



## Parish and Partners Foreword

Dear All,

### Welcome to this Cost of Living Special Edition of the Parish and Partners Newsletter.

This publication provides some practical advice for residents on how to cope with the rising cost of energy, identifies the support schemes and benefits which are available to residents, and introduces new schemes such as "Winter Warm Hubs". As part of the budget that was approved in February, Council provided for a further £50,000 to support our residents most in need with heating costs, however, this is not an issue that the Council alone can resolve. Whilst we are actively communicating all of these schemes we thought it would really help our communities if you could help spread the word.

In addition to all that is currently planned a summit of all public sector agencies has been called on 25th November. The purpose of this session which is being organised by the County Council is to ensure that we are all joined up in our efforts to support our residents, we avoid duplication, and we concentrate on maximising our efforts to support residents. The schemes which will be discussed include:

- Providing support to organisations such as the Citizens Advice South Warwickshire, Act on Energy, VASA and Money Advice Service to ensure that our residents can access the support to which they are entitled;
- To create a dedicated website that identifies all of the support schemes which are available, we often find through our own contacts that residents are not always aware of what support is available;

- Support of Warm Hubs, following on from the pilots identified later in this newsletter how a network of these hubs could be extended across the County. Warwickshire County Council is taking a lead in this area.

The Warwickshire Association of Local Councils will be represented at this summit. Following this event we are expecting some further announcements of how we can help our communities.

As well as the significant impact upon our residents the Council is also struggling to come to terms with the impact of inflation, in the current year we are expecting our costs to be around £1.2m higher than we had budgeted due to issues such as pay, contract costs, heat and fuel. Whilst writing this foreword, we are awaiting the Chancellor announcements within the Autumn Statement to address the governments spending deficit.

The Council is fully expecting a significant reduction in the support that we receive from Government at a time when the costs that the Council are facing are increasing. We are also expecting the Government to make announcements surrounding maximum permissible levels of Council Tax before a referendum would be required. You may be aware that Stratford on Avon District Council has the lowest level of Council Tax in Warwickshire and one of the lowest in the Country, however, when Government considers referendums it is the comparison with the previous year that is important.

We are therefore going through a detailed process at the moment to review all of our costs and also areas where we may be able to increase our income with the view of preserving as many services to our residents as possible. The draft budget will be presented to the Cabinet for consultation on 16th January 2023, before it is hopefully finally agreed by Council at its meeting on 27th February. To help us meet these deadlines could I please encourage you all to ensure that you return your precept forms to the Council as soon as possible.

This has been another very challenging year for the Council, as you may have read we will not be progressing plans of merging with Warwick District Council, and we have still been working with our communities in relation to COVID. Thankfully, in relation to COVID the threat to public health is reducing and through programmes such as the vaccine rollout we are coming to terms with living with this disease.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for all of your support. I hope that you all manage to get some down time over the Christmas period, and I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a very happy new year.

Very Best Wishes

David





## Are you worried about the rising cost of energy bills?

The enormous rise in energy costs has left many people worried, but there is help available.

### Contact your supplier

If you're struggling to pay your bill or you are in debt – contact your energy supplier. **The earlier you contact them, the better.** They can help with debt payment plans and help you with managing your ongoing payments.

Some also have hardship funds which they can tap into to help people – and you don't always have to be one of their customers.

### Act on Energy – here to help :)

Act on Energy is a local energy advice charity with over 20 years' experience helping people to keep warm and well.

They can offer **free expert advice** on:

- Energy efficiency tips to reduce your bills
- Grants and funding for energy efficiency measures
- Grants for broken heating systems
- Help with fuel bills and energy debt
- Billing issues with your supplier

Some funding schemes require certain criteria to be met – but others don't, so it's well worth giving them a call now to see how they can help you.

