



Economic Downturn Leaflet – sources of assistance to North Dorset residents during the economic downturn

Getting the benefits you are entitled to:

North Dorset District Council's **Council Tax** web page http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/council_tax explains the background to Council Tax and lists those who are exempt from paying Council Tax and those eligible for a 25% reduction in the cost of the tax.

There is a Benefit Calculator <http://ha.boroughofpoole.com/benefitscalculator/> available on line to give you an indication of whether you will receive help – but the best way to be sure is to complete a claim form. You can call into the Office at Nordon and our trained professional staff in the Customer Contact Team will assist you.

Housing Benefit is a national welfare benefit administered by Local Authorities. The purpose of Housing Benefit is to help people receiving state benefits or on low incomes pay their rent. The amount of benefit awarded will depend on your household and financial circumstances. The following link provides more information on the benefit http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/index/living/benefits/housing_benefit.htm. Alternatively please phone 01258 454111.

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit. Child Tax Credit is paid direct to the person who is mainly responsible for caring for the child or children and Working Tax Credit is for people who are employed or self-employed, who usually work 16 hours or more a week. You can now find out whether you qualify by visiting <http://www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/Qualify/DIQHousehold.aspx> or phone **0845 300 3900 (8 am to 8 pm, 7 days per week)**.

Check your eligibility for **home repair and improvement grants**, installing or improving your heating system, affordable warmth grants and disabled facilities grants in your home http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/financial_assistance_leaflet.pdf or call 01258 454111

Jobcentre Plus <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html> will also be able to give advice on other benefits that you may be entitled to such as working tax credits or child tax credits. Phone 0800 055 6688 (8 AM to 6 PM, Monday to Friday). A textphone service is available for people with a speech or hearing impediment – 0800 023 4888.

Pension Credits. If you are over 60 years of age you may now be receiving pension credits which means you could also be entitled to help with your rent (including site fees for mobile homes) and your council tax bill. The Pension Credit helpline is 0800 99 1234.
<http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/pensioncredit/>

Concessionary Travel Scheme: http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/index/aboutyourcouncils/north_dorset/dorset_concessionary_travel.htm or contact the Customer Contact Team on 01258 454111. You will be eligible for the Dorset Bus Pass if you are: 60

years or over, under 60 and disabled (see above website for details), Registered blind or partially sighted.

Sources of advice and assistance

Citizens Advice Bureau: <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>

Citizens Advice Bureau and the TUC have produced [Coping with the Economic Downturn](http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/coping_with_the_economic_downturn.pdf) http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/coping_with_the_economic_downturn.pdf. *A practical guide for working people and their families.*

Pensionage is a non profit organization providing help for older people and for those who help them. The aim is to provide an up to date central point that brings all of the relevant information you could be searching for into one website <http://www.pensionage.co.uk/>

Business Debtline: – a national business helpline offering free independent advice to small businesses on www.bdl.org.uk or call 0800 197 6026

Community Legal Services Direct: – provides free information, help and advice on a range of common legal issues on www.clsdirect.org.uk

Real Help Now: www.realhelpnow.gov.uk/ is a government website detailing sources of help for businesses and people during the economic downturn, including specific information for http://www.north-dorset.gov.uk/real_help_for_the_south_west.pdf

First Dorset Credit Union provides its members with a safe, ethical, and more economical alternative to high street banking and doorstep lenders <http://www.firstdorsetcreditunion.co.uk/>

There is a wide range of benefits you may be entitled to that are comprehensively covered on the **DirectGov website** <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/index.htm>

The Prince's Trust. Aims to help young people make their way in life through self-employment. Financial and other assistance is targeted at disabled people and young people (aged between 18 and 30) who are unemployed or disadvantaged and that have a viable business idea. For further information, please call 01202 888845. <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

Some money saving initiatives

Private Sector Leasing – residential property: - Are you looking to generate an income from a long term empty dwelling, second home or perhaps considering relocating but wish to retain your current home in North Dorset? Grants may be available to assist you to bring a redundant property back into use. We can give you guaranteed rental income and no tenant management responsibility or administrative fees. Terms and conditions apply. For more information call Jo Rickman, Housing Enabling Officer on 01258 484377 or e-mail JRickman@north-dorset.gov.uk.

Reduce the cost of travelling to work by sharing a car: You can also reduce the environmental impact of your travel. You can register free with CarshareDorset www.carsharedorset.com and LiftShare www.liftshare.com/uk/ to share your car or share someone else's car to and from work.

Dorset Reclaim <http://www.dorsetreclaim.org.uk> has furniture, electrical, and household items available to low income families and individuals at minimal cost

Free School Meals. Local authorities are able to grant free school meals to children whose parents/guardians receive Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, or in some instances Child Tax Credit. <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/index.jsp?articleid=369746> or phone 01305 224832