

Energy

- Remember to keep all internal doors closed
- Keep your freezer full to make it more efficient, even if it's with a loaf of bread
- Heat the person not the room, think about electric blankets, warm throws, or layers
- Make sure the space around your radiator is clear
- Descale your kettle to make it more efficient (you can use household vinegar)
- Deal with draughts. Rolled up towels make good door draught excluders. Cling film for windows
- Turn off appliances at the mains and always turn off lights in rooms when you're not in them
- Use a tower extension – having TVs / Entertainment systems plugged into a tower allows you to easily switch off all appliances at once. Save energy not leaving them on standby and if you struggle to reach sockets in the walls this makes it easier (cost about £20)
- Use a solar powered 'garden light' as a light in the hallway or other rooms which you can safely see by a lower light – you can charge these on a window sill which gets the sun (from £3)
- Use a battery charge pack – when you are out on the bus, trains, in a car, at cafes, the pub or libraries then charge it up. At home you can use these to power a speaker / radio / mobile phone (cost £10 -£20)
- Use alternatives to a traditional cooker – air fryers are quicker and slow cookers lower energy usage
- Avoid using the microwave to thaw items – plan meals and thaw frozen items on the drainer
- Make a flask of tea or coffee when you make a mug – saves a boil and also getting up for another cuppa! (flask £5)
- Only boil enough water for your hot drink
- Use microwave to cook baked potatoes and vegetables rather than gas hob or oven
- Bleed radiators and repressive boilers

Cost of Living Tips

- Refilling household essential like herbs, rice and flour at your local zero waste store
- Swapping out certain veggies in a recipe for more seasonal produce will reduce costs
- Batch cooking, make larger portions of a meal and freeze them, making it much cheaper
- Know the difference between use by and best before dates
- Avoid convenience stores. These are much more expensive to shop in
- Shop around, buying in one store often will not save you money
- Stock up where you can and use own labels rather than big brands
- Shop with neighbours or friends to make the most of multi buy options
- Make your own snacks rather than using prepackaged crisps and snack bars
- Cook together once a week to share costs of food and cooking. One rule: simple food it's together that matters
- Prepare your meals into reusable containers. It makes you less likely to buy food on the go saving you money
- Sell unwanted items to help buy things you really need
- Build courage to cancel regular payments you don't need, like streaming apps that will go up
- Make use of known reward cards
- Make regular rain checks of your spending and budget
- Use top cash back accounts when buying online
- Go for longer lasting initially more expensive items
- If on benefits, find out about social tariffs for phone and internet. They are not publicised well!

Food & Cost Savings

Recognising a Scam

- it seems too good to be true – for example, a holiday that's much cheaper than you'd expect
- someone you don't know contacts you unexpectedly
- you suspect you're not dealing with a real company – for example, if there's no postal address
- 'Hi mum' text or What's App message – scammers impersonating family members saying they have lost their phone, it's damaged or they can't access it and therefore messaging from a friends' phone. If engaged, will go on to ask for money to be transferred to a bank account

Useful websites

- www.helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk
- www.which.co.uk/topic/cost-of-living
- www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/977/help-with-the-cost-of-living
- www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/cost-of-living-survival-kit/
- www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/help-with-debt/dealing-with-your-debts/reducing-your-regular-living-costs/
- www.stepchange.org/about-us.aspx
- www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/it-doesnt-add-up/
- www.endchildfoodpoverty.org/full-time-meals
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/get-help-with-online-scams/>

This resource has been created by community partners in Cherwell.