-form](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/benefit-change-in-circs-form)

Entitlement to local council tax support and free school meals will be reassessed as soon as possible. If in the meantime they are struggling to pay their council tax then they need to contact us as highlighted above and a payment arrangement will be discussed.

### **Council Tax Hardship Scheme**

The Government has announced that a council tax hardship scheme will be available to those who are considered 'financial vulnerable'. Details of the scheme will be published week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and details will be made available here:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/covid-19-coronavirus-advice-and-guidance/>

### **Other support / helpful links**

For general advice on what help and support may be available please visit:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/benefits-help-and-support/>

The local welfare assistance scheme helps people who are in financial crisis due to an emergency or other unexpected circumstances:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/benefits-help-and-support/local-welfare-assistance-scheme/>

For assistance with food please visit:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/benefits-help-and-support/foodbanks-in-barnsley/>

Web chat is also available on all council tax, council tax support and housing benefit webpages. The phone lines are busy and we are asking people to go online where they can.

If people do not have access to the internet they need to phone 01226 787787 opt 3. We will then make an apt to phone people back and go through the form over the phone.