To enquire visit [www.actonenergy.org.uk](http://www.actonenergy.org.uk)

or call this free phone  
**0800 988 2881**

### Price Cap explained

**From 1 October**, the Energy Price Guarantee will come into effect to help householders with their rising energy costs. It means that a 'typical' bill will be around £3,000 a year.

But this is not a maximum bill! The £3,000 is based on a typical household usage – so the more energy you use, the more you pay. That's because the Guarantee limits the amount you can be charged **per unit of gas or electricity**, it does not put a maximum limit on your bill. So, your exact bill amount will continue to be influenced by **HOW MUCH ENERGY YOU USE.**

### Energy Bills Support Scheme

The £400 reduction on domestic electricity bills will go ahead as announced earlier this year. Those customers who have a standard credit meter will receive the non-repayable grant direct from their electricity supplier over a six month period from October.

Traditional prepayment meter customers receive Energy Bill discount vouchers from the first week of each month, issued via SMS text, email or post, using the customer's registered contact details. Customers will need to redeem these at their usual top-up point, such as their nearest local PayPoint or Post Office branch. Make sure your contact details are up to date.

**BE VERY CAREFUL TO AVOID SCAMS - NO HOUSEHOLD WILL BE ASKED FOR BANK DETAILS AT ANY POINT.**





## Are you worried about the rising cost of energy bills?

### Do you rely on domestic heating oil?

To get the best possible price, consider joining an oil syndicate scheme such as WRCC Energy Community Oil Scheme. Call **01789 472619** for more information.

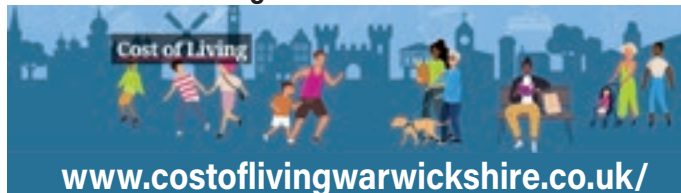
### Are you maximising your income?

It's estimated that billions of pounds are unclaimed in the UK each year, with many people not aware that they are entitled to benefits. Claiming certain benefits also allows you to tap into other forms of help so it's worth checking if you are eligible.

You can use a free online benefits calculator check such as [Turn2us Benefits Calculator](#) or [Entitled To Benefits Calculator](#) or contact **Citizens Advice South Warwickshire** on **0300 330 1183**.

Here are some of the key benefits that you should check

Visit the cost of living microsite for the latest information



[www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/](http://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/)

### THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT

rebate could give you an extra £150 credit on your electricity bill. Households with high energy costs who claim a means tested benefit will be eligible. These households will receive this rebate from qualifying suppliers automatically from October.

[www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)



### THE COLD WEATHER

**PAYMENT** is paid to eligible households on means tested benefits in areas where 'exceptionally cold weather' is forecast or has occurred. Automatic payments amount to £25 per qualifying week between 1 November and 31 March.

[www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](http://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment)

### HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

for those who need help towards the rising cost of living including energy, water and food costs. It's managed by Warwickshire County Council through its **Local Welfare Scheme**. To enquire or apply for support, call **0800 408 1448** or **01926 359182**

[Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme - Warwickshire County Council](#)

### COST OF LIVING PAYMENT

is a range of payments announced by the Government with the second payment due in November. Check to see if you're getting all your entitlements [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment)

### COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

if you're a low income household, you may be entitled to a council tax reduction. Apply at [www.stratford.gov.uk/benefits-support/local-council-tax-reduction-scheme.cfm](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/benefits-support/local-council-tax-reduction-scheme.cfm) or call **01789 260991**

### FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Even if your child is receiving free school meals because they are in Early Years at school, you should still apply for benefits-related free school meals because this will be a pathway to other help and support and you will be given priority support from the Local Welfare Scheme during school holidays. Apply at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/education-learning/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/education-learning/apply-free-school-meals) or call **01926 359189**

### DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT

This can be awarded in addition to a housing benefit award or a Universal Credit housing element, in unavoidable exceptional circumstances, e.g. health issues, urgent debt.

