

DURHAM

Winter 2023

County News

www.durham.gov.uk



Festive events

Your guide to Christmas in County Durham

Multiply

Improve your maths confidence

Winter ready

Preparing for all weathers



Welcome

to the winter edition of Durham County News

There's a lot to look forward to this winter in County Durham.

On pages 16 and 17 you can read about our Christmas shows, including three magical pantomimes and Tinsel, a brand-new festive treat for younger children. There's also information about play opportunities at Abbey Leisure Centre on page 3 and news of our Lunar New Year celebrations, a fantastic festival at Locomotion and a host of winter events in our What's On section.

This edition is also packed with top tips to stay safe this winter, from dealing with emergencies to staying warm and well and driving safely.

On page 8 you can find the most up to date information on council services and closures over Christmas and information about recycling, reusing and waste services on pages 14 and 15.

There's also some great real-life examples of life changing fostering services and details of how you can improve your maths skills.

I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and all the best for 2024.

Amanda Hopgood



Councillor Amanda Hopgood,
Leader of the Council

Inside...

Pages 4-7
News



Page 8
Holiday opening times

Page 9
Preparing for emergencies

Pages 10-11
Winter wellness



Page 12
Winter roads



Page 13
Road safety

Pages 14-15
Green living



Pages 16-17
Christmas shows



Page 18
Employment



Page 19
Fostering

Pages 20-21
Town centres



Pages 23-31
What's On



Front cover image: Tinsel, our festive production for ages three and over – find out more on page 17. Artwork: Bethan Woolven

More content is available at www.durham.gov.uk/dcn or scan this code:



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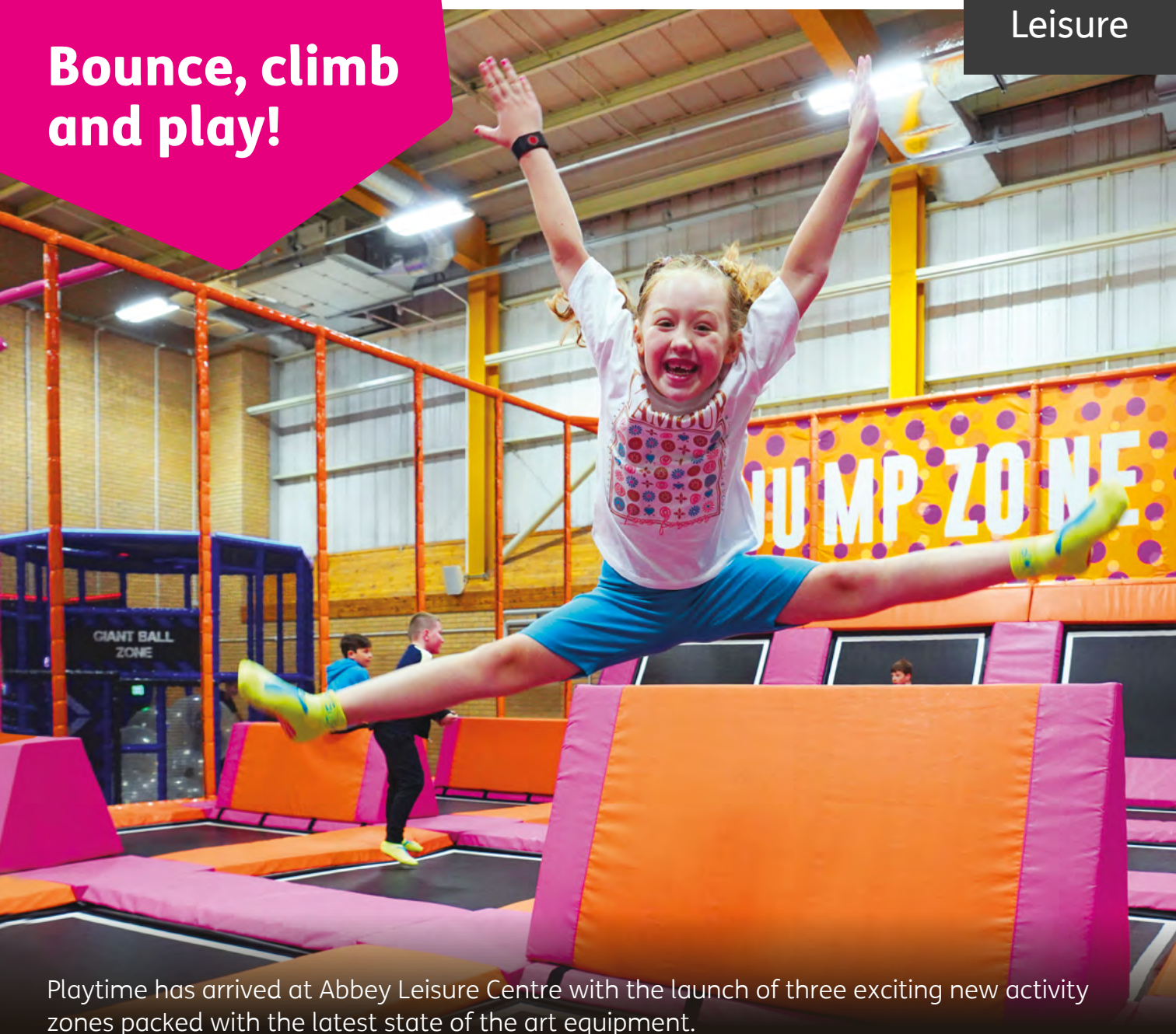
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Bounce, climb and play!



Playtime has arrived at Abbey Leisure Centre with the launch of three exciting new activity zones packed with the latest state of the art equipment.

Younger visitors can now bounce, climb, slide and leap around Abbey Adventure, enjoying three different activities for one price.*

As well as a new soft play area, Abbey Adventure boasts trampoline parkours and a Tag Zone challenge. Interactive scoring means they can compete against one another as they make their way through the arena.

The new additions are part of a programme of work being carried out across our leisure centres, which also includes

a new soft play facility and ten-pin bowling at Peterlee Leisure Centre.

There'll soon be more room to play at The Louisa Centre, Stanley too, with work underway on a new play zone and café, and there are also changes coming at Spennymoor and Teesdale leisure centres.

Why not make a splash during the school holidays with free swimming sessions in our pools for young people aged 18 years and under during the school holidays.

Find out more about activities for all ages on our leisure centre website www.thriveleisure.co.uk

thrive 

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Customer Services

03000 26 0000

8.30am – 5pm (Monday-Thursday)

8.30am – 4.30pm (Friday)

Out of hours emergency service
available.


For social care and independent
living enquiries or adult and
children's welfare issues:


**Social Care Direct/Children's
First Contact Service**


03000 26 79 79


To find and/or contact your
local councillor:

[www.durham.gov.uk/
councillorinfo](http://www.durham.gov.uk/councillorinfo)


 [@DurhamCouncil](https://twitter.com/DurhamCouncil)

 [/durhamcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/durhamcouncil)

 [/durham_county_council](mailto:info@durham-county-council.gov.uk)

 [/durham_county_council](https://www.instagram.com/durham_county_council)

 [linkedin.com/company/
durham-county-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/durham-county-council)

 [/DurhamCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/DurhamCouncil)



Gala Youth Theatre drama sessions

Gala Youth Theatre sessions are now available to book for dates up to the end of the year.

Open to young people aged four to 18, Gala Youth Theatre offers a wide range of opportunities to improve confidence, develop performance and creative skills, and make new friends whilst learning about the process of theatre-making.

Students are part of a supportive group led by experienced theatre practitioners. As well as weekly drama sessions, there are also performance opportunities, visits from theatre specialists and trips to see shows.

Sessions are available in four age groups:

- ★ 4 to 7 years: Saturdays, 10am–11am
- ★ 8 to 11 years: Saturdays, 11.15am–12.45pm
- ★ 12 to 14 years: Wednesdays, 4.15pm–5.45pm
- ★ 15 to 18 years: Wednesdays, 6pm–7.30pm

Sessions can be booked each week at £7, or a term pass can be purchased for all sessions (£70 for ten sessions).

Find out more and book your place at www.galadurham.co.uk/gala-youth-theatre

Empire Consett repairs

It's important that our cultural
venues are able to serve our
communities for many years to come.

To ensure we are able to offer
audiences at Empire Consett the best
quality shows and performances in a
comfortable and safe venue, it is necessary for important remedial work to be
carried out in the theatre's roof areas.

Unfortunately, the nature of the work means that it's not possible for the venue to remain fully open while this work is undertaken. Therefore, Empire Consett will temporarily close in February 2024 for work to take place and will reopen in Autumn 2024.





School sea glass mosaic installed

Three sea glass mosaics created by schoolchildren have been officially unveiled in Seaham.

Pupils from Seaham Trinity and Roperly Walk primary schools worked with local artist Susan Warlock to create the mosaics, which commemorate National Heritage Lottery investment in Seaham, as part of our £1.6m Seaham Townscape Heritage Project. The project has seen the relocation of car parking, the widening and re-paving of footpaths and the transformation of the former rail tracks at South Crescent. Repairs and improvements have also been made to shop fronts.

