

## Information and Advice Services



**Information on our free, confidential and  
impartial advice services**

# Our information and advice services

We provide comprehensive, impartial information and advice services for residents of South Ayrshire.

Our professional Information and Advice Hub team can help you with money, debt and welfare benefits advice.

This brochure provides more information on the help we offer and how to access it, including food vouchers, free school meal and clothing grants and blue badges.



# How we can help you with welfare benefits

## Information and Advice Hub

We offer impartial and confidential advice on all DWP benefits, including:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence payments
- Attendance Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Universal Credit

We can perform Income Maximisation checks and Better Off Calculations to ensure that you are claiming the right benefits.

Where you have been refused a DWP benefit, or the award you have been given is lower than you think you may be entitled to, we can support you with mandatory reconsiderations and tribunal representation.

We can also make a referral for you to a partner agency who can assist you to appeal any benefit decision administered by the Council.

*For information on benefits administered by the Council, such as Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, please visit our website.*

## In 2018/19 we:



Helped 7001 customers



Prepared 231 tribunal appeals



Generated £3,640,233 for customers

*I had to give up employment to care for my disabled child. The Information and Advice Hub team carried out a benefit check and assisted me to make a claim for Disability Living Allowance for my child. They also advised me to notify child tax credit that the household now had DLA in payment. This increased my weekly entitlement of child tax credit. My weekly benefit increased by a total of £184.48.*

*- Customer A*

# How we can help you manage money and debt

## Information and Advice Hub

- We can help you to manage your money through personal budgeting support
- We can help you to manage your debt such as credit card debt and loan repayments
- We can negotiate with creditors on your behalf
- We can give advice if you are facing disconnection of your fuel supply

## In 2018/19 we:



Helped customers manage debt totalling £1,362, 502

*Miss B has two children, is working part time and is struggling to make ends meet. Her marriage break up left her with debt and rent arrears.*

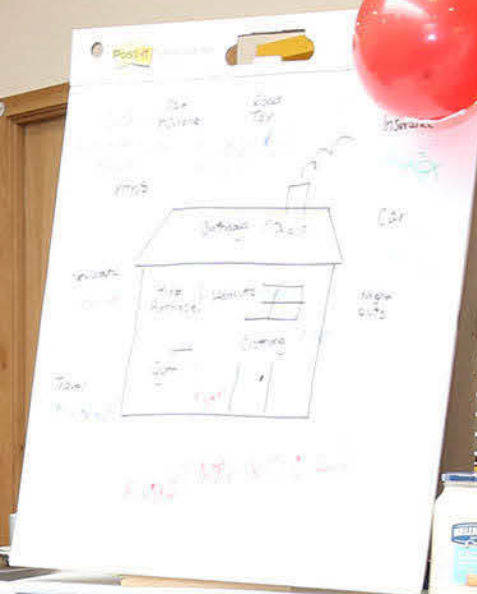
*We helped Miss B to manage her debt and to maximise her income by making a claim for Universal Credit.*

 Call us on 0300 123 0900

 Email us at: [informationandadvicehub@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:informationandadvicehub@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

 Visit us at 1 Mainholm Road, Ayr, KA8 0QF  
Or ask at one of our Customer Service Centres





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# How we can help if you are in crisis

## Food Banks

If you are in crisis, you may be eligible for a food voucher for your local food bank.

We work in partnership with the Trussell Trust and the Salvation Army to offer a food bank voucher service.

## How to Apply for a Food Bank Voucher

If you live in South Ayrshire, you can check eligibility and apply by phoning us or visiting your nearest Customer Service Centre.

**In 2018/19 we:**



Issued 1918 food bank vouchers

 Call us on 0300 123 0900

 Email us at: [customerservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

 Or visit one of our Customer Service Centres

# Crisis Grants

If you are in crisis, you may be able to access a crisis grant to cover the costs of an emergency and help you with your most urgent living costs, such as food and heating. A crisis grant does not need to be paid back.

Examples of emergencies are when:

- There's a fire or flood at home
- You've lost money
- An unexpected crisis happens
- You're a victim of domestic abuse and you need help with things like moving away from an abuser
- You're a grandparent or other relative who has taken over caring for a child, and you're waiting on a transfer of benefits
- You're facing a gap in your normal income because of a redundancy or change at work



## How to Apply for a Crisis Grant

If you live in South Ayrshire, you can check eligibility and

- Apply online
- Or phone us on 0300 123 0900

For more information about Crisis Grants, visit our website



# Community Care Grants

You may be able to apply for a Community Care Grant to help with costs if:

- You're leaving care and need help to start a settled home, or support to stay out of care
- You've been homeless, or living an unsettled life, and need help to start a settled home
- You or someone you are caring for has been released from prison or a young offenders' institution
- You're experiencing great pressure and need help with one-off items (like a cooker or a washing machine)
- You're escaping domestic abuse
- A child's health is at risk