Apply at [www.stratford.gov.uk/benefits-support/housing-benefits.cfm](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/benefits-support/housing-benefits.cfm) or call **01789 260991**

### WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S COST OF LIVING WEBPAGE

is a useful starting point for various forms of help and support. For more info, please go to [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/costofliving)





## Funding for community organisations

### Winter Warm Hubs

WRCC (Warwickshire Rural Community Council) has been running the Warm Hubs project, supported by Cadent Gas, for two years.

Warm Hubs are currently running at Shotteswell, Bidford-on-Avon, Salford Priors and Wellesbourne. In Stratford District 50 more Winter Warm Hubs are being set up with small start up grants from WRCC.

**Further funding has been secured from Warwickshire County Council to support community organisations and Parish Councils seeking to set up Winter Warm Hubs.** Interested organisations should contact [warmhubs@wrccrural.org.uk](mailto:warmhubs@wrccrural.org.uk) as soon as possible for an update, or visit [www.wrccrural.org.uk/winter-warm-hubs](http://www.wrccrural.org.uk/winter-warm-hubs) for an organiser's handbook and a grant application form.

You can also find your nearest Warm Hub or Winter Warm Hub, plus additional energy advice and useful resources, at [Warm Hubs Network - WRCC \(wrccrural.org.uk\)](http://Warm Hubs Network - WRCC (wrccrural.org.uk)).



### Cost of living grant

Warwickshire County Council has launched a grant fund worth £180,000 that will support voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and town and parish councils to step forward to establish projects that counteract and address some of these pressures.

Groups are invited to apply for funding of up to £1,000 to support projects or initiatives that focus on one or more of the following criteria:

- Food and other household essentials
- Improving community assets and their sustainability
- Improving access to services
- Improving financial capability
- Improving mental wellbeing
- Tackling social inequalities

Information on eligibility and support for making an application can be found on [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/colgrant](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/colgrant)

**To ensure the funding can be allocated as quickly as possible the deadline for applications is 5pm on 18th December 2022. Applications will then be evaluated, and successful bids will be allocated funds from 9th of January.**





### Cost of living support

The rise in living costs is having an impact on household budgets for many and people are making some tough decisions about what to prioritise. Help and information is available via these two websites.

[Cost of Living Support | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#) or [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/costofliving)

### Food support

If you're finding it hard to feed your household, help and advice is online at [Stratford-on-Avon Foodbanks | Stratford-on-Avon District Councils](#) or [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/foodsupport](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/foodsupport)

### Housing support

Having a safe home is something we all need, but sometimes we can experience housing difficulties that cause a lot of stress and make it difficult to enjoy family life. If you need support to deal with a housing problem, visit [Homes & Properties | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#) or [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/managing-money-debt/housing/1](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/managing-money-debt/housing/1)



Citizens Advice South Warwickshire offer **free, confidential, impartial and independent advice** for all residents of Stratford-on-Avon District.

Please visit the [Information & Advice](#) section of the CASW website.

Community Advice hubs are available in Alcester, Bidford, Lighthorne Heath, Studley and Wellesbourne. These are appointment only services. You can use the contact details below to make an appointment.

Visit <https://www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk> or call **0300 330 1183** or **0800 144 8848**

An out of hours service operates on Mondays 5.00pm – 7.00pm.  
Call **0800 995 6047**

The **Help to Claim** service can support you in the early stages of your Universal Credit claim, from the application, through to your first payment. Contact an adviser through the national Help to Claim service on **0800 144 8444**

## Energy Support Fund

Earlier this year Stratford-on-Avon District Council made £50,000 available to support lower income households who are struggling to pay energy bills this winter. Act on Energy is administering the Energy Support Fund on behalf of the Council by making a payment directly to the household's energy supplier or issuing pre-payment vouchers.