The mosaics, which incorporate found and donated sea glass from the Seaham coast alongside traditional glass tiles, have been installed at the bottom of Church Street.



Schools learn road safety tricks



Hundreds of County Durham schoolchildren enjoyed a series of magic shows packed with road safety messages.

With the help of spellbinding tricks, plenty of jokes and some catchy songs, reception and key stage one pupils from 10 primary schools were given an important introduction to road safety. Topics covered include “stop, look and listen”, finding safe places to cross, and how to use pedestrian crossings.

Tots give active travel route the thumbs-up

School runs and commutes have been made easier for people living and working in and around Newton Hall, thanks to an upgrade to a walking and cycling route.

We completed improvements to the path between Old Pit Lane in Newton Hall, and Rivergreen at Aykley Heads, by widening and resurfacing it to make it accessible for walking and wheeling. Children from the nearby Busy Bees Nursery were invited as special guests to an official opening event, after showing a keen interest in the project.

To find out more about how the council is improving the county’s walking and cycling routes visit www.durham.gov.uk/activetravel



Apply for a school place now

Don't forget to apply for your child's infant, junior or primary school place as the deadline is fast approaching. If your child turns five on or between 1 September 2024 and 31 August 2025, you will need to complete an application form telling us which school you would like them to attend. Apply online at www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions or call 03000 265 896 to request a paper copy. Applications close at midnight on 15 January 2024.



Pick of the bunch at floral awards

County Durham entries carried off a big bunch of awards following this year's Royal Horticultural Society Northumbria in Bloom competition.

Among the many successes were a number of entries submitted by our council. **Durham City** was awarded Gold and winner in the Small City category, **Chester-le-Street** won Silver in the Large Towns category, and **Riverside Park** and **Wharton Park** both won Gold in the Best Parks category.

There were also accolades for entries from local communities, town and parish councils and schools, with **Durham Gilesgate Primary School** scooping yet another win, **Seaham** taking first place in the Coastal Resort category and **Stanley** getting Gold in the Large Town category.

The awards recognise, encourage and reward community groups who work together to transform their village, town or city through gardening, environmental awareness and community support.

For more information visit www.northumbriainbloom.com



Working with our communities

Our Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) bring together local people, councillors, businesses and our council's partner organisations with a focus on improving life in their communities. Following a consultation earlier this year on proposals to change the way we do this work, we will be gradually making improvements and changing our AAPs to local networks.

The networks will continue to help us, along with our partners, better engage with, consult and support our local communities. More information can be found in the Cabinet agenda and minutes for 12 July 2023 at democracy.durham.gov.uk

While we gradually change over to local networks, our AAPs continue to offer people and organisations in County Durham the opportunity to work together and take action on local issues. Find out how to get involved at www.durham.gov.uk/AAPs

Changes to Customer Access Points

Opening hours at some of our Customer Access Point have now changed. Details of new opening hours are below.

Location	New opening hours
Barnard Castle	Wednesday 10am to 5pm and Friday 10am to 4.30pm
Chester-le-Street	Monday and Tuesday 9am to 4pm, Friday 9am to 4pm
Consett	Monday and Wednesday 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm
Stanley	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am to 5pm

The opening hours and locations of all our Customer Access Points can be found on our website at www.durham.gov.uk/customeraccesspoints

Save the date

Bishop Auckland Food Festival

returns next year on

Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April.

Mark your diary for a weekend of food, fun, and entertainment with hundreds of independent stalls and cookery demonstrations and another star-studded line-up of celebrity chefs.

www.bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk



DurhamLearn rated “good”

Our adult learning service has once again been rated as “good” by Ofsted.

The service provides education and training across the county with courses ranging from English and maths to digital skills and first aid.

Following a four-day inspection by a six-strong Ofsted team, it was rated “good” in all areas.

The inspectors reported that staff “develop learners’ confidence and character very well” and “treat learners with respect and care”. Learners and apprentices “quickly learn the skills that they need to gain and maintain employment”, they added. They also praised the service for developing skills programmes “that meet local employer needs” and “address social isolation in communities”.

For information on DurhamLearn courses visit www.durham.gov.uk/durhamlearncourses



Arts for the Brain

A community music group for dementia sufferers and their carers has been awarded £5,000 to help it support more people.

Community arts organisation Blaize has been running singing sessions in Barnard Castle and Middleton-in-Teesdale for more than eight years. Now, thanks to a grant from our Teesdale Area Action Partnership, a further session will soon run in the Cockfield and Evenwood area. The funding will allow 50 to 80 people to join the fun, taking part in music and dance activities designed to improve brain activity, wellbeing and mood.



Photo: Teesdale Mercury

The next dates are:

Friday 17 November and 15 December, 2.30pm-3.30pm at UTASS, 9-11 Chapel Row, Middleton-in-Teesdale, DL12 0SN
Contact: Julia Stephenson. julia@utass.org 01833 641 010.

Monday 13, 27 November and 11 December, 2pm-3.30pm at The Hub, Shaw Bank, Barnard Castle DL12 8TD
Contact: Sally Davies. sallyldavies@icloud.com 07517 177121



Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

TV personality Robert Rinder MBE will be leading Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations in County Durham this year.

Robert will attend a commemorative event at Durham Cathedral on **Friday 26 January**, alongside Bernie Graham and Charlotte Lane.

Rob and Bernie were part of the award-winning documentary series *My Family, the Holocaust and Me*, which helped British Jewish families trace the stories of their family, to understand their experiences of the Holocaust. Charlotte is one of the leaders of the UK wide-school project *The Holocaust, Their Family, Me and Us*, derived from the documentary series. The aim is to provide young people with an opportunity to reflect on the legacies of the Holocaust, through sharing their family history.

For more details on how to get tickets for this event and timings, visit www.durham.gov.uk/hmd

For more information about Holocaust Memorial Day, please visit hmd.org.uk





COUNCIL SERVICES OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD



Leisure centres will be open throughout the festive period except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Visit www.thriveleisure.co.uk for opening hours at your local centre.



Library opening times may vary.

Call into your local library or check for opening times at www.durham.gov.uk/libraries



Family Hub opening times may vary.

Call into your local hub, check for opening times at www.durham.gov.uk/familyhubs or call 03000 261 111.



Customer Access Points will close at 12.45pm on Friday 22 December and reopen on Tuesday 2 January.



Register offices will close on Friday 22 December at 12.30pm and will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day.

Bishop Auckland and Durham register offices will open for appointments only on Wednesday 27, Thursday 28 and the morning of Friday 29 December but opening times will vary. Call 03000 26 6000 to book an appointment.

Normal opening hours will resume on Tuesday 2 January.



Day centres for adults will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.



Payments line: Make a debit or credit card payment 24/7 on 0300 456 2771.

In an emergency - Call our out-of-hours number: 03000 26 0000



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Would you know what to do in a power cut?
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at northernpowergrid.com/care or email us direct
priorityservices@northernpowergrid.com or call 0800 169 2996



Stay safe

Emergency situations such as severe weather, flooding and power cuts can have a big impact on you and your property, and can happen at any time.

Here are some steps to make sure you are as prepared as possible to deal with a serious incident.

Plan ahead

Write down key information about you and your family such as contact numbers, insurance numbers and medication lists. Share this with family and friends and store in an accessible place.

Download apps and bookmark websites you think may be useful in the case of an emergency so that they are easy to find.



Plan and prepare

Extra help for vulnerable people

All utility companies should hold a priority services register. This is a list of people who are considered vulnerable and would struggle without gas or electricity supply, even for a few hours, and therefore will receive additional help in an emergency situation. If you meet the criteria, you can sign up at:

- > Northern Powergrid Priority Services Membership: www.northernpowergrid.com/care
- > Northern Gas Networks Priority Customers: www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/priority-customers
- > Northumbrian Water Priority Services: www.nwl.co.uk/priority

For more information on priority registers, visit: www.ofgem.gov.uk/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register



Important items to store in your home

- ✓ Wind up torches or battery powered lights with a stock of batteries
- ✓ Tinned food with long use-by dates and ready to eat food which doesn't require heating up
- ✓ Antibacterial wipes
- ✓ A fully charged portable power bank
- ✓ Extra blankets, foil blankets and hot water bottles
- ✓ Bottled water
- ✓ First aid kit



Looking after yourself and others



Emergency Services

Only in emergencies: **999**

Durham Constabulary

Report non-emergency incidents: **101**, www.durham.police.uk

Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Advice about household fire safety. **0845 3058383**, www.ddfire.gov.uk

NHS

Health advice fast but not a 999 emergency. **111**, 111.nhs.uk

Gas – National Grid

If you smell gas: **0800 111 999**

Gas – Northern Gas Networks

Customer enquiries: **0800 040 7766** www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk

Electricity

Report a power cut: **105**

Electricity – Northern Powergrid

General enquiries: **0800 011 3332** www.northernpowergrid.com

Water – environmental flooding

0345 988 1188

Water – emergency leakline

0800 393 084

Water – sewer flooding

0800 328 7648

Water – Northumbrian Water

Water and sewerage services. **0345 717 1100**, www.nwl.co.uk

Durham County Council

General enquiries: **03000 260 000** www.durham.gov.uk

For emergency social care and child welfare concerns, including foster carer support: **03000 267 979**

If you are homeless, or facing homelessness: **08081 968 406**

Care Connect (community alarm service): **03000 262 195**

Births, deaths and marriages: **03000 266 000**

Stay informed

Tune in to your local radio station and follow the emergency services' social media accounts for updates and instructions.



