



Date: 11th October 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian

The #OPAL holiday activity programme is a packed half term programme bursting with great activities and delicious meals every day.

Children and young people will be able to access hundreds of activities throughout the half term holidays, including specific provision available for children with SEND or additional needs, at no cost to you. Many of the activity providers are holding Halloween themed week of activities as well as **boxing, trampolining, football, pony riding, music, dance, circus skills, cycling, cooking, climbing, films, gardening, arts and crafts, forest school, photography, trips out, yoga, djing, ice skating** and many other exciting opportunities.

To find out where your nearest scheme is please click on this link - [October Half Term Play and Activities \(OPAL\) – Merseyside Play Action Council](#) or visit www.Merseyplay.com and click on the OPAL link.

When you have chosen an activity, you will need to contact that organisation to book a place. If your child has any additional needs or dietary requirements then please discuss this with the organisation when you book.

Liverpool City Council is working with local schools, voluntary and community organisations, and childcare providers to provide the OPAL programme.

Please see page 2 for information regarding additional support available for residents who may have been affected by recent events such as changes to benefits, energy price increases, furlough ending or for anyone struggling to make ends meet.

Regards

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Additional Support Available

Benefits advice

Request benefits advice or get help with Universal Credit claims today at www.liverpool.gov.uk/bms or check if you qualify online at www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators. You can also call freephone 0800 028 3697 or visit any One Stop Shop. You can also speak to your landlord if you're a social housing tenant.

Debt

Your local Citizens Advice can help you deal with debt. You can book appointments with the city centre money advice team on 0151 233 2771. Call 0344 848 7700 or visit www.citizensadvice.liverpool.org.uk to find your local office. For details of other organisations go to www.liverpool.gov.uk/debt

Council Tax

Call us today on 0800 028 3686 if you're having problems paying your Council Tax, have Council Tax arrears, are struggling to pay back overpaid Housing Benefit or owe other debts to the council.

Free school meals

Apply today at www.liverpool.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals or call free phone 0800 028 3697 and your family could save over £400 per year and your child's school can receive up to £1,900 additional funding for every eligible child.

Housing

Housing Options provides help and advice if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Call us on freephone 0800 731 6844. Visit any of our One Stop Shops – www.liverpool.gov.uk/onestopshops or call 0151 233 3000

Fuel and energy bills

Our Healthy Homes team can provide free help and advice if you're struggling to pay your fuel bills, and energy saving hints and tips to help keep you warm and your bills low. They may also be able to help with replacement boilers and windows. Visit www.liverpool.gov.uk/housing/fuel-poverty-and-energy-efficiency/ or call them on freephone 0800 0121 754.

Council Tax Support

Council Tax Support helps you pay some of your Council Tax if you are on a low income or claiming certain benefits. You can claim whether you own your home or rent, or whether you're working or unemployed.

Find out more: www.liverpool.gov.uk/benefits/housing-benefits/council-tax-support/

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) can give you short term help to pay your rent when Housing Benefit or Universal Credit does not meet your rent in full. You can apply if you receive

Housing Benefit or the housing cost element of Universal Credit or there is a shortfall between your rent and benefit entitlement.

Find out more: www.liverpool.gov.uk/benefits/housing-benefits/discretionary-housing-payments/

Liverpool Citizens Support Scheme

If you find yourself in crisis you can apply for support to get food and basic necessities for you and your family including gas and electric vouchers (urgent needs) and furniture and household essentials (home needs). An emergency or crisis might be a fire or flood, or you have had to move due to violence or fear of violence, or you are leaving care or prison and need support to stay in the community.

Find out more: www.liverpool.gov.uk/benefits/help-in-a-crisis/liverpool-citizens-support-scheme/

Foodbanks in Liverpool

Your local foodbank can provide at least three days' emergency food and support to people in crisis. You can get a voucher from your: health visitor, social worker, local citizens advice or charity organisation and take your voucher to your local Trussell Trust foodbank to receive your emergency food. Your local church or community centre may have their own system and you may not need a voucher.

Find out more: www.liverpool.gov.uk/benefits/help-in-a-crisis/foodbanks/

Short-term benefits advance

If you're waiting for your first benefit payment and don't have enough money to cover food and essential items such as rent, gas and electric you can ask your local Job Centre for a short-term advance.

Find out more: www.liverpool.gov.uk/benefits/help-in-a-crisis/short-term-benefit-advance/