Eligible households with children could benefit from up to £500 and households without children up to £300.

The fund went live on October 1st and to date Act on Energy have received over 140 applications for support. We are pleased to confirm that much of this funding is allocated however, Act on Energy are advising people who are struggling to pay energy bills to register their interest in the fund by completing the form on the website [www.actonenergy.org.uk/project/energy-support-fund](http://www.actonenergy.org.uk/project/energy-support-fund) to ensure that every penny goes to households that need the support.

If further funding becomes available Act on Energy will contact the household to determine eligibility and take energy supplier account details.





A guide to help you stay safe and well this winter 2022/23

[warwickshire.gov.uk/winterwellness](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/winterwellness)

As the days get shorter and the weather gets colder, many people around the county may be worried about the cost of living, their health and wellbeing or other difficulties during the winter months.

Keep yourself warm and well in Warwickshire this winter by following our [Winter Warmth Checklist](#)



A free advice line is also available at **0800 988 2881**.  
Staying warm

For advice and support, visit our Winter Wellness webpages <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/winterwellness>

You can also download our [Winter Wellness booklet](#).

If you can, try to heat the rooms you use to at least 18°C, as this reduces the risk to health.

### BOILER SERVICING

Get your boilers, heaters & cookers regularly serviced by a registered engineer to ensure it's operating as efficiently as possible, minimise repairs and prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.



### BEING PREPARED

Check the [@MetOffice](#) weather forecast. If cold weather is forecast, stock up on tinned and frozen foods, warm clothes and any medication. You should also keep emergency supplies such as food, water and warm clothing in your car in case you get stranded by bad weather.

### VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Look out for vulnerable people, prepare emergency contact numbers and protect water pipes from freezing by insulating them.

### STAY WELL

Being active is a great way to keep warm and look after your physical and mental health.

If you're staying indoors there are plenty of activities you can do such as dancing, yoga or online workouts. If you do head outside, going for a brisk walk is great exercise.

Wellbeing for Warwickshire is here to support you in the way that suits you best.



We understand that the rise in the cost of living can lead to worry and stress, which can impact your mental health.

Could you benefit from free, safe and anonymous mental wellbeing counselling and support?

Wellbeing for Warwickshire is an open door to supporting your mental health.

[Home - Wellbeing for Warwickshire](#)

Or call **0800 616171** or **0300 330 5487** from a mobile for free, confidential help and emotional support.

The phone line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 365 days a year.

If you, or someone you know, is having thoughts of suicide or significant self-harm, help and support is available now. Visit [www.dearlife.org.uk](http://www.dearlife.org.uk) where you will find details for crisis support.

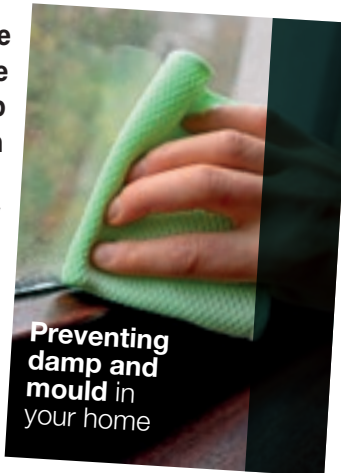
**If there is immediate risk to life, call 999.**





## Damp and Mould

Many will be aware of the recent tragedy in Rochdale where the issue of damp and mould was very much in focus. Damp and mould can be a problem in a property of any age, and this can sometimes contribute to health problems, such as chest infections and asthma so we would like to provide some general advice, to help you avoid damp and mould occurring in your home.



Damp, and then the mould that can develop in a property and has several causes. We regularly see it where warm, moist air cools (condensates) onto a cooler surface. Damp and mould have four main causes and we recommend that householders consider each item and see if there is anything that you can do or change to reduce the risk of this problem occurring.



### Temperature: is your property too hot or cold?

A living area should be typically heated to about 21° and sleeping areas to 18°.