Warm and well this winter

It's important to look after yourself and others during cold weather. Here are some seasonal health tips to help you stay well and build activity into your winter days.



Staying warm, well and well hydrated

These simple tips can help keep us all warm and well this winter.

- ★ Stay active, remember to dress for the weather and wear shoes with good grip outside
- ★ Drink at least six to eight mugs of liquid a day, especially warm drinks during cold weather
- ★ Keep your home between 18 and 21°C during the day and at least 18°C at night

For more help, including energy tips and money advice, visit: www.durham.gov.uk/warmandwell

Check in on neighbours

This is so important, especially during the winter. If you are concerned about someone, call Social Care Direct on **03000 26 79 79**.



Watch out for signs of hypothermia, such as shivering, cold and pale skin, slurred speech, fast breathing, tiredness and confusion. If you think someone is suffering from hypothermia, call **999** immediately.

Be Wise, Immunise

One of the best ways to protect yourself and those around you from winter illness this year is to get your flu and Covid-19 vaccinations – it is safe to get them together.



You may be able get them through the NHS if you:

- ✓ are aged 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2024)
- ✓ have certain health conditions or a learning disability
- ✓ are pregnant
- ✓ live with someone who has a weakened immune system
- ✓ are a carer
- ✓ are a frontline health or social care worker
- ✓ live in a care home

Flu vaccines will be offered to most children aged 2-3 or in school years Reception – Year 11.

In County Durham, your GP will call you with a Covid-19 vaccination appointment, please don't call them. You can also book a pharmacy appointment online / calling 119.

Good handwashing helps stop the spread of lots of winter germs!





Get outside

Enjoy a breath of fresh air with our Move outdoor activity programme, which features autumnal walks, cycle rides and running groups. Activities are led by our experienced leaders who will guide you through your activity whilst you enjoy the scenery and seasonal colour changes. Plus, most activities include a well-deserved cosy cuppa at the end.



Visit a gym

Our leisure centres offer activities to help everyone keep moving this winter.

Our gyms are fitted with a selection of cardio, weight and resistance equipment to support your fitness goals. Trained instructors are available to show you around, offer fitness tips and develop personal fitness plans tailored to your needs. Or choose from hundreds of fitness classes, whether you are looking to improve your core, increase your strength or a cardio blast, our timetable has something for everyone.

Library activities

Wellbeing activities for adults are an important part of the offer in our 39 libraries across the county, from reading groups and knit and natter sessions to crafts and colouring – and even origami. This photo is of the origami group at Clayport Library. The sessions are run by Kate, a talented and creative member of library staff, every Monday afternoon from 2pm. The sessions are free of charge, and there is no need to book in advance.

Why not call in to your local library to see what they have to offer?



Prescriptions

Make sure you have a supply of medicines for over Christmas and in case of poor weather.

You can order repeat prescriptions online. Speak to your GP practice for more information or visit www.nhs.uk/nhs-services

If you feel unwell, don't wait. Seek advice from your nearest pharmacist about any minor health concerns or call 111 if you have a more urgent medical problem. In an emergency, call 999.

Make a splash

Swimming can be a great way to stay active as the buoyancy of the water supports your activity. You can choose to simply swim or join in an aqua class for a full-body workout.

If you need support to get moving, our Move activities programme can help you get started. From seated exercise to walking football, there's something for all abilities. You can also check out the new Move Hub at Abbey Leisure Centre, featuring the latest power-assisted equipment. Our friendly staff are available to discuss your mobility needs and help you get started.

Visit www.thriveleisure.co.uk for up-to-date Move, leisure centre and activity information.



Preparing our roads for winter

As the cold weather sets in, our highways team is already working to ensure our roads are ready for you to travel safely. Our preparation for the winter months starts early, with checks to make sure our vehicles are serviced and winter ready.



Looking ahead

Our team use specialist forecasting systems, supplemented by data from our weather stations to make decisions on when to grit our priority road network.

Follow our Facebook and Twitter accounts for regular updates on road conditions and gritting routes. Remember to check the weather before setting off, particularly if you are heading on a long journey. Met Office weather warnings are available at www.durham.gov.uk/weatherwarnings

Driving in snow and ice

Snow and ice can make driving dangerous. The safest option is to stay at home in these conditions, but if you need to travel, follow our top tips to keep safe on the roads this winter.



- ✓ Ensure your vehicle is topped up with a low temperature screen wash and check your lights, indicators and tyres before driving.
- ✓ Let someone know your intended route and expected time of arrival.
- ✓ Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged.
- ✓ Allow at least 10 seconds stopping time between you and the vehicle in front.
- ✓ Accelerate, steer and brake more gently.
- ✓ Use dipped headlights.
- ✓ Take a hot drink, water and food with you.
- ✓ Make sure you have a snow shovel, tow bar or other equipment to help if your car gets stuck.
- ✗ Don't try to overtake vehicles which are clearing or gritting the road.

Find more tips for winter driving at www.durham.gov.uk/winterdriving

Contact us

Potholes

The winter weather is often the root cause of potholes. To report a pothole, visit www.durham.gov.uk/potholes or call 03000 26 0000.

Sandbags

We can provide sandbags if your property is at immediate risk of flooding in the wet winter months. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/sandbags or call 03000 26 0000.

Salt bins

If a salt bin needs refilling, let us know by completing our online form at www.durham.gov.uk/saltbins quoting the number on the top of the bin.

Staying safe on our roads

Road Safety Week

Think about your speed

During Road Safety Week, from **19 to 25 November**, we are encouraging drivers to think about their speed.

Five people die on UK roads every day

Excess speed is a contributory factor in 1 in 3 fatal road crashes

An average speed reduction of 1mph reduces crash frequency by 5 per cent

Speed can be the difference between life and death. The speed a vehicle is travelling dictates whether or not a driver will be able to stop in time to avoid a crash and, if they can't stop, the force of the impact when they crash.

Breaking the speed limit (or travelling too fast for conditions) is recorded by police at crash scenes as a contributory factor in around a third of all fatal crashes and a quarter of crashes that result in serious injury.

Speeding traffic can also make our communities noisier and more polluted, discouraging walking and cycling.

Find out more by visiting www.brake.org.uk

Stop means stop!

School Crossing Patrols - affectionately and locally known as 'lollipop' men and women - ensure the safety of children, young people and adults by providing a safer environment to cross the road.

Below are four nationally recognised signals you might see from our lollipop legends, but do you know what they mean? Figure C is the most misunderstood.

Here's what each one means:

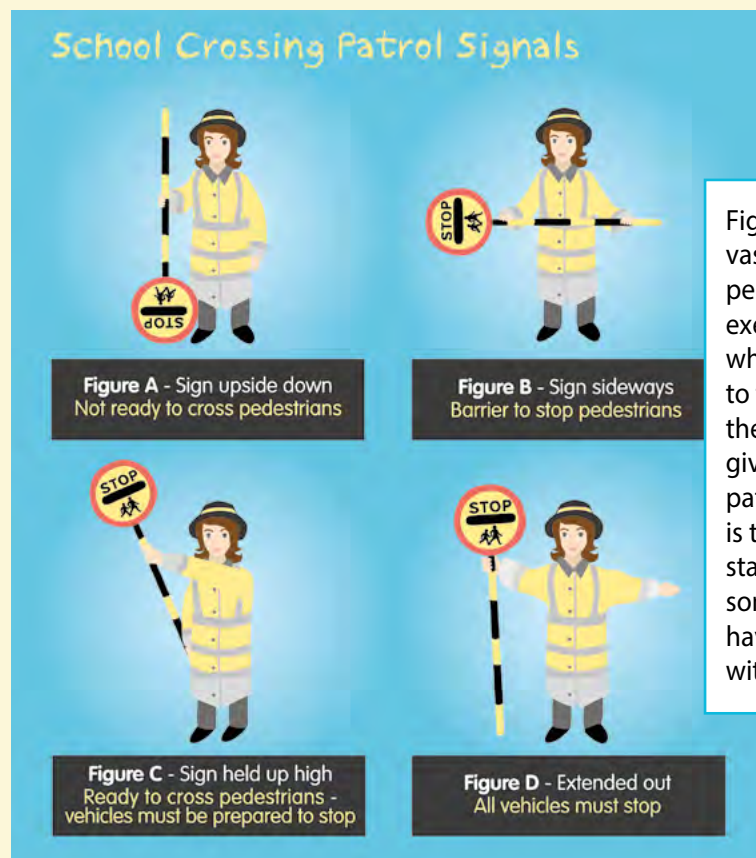


Figure C – the vast majority of people are exemplary when it comes to following the instructions given by our patrols, but this is the one our staff tell us they sometimes have problems with.

