

London Borough of

**Redbridge**



**Councillor Kam Rai  
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Dear Resident

I am writing to you in light of the recent end to government support for many of you. The council recognises that many residents may be facing serious financial difficulties as furlough payments have stopped and the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift has been cut by the government. We understand the impact the end of this additional support may have on you and your families.

While we cannot change government policy, we want to let you know that we are here to help and we have services and support in place that you may be able to access.

If you are struggling with your finances and finding it difficult to make ends meet, please get in touch as help is available. If you're worried that you're heading towards financial problems, speak to us so that we can help you in preventing these issues from escalating.

### **Help with food**

In an emergency, you can contact the council's Welfare Benefit Team on 020 8708 4180 to make a request for a Trussell Trust Foodbank voucher.

You may also be entitled to free school meals for your children:

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/free-school-meals/>

### **Help with rent**

If you find yourself struggling to pay your rent, you may be able to get help with your housing costs through Universal Credit or in some circumstances, Housing Benefit.

If you are receiving financial support towards your rent and are still struggling to make ends meet, you can apply for additional support through the council's Discretionary Housing Payment scheme.

More information is available via the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit>

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/benefits/discretionary-housing-and-hardship-payments/>

### **Priority Bills**

It is important to keep on top of your priority bills, such as Council Tax. You may be able to get a discount or reduction on your Council Tax bill. We have a scheme that can reduce your bill by up to 85% depending on your circumstances. More information can be found at:

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/council-tax/apply-for-council-tax-reduction-scheme/>

Further support may be available via the council's hardship scheme:

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/benefits/discretionary-housing-and-hardship-payments/>

### **Health and Wellbeing**

The council recognises that financial difficulties can have a serious effect on your health and wellbeing. There is a range of support available to you at:

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-hub/your-health-and-well-being/>

### **Employment Support**

The council is committed to helping people move back into employment, find better paid work and develop their skills through training which will help increase financial resilience.

Our free [Work Redbridge service](#) is open to all residents providing support to get back into work and it also includes training, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities.

If you are thinking of starting your own business, we have advice and support available. Please visit <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/business/business-advice-and-support/start-your-business/>

### **Welfare Benefits Team**

Over the course of the autumn and winter, the council is working to identifying residents who may be experiencing financial difficulties and offering them support. **However, if you are not contacted by the council but are experiencing financial difficulties, please do contact the team.** The earlier you get in touch with the council, the more ways there are for our team to help you.

The council's Welfare Benefit Team can carry out a full benefit check to ensure you are receiving everything you are entitled to. They can also help our most vulnerable residents with applications for state benefits.

Together with approved partners, the team can provide a full range of money management support including on budgeting, managing bills and dealing with debt. A detailed summary of all benefit support available to residents, including how to claim.

### **Household Support Fund**

The council has received just under £2 million in funding to help Redbridge families and individuals in need of extra support this winter.

The household support fund can be used towards food, energy and water and other winter essentials such as sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler servicing and repairs, or the purchase of items such as fridges, freezers, or ovens.

To access support through the household support fund, you must be referred by a professional currently working with you or your family such as a social worker, educational welfare officer, family support worker or through your child's school.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Rai', with a colon at the end.

Councillor Kam Rai  
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Leisure & Culture