

# Don't Pay

## Organisers Guidebook

This document will be frequently updated and was last updated on 25 October 2022.  
Check [dontpay.uk](https://dontpay.uk) for the most recent version.

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**UPDATE: 12/08/2022**

Listen to our Debt Advice for Don't Pay Organisers Podcast [here](#)

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# Welcome to the Don't Pay Organising Guidebook!

Together we will win a reduction in our energy bills to an affordable level. But it's going to take all of us.

By signing up as an organiser you're taking us one step closer to lower bills for all.

If you are signing people up to the 'Don't Pay' pledge to strike you are part of 'Don't Pay'. You can do this however you like. You can do this as an individual, a group of friends or as a more organised local group. You can also use whatever methods you think are best to do this. You know your friends, neighbours, colleagues and community best so you know what will work.

This document is a guide and we hope it will help you organise in your community if you want more ideas and tips on getting going. It includes an overview of the plan, key dates and strategy, tips on how to organise in your community and frequently asked questions for conversations you're having about going on strike.

## The Problem

Energy bills are already too high, they've nearly doubled in the past year, and could skyrocket again next April. For millions of us, this means we won't be able to afford food and bills this winter.

We can't afford for this to happen.

And together, we won't let it.

## Our Plan

It's simple: we're demanding a reduction of energy bills to an affordable level. To do this, we'll gather a critical mass of people to pledge not to pay to force the government to take action. The threat of the strike has already forced the government into action with the limited Energy Price Guarantee, but we know we can win more.

Mass non-payment is not a new idea, it happened in the UK in the late 80s and 90s, when more than 17 million people refused to pay the Poll Tax – helping bring down the Thatcher government and reversing its harshest measures.

Even if a fraction of us withhold our payments, it will be enough to put energy companies in serious trouble, and they know this. We will bring them to the table and force them to lower our energy bills.

**Here's our plan to get there:**

<b>1 Build support:</b>	<b>2 Gather pledges.</b>	<b>3 Cancel our direct debits if the price hike goes ahead.</b>
<p>For this to work, we are organising for a critical mass of people to join in. It's a big number but this crisis is bigger. Organising in your community and online is a big part of how we win.</p> <p>We need people like you, local organisations and community groups to all do this, building this up street by street, estate by estate and city by city. There are already more than 500 local groups, so get involved or set one up. More about how you can help do that is in this document.</p>	<p>We need to build the strongest possible movement, with those who can't and those who won't pay standing together.</p> <p>We need to show serious power to the energy companies and government who are taking us for a ride.</p> <p>Millions already can't pay and even more of us will be angry about paying more than double what we used to pay for the same amount we use. Let alone food, petrol and mortgages.</p>	<p>On December 1st, if the government and big energy companies have not reduced our bills to an affordable level we all cancel them on the same day.</p> <p>It can only work if we believe in each other and show the powers that be that we will not stand for being treated as cash cows.</p>

# Organising to build the strike

To win we'll need numbers, and we'll need to go grow our presence in every city and town around the country. That starts with you, organising a local Don't Pay group in your community.

## Getting started

Here's what you can do:

- Join our [Telegram group](#) to get the latest info about organising.
- Share the [Don't Pay pledge](#) on your social media channels.
- [Fill out our survey](#) to tell us a little bit about you, and what kind of tools and resources you need

## Take action your area

- [Order stickers and leaflets](#) and start putting them everywhere.
- Share the [Don't Pay pledge](#) with your neighbours and put leaflets in local restaurants, cafes, pubs, churches etc.

# Don't Pay Groups

## How to set up a group or join a group

We think that to organise at a scale to get a critical mass of people on board we need to have **hundreds of Don't Pay groups** set up all over the country, linking up thousands of you that want to organise in your area. There are already over 500 groups across the country, so fill in your details [here](#) to get linked up or set up a new one.

Local groups can follow whatever structure, meeting schedules, and strategies suit them. For those who are new to organising we have included some guidance on holding meetings below.

The local meetings have two aims: To build support to **Scrap the Hike** and to get as many people signed up to the website to **Pledge to Strike**.

