

Income Maximisation Checklist

Income maximisation involves :
ensuring you have as much money coming in as is possible,
this could be either increasing your income
or considering ways of reducing expenditure.

Ways of Increasing Income :

1. Benefits

- **Carry out a benefit check**, may well identify additional (or incorrect) benefit entitlements:
[Get Support - Turn2us](#)

- **Some commonly underclaimed or unclaimed benefits include:**
 - **Disability Benefits:** Personal Independence Payment (working age), Disability Living Allowance (children under 16) and Attendance Allowance for pensioners. These are paid in addition to any other income (benefit or otherwise) for clients/family members with health problems/disabilities
PIP claim: Telephone: 0800 917 2222 DLA Telephone: 0800 121 4600 AA Telephone 0800 169 0154
DLA and AA forms: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>
 - **pension credit** for people over pension age [Pension Credit calculator - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - **universal credit** [Universal Credit online - Universal Credit \(universal-credit.service.gov.uk\)](#)
 - **Carers allowance** if you looking after a disabled person (this could include a family member). The disabled person has to be getting one of the disability benefits mentioned above [Universal Credit online - Universal Credit \(universal-credit.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Local advice centers can help check entitlement and give support to make claims for the above (and other) benefits if you are unable to manage to make the claim yourself.

2. Local Authority Benefits (Tower Hamlets)

- **School clothing grant** can help towards the cost of a school uniform for children aged 11 who is changing from primary to secondary school. Only one grant is payable during a child's school life. [School clothing grants \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/school-clothing-grants)
- **Tower Hamlets Educational Maintenance Allowance** for students staying in education and university bursary are available in Tower Hamlets [Education Maintenance Allowance \(EMA\) and University Bursary schemes \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/education-maintenance-allowance-ema-and-university-bursary-schemes)
- **Discretionary Housing Payment** Tower Hamlets can offer additional housing benefit (including backdates) to existing housing benefit claimants who do not receive full benefit and who have special circumstances.
This will include people on reduced benefit such as people who have benefit cap, bedroom tax, local housing allowance, minimum income floor reduction [DHP Application Form \(1.0\) \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/dhp-application-form-1.0)
- **Council Tax** In some circumstances, you may not be required to pay full or any Council Tax, some circumstances that mean you might be entitled to a discount or exemption are:
Council Tax Reduction (low income clients may be eligible for a reduction or won't have to pay)
Single person discount – 25% reduction if lone person (ignore dependent children/students)
Disability band reduction – may be eligible to reduce CT band if room required due to disability
Challenge to CT band
Some people are exempt from CT charge such as: students, hospital patients, severely mentally impaired (and others check list)
Section 13a if there is Severe Financial Hardship there is some (limited) provision to completely clear CT debts (need to check with an advisor on this one)
[Council Tax Reduction \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/council-tax-reduction)

Most of the local authority benefit claims can be found on [Tower Hamlets - forms](#)

3. Tax

A tax refund is a refund of tax which has been overpaid. There are several reasons why tax may have been overpaid, including: you start a new job, you marry or form a civil partnership, you have the wrong tax code, if you are self-employed and you make too many payments, you have more than one job. <https://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-refund> Tax aid offers free tax advice to those on low income [TaxAid - help with a tax problem if HMRC can't sort it out](#)

4. Crisis and emergency payments

- Resident Support Scheme: Tower Hamlets provides an emergency financial payment where there is a short term crisis and severe financial hardship check eligibility [Residents' Support Scheme](#)
- Some landlords (social), advice centres and charities have access to hardship funds

5. Employment

Check that you are receiving minimum wage, increase hours (may have impact on benefits you receive check [www.turn2us](https://www.turn2us.org.uk))

Reducing expenditure

1- Food poverty

- **Food Banks**, give food, support and advice to local people in hardship. Each foodbank has different days / access but a list of them can be found on [Tower Hamlets food support - March 2022 update \(thcan.org.uk\)](#)
- **Free school meals** [Free school meals \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Healthy start vouchers** [Healthy Start - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Pregnant, child under 4, mother with child under 1. In receipt of qualifying benefit (pretty much the means tested benefits) – eligibility for voucher for each person eligible (worth £3.10 each) to spend on 'healthy food'
- **Food store** A food support service, which is a membership-based and in 5 locations in Tower Hamlets. This is a subsidised scheme that members pay to use, unlike food banks offering food free hand outs. Membership costs either £3.50 per week or £10 per month. In return members will get £20-30 worth of food plus available fruit and vegetables on top of that. Members will have greater choice of food banks. thefoodstoreburdett@outlook.com
- **Free meals** and other emergency food suppliers are listed on the WWW.thcan.org.uk/factsheet website

