

## **Help with Cost of Living**

The government has put in place several schemes to help with energy bills. Many of these have already taken effect. These are the additional schemes of which I am aware. They are mainly directed at low income families. There is also lots of help on the Braintree District Council website on the home page.

Iona Parker

District Councillor for Stour Valley North

- Sustainable Warmth grant
  - Grants available for up to £10,000 for improving energy efficiency
  - Where either household income of less than £30,000 or someone on means tested benefit + property with low energy performance rating
  - Also available to landlords
  - Apply to Braintree District Council.
- Major housing grant
  - For upgrades to heating/hot water
  - Means tested
  - Must be repaid when property sold or transferred
  - Apply to Braintree District Council
- Disabled facilities grant
  - To adapt home to make it suitable for someone with a disability
  - Contact occupational therapy team at Essex County Council
- Green Doctor Advice
  - Free energy saving measures and general advice for those struggling to pay utility bills
  - Available to pensioners, low income families, those with health conditions, families with young children under 5, pregnant women
  - Apply [greendoctoreast@groundwork.co.uk](mailto:greendoctoreast@groundwork.co.uk) or call 077 0294 1440
- Essential Living Fund
  - Grants for furniture, furnishings, white goods, footwear and clothing, general living expenses
  - For low income families or who are otherwise in financial difficulty
  - Apply via Southend Borough Council <https://www.southend.gov.uk/extra-financial-help/essential-living-fund> or phone 0300 7900124
- Council Tax Support Fund
  - Discount on Council Tax bills
  - For those on low incomes who are renting
  - Apply to Braintree District Council <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/benefits/apply-council-tax-support>
- Discretionary Housing Payment
  - Extra payment to help with housing costs
  - For those in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit with housing element
  - Apply to Braintree District Council on 01376 557852
- Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate

- One off payment of £150
  - For properties in Council Tax bands E-H (who did not benefit from earlier government scheme for bands A-D)
  - On means tested benefits or otherwise financial hardship
  - Apply to Braintree District Council by **30<sup>th</sup> November**
- Healthy Start vouchers
  - Vouchers for fruit, veg, formula milk
  - For pregnant women or families with a child under 4
  - Means tested
  - Apply 0345 6076823
- Free holiday clubs for children
  - For children on free school meals/pupil premium
  - See <https://www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate/>
- Help with broadband costs
  - For people on means tested benefits
  - Apply direct to broadband provider. See Essex County Council website for links <https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/help-with-your-broadband-bills>