

Helping hand winter messages 2022/23



Conversation guide

Residents are facing more pressure on household budgets due to the increase in the cost of living, food and energy bills. Here's a conversation guide to help you advise Rochdale residents about how they can stay warm, stay well, stay on track and stay connected this winter. We have also set up a cost of living webpage (rochdale.gov.uk/cost-living) where residents can access more info and residents can call us on **01706 923685** for information and support.

Staying Warm

1. Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F)

Being cold isn't just uncomfortable it can also be very bad for your health. Breathing in cold air can increase the risk of chest infections.

2. Get help if you're struggling to keep your home warm

If you're having issues keeping your home warm then help is at hand. **Groundwork offer a free service** to help you with your bills; offer advice around energy saving measures; install energy efficiency measures; repair heating systems and more.

For more details and referrals visit:

groundwork.org.uk/greendoctor/our-partners/energyworks-green-doctors-in-greater-manchester

Contact your energy supplier as soon as you can if you're worried about paying your energy bills, are in debt to your supplier, or can't afford to top up your prepayment meter. Under Ofgem rules, your supplier must work with you to agree on a payment plan you can afford. **Citizens Advice** can offer you assistance around this and your energy bills. More info: casort.org

You can sign up for the **Electricity North West free extra care** register for them to help you keep safe and comfortable if there is a power cut. This is designed for people with particular needs for example medical equipment, older people and families with young children. More info: enwl.co.uk/power-cuts/extracare/register-or-update-your-details

2. Visit one of our warm spaces

You don't have to sit at home in the cold. Our warm spaces offer a place where local people can gather for free in a warm, safe, welcoming place and enjoy a free drink, activities and access to other services. More info: rochdale.gov.uk/warmspaces

Staying on Track

3. Get practical advice and support

If you need help accessing food, then you can get assistance from our food pantries, food clubs and food banks. More info:

rochdale.gov.uk/benefits-money/money-debt-benefit-advice

If you're having financial issues during 2022/23, then you may be able to access superstore vouchers, fuel vouchers and other help through our Household Fund. You can access this, as well as information, advice, help and signposting to services by contacting us on **01706 923685 Monday Friday, 9am 5pm**.

More info: rochdale.gov.uk/benefits-money/household-support-fund

You can **borrow a laptop, Chromebook or tablet** from your local library to use at home from our **Digitech Library**. This works in a similar way to how you can borrow a library book. You can also access free data.

More info: rochdale.gov.uk/libraries/digitech-digital-tech-library

Citizens Advice are a charity that offer free impartial advice around debt, benefits, housing rights and much more. Tel: **0808 278 7803** (free service) service). Lines are open Monday to Friday: 8:30am 5:30pm. There are, also, lots of online resources and web chat services. More info: casort.org

Our **Living Well Community Champions** can support with housing, debt and benefits and can support people to apply for our **Household Fund** where residents can access fuel vouchers, supermarket vouchers and white goods. To refer a resident email champions@thebiglifegroup.com or call **01706 751190**

4. Make sure you're getting everything you're entitled to

There are a number of national programmes to help residents offset the cost of living crisis. Check that you're getting everything you're entitled to.

More info: helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk

Are you entitled to pension credit? Pension Credit can top up your low income if you've reached State Pension age. Lots of people who qualify for it haven't claimed it yet, so it's worth checking if you can get it. More info:

independentage.org/get-advice/money/benefits/pension-credit

Staying Well

4. Stay as active as you can and look after yourself

Living Well can provide support and coaching around stopping smoking, exercise and feeling better all round. They can help you with a wide range of issues including: reducing your alcohol use, improving your mood, weight management or something else. More info: livingwellrochdale.com, or you can contact them on **01706 751190**

Your Trust offer a range of activities to keep you healthy throughout the winter. See website for more details: yourtrustrochdale.co.uk

Action Together provide a variety of ways people in Rochdale can volunteer: actiontogether.org.uk/volunteer

5. Get advice if you feel unwell

You can get help and advice from

- A Pharmacy pharmacists can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses and can tell you if you need to see a doctor
- Your GP you may be able to speak to a GP online or over the phone, or go in for an appointment if they think you need to
- **NHS 111** go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do

Staying Well

6. Get your Covid 19 vaccine and booster

It is likely that the impact of COVID 19 will be worse in winter. You may want to think about extra ways you can keep yourself safe, like wearing a mask, keeping your distance, washing your hands and carrying hand sanitiser. You may be due a booster, or you may not have had your first jab or second jab. It's not too late to start building your protection.

More info: rochdale.gov.uk/covidvaccine

7. Make sure you get your flu vaccination

Flu will often get better on its own, but it can make some people seriously ill. It's important to get the flu vaccine if you're advised to. It's free to people over 50 and some others. The flu vaccine is safe and effective. It's offered every year on the NHS to help protect people at risk of flu and its complications. More info: nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/

Staying Connected

8. Keep in touch with friends, family and your community

If you need someone to talk to, call our **Living Well chatters on 01706 751190**. Living Well also have a digital library and digital champions to support people getting online to connect with family and friends and do online shopping. Contact **Living Well's Community Champions:** livingwellrochdale.com/service/community-champions

HMR Circle is a membership based service for people over 50. They have a monthly calendar with a whole range of social events including meals, day trips and more. They can also provide volunteers to help people with gardening, help around the home and technology. More info: hmrcircle.org.uk

If you're **struggling with your mental health**, you can get support from Rochdale Mind. More info: rochdalemind.org.uk

9. Look out for others. Ask how they are keeping warm during cold weather



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