In your community, there will be some people who cannot pay and those who could, but choose to strike. There will also be people on prepayment meters who have no choice but to pay. But all of us can support and build the strike, working together and helping each other out. For example, your local group could set up a fund to help group members on prepayment meters who can't afford to pay, so that they still have energy. Likewise, those on prepayment meters can help other group members in all sorts of different ways.

## **Running your local group**

We only have a few months to grow our numbers and show the government we're serious. Local 'Don't Pay' groups are the backbone of how we have the largest impact on the 1st of December.

While you can organise your groups and meetings in a way that works for you, here are some tips if you're not sure how.

**Finding a time that works for most people:** Organise your local meeting at a date and time that works for the most number of people. Be conscious of work schedules, childcare duties and other real-life issues we all deal with. But don't expect that every person will be able to make it, so also take notes and report back to others.

**Figure out safety:** we are still living through a pandemic, so some people are comfortable meeting in person, while others aren't. Talk about this before meeting, and find a space and way to meet that works for everyone: this could be in person, in a park/outside, or a hybrid online and in-person meeting.

Once you've got a date, time and location, get as many people as possible to the meeting by making them open and inviting.

**Get to know each other:** if you don't already know each other, spend some time talking about who you are and why you're part of the campaign.

**You know the key goals above:** growing your local group, building the number of pledges and taking action. To get there, here are some things you could do in your meetings:

**Have a meeting agenda and have meeting outcomes:** What do you want to achieve from each meeting?

**Plan outreach together:** on how you can get more people involved. This could include doing some mapping on who you all know in your community or being part of public events and leafleting or canvassing. More ideas and tips are below.

**Figure out next steps:** which could be another meeting, but it could also be determining who is taking which roles and tasks.

**Set tasks and deadlines:** This could be leafleting, fly posting, or signing up a certain number of people. Have tasks and dates they need to be done and remember to allocate a person to each task.

Report back: share notes back with your group and new people who have joined so everyone can see what happened and what's being discussed and decided.

## **Ideas for growing the group**

It's important that your local group keeps growing and brings in new people from different parts of the community. Make a list of which groups you already know and contact them, e.g. councils, trade unions, churches, playgroups, mosques, sports teams and so on. Also, think about people you know who are respected or influential in your community or at work and ask them to get involved.

Set and stick to targets and deadlines for contacting people and report back to your local group to keep the momentum going.

### **Be at every local event:**

Figure out which local events are coming up, like parades, summer fairs, school activities, anything. Take a look at the community calendar, municipal events and local events guides.

Make a point to show up at them: organise a table at the event and hand out materials and information to attendees and ask them to pledge to strike. Or get some leaflets, hand them out, talk to people and get people to sign the pledge.

Every time someone signs up, have the next action ready to go: like getting that person to join your Telegram group or attend the next local meeting or event.

Get out in your neighbourhood and area:

It doesn't just have to be events already on – you can also organise your own!

For instance, you could get people together to go door to door in your neighbourhood, talk to your neighbours to share more about the campaign and ask people to sign the pledge. Pick key neighbourhoods to do this in, and keep in mind when people are usually home.

Or you could organise local community BBQs and invite the whole neighbourhood to get together, have some fun and talk about going on strike.

Bring 'Don't Pay' signs and posters to the event and paper versions of the pledge forms.

Connect bill relief to bill cancellation:

Make a list of support, organisations and resources for people struggling with debt to share with people who may need it. Share this list with people in the campaign who might need it so they know how they can access these types of bill relief. But don't stop there – make sure everyone who accesses or learns about the list of resources and support also knows about the campaign and is pledged to be part of it.

## Talking about the Don't Pay campaign

Talking to people about Don't Pay and getting them signed up is the most important part of how we have the most impact on December 1st and how we win. You know the people you know, and you know how to speak to them.

Here's a simple conversation format you can use:

**Build trust and connect your issues:** ask open-ended questions about energy bills and the increasing cost of living, and share why you're worried and angry about the same issues. How has the rising cost of bills impacted your family and theirs? Listen and learn more.

**Give them hope:** now that you're both angry about the issues, tell them about Don't Pay, the plan to win and how we need one million people to pledge to strike. Share how people striking before have won changes, like the Poll Tax. We know this is possible if they take part.

