



The cost of living crisis: four ways to help those hit hardest

We're all aware that the cost of living in the UK has risen significantly in recent months, with prices for energy and food at the highest we've seen in many years. But did you know the devastating impact this is having on low income households in particular? According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the rise in costs could see those who are already struggling financially having to pay up to £700 more per year.

On top of this, many of the protections put in place to shield those on low incomes during the pandemic have now come to an end, including the vital £20 per week Universal Credit uplift. The reality is, with bills up and income down this Christmas, thousands across the UK will struggle to feed their families and heat their homes. So what can we do? Here are four ways you can help right now.

Donate to your local food bank

We've all seen the news about the growing level of child poverty in the UK and sadly the number of families relying on food banks right now is higher than ever. Find out where your nearest food bank is and how you can support them. If you're not able to give financially, donations of non-perishable groceries and toiletries will most likely be welcome. Look out for donation baskets in your local supermarket, or take your items directly to the food bank.

Check on your neighbours

Through our work at CAP, we know that debt and poverty can be an isolating experience. Many people feel ashamed or embarrassed about their situation and are reluctant to ask for help. It's important to check in on those in your community who may be particularly vulnerable, and encourage them to seek the support they need sooner rather than later. CAP's free helpline number is 0800 328 0006 and capuk.org/help has more information about the services CAP provides.

Write to your MP

While we can all do our bit to help, this is a problem that needs to be prioritised by those in power. By writing to your local MP, you can draw attention to the injustices you're seeing in your community and urge them to speak up on your behalf. If you can, why not arrange a face-to-face meeting with your MP and have a conversation about poverty concerns in your area?

Provide families with emergency food and fuel

This year, CAP's Christmas appeal is raising funds to enable local churches to deliver emergency support to families and individuals in desperate need. £45 could provide a single adult with an emergency food shop, £115 could feed a family of four, and £60 could help heat someone's home with an emergency fuel top-up. Together we can make sure families won't go cold or hungry this Christmas. Visit capuk.org/donate to give.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity with over 580 services across the country delivering debt counselling, money management education, job clubs, life skills groups and more. Visit capuk.org to find out more.