## How to Apply for a Community Care Grant

If you live in South Ayrshire, you can check eligibility and

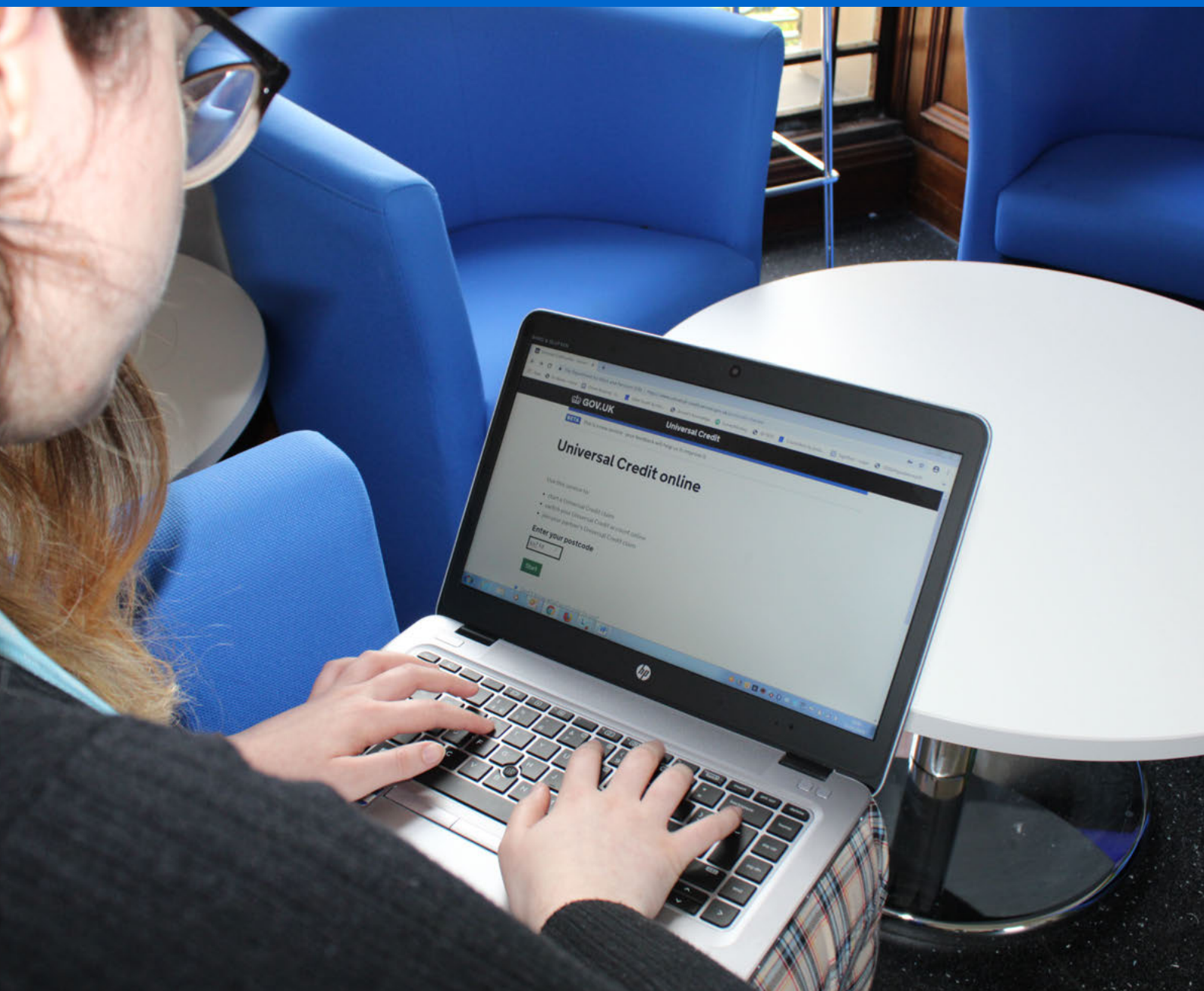
- Apply online
- Or phone us on 0300 123 0900

For more information about Community Care Grants, visit our website

# Do you need help to make an online Universal Credit claim?

Visit our digital access and support directory on our website

Call us on 0300 123 0900



# Are you the parent or carer of a child?

To find out if you may be entitled to Free School Meals and/or Clothing Grants, call 0300 123 0900, or ask at your local Customer Service Centre



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# Do You Qualify For A Blue Badge?

If you have mobility problems and difficulty using public transport, you may qualify for a Blue Badge.

You automatically qualify if you:

- Receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance
- Receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
- Are Registered Blind
- Receive Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and scored 8 points or more in the 'moving around' area of your assessment. Please check your decision letter if you're not sure

If you don't automatically qualify, you may still be eligible if you have a permanent and substantial disability which means you are unable to or have considerable difficulty walking.

## **How to Apply for a Blue Badge**

If you live in South Ayrshire, you can

- Apply online

For more information about Blue Badges, visit South Ayrshire Council web pages, or visit your local Customer Service Centre



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# Our Partners

We work in partnership with the NHS and third sector organisations to help customers access the information and advice they need.

We have worked with 217 agencies to create an online Directory of services called Signpost.

You can access Signpost at this link or via our web pages:  
[www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Our main partners are:

-  Activity for Health
-  Ayr Housing Aid Centre
-  Ayrshire Housing
-  Patient Advice & Support
-  SeAscape
-  Stepping Stones for Families

If you access any of the above partners, they can also make a referral to our information and advice services on your behalf.





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# Raising awareness

We take part in lots of community events across South Ayrshire to help raise awareness of the services we provide.

We also deliver information sessions to school pupils, students and young carers, to help them manage their money and avoid getting into debt which they can't repay.

## How to contact us



Phone us on 0300 123 0900



Visit our web pages: [www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk)



Visit your local Customer Service centre in:

Girvan

Maybole

Troon

Prestwick

Ayr

Email us: [customerservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)



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