**Ask if they'll join you:** and answer any questions they might have about what going on strike will mean and how it might impact them. These are covered in [our FAQs](#) and if people have more questions, you can email [support@dontpay.uk](mailto:support@dontpay.uk)

**Give them something to do:** after they pledge their support, have the next action and activity for them ready to go. For instance, putting up posters, attending an upcoming meeting or event, signing up five of their friends, and joining the Telegram group.

Always follow up within a few days or a week to see how they're doing and if they're interested in getting more involved. Finding and developing more organisers is how we'll keep growing our numbers.

### **Helping those with questions:**

Check out our FAQs for more information and different strategies for going on strike. Also join our upcoming national organising calls for more discussion on different strike strategies, legal support, and mutual aid strategies.

## **Supporting Those In Need**

Everyone will be affected by rising energy bills. Don't Pay will be a focal point for this and so we expect people in need will reach out to organising groups. The best way we can support these people is by directing them to local services that can provide the professional help that we may not be trained to give.

### **We expect these kinds of concerns to fall under a few categories:**

- financial hardship
- legal difficulty
- deteriorating mental health
- homelessness
- domestic violence
- safeguarding

### **What is the role of those involved with support in Don't Pay?**

- To direct people to services that can help them
- Not to provide specific advice, as we are not trained professionals in these domains

### **How will the workload be managed?**

Local groups need to be empowered to

- Run their own support department
- Tailor a list of services for their area/needs of their community

### **How should we respond to someone who reaches out?**

- In manner - as you would to a friend:
  - Be sensitive to their situation

- Acknowledge their concerns
- However - we must have *boundaries*:
  - No specific advice
  - Be transparent about our ability to help directly, due to the above

What if someone is in imminent threat of harm?

In the exceptional circumstances that someone is at risk of harm from someone or to themselves, and is unwilling/unable to contact emergency services, then it is reasonable for the support group to do so.

### **Examples:**

- Someone who is planning on taking their life imminently
- Someone who is at active risk of harm from domestic violence

### **A list of nationwide services can be found in Support Services**

- This list should be tailored on a local level to the services available
- And the particular needs of the community

This document will be frequently updated and was last updated on 18 July 2022. Check [dontpay.uk](https://dontpay.uk) for the most recent version.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Frequently asked questions**

We will be constantly adding to our FAQs on the website, you can view them [here](#).

### **Support Services**

#### **Mental Health**

- Emergency - 999, A&E
- Crisis:
  - [crisis helplines](#)
  - crisis teams: in A&E, same day GP appts through 111, if already referred
- More chronic: [GP, listening services, IAPT](#)
- LGBTIQ+ specific services: switchboard

#### **Financial Hardship**

- <https://www.stepchange.org/how-we-help/debt-advice.aspx>
- <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/contact-us/money-guidance>

- <https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/dealing-with-debt/debt-advice-locator>, debt advice locator
- <https://nationaldebtline.org/>
- <https://www.debtadvicefoundation.org/>
- Finding services:  
<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/tools-resources/money-management/debt-advice>

### **Domestic Violence**

- Emergency: 999
- Phone and live chat <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>
- Directory for local services: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-directory/>
- App with a directory of local services: <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>
- Raise it in any healthcare visit - pharmacists, nurses, doctors
- Ask for ANI: any boots pharmacy,
- LGBTQIA+: <https://galop.org.uk/get-help/helplines/>
- Live chat: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>

### **Homelessness**

- StreetLink exists to help end rough sleeping by enabling members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them. <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>
- Crisis: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/>
- Centrepont: <https://centrepont.org.uk/what-we-do/>
- St Mungos: <https://www.mungos.org/>
- Emmaus: <https://emmaus.org.uk/>

### **Legal**

- List of services: <https://www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-individuals>
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/legal-system/finding-free-or-affordable-legal-help/>

### **Safeguarding**

- Vulnerable people: children, older adults, those with disability
- If at risk of abuse or neglect (including self-neglect): contact 101 or the local authority safeguarding number - in a NON-professional capacity