



## Support with food, pets and living expenses

**Food banks are places in your local community that can help if you can't afford to buy the food you need.**

### Getting help from a food bank

Usually, you can't just walk into a food bank and get food. Instead, you need a referral from a local advice organisation, your doctor or health visitor, social services or your housing officer. They will give you a voucher that you can swap for food at the food bank.

Staff at the food bank will welcome you, offer you a warm drink and chat about how they can help. They may have pet food and cleaning supplies, as well as food, and often know about other ways you can get help.

[Find your local food bank in NI.](#) The main distributor of food through food banks in the south of Ireland is the charity [Crosscare](#) based in Dublin.

### Help with pet expenses

Pets are a huge source of comfort, especially when you're experiencing mental ill health. But pets cost money.

Here are some organisations that may be able to help with pet expenses:

- [PDSA provide free or low-cost pet treatment](#) if you receive certain benefits and live in their catchment area (NI)
- The [Irish Blue Cross \(ROI\)](#) can provide low cost veterinary services to pets whose owners are on certain means-tested benefits and live within their catchment area

- [The Dog's Trust](#) can provide free healthcare for your dog (NI) if you're homeless or living in temporary housing
- [7th Heaven Animal Rescue Trust](#) (NI) gives emergency pet food packages to people in financial hardship
- The USPCA provides pet food packages to the Trussel Trust's food banks – you can pick one up if you get a voucher from a referring charity



### Help with essential items

Charities like the Family Fund, Glasspool and Buttle UK can help you pay for essential items like white goods and furniture.

Talk to your [local advice agency](#) (NI) or [Citizens Information](#) (ROI) if you need help with essential household items. They may be able to help you find what you need.

### More resources

- Use apps and websites like [Olio](#), [Freecycle](#) and [TrashNothing](#) to find free food, clothes, furniture and other items