If you see the school crossing patrol standing on the pavement holding out the sign, then you must be prepared to stop your vehicle (provided it is safe to do so) – even if the patrol is on the opposite side of the road.

The simplest way of putting it is that **STOP means STOP**.

Please help keep our schoolchildren and our school crossing patrols safe.

By the way, we're currently recruiting school crossing patrol staff at locations across the county. We also need a number of casual staff.

Details can be found at www.northeastjobs.org.uk or by calling the Road Safety Team for more information on 03000 268 175.

Recycle right this Christmas

Over the festive period, 30 per cent more glass bottles and jars, food and drinks cans, paper and cardboard will be thrown away.

Here are our top Christmas recycling tips to help you reduce your impact on the environment as well as your waste. Find out what to do with old batteries, Christmas trees and wrapping paper.

Baubles

Glass baubles are not recyclable. Broken glass baubles should be disposed of by wrapping and putting in with general waste.

Plastic baubles are usually made from types of plastic not widely collected yet in the UK and are likely to be covered with glitter which would impact on the recycling process, so should also go in general waste.

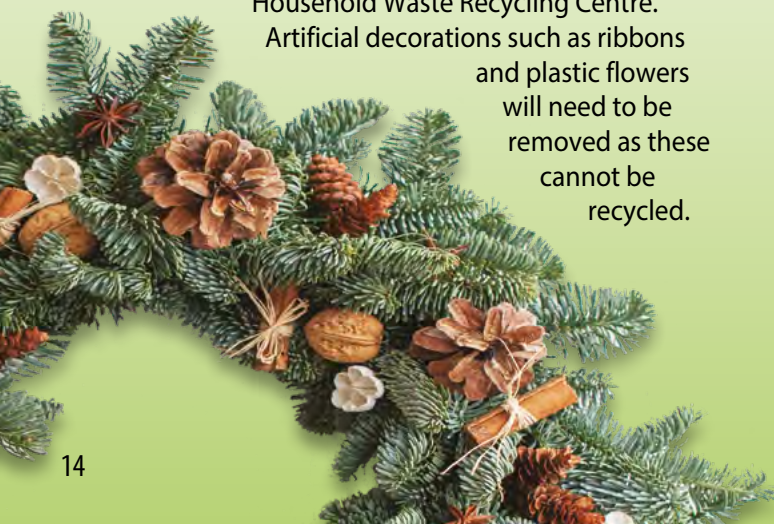
Tinsel

Tinsel cannot be recycled. If your tinsel has finally lost its sparkle and needs to be thrown away, please dispose of it in the waste bin.

Wreaths

Natural materials on wreaths, such as ivy, fir cones, mistletoe and holly, can be composted as long as they are not covered with excessive glitter. Simply remove the greenery from the base and add to your garden or green waste collection or drop off at your local Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Artificial decorations such as ribbons and plastic flowers will need to be removed as these cannot be recycled.



Presents

Plain Christmas wrapping paper, without glitter or sparkles, can be placed in your recycling bin but remember to take off any tags and tape. Remember the scrunch test! If it scrunches, it can be recycled. Foil wrapping paper cannot be recycled.

Batteries



Batteries can cause fires in our vehicles and machinery and should never be placed in any of your bins. Most supermarkets have battery recycling pods, or you can take them to one of our small electrical recycling points and dispose of them there.

Glass bottles and jars

Please only recycle glass bottles and jars in your kerbside recycling box. www.durham.gov.uk/whatgoeswhere

Old toys

New toys from Santa? Old electrical ones can be taken to one of our hundreds of recycling points across the county www.durham.gov.uk/weee.

Other unused toys should be donated to charity or taken to one of our household waste recycling points if broken.

For more information, visit www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc





Reduce and reuse

Making the most of existing items and cutting down on buying new ones this Christmas is a great way to save money and help the environment. Why not try:

✓ Getting crafty

Hand-made gifts, such as chocolates, jams and chutneys are a great personal present and can help you save significant amounts of money.

✓ Clearing-out

Decluttering your home before Christmas arrives can make space for presents and help others if you donate unwanted items to charity. Selling older items online could earn you some extra pennies too. www.durham.gov.uk/reuse

✓ Buying ahead

Get organised by looking ahead to next Christmas and keeping an eye out for heavily discounted Christmas cards, wrapping paper and decorations in the post-Christmas sales.

✓ Save on wrapping

Alternative gifts such as adopting an animal, gift experiences like theatre tickets and e-vouchers provide a good excuse to cut down on wrapping.



Christmas waste services

Christmas and New Year bin collections

Bins will be emptied as normal up to and including **Friday 22 December**.

Over Christmas and New Year, the following changes will apply:

<i>Normal collection day</i>	<i>Revised collection days</i>
Tuesday	Wednesday 27 December
Wednesday	Thursday 28 December
Thursday	Friday 29 December
Friday	Saturday 30 December

Normal collections will resume from **Tuesday 2 January 2024**.

You can also find collection details online by entering your house number and postcode into the 'My Durham' section at www.durham.gov.uk

There will be no large waste (bulky) collections between 23 December and the 1 January.

New...

Recycle your old vapes

You can now recycle used vape cartridges at our small electrical recycling points and household waste recycling centres.

www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc
www.durham.gov.uk/weee



Festive theatre magic

A trio of fun-filled pantos and a brand-new family show for the little ones make up our enchanting theatre offer this winter.

Take your seat for panto season

A Gala-Durham production

CINDERELLA

HAVE A BALL WITH OUR SPELLBINDING PANTO!

Enjoy new twists and magical turns as a thrilling retelling of Cinderella takes to the stage at Durham City's Gala Durham.

This new take on the oldest fairy tale of all time will be full of magic and excitement, strange characters and talking animals.

Will Cinderella go to the ball? Will the clumsy fairy godmother get their spells right? Find out in this Gala Durham production, from the producers of Alice in Wonderland.

The show runs from **Thursday 23 November to Saturday 6 January.**

Tickets are priced from £8 to £20 and between £60 to £70 for a family ticket (minimum one child).



Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum, we spy lots of fun with Jack and the Beanstalk at Empire Consett.

Beaver Ridge Campsite has a giant problem. Every night, the sound of giant footsteps causes treetops to tremble, windows to wobble and clouds to collide, bringing giant rainstorms across the Enchanted Forest. Sometimes a giant voice is heard booming across the sky...

Join Jack, Dame Tilly Trot, Lord Mayor Tommy Tomato, Big Mac the Cow, Cowella Daville and a whole host of other characters on an adventure packed full of fun, hit songs, dazzling costumes, audience participation and more, in our GIANT panto.

Empire regular and audience favourite Leah Bell writes, directs and stars, alongside Tommy Cannon, Crissy Rock and Jason Jones from **Friday 1 to Sunday 31 December.**

Tickets cost between £10 and £18 with family and group discounts also available.

All your Christmas theatre wishes will be granted by a host of hilarious and colourful characters on an enchanted journey of magic and mysticism, as Aladdin flies into Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

Marvel at the adventures of a young lad from the Far East... of Newcastle, as he overcomes the odds stacked against him. Wonder at the power of his magical lamp and the spirit contained within. Cower in fear as evil forces battle to control and ultimately defeat him, and laugh your little socks off at the antics of our hilarious Dame and blundering knockabout.

A swashbuckling non-stop thrill ride of a show for all the family, presented by Mendes Management, from **Friday 8 to Sunday 10 December**.

Tickets are £16 (£14 concession) or £53 for a family ticket (minimum two children).



Hurrah! Shows suitable for everyone

To make sure audiences of all needs and abilities can enjoy our live theatre shows, we're staging specially adapted performances, so everyone can share in the festive fun.

Accessible performances of Cinderella will take place at Gala Durham, with a relaxed performance at 1pm on Friday 8 December, British sign language interpreted performance at 2pm on Saturday 2 December and a British sign language interpreted and captioned performance at 6pm on Wednesday 3 January.

A relaxed performance of Jack and the Beanstalk will start at Empire Consett at 11am on Thursday 28 December and a **British sign language interpreted performance** will take place at 3pm on Thursday 28 December.

Also playing...

Fun for all ages? Oh, yes there is!

Little ones and their grown-ups will love **Tinsel**, a brand new festive production perfect for ages three and over and packed full of original live music, puppetry and raucous storytelling.

Tinsel is the tale of one magical little boy who dreams of being the fairy on top of the Christmas tree. He can sing, dance, and wear a sparkly tiara as well as anyone else can. But to get to the top, he'll have to convince a whole tree of doubting baubles, naughty elves, and a naysaying nutcracker that anyone can shine if they're just given the chance. From Gala Durham and Wrongsemble, the producers of A Town Called Christmas, Tinsel is due to sparkle at **Bishop Auckland Town Hall from Thursday 30 November to Sunday 3 December**, 10.30am and 1.30pm and at **Gala Durham from Tuesday 5 to Sunday 24 December**, 10.30am and 1.30pm (+3.30pm Sunday 24).

Tickets are £8 or £30 for a family ticket (minimum one child).