2- Price comparison:

Check for cheaper products on: bank accounts, loans, credit cards, and other financial products. Expenditure on items such as car insurances, phones, broadband, utilities, household purchases may be a way of reducing expenditure - some comparison sites [Switch supplier or energy tariff | Ofgem](#)
[MoneySuperMarket | Always more ways to save](#)

3- Energy Suppliers

Energy - Check if supplier runs a trust or hardship fund. Some energy companies help customers of any supplier. Some funds will just help with energy debts, but some will help with other assistance

The discount and grant schemes available are constantly being added to and/or changed so it is best to look at information websites to check this

[Grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills - Citizens Advice](#)
[Extra help for 2023/24 - Turn2us](#)

Warm Home Discount £140 reduction off electricity for pension credit / low income, some suppliers have hardship funds to help with energy debt (for more information visit the individual supplier websites).

Information on all of them is available on 'Let's Talk' website click on energy provider to start the online application process. Each scheme, has different criteria in terms of who can apply, and offers different types of support. Support could be debt write-off, energy efficient white goods, boiler repairs/ replacements. www.lets-talk.online/Home/AllSchemes

4- Water

Clients on a water meter with either a large family or water-dependent medical condition, may be eligible for a cap on bills. For this year (2022/23), they cap bills at £423. To qualify for the scheme, someone in your household: Must receive a means-tested benefit (see website for full list) AND, must have a medical condition that requires extra water OR three or more children under the age of 19 living at the property making you eligible for child benefits

If you are on a low-income household, you may be able to get a discount on their bill, they offer a 50% discount on the whole bill, households earning below £20,111 in London boroughs, qualify, Thames Water will check details and verify income. [WaterHelp](#)

5- Health costs:

Prescriptions, glasses, dental and other NHS costs may have full exemption if eligible for (most) means tested benefits but there is also low income and prepayment and fixed fee schemes

www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs

6- Child Care

There may be help available for free/reduced child-care costs whether client is in or out of work (or student). This could be through benefits (Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit) or other government schemes

[Help paying for childcare: Childcare you can get help paying for - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/help-paying-for-childcare)

7- Budgeting

Budget Planner – Free online daily, monthly and yearly budget planning tool - Money Advice Service

Financial Statement / Personal Budget records income and expenditure

- Helps to control of household spending
- An essential tool in the debt advice process
- Helps to identify areas of high expenditure
- <https://tools.nationaldebtline.org/yourbudget/>
- <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/use-our-budget-planner>

Budgeting means keeping control of finances. This may done by doing a financial statement / personal budget sheet and recording your income and expenditure. There are a number of budgeting tools available and the purpose of these are to: help control household spending, to be used as a tool to negotiate payments in the debt advice process and to help to identify areas of high expenditure

8- Debt Advice

If you have got credit debts or in debt with rent/council tax or other priority debts, there are many options of free, independent websites that you can use to sort out your debt problems. If you are confident to use them there are self help website, if not Tower Hamlets has a number of free debt advice services where you can get assistance.

Self Help – will include budget sheets, ways of maximising your income, options, factsheets and sample letters.

[Debt Advice Tower Hamlets \(thcan.org.uk\)](http://thcan.org.uk)

9 Other Income Maximisation considerations

- Tax codes / refunds / allowances

[Tax Information Centre - Tax Help for Older People \(taxvol.org.uk\)](http://taxvol.org.uk)

<https://taxaid.org.uk/>

[Income Tax: introduction: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- Child Maintenance

[Calculate your child maintenance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

- Travel

[Free and discounted travel - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](http://tfl.gov.uk)

- Charities/unions/hardship funds

[Search for charitable and educational grants - Turn2us](http://turn2us.org.uk)