



Cost of living

Living with EB can be expensive. It may mean facing extra costs such as prescriptions, increased household bills or impact your or your family's working life and income. Equipment such as washing machines, tumble dryers and blenders are used more than the average household. Wheelchairs and electric beds need to be charged. Trips to appointments are essential.

We know that these are difficult times and the cost of living crisis is a concern for many people across the country. More and more families are turning to DEBRA for assistance, advice and information — from how to access benefits, grants for washing machines or household goods, travel reimbursement to attend hospital clinics or advice on where to find specialist seamless and non-stick clothing and light-weight bedding to keep warm.

If you are feeling worried, our Community Support Team are here to help. We have a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience and are often able to respond quickly whilst working out longer term solutions.

We are here for all members of all ages and with all types of EB.

Telephone: 01344 771961 (select option 1)

Email: communitysupport@debra.org.uk

Ways our Community Support Team can help

Our team are experienced in understanding the benefits system and financial support schemes as well as managing the costs of everyday living. And we can advocate for your needs and help you work with other organisations for further support.

There are a variety of government benefits you may be entitled to that you are not currently claiming or grants, allowances or social care options you could receive. And some councils offer their own grant schemes and may be able to assist with your energy and water bills, food and essential items.

We'll carry out an initial telephone or virtual consultation to assess your situation, and the support we provide will vary depending on your personal circumstances.

We can help with

- **financial queries** such as household finances or worries about debt and budgeting;
- identifying **sources of financial help** such as school uniform grants, direct payments and personal budgets, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and other benefit entitlements;
- talking through what schemes may be appropriate or **what to include in your application**;
- choosing the right tariff, finding the best deal, liaising with suppliers or schools, supplying supporting letters, **exploring options** to cover travel costs to appointments or local area support schemes;
- **suggesting funds** that may be available; we also have a DEBRA support grant to help with a range of items in times of need;
- as well as talking to our team, we can **signpost** you towards agencies and other sources of useful information.

Online resources

Here are some links to sources of information and practical advice which you may find useful — from budget planning and price comparison sites to government schemes and benefits calculators.

- **Government support** information including income and disability benefits, bills and allowances, childcare, housing, travel, energy bill support scheme and cost of living payment from Gov.uk
- **Getting help with bills**, benefits, grants, debt & more from Citizens Advice
- **Tips for organising your finances** from Mind.org.uk
- **Energy & water advice** from Scope
- **Free debt advice** from StepChange.org
- **Budget planner** and **cost of living survival guide** from MoneySavingExpert.com
- **Budgeting tools** from Citizens Advice as well as other sites such as Energy Saving Trust and Disability Rights UK
- **Benefits eligibility** and online calculator from entitledto.co.uk
- **Cutting costs** on household bills from Uswitch
- **Price comparison** sites and more tips on how to save money from AbilityNet
- **Advice & information** and campaigning for more support from Scope
- **Financial support, grants, information** and support from DEBRA

Membership benefits

Families and individual members can use our DEBRA **holiday homes** at highly discounted rates (50-70% off standard rates), to get respite and breaks at more affordable prices and, if needed, the new grant we offer can give further help during these difficult times.

We also have over 100 **DEBRA stores** across the country where our members have a 10% discount.

Membership is free, so if you know of any other families that could benefit from being a member please let them know about us.

Our support team – just a call away

The **Community Support Team** provide advocacy, information and emotional and practical support for the whole EB community and all types of EB. In these difficult times, their help could be vital.

The team are available Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm. Outside these hours you can email or leave a message. We will get back to you as soon as possible.



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