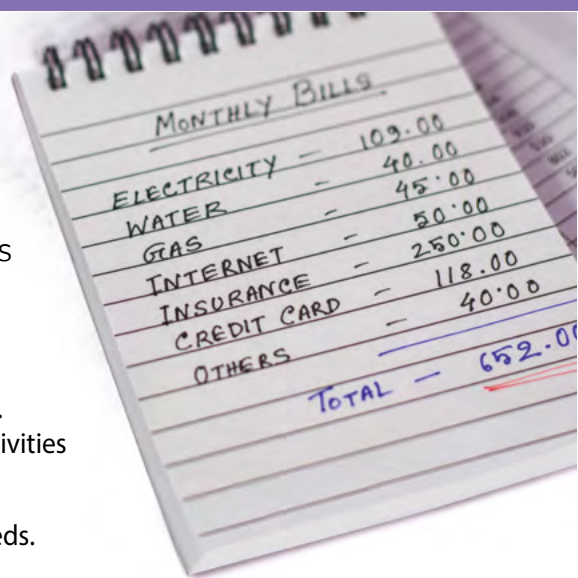
Gala Durham: 03000 266 600 | galadurham.co.uk
Empire Consett: 03000 262 400 | empireconsett.co.uk
BATH: 03000 269 524 | bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk

Multiply-ing opportunities

Do you panic when your child asks for help with their maths homework? Perhaps you find it a struggle trying to balance your household bills?

If you lack confidence in your maths skills, our Multiply programme can help. Available to everyone aged 19 and over, the programme offers short, fun activities to help improve your skills.

Training is available across County Durham and is tailored to individuals' needs.



Career opportunities

Lisa Bestford wanted to improve her maths skills so that she could change to a less physically demanding job for health reasons.

Lisa's dyscalculia affects her ability to understand number sequences and basic functions. Bad learning experiences in the past had given Lisa a fear of maths, which Multiply helped her overcome. Her tutor also ensured her learning environment allowed her to walk around or stand when she needed to manage pain.

The 36-year-old from Bishop Auckland is now completing higher level courses so that she can apply for administrative jobs.

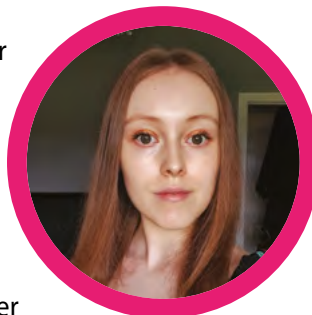
"I thought Multiply was very simple to understand because it was everyday situations," Lisa said. *"If I did not do Multiply, I would have avoided doing any more maths courses."*

Learning new techniques

Charlie Crossley joined Multiply to develop her confidence and life skills before moving away from home for the first time.

The 24-year-old from Edmondsley wanted to improve her maths skills because she thought home-schooling had left her with gaps in her knowledge.

Charlie's tutor helped her master key skills such as fractions and percentages and taught her new, easier methods to replace the more difficult and time-consuming ones she had been using.



"Multiply has aided me in confidence with handling money, which is a huge part of moving to London and preparing for a degree," said Charlie.

"The course was extremely helpful towards my personal trainer course. For the first time, I did not feel like the odd one out for lacking knowledge in maths."

Confidence boost

Emma Tempest, from Peterlee, worked with a tutor to improve her maths skills and can now shop with confidence.

The 42-year-old struggled with maths due to dyslexia, dyscalculia, learning difficulties and memory issues. However, she found that the short, focussed activities and frequent breaks offered by Multiply prevented her from feeling overwhelmed, and is now enjoying using her new skills to calculate the correct change in shops.

"I wanted to be able to pay my bills and read my letters by myself and this has helped me do that," she said. *"I was embarrassed before about my maths skills but am now a lot more confident."*

Multiply

Durham LEARN
anytime, anywhere



Visit www.durham.gov.uk/multiply, email multiply@durham.gov.uk or telephone 03000 266 115 to find out more.



Working together to support foster carers

We recently celebrated the launch of Foster with North East, a partnership which brings together the knowledge and expertise of 12 councils, including ours, to better support foster carers in the region.

Former teacher Julia and her husband Mark, a retired police officer, have been foster carers with us for 11 years and now receive support from Foster with North East. They have two grown-up children, two grandchildren and are currently caring for three babies.

The couple made the choice to foster when their daughter left for university. *"It really hit us, and I had a sudden feeling of 'Is that it?'"* said Julia. *We felt that we had so much more love and care to give. We talked it through with our children and they encouraged us."*

Julia says people are often curious to find out how she manages to say goodbye when children return to their birth family or move on with adoptive parents. *"I consider us as being just a little part of a child's journey and something that we are privileged to be part of. Ultimately you just want what's best for the child and to see them happy."*

But what makes a good foster carer?

"Fostering is more than just caring for a child, you must be prepared to attend meetings and keep records up to date, and always be their advocate and voice," Julia added.

"As with all caring it's not always easy but there is lots of support, from social groups through to official training and working closely with social workers."

"For us, fostering isn't a job, it has brought us an immense amount of pleasure. There's nothing better than waking up and seeing a baby smiling and giggling at you. The children have brought us more joy than we ever imagined possible, and we wish we had done it sooner."



“...it has brought us an immense amount of pleasure.”



There are often misconceptions about who can foster, but the reality is that foster carers are needed from diverse backgrounds and with different circumstances. If you are over 21, have a spare bedroom for older children and have the right to live and work in the UK, then you could be a foster carer.



If you think you could share your home and help shape the future of children and babies in the region, find out more at www.fosterwithnortheast.org.uk

Foster with
NORTH EAST

Spotlight on Bishop Auckland

We're helping to build a better Bishop Auckland for everyone to enjoy.

With more than £192 million being invested in the town to improve transport connections, create brand new commercial and leisure facilities and develop significant cultural attractions as well as 3,750 new jobs, there is lots to be excited about.

Considerable investment of £19.8 million has been secured through the **Future High Street Fund**. This money is being used to support a number of projects, ranging from a **new bus station** to **public space improvements**. The town was also one of only 101 areas nationally to be selected to apply for **Stronger Town Funding** and successfully secured £33.2 million for an agreed set of projects.

In **Newgate Street**, we are using some of this money to bring empty properties back in to use. We're also preparing to welcome **STACK** to the high street, with work now underway on site. Once finished, it will house local independent food traders and bars, as well as providing space for a wide variety of live entertainment.

As well as boosting the local economy, the development should bring more visitors to the town.

Further down the street, plans have been approved for the regeneration of **Kingsway Quarter**. The proposals will see 3,000m² of derelict land and disused buildings transformed into a new vibrant public square and car park.

Surrounded by buildings of historical significance, it will revitalise and repurpose the area as a place for people to visit, live, work, dine and shop.



Reinventing the town centre

Businesses around the town are already enjoying the benefits of investment from our **Property Reuse Fund**.

The fund is a vital part of the Bishop Auckland Masterplan and our plans to regenerate and bring new life to the town centre, with grants available to bring buildings back into use.

The aim is to encourage a more diverse and modern retail, hospitality and accommodation offer in order to attract more visitors, who stay longer and spend more money in the town.

Moss & Ivy @ The Vines

Joanne and Wayne Parnaby opened the doors to their new venture last year and it has proven to be a hit with shoppers and diners.

They used their grant to redevelop the entire three floors of a vacant building. The ground floor is now a home accessories store, while the upper two floors boast a luxurious coffee lounge bar that pays homage to the heritage of the building.

A total of almost 70 per cent of the cost to complete the work came from the Property Reuse Fund.



Inspiral Cycles

Gary and Fiona Ewing, owners of Inspiral Cycles on Newgate Street, applied to the scheme with hopes of contributing to the accommodation offer for the up-and-coming tourism scene.

They used the money from their grant to redevelop the upstairs of their new bicycle workshop into an eco-friendly, self-contained flat. They wanted to create accommodation which could be rented as a holiday let for those visiting bike trails such as Hamsterley Forest or the new tourist attractions in the town.

Fiona and Gary have also used a Business Improvement Grant to improve their shopfront with new signage and a new coat of paint, helping their business stand out on the high street.



47 Newgate Street

Plans were approved last year to convert all three stories of the old Burton's menswear store and the vacant Post Office building, on the corner of Newgate Street and Victoria Avenue.

The site is undergoing a major revamp, which will see it converted into 10 luxury apartments. The development will include restoration of the historical façade and a new extension to the rear of the property.

Part of the restoration work will be funded by Historic England and the council through the Conservation Area Grant Scheme.

The ground floor will be home to an exciting new venue from Bishop Auckland company Caps Off which will also see the creation of 15 new jobs.



Selective Licensing of privately rented properties

Since April 2022, private landlords have been required to obtain a licence to legally rent their properties in selected areas of the county.

About 42% of the private rented sector is covered and you can check if a property is included at www.durham.gov.uk/selectivelicensing



The licence fee is a maximum of £500, per property, for the length of the five-year scheme.

For more information, please contact:
Telephone: **03000 268 000** (press option 2)
Email: selectivelicensing@durham.gov.uk



Selective
Licensing



Safeguarding adults is everybody's business

Concerned about an adult who may have care and support needs?

