**RCT Addendum to the Welsh Parliament Senedd Research ‘Support with cost-of-living pressures – a guide for constituents’ May 2022.**

The original Welsh Parliament Senedd Research publication can be found here:

<https://research.senedd.wales/media/043aeteo/support-with-cost-of-living-pressures-eng.pdf>

Many of the applications and further information links within the Welsh Parliament publication and below will require internet access which may not be available to all. If a family does not have internet access, public access computers are available free at any of the libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf for members. Membership is also free of charge. The council also provide access to Free WiFi in the majority of our libraries.

**Cost of Living Support Scheme (council tax rebate)**

More information on how the scheme operates in RCT is available via the council website at the following link:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ConsumerAdviceandMoneyMatters/CostofLivingSupportScheme.aspx>

This includes details on the Main Cost of Living Support Scheme for properties in bands A to D and/or if you receive Council Tax Reduction Support as of 15th February 2022 as well as the Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme for properties in band E or F as of 15th February 2022; Exempt Occopued properties; Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO’s) & Students; and Family payments for those with one or more children of compulsory school age.

Families may be entitled to the Main Cost of Living Support Scheme and elements of the Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme and if you have not received these to date, please click the link above and follow the next steps as the scheme closes at the end of September 2022.

**Pupil Development Grant Access scheme**

The scheme for the **2022/23 academic year will run from summer 2022**. It will provide £300 for learners eligible for Free School Meals entering Year 7 and £225 for learners eligible for Free School Meals in all other years from Reception to Year 11.

The grant application can be completed on the RCT website at the following link:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ChildrenandFamilies/ParentandFamilySupport/Financialsupportforfamilies/PDGAccessGrant202122ForSeptember2021yeargroups.aspx>

**Free School Meals**

Free School Meals holiday payments will be provided by BACS until the end of Summer 2022 in line with Welsh Government funding at the rate of £19.50 per week (£3.90 per day) per eligible learner.

For families who may be able to receive Free School Meals but do not currently do so, they can apply online via the following page:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/FreeSchoolmealsApplyforfreeschoolmeals.aspx>

From September 2022, the rollout of universal free school meals will begin. From the new autumn term (Monday 5th September 2022) onwards all Reception children will be offered Free School Meals. From 1st January 2023 all Year 1 children will receive this offer and Year 2 children will receive the offer from 1st April 2023. We will be in further communication as the offer is rolled out.

**Additional Sources of Advice and/or Support in RCT**

**Local Support Organisations and Services**

***Resilient Families Service***

The Resilient Families’ service has been operational since January 2018 and provides the Team Around the Family arrangements in RCT. It is the Council’s recognised approach to delivering the early intervention and prevention agenda across RCT.  Resilient Families Service provides the opportunity to deliver swift, effective, consistent and bespoke support to families.

Families can self-refer to the Resilient Families Service by phone (01443 425006)

For more information on the Resilient Families Service please visit <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ChildrenandFamilies/ParentandFamilySupport/ResilientFamiliesService.aspx> or contact 01443 281435 or email rfs@rctcbc.gov.uk

***Citizens Advice Bureau***

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provide free, confidential and impartial advice and campaign on big issues affecting people's lives.

The RCT branch is an independent charity based in Mountain Ash and is part of the Citizens Advice network across England and Wales.

People access CAB RCT with all sorts of issues. They may have money, benefit, housing or employment problems. They may be facing a crisis, or just considering their options. More information can be found at [www.carct.org.uk](http://www.carct.org.uk) or by phoning 01443 409284

Alternatively national advice can be provided via the Adviceline on 0800 7022 020 or by visiting [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

***Food Banks***

There are a number of Food Banks operating across RCT. The Trussell Trust supports a network of many of these and you can search for the nearest food bank on the following link:

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>

***Employment, Training and Volunteering Support***

Communities For Work and Communities For Work Plus offer support to residents in RCT who are looking to get into employment training or volunteering. They also offer in-work support to those on low incomes who are looking to retrain or up-skill.

More information can be accessed through the Central Support Team on 01443 425761 or by emailing cfw@rctcbc.gov.uk