

Position statement on support the financially vulnerable: Tuesday 17th March

Below is a position statement for organisations supporting people with money issues. This information will be kept up to date with further organisations being added as the information comes through on the Leeds Money Information Centre website www.leedsmic.org.uk.

Age UK Leeds

After 20/03/20 the **Age UK Leeds advice service will not be carrying out home visits or offering office appointments or drop in sessions until further notice**. The office will remain open but there will be no advice staff present in the office, so **please do not signpost advice clients to the office**. The café is currently still open.

We will continue to provide telephone advice*. People can ring 0113 389 3000 and leave their name and number and brief details of their query. We will call them back within 5 working days. They can also ring the National Age UK Helpline on 0800 678 1602.

*We give benefits advice for people over state pension age but we do not give debt advice

Better Leeds Communities

From the 17th March 2020 we will be supporting people who need advice and support with regard to Debt, Housing and Benefits only via the telephone (we will provide telephone appointments where we will call the clients so there is no cost to them) and via email. We are here to help. We have suspended our Drop-Ins at:

- Hunslet Foodbank
- Armley Foodbank
- Lower Wortley Foodbank
- Woodhouse Foodbank
- Bramley Foodbank
- Moortown Foodbank
- Compton Centre

0113 275 4142

info@betterleeds.org.uk

www.betterleeds.org.uk

Citizens Advice Leeds

As of 18th March 2020 Citizens Advice Leeds will close face to face services. Resources will be diverted to telephone, email and webchat, available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Enquiries: 0113 223 4400

www.citizensadviceleeds.org.uk/

Help to Claim: 0800 138 3944

Chapelton Citizens Advice

As of 18th March 2020 Citizens Advice Leeds will close face to face services. Resources will be diverted to telephone, email and webchat, available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Enquiries: 0113 223 4400

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Help to Claim: 0800 138 3944

DWP

- All office in Leeds are currently open.
- Disabled people will be contacted by web and telephone for appointments.
- There will be no face to face assessments for vulnerable people.
- New claimants will be undertaken over the phone, with ID verification being undertaken this way.
- Two good sources of information are:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/insights/coronavirus-claiming-welfare-benefits/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>

0845 6060 234 or www.gov.uk

Ebor Gardens Advice Centre and Money Buddies

- Ebor Gardens Advice Centre are closing face to face services. People can contact via the Money Buddies website, Facebook, Twitter, telephone, email.
- They will take a decision on Money Buddies at the hubs later this week. Some services have closed their doors, which has meant we have been unable to deliver a Money Buddy service. Please check our website and Facebook for updates.

admin@egac.org

www.moneybuddies.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/VirtualMoneyBuddy>

<https://twitter.com/LeedsMoneyBuddy>

Call them on 0113 235 0276

Leeds City Council Community Hubs

- Community Hubs and face to face services are currently operating as business as usual.
- Encouraging customers to contact via telephone and web where possible.

0113 222 4444 or www.leeds.gov.uk/contact-us

Leeds City Council Welfare Rights

- Telephone appointments are available.
- Triaging home visits to utilise surgery appointments and telephone appointments where possible.

0113 376 0452 or by email Welfare.Rights@leeds.gov.uk.

Leeds City Council Housing

Offering a supportive approach to all tenants, and encourage tenants to make contact with their Housing Officer at the earliest responsibility if there are any issues which may impact on a tenant's ability to pay their rent. If a tenant is affected by Coronavirus we would therefore expect them to

ring their Housing Officer to discuss any potential impacts in the usual way. We will discuss their circumstances and where appropriate agree a revised re-payment plan. If the impact on their income is such that they have eligibility for UC Housing Element or Housing Benefit we will advise/support with their claim as required. Enforcement action would be a last resort - as outlined in the court action protocol we would not undertake enforcement action where an affordable repayment agreement is being kept to or a claim for UC Housing Element or HB is pending.

0800 188 4000 or HousingEnquiries@leeds.gov.uk

www.leeds.gov.uk

Leeds City Council: Council Tax

Similar approach to Housing (see above) encouraging people to get in contact as soon as possible. Need to ensure that people are getting the support they are entitled to before arranging payment breaks etc.

0113 222 4404 or www.leeds.gov.uk/contact-us

Leeds Community Gambling Service

From Wednesday 18th March the service is moving to remote working providing support via telephone and online. The duty service on the main Leeds number will continue to operate from 9 – 5pm.

0113 388 6466

Leedscommunitygamblingservice@gamcare.org.uk

www.gamcare.org.uk/get-support/our-treatment-offer/leeds/

Leeds Credit Union

- Moving as many members as possible over to digital services primarily but also telephone service.
- Look to follow the lead of the Council in terms of which branches remain opening.

Phone: 0113 242 3343

Email: services@leedscitycreditunion.co.uk

Website: <https://www.leedscitycreditunion.co.uk/>

Stepchange

- Operating as normal with full online and telephone advice service
- www.stepchange.org or 0800 138 1111

Engage Leeds and Gipsil

Including: Engage Leeds Floating Housing Support, Engage Leeds Advice and Employment & Engagement Services, Flagship Young People's Services & GIPSIL Care Leaver Service

Access to advice is restricted to those within the Housing Support Services and is not open access except the 'Help Through Crisis' team based at Archway. At this time, would ask that contact should be made via telephone in the first instance.

All other services continuing with some staff working from home. Contact being maintained via phone and email where possible but face to face appointments continuing where needed.

Engage Leeds: <https://engageleeds.org.uk>, referrals@**engageleeds**.org.uk or 0113 380 7615

Flagship: <https://flagshipleeds.org.uk>, referrals@flagshipleeds.org.uk or 0113 391 8000