It could be a family member, neighbour, or someone out and about – if you are concerned that an adult is being abused or neglected, call Social Care Direct on **03000 26 79 79**.



Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership

NHS



BE WISE IMMUNISE

The risks of **COVID-19** and **flu** are still real. Get your vaccinations to protect yourself and the people you love. To find out more and book your appointment, visit nhs.uk



What's On this winter



16 December 2023 – 2 January 2024

Flying Scotsman Centenary Festival

Create lasting memories with your family this Christmas as Locomotion celebrates 100 years of Flying Scotsman.

See Flying Scotsman in light steam on the final stop of its UK centenary tour. The festival will be filled with exciting activities that will delight visitors young and old.

Climb aboard Flying Scotsman

Step inside the iconic locomotive and see the crew's domain, including the tender corridor and the support coach. This rare opportunity is not to be missed.

Flying Scotsman sand sculpture build

Witness an incredible 60-tonne sand sculpture that pays tribute to this engineering marvel. Come at the start as the sculpture begins to take shape and visit again to see the finished article.

Pop-up street food

Satisfy your taste buds with a variety of delicious street food options from local vendors.

The Storyline

Climb aboard our special train and embark on a captivating journey filled with tales of adventure and wonder.

Fun fair

Experience the excitement of a traditional fun fair with rides and games for all ages.

Make and take railway lanterns

Get creative and create your own railway lantern to take home as a cherished memento of the day.

Hornby activities in the Hornby Café

Perfect for aspiring engineers and railway enthusiasts of all ages.

Locomotion, Shildon, DL4 2RE

Accessible parking only. Please use public transport.

Free entry, booking essential. Book tickets online [locomotion.org.uk](https://www.locomotion.org.uk)

LOCOMOTION

Bishop Auckland Town Hall



Monday 18 December, 7.30pm

Jez Lowe's Get Yer Skates On

The award winning songwriter returns with his toe-tapping folk music quartet The Bad Pennies for a night of good humoured seasonal music and stories from North-east England.

With harmony vocals, guitars, fiddle, Northumbrian pipes, bass and piano and special guest balladeer Benny Graham, make sure you book early to get your Jez Lowe Christmas fix for 2023.

£13.50 (£12 concession)



Thursday 18 January, 7.30pm

The Wizard of Oz

Join Ballet Theatre UK as we follow the yellow brick road and discover all the wonders of Oz.

Enjoy Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion, (and yes Toto too) as they seek the Wonderful Wizard to find that there's no place like home.

This two act, full-length, ballet adaptation of the iconic tale by L. Frank Baum is family friendly and is the perfect way to introduce children to the classical ballet.

£20 (£18 concession and £13 under 16s)



Saturday 2 March to Saturday 1 June

Exhibition: Dressing Room No.1

Born and raised in Bishop Auckland, photographer Sophie Teasdale has been delving behind the scenes into a world that we rarely get to see...backstage in theatres.

For over a decade Sophie has photographed actors and musicians in the safe haven of their dressing rooms, from local North East venues to London's West End, with the aim to capture that golden moment somewhere between real life and the bright lights of the stage.

03000 269 524 www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk



The Story

Thursday 16 November, 10.30am

Highlights of Roman County Durham

Excavations, research and chance discoveries over the past 20 years have transformed our knowledge and understanding of settlement in the County Durham area during the Roman period.

Join archaeologist David Mason to explore some of the more significant discoveries and the range of military and civilian sites in this period.

Booking essential. Booking information is in the News section of www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk



www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk



Gala Durham

Friday 23 to
Sunday 25
February

Charlie Cook's Favourite Book

A Little Angel Theatre and Lowry Co-Production

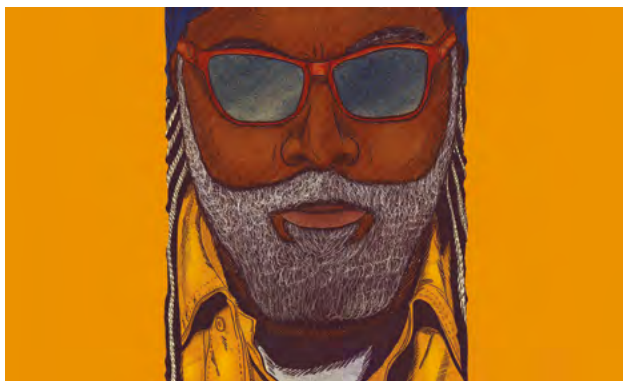


Based on the original book written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler

Charlie loves reading. Especially books about pirates. But his sister hates it – it's boring! Can Charlie convince her that reading is fun? Perhaps if she read a book about a pirate, who is reading a book about Goldilocks, who is reading a book about a knight...

Delve into a range of books with Charlie Cook, brought to life with puppetry and enchanting songs, and perhaps you will be able to help his sister discover the wonderful world inside a book... Recommended ages: 3 to 8

£15 (£13 concession)



Tuesday 5 March, 8pm

Reginald D. Hunter

In these supercharged socio-political times the challenge is more and more becoming separating what's true and what's real.

Join Reginald D. Hunter for an hour of exploring this phenomena in this progressive work in a pre next-variant world.

As seen on *Live at the Apollo*, *Have I Got News For You*, and *8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown*.

'Stand-up comedy's coolest customer' *Telegraph*

Recommended age: 18+

£24



03000 266 600 www.galadurham.co.uk

Hardwick Park

Wednesday 29 November, 10am
Saturday 2 December, 10am

Toddler Tales and Trails – We're Going on an Elf Chase

We're going on an elf chase. Come and join the fun. Can we catch them all? YES! Run, run, run! Younger children will enjoy a reading of Martha Mumford's *We're Going on an Elf Chase*, with craft activities, and an interactive park trail. Must be booked online in advance. **Activities will take place outside. £5**



Saturday 9, Sunday 10, Saturday 16 and Sunday 17
December

10am, 10.30am, 11am, 11.30am, 12noon, 1.30pm,
2pm, 2.30pm, 3pm, 3.30pm

Father Christmas in the Park

Visit Father Christmas in his Festive Yurt. Children with a ticket will receive a hot chocolate on arrival or a hot blackcurrant.

Whilst families wait to visit Father Christmas, they will have an opportunity to complete a small wooden craft and children can make their own environmentally friendly reindeer food to take home and pop out on Christmas Eve.

Customers are advised that timeslots are booked in 30-minute blocks. Ticket holders will be allocated their individual Father Christmas timeslot within the booked timeslot nearer to the date of your visit. For example, if you have booked the 10am timeslot your Father Christmas visit will be allocated between 10am and 10.30am. Ticket holders are advised to arrive 15 mins prior to their Father Christmas timeslot to allow your family time to complete the craft activities prior to the visit and avoid queues forming outside. **£15 per child**



03000 262 899
www.durham.gov.uk/hardwickevents

Beamish Museum



Wednesday 27 December to
Sunday 6 January

Twelfth Night

Enjoy live music, crafts and traditional displays – the perfect outing to blow away the post-Christmas cobwebs.



Friday 8 to Sunday 10 March

International Women's Day

Learn about the role of women in the 1820s, 1900s, 1940s and 1950s.



Sunday 10 March

Mothering Sunday

Discover the customs and traditions of the day and join in with family activities such as seed and bulb planting, crafts and baking demonstrations.

0191 370 4000
www.beamish.org.uk

ONGOING EVENTS



Last Wednesday of each month,
1pm-4pm

Volunteer Day at Bowlees Tree Nursery

Bowlees Visitor Centre,
Barnard Castle, DL12 0XF

Help with nature recovery work by seed collecting and sowing, potting on and watering plants. Free. 01833 622145
www.northpennines.org.uk/events

Mondays (excluding Bank Holidays),
1.30pm-3.30pm

Pregnant to Preschool

No.42, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NR

Join the NHS infant feeding team for peer support, activities and fun, from singing songs to messy play. Free.
01388 743750
www.aucklandproject.org/whats-on

Tuesday 20 February and 19 March,
7.30pm

Ferryhill, Sedgefield & District Flower Club Flower Demonstrations

Sedgefield Parish Hall, Sedgefield,
TS21 3AT

£5. 07533 752870

Until Saturday 31 August

Penned and Printed Exhibition

Palace Green Library, Durham,
DH1 3RN

Showcasing items from Durham University's Archives and Special Collections, this exhibition tells hidden stories from the shelves and strongrooms, exploring themes of medical progress, local stories of crime and punishment, and the journey to women's suffrage. Free. 0191 334 2932
www.dur.ac.uk/things-to-do

Every Thursday,
11am-2pm

Durham Haven Support Group

The Hut, Chestnut Grove, Ushaw Moor,
DH7 7LJ

A support group for people who live with, or people who care for someone with an autoimmune chronic pain illness. Offering advice, understanding and positivity. Activities include exercise, crafting, games, pain management and more. 07920 112389
fybrohaven@gmail.com



