# What does the Chancellor's cost of living support mean for blind and partially sighted people?

Millions of households across the UK will benefit from a new £15 billion package of targeted government support to help with the rising cost of living, the Chancellor announced today (26 May).

Here the key changes that will be of interest to blind and partially sighted people:

**All households will get £400 of support with their energy bills through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.** Instead of the planned £200 off bills which had to be repaid through higher bills over five years, this will now be a £400 payment will now be made as a grant. Energy suppliers will deliver this support to households with a domestic electricity meter over six months from October. Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their account, while customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher.

**More than 8 million households on means tested benefits will receive a payment of £650 this year, made in two instalments.** This includes all households receiving the following benefits: Universal Credit, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Pension Credit. DWP will make the payment in two lump sums – the first from July, the second in the autumn. Payments from HMRC for those on tax credits only will follow shortly after each to avoid duplicate payments. Claimants will need to be in receipt of one of these benefits, or have begun a claim which is later successful, as of 25th May 2022 to be eligible for the first of the two instalments.

**Pensioner households will receive an extra £300 this year to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.** This additional one-off payment will go to the over 8 million pensioner households across the UK who receive the Winter Fuel Payment and will be paid on top of any other one-off support a pensioner household is entitled to, for example where they are on pension credit or receive disability benefits. All pensioner households will get the one-off Pensioner Cost of Living Payment as a top-up to their annual Winter Fuel Payment in November/December. For most pensioner households, this will be paid by direct debit.

**Around six million people across the UK who receive the following disability benefits will receive a one-off payment of £150 in September**: Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Scottish Disability Benefits, Armed Forces Independence Payment, Constant Attendance Allowance, War Pension Mobility Supplement. For the many disability benefit recipients who receive means tested benefits, this £150 will come on top of any other payments they may be eligible for listed above.

All these payments will be tax free and exempt from the benefits cap.

Earlier in the year, the government also announced a **£150 Council Tax rebate for households in England in Council Tax bands A-D**. This is handled by local councils and millions of households have already received this payment.

In addition, the government has provided funding to local councils to deliver a **Household Support Fund**. This is administered by local councils in England and further information is available directly from your local council on any hardship support that may be available.

Public Affairs and Campaigns Team

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May 2022