**Cost of living support**

Use our [cost of living web pages](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vYmV0YS5pb3cuZ292LnVrL2tlZXAtdGhlLWlzbGFuZC1zYWZlL2Nvc3Qtb2YtbGl2aW5nLyIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyNDAyMjIuOTA2MTc3ODEifQ.9ACI7wjCXVd0iW8ZwOoMWzYjQs_Y4aW8Cf459I_-YHc/s/1100111160/br/237533600387-l) to see what's available near you, including information on community pantries and Warm Welcome Spaces. Residents can also call us on 01983 823134.

Contact Citizens Advice Isle of Wight on 0800 144 88 48 or enquiries@iwcab.org.uk. Their advice is free, confidential and independent. They can help with debt, benefits, legal advice and much more.

Contact[The Footprint Trust](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vZm9vdHByaW50LXRydXN0LmNvLnVrLyIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyNDAyMjIuOTA2MTc3ODEifQ.-fSeEEG-ZXKXgV0JLVApifC_T6nuJfqo4xQmb-Tbg_Q/s/1100111160/br/237533600387-l) for free advice or call them 01983 822282.

Use the [connect4communities website](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LmhhbnRzLmdvdi51ay9zb2NpYWxjYXJlYW5kaGVhbHRoL2NoaWxkcmVuYW5kZmFtaWxpZXMvY29ubmVjdGZvcmNvbW11bml0aWVzIiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDI0MDIyMi45MDYxNzc4MSJ9.OeRLspYO0cNHKA4sawlseTfIunZufktoGGxig0-pS_8/s/1100111160/br/237533600387-l) to see what other support is available in your area.

The government [Help for Households website](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vaGVscGZvcmhvdXNlaG9sZHMuY2FtcGFpZ24uZ292LnVrLyIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyNDAyMjIuOTA2MTc3ODEifQ.chQ0WqQwnBN_COKKRYY5-NQsN8wTVHoiCBygyQUWln4/s/1100111160/br/237533600387-l) has information about help with childcare costs, benefits and many other schemes.

**Discover the Family Hubs and Centres on the Island**

Do you know about the Family Hubs and Centres that are here to support Island families? They are places where residents can find a variety of services and activities for them and their children, from pregnancy to 19 years old (or 25 years old for those living with Special Education Needs and Disabilities). People can pop in anytime to the Family Hubs, which are open five days a week, or visit the Family Centres, which have different opening hours. Each Hub and Centre is based on the needs of the local community, so some services may differ. But they can offer:

* Maternity support.
* Health visiting services.
* Advice on getting into work.
* Speech and language support.
* Antenatal and parenting programmes.
* Breastfeeding support.
* Baby stays and plays and other support groups.

To find out more about the Family Hubs and Centres and what they can do for you, please visit the IW Family Information Hub website: <https://familyinfohub.iow.gov.uk/>

**Apply now to get 15 hours childcare for your 2-year-old to start in April**

Applications for 15 hours childcare are now open for eligible working parents in England with a child who turns 2 years old on or before 31March.

* Parents can apply at [Check you're eligible for free childcare if you're working - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working). They will receive a code which can then be shared with their childcare provider. To continue receiving government support, parents will need to reconfirm details every three months on the gov.uk account.
* From **September 2024**, 15 hours childcare will be expanded to eligible working parents in England with children between 9 and 23 months old.
* From **September 2025**, eligible working parents in England with children between 9 months up to school age will have access to 30 hours childcare.
* This comes alongside the existing government childcare support, including **30 hours for 3-and 4-year-olds**, **Tax-Free Childcare** and **Universal Credit Childcare**. Parents might be able to use more than one offer to help with their childcare costs.

Childcare is also expanding for primary school children.

* From September 2024, parents in England are expected to see an expansion in the availability of childcare in their local area before and after school, that runs from 8am until 6pm or later, also known as ‘**wraparound childcare**’.
* If you are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare, you can use the support to help pay for wraparound childcare.

Visit Childcare Choices to see what support you might be eligible for, now and in the future, so you can juggle work and life: [Childcare Choices | 30 Hours Childcare, Tax-Free Childcare and More | Help with Costs | GOV.UK](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/)

**Help for your organisation to improve energy efficiency!**

Does your voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation need help to improve energy efficiency?

The VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme has 2 parts:

* Part one: Eligible organisations can apply for the cost and delivery of an independent energy assessment. This will help identify how to reduce bills through measures such as improving or installing new energy features in the building, or changing how energy is used. These assessments will be useful to organisations whether or not they apply for the second element.
The first part of the scheme is open until August 2024, with decisions being made on a rolling basis.

* Part 2: Organisations with an energy assessment may then be eligible to apply for a capital grant to install the recommended energy efficiency measures in their premises. The second part of the scheme opened in January 2024 and organisations can apply through three grant rounds, the last of which will close in August 2024. All capital grants must be spent by 31 March 2025, so all organisations, but particularly those with more complex projects, are encouraged to apply early to ensure sufficient time for the installation of measures.

For more information, visit:[**VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme - Groundwork**](https://www.groundwork.org.uk/vcseenergyefficiency/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo&utm_content=Cost+of+Living)

**Enjoy the Easter holidays**

Head to our museums, libraries and leisure centres and help keep everyone entertained.
Explore the hidden treasures of our [museums](https://www.iow.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-heritage/heritage-and-tourism/)
Our museums are more than just places to see exhibits. They are also family-friendly spaces where you can have fun and learn. From interactive games to hands-on crafts, there is something for everyone:

* Museum of Island History on Tue or Thur (10am-1pm). Create and take home a paper hand axe and see the real ones in the museum. Only £1 for adults and 50p for kids.
* Newport Roman Villa opens on 29 March. Have fun in the activity room, dress up as a Roman, make a mosaic and rebuild a pot (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 10.30am-2.30pm).
* Explore [Dinosaur Isle](https://www.dinosaurisle.com/) and learn about the amazing dinosaurs that lived on the Island.

**Book now for free Easter activity spaces for eligible children and young people**

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme returns for Easter 2024 with an exciting range of activities for children and young people across the Island, to book your child’s place and check eligibility go to [Easter Listings for the Island's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) (iow.gov.uk)](https://familyinfohub.iow.gov.uk/kb5/iow/directory/results.page?familychannel=8-6)

The Easter programme has a fantastic range of activities on offer including horse riding, tennis and football coaching, multi-sport games, animal care, theatre skills and arts and crafts.

**Isle of Wight Council website downtime**

Due to essential core network maintenance our website will be unavailable on Saturday, 16 March and Sunday, 17 March.

During this period there will be no access to our iow.gov.uk website or associated council services. This includes all residential services such as waste services, online payments, the revenues and benefits portals, our registrar services and planning. Our phone system will also be unavailable, including our contact centre. For waste tip bookings, residents will need to book their slot in advance of the weekend as same day bookings will not be available during the downtime.

Emergency calls will be handled as usual throughout the downtime by Wightcare on 01983 821105.