NOVEMBER

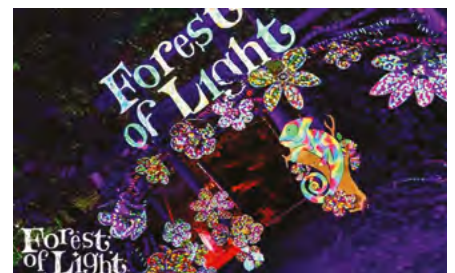


Saturday 11 November and 9
December, 10am, 12.30pm and 3pm

Blacksmith Workshops

South Causey Inn, Stanley, DH9 0LS

Learn traditional blacksmithing techniques and create your very own beautifully crafted ironwork. £48.
0120 723 5555
www.southcausey.co.uk/what-is-on-south-causey-inn



Saturday 11 November to Sunday 7
January

Forest of Light

Beamish Hall Hotel, Stanley, DH9 0YB

A wonderful world of magical illuminations and fantastic lighting displays. From £10. 01207 233 733
www.beamish-hall.co.uk/forest-of-light



Saturday 11 November, 1.30pm
Beginner's Art Workshop

Lanchester Garden Centre,
 Lanchester, DH7 0SS

Learn to paint in soft pastel with resident artist Mags from PastelArt to achieve a festive painting of The Traditional Toy Maker. **£35.** 07591 203776
<https://lanchestergardencentre.co.uk>

Sunday 12 November, 2pm
Barnard Castle Band: Remembrance Concert

The Witham, Barnard Castle,
 DL12 8LY

A remembrance programme filled with a variety of pieces to entertain a wide audience. **Tickets £8 (under 16s and students £5).** 01833 631107
www.thewitham.org.uk

Tuesday 14 November, 6pm-8pm
Diwali Festival

Oriental Museum, Elvet Hill, Durham,
 DH1 3TH

Celebrate the Hindu festival of lights with this special late night opening. Visitors can enjoy traditional puja prayers to the goddess Lakshmi, music, delicious food, games and more. 0191 334 5691
www.dur.ac.uk/things-to-do



Thursday 16 to Sunday 19 November
Lumiere Durham

Locations throughout Durham

Light art festival with a thought-provoking new programme of spectacular light artworks. **Free.**
www.lumiere-festival.com



Saturday 18 November, 10am-2pm
Christmas Market Fundraiser

Gainford Village Hall, Gainford,
 DL2 3DY

Christmas market with stalls and refreshments. **£1 entry, children free.** 07821 435272



Saturday 18 November to Sunday 31 December
Christmas Trail, High Force

High Force Waterfall, Barnard Castle,
 DL12 0XH

Wrap up warm and enjoy a wintry walk to High Force Waterfall. Collect Christmas clues and fill in a trail sheet. Trail included with general admission to waterfall. 01833 622336, www.raby.co.uk/whats-on



Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 November, 10am-4pm
Shildon Brick Show

Locomotion, Shildon, DL4 2RE

A weekend of LEGO® displays, activities and trade stands, in association with Brick Alley LEGO® User Group. **Free.** **Booking essential.** 03300 580058
www.locomotion.org.uk/whats-on

Sunday 19 November, 10.30am-3.30pm
Christmas Market

Spectrum Leisure Centre, Willington,
 DL15 0JA

Free. 01388 747000
www.facebook.com/SpectrumLeisureandCommunity



Wednesday 22 November to Sunday 31 December

AGLOW at Auckland Castle
 Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland,
 DL14 7NR

With seventeen incredible illuminations and some of the largest light installations in the country, AGLOW promises to be one of the most spectacular Christmas light trails in the North East. A must-see experience for all the family. **Tickets from £14.50 (under 3s free).** 01388 743797
<https://aucklandaglow.org>



Friday 24 and Saturday 25 November, 10am-5pm, Sunday 26 November 12noon-5pm

Brancepeth Castle Christmas Craft Fair

Brancepeth Castle, Durham, DH7 8DE

70 craft stalls and delicious home cooked food and cakes. Craft workshops. Free parking. Wheelchair accessible. **Adult £4, seniors £3, under 14s free with paying adult. First hour of the day: Adult £5, seniors £4.** 0191 378 9670
www.brancepethcastle.org.uk

What's On



Friday 24 and Saturday 25 November, 7.30pm and 2am on Saturday

A Christmas Carol

Durham Cathedral, Durham, DH1 3EH

Chapterhouse Theatre Company present Charles Dickens' timeless tale of hope and redemption. **£13.50 to £21, under 5s and carers free.** 0191 338 7178 www.durhamcathedral.co.uk

Friday 24 to Sunday 26 November

Bishop Auckland's Christmas Town

Market Place, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NJ

A magical weekend of festive fun for the whole family. Enjoy Christmas markets, Santa's grotto, winter attractions, entertainment, wreath workshops, performances and traders from across the region.

<https://bishopaucklandschristmastown.co.uk>

Saturday 25 November, 11am-4pm

St Cuthbert's Hospice Christmas Fair

Hallgarth Manor, High Pitlington, DH6 1AB

Festive fun and shopping for all the family, Santa's grotto, food and drinks, Christmas crafts and gifts, fundraising stalls, raffle and much more. **Entry by donation.** 0191 386 1170 www.stcuthbertshospice.com/events

Saturday 25 November, 11am-3pm

Middleton Mart Christmas Fair

Middleton Auction Mart, Middleton-in-Teesdale, DL12 0PG

Festive fair set in the Farmers Auction Mart, with fairy lights, foliage and festive music setting the scene. **Free entry.** 01833 641010



Saturdays and Sundays 25 & 26 November, 2 & 3, 9 & 10, 16 & 17 and Tuesday 19 to Sunday 24 December

Christmas Santa Specials at Weardale Railway

Weardale Railway, Stanhope, DL13 2YS

All aboard for a magical journey through the Weardale countryside. **From £25, under 2s and carers free.** 01388 743750 www.weardale-railway.org.uk/christmas



Sunday 26 November to Saturday 2 December

The Uninvited Guest by Agatha Christie

City Theatre, Durham City, DH1 3RA

Michael Starkwedder stumbles into Richard Warwick's study to find him dead and his wife standing beside him with a gun... **From £7.50.** 03000 266 600, www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk



Sunday 26 November, 4pm-6pm

Crook Winter Light Parade

Glenhome Drive, Crook, DL15 8QE
An enchanting carnival procession that lights up the streets of Crook with live music, dance, street theatre and illuminated lanterns and puppets. Suitable for all the family. **Free.** 01388 765002, info@jackdrum.co.uk

Wednesday 29 November, Sunday 3, Tuesday 5 and Thursday 7 December

Christmas Wreath Workshop

Lumley Castle Hotel, Chester-le-Street, DH3 4NX

Create your own bespoke Christmas wreath with expert guidance and festive nibbles. **£39.95.** 0191 389 1111 www.lumleycastle.com/event/christmas-wreath-workshop



DECEMBER



Friday 1 to Sunday 3 December

Durham Christmas Festival

Durham City

Three days, three markets and loads of festive fun to start the Christmas season, including the children's lantern procession. **£4 entry for Craft and Producers' Market. All other markets free to enter.** 0191 384 6153 www.durhamchristmasfestival.com

Friday 1 December, 7pm

A Musical Extravaganza

Garden Farm Pub, Chester-le-Street, DH2 3EH

RMTC presents a night of musical entertainment from west end shows and a selection of Christmas songs. **£8.** 07846 992 611

Saturday 2 December, 7.30pm

Martyn Joseph

Durham Town Hall, Durham, DH1 3NJ

Take everything you think you know about singer songwriters and rip it up. For one man and a guitar Martyn creates a performance with a huge far-reaching sound that is energetic, compelling, and passionate. **£22.** www.imageacoustic.co.uk



Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 December, 10am-4pm

Christmas Market, Raby Castle

Raby Castle, Staindrop, DL2 3AH

Discover lots of delicious treats, seasonal produce and beautiful homemade products from local suppliers. The perfect place to pick up a special gift. The Stables Shop will be open and decked to the halls with boughs of holly and unique Christmas treasures. **Free.**

01833 660202, www.raby.co.uk/whats-on

Saturday 2 December, 7.30pm

Weardale Community Choir Concert

St Thomas Church Hall, Stanhope, DL13 2UE

A free concert of familiar songs. **Donations welcome.** 07811 221151 www.ticketsource.co.uk/weardale-community-choir

Saturday 2 December, 1pm-4pm

Christmas Family Fun Day

The Durham Centre, Durham, DH1 1TN

Christmas Family Fun Day, with rides, crafts, games, Santa's Grotto, refreshments and much more. **Free.** 07939 271502, info@emmanuel.org.uk



Sunday 3 December, 12.30pm

Cinderella afternoon family show

Ramside Hall Hotel, Golf and Spa, Durham, DH1 1TD

The most magical pantomime of them all guaranteed to get you in the Christmas spirit. Telling the classic story of Cinderella whilst adding modern day twists perfect for the whole family. Includes two course meal. **From £17.95.**

0191 386 5282

www.ramsidehallhotel.co.uk/christmas



Thursday 7 December, 7pm

Cestrian Flower Club Christmas Demonstration

Methodist Church, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3TF

Demonstration by Catherine Gledhill, National Demonstrator. **£8.** 07751 752187

Friday 8 December, 5pm-8pm

Festive Late at The Bowes Museum

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NP

Visit the museum after hours and enjoy *The Magic of the Silver Swan* and *A Collector's Story: A Private Collection of Vivienne Westwood* and browse the shop for seasonal gifts, cards and decorations. **Free entry.** 01833 690606

www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

Friday 8 December, 6pm

Hilarity Bites Comedy Xmas Special

The Pavilion, Peterlee, SR8 1ER

If you are looking for all night belly laughs, then this is the night you need. **£15.** 18+ 0191 586 2491

www.ticketsource.co.uk/peterlee

Saturday 9 December, 10am-12noon

Christmas Coffee Morning

Wolsingham Methodist Church, DL13 3DD

Parking at rear of church. **Free entry.**

Saturday 9 December, from 4pm

Christmas in Consett

Middle Street, Consett

The Derwent Valley Area Action Partnership will host this festive event with live music, children's characters and more. Wear your Christmas jumper to be in with a chance to win a family ticket to see Jack and the Beanstalk at The Empire Theatre, Consett. **Free.**

Saturday 9 and 16 December, 10am

Breakfast With Santa

Bowburn Hall Hotel, Durham, DH6 5NH

Events include face painting, balloon modelling, kids colouring and a visit from Santa, plus a selection box for the kids. **From £10.95.** 0191 377 0311

www.bowburnhallhotel.co.uk/events



Sunday 10 December, 3.30pm

Blessing of the Crib and Lighting of the Christmas Tree

Durham Cathedral, Durham, DH1 3EH

A family favourite service where the lights on the cathedral's giant Christmas tree are lit, and the nativity scene is blessed. **Free.** 0191 338 7178

www.durhamcathedral.co.uk



Friday 15 to Sunday 17 December

Winter Market

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NP

Experience the sights, sounds and tastes of the festive season as the ever popular Winter Market returns. **£6.50, children £3.50, under 5s free, car parking £5.** 01833 690606, www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on

Saturday 16 December, 7pm

A Concert of Christmas Music and Carols by The Argus Singers

Chester-le-Street Methodist Church, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3TF

£5 including refreshments.

0191 388 1313

info@cornerstonescentre.co.uk

What's On

Sunday 17 December, 2.30pm-5pm

Mighty Wurlitzer Traditional Christmas Concert featuring "Howard Beaumont" - The Console

New Victoria Centre, Crook, DL15 8EZ

Traditional Christmas concerts with all the wonderful seasonal favourites on the Mighty Wurlitzer. £12. 01388 762567
www.netoa.org.uk

Sunday 17 December, 7pm

St Cuthbert's Hospice Light up a Life

Durham Cathedral, Durham City, DH1 3EH

The annual Light up a Life Service held at Durham Cathedral, is an opportunity for anyone in our community to come together to remember and celebrate the lives of those we love and miss. 0191 386 1170
www.stcuthbertshospice.com/events

Tuesday 19 December, 7.30pm

Christmas Workshop by Ferryhill, Sedgfield & District Flower Club

Parish Hall, Sedgfield, TS21 3AT

Christmas workshop by Val Guest and faith supper. Price TBC. 07533 752870

Thursday 21, Saturday 23 and Friday 29 December

Christmas Murder Mystery Dinner

Lumley Castle Hotel, Chester-le-Street, DH3 4NX

A dramatic stage production for the fun filled sleuth to enjoy. £49. 0191 389 1111
www.lumleycastle.com/events

Wednesday 27 December, 7pm

Full Cold Moon Fire & Sharing Circle

Dalton Moor Farm, Seaham, SR7 9JY

Moon Phase Circles and various moon rituals have been held for many centuries, probably thousands of years, to mark the changing cycles. A celebration of the full moon, including candlelit walk, meditation, food and drink. The December full moon is called the Cold Moon, due to the tendency for snowy weather at this time of year. £16. 07887 551643
www.daltonmoorfarm.co.uk

JANUARY

Saturday 27 January to Sunday 23 June

Murmuration

The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NP

Birds are the focal point for this group show which takes inspiration from the ornithologist, photographer and former Barnard Castle School pupil Bentley Beetham, who took part in the 1924 British Mount Everest expedition. 01833 690606
www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk

Tuesday 30 January to Friday 2

February, 7pm

Red Riding Hood Pantomime

Blackhall Community Centre, TS27 4LG

Blackhall Community Drama Group presents 'Little Red Riding Hood'. £5. 0191 586 7396

FEBRUARY

Saturday 10 February, 7.30pm

Soul Junction

The Witham, Barnard Castle, DL12 8LY

Brassy, sassy and classy, Soul Junction brings the very best of Soul and Motown to the Witham. The 7-piece band has a classic soul line-up, including horns, filling the dance floor every time. £15. 01833 631107
www.thewitham.org.uk/whats-on



Saturday 17 February, 7.30pm

Jez Lowe

The Witham, Barnard Castle, DL12 8LY

Jez Lowe is well-known in the UK folk and acoustic music scene. After four decades of performing, writing and recording, his songs of Northern England have reached audiences all around the globe. A new solo album is being readied for release in 2024. From £12. 01833 631107, www.thewitham.org.uk

Please note: venue opening is subject to change, please check before you visit.

MARCH

Friday 1 to Sunday 3 March

Great North Big Band Jazz Festival

Park View Community Centre, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3PZ

Big Band Jazz Festival with over 30 bands. Largest big band festival in the UK. £10 per day, £15 weekend ticket. 07958 302745
www.facebook.com/sunderlandjazz

Tuesday 5 to Saturday 30 March

Shifted - Womens contribution to coal mining life, culture and community

EDAN Gallery, Seaham, SR7 7HF

This exhibition is designed to commemorate the 40 year anniversary of the start of the year-long Miners' Strike March 1984-1985 in which women played a crucial role. Free. 0191 649 9431
edanart@live.com

Thursday 7 March, 7pm

Cestrian Flower Club

Methodist Church, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3TF

Flower arranging demonstration by Christine Ogle. £7.50. 07751 752187



Wednesday 27 March, 1.30pm

Lanchester Flower Club

Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Durham DH7 0PB

Meeting with a flower demonstration by Heather Curry, on the theme "Time for tea". 01207 521275

This is durham

Find more events and activities at

www.thisisdurham.com/whats-on

Celebrate Lunar New Year in Durham City

**Saturday 10 February
10.30am and 4pm**

A day of celebrations will welcome the Lunar Year of the Dragon in 2024.

A range of family-friendly events to mark the New Year will take place in Durham City, including a lion dance procession, which visitors can follow through the city centre.

There will also be activities and demonstrations in Durham University Students' Union, Dunelm House, New Elvet and Clayport Library, Millennium Place throughout the day, including a traditional tea ceremony, crafts and calligraphy activities.

All activities are free of charge.

Visit www.thisisdurham.com/lunar for an up-to-date programme of activities for the day.

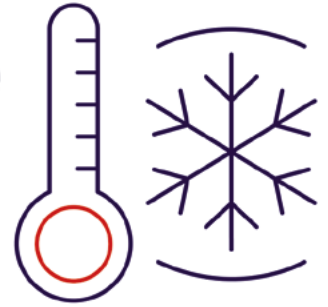
The festival programme has been developed by a partnership of Durham County Council, Durham Markets, Durham Chinese School and Durham University, as part of the Durham Global Alliance.



With support from



keeping your home warm this winter



The rising cost of living is affecting many of us, especially during these winter months when you might be worried about being able to affordably heat your home.

It's important you feel able to heat your home, to protect your and your family's health. Here's some tips on keeping costs down while ensuring your home is warm this winter:

- If your radiators have valves, turn them up in the rooms you want to keep warm and down in the rooms you aren't using.
- If you have a combi boiler, turn the flow temperature down.
- Use timers on your central heating.
- If you can, set your thermostat at the lowest comfortable temperature (recommended 18°C to 21°C).
- Take regular meter readings to ensure your bills are accurate.
- An annual heating service will ensure the performance of your heating throughout the year. If you rent your home, your landlord will arrange this.
- Open curtains during the day and close them at night, to let warmth in and keep cold out.
- Wash your clothes on a lower temperature if you can.
- Move furniture away from radiators or heaters if you can, to help heat travel around your home.
- Remember, it's important to keep your home ventilated, too. Try not to block ventilation such as windows, air blocks or extractor fans.

Get expert advice

Expert organisations can provide further help and advice. Useful contacts:

- The GOV.UK website hosts helpful information on support with energy bills.
- Citizens Advice can advise on help with energy bills.
- Your energy supplier might be able to help if you're disabled or have a long-term health condition.
- If you rent your home with a housing association, check what services and support they offer.

Visit the GOV.UK website to check if you are eligible for support with the cost of living and funding energy, such as:

- You could get £150 off your electricity bill for winter 2023 to 2024 under the Warm Home Discount scheme if you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit or are on a low income.
- You may be eligible for Cost of Living Payments which are available to households on means-tested benefits.

If you rent your home with a housing association and are worried about rising costs, being able to afford heating your home, or the implications of not being able to do so, speak to your landlord or visit their website to find out what specialised and personalised support they can offer you.

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