### Poor Air circulation

Where air cannot circulate around the whole of a room, this may allow the build-up of mould. Furniture should ideally not be pushed up tight to outside walls, which may be cooler than other walls. Storage pushed into the corners of rooms will give damp and mould the opportunity to develop. Try to keep your property tidy and reduce storage where possible. Open cupboards occasionally to help the air to circulate there.

### Lack of ventilation

It is important to allow fresh air into the property from outside to combat the build-up of moisture in the air. Allowing fresh air in will help expel the moisture-laden air.

It is best to avoid the build-up of moisture by making sure that any water vapour from bathrooms and kitchens is properly ventilated, either through the use of a mechanical extractor, or by opening windows. Try to minimise the production of steam in both rooms, and don't allow that moisture-laden air to circulate around the property.

### Lack of insulation

Mould will develop where warm, moist air, settles on a cold surface and creates a damp patch. If walls are insulated, then this can help inhibit the condensation process. If the property is not insulated, the owner should look into this, as there are some schemes that may assist.



Further information can be found on the Council's website at [Housing Standards in Rented Accommodation | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#). You can download a copy of a new booklet that has been produced by the local authorities in Warwickshire, and also view a video produced by our partners at Act on Energy [Damp & Mould - The Movie - YouTube](#). Information from Act on Energy can be found at <https://actonenergy.org.uk>.

Social tenants may well find that their landlord has some helpful advice too. For example, Orbit have information at [How we can help you if you're experiencing issues with mould | Blogs | Orbit Customer Hub](#)

You can contact the Council at [PSHT@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:PSHT@stratford-dc.gov.uk) or on 01789 260848.





## Trees Call to Action Project (TCAP)

The Trees Call to Action Project (TCAP) is an exciting new project that will enable communities and landowners to access funds for tree planting and hedge planting. The TCAP team will be visiting parishes to discuss your planting opportunities and how to apply for grants for planting new green spaces that can benefit the environment, reconnect people with nature, and support wildlife.

The government has created a target to treble tree planting rates in England by 2025 as a crucial part of meeting the UK's net-zero targets. This has led to the creation of projects like TCAP.

The project is funded by a grant from the [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) and will be delivered by staff from four partner organisations: the Heart of England Forest, Stratford-upon-Avon District Council, Warwick District Council, and Wychavon District Council.

You can find more information about the project and the individual Project Delivery Officers on [The Heart of England Forest website](#).

Project Delivery Officers will be communicating with local communities and landowners to discuss what options are available to you and how you can access the grants. Each new green space that is planted is a step forwards in our important national responsibility to reduce our carbon emissions, help the recovery of the UK's native biodiversity, and connect people to green spaces.

There are many benefits to tree planting within your community including:

- Cleaner air
- Carbon sequestration
- Building community spirit
- Offering green spaces for general health and wellbeing
- Providing homes and food for wildlife and increasing biodiversity

If you are interested in working with the project, we can offer the following:

- Help and guidance in finding, accessing, and applying for grants/funding for tree planting
- Assistance for tree planting plans; when, where and which trees to plant
- Volunteer training in tree planting in one of The Heart of England Forest planting areas
- Management and ongoing maintenance plan for your new tree planting site



If you are interested in funding for your own land or the local area, reach out to your local TCAP Project Delivery Officer by email [lindsay.mcgurk@heartofenglandforest.org](mailto:lindsay.mcgurk@heartofenglandforest.org) or call 07834 810346

You can sign up for the [monthly e-newsletter](#) from the Heart of England Forest to receive more news and updates.







## SAVE TIME

TWO SERVICES FOR ALL RESIDENTS

Did you know you can now claim Housing Benefit online. Go to [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)

If you want to make a payment for Council Tax or Business Rates use our dedicated payment line 0345 600 6956



[www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)



[info@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:info@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



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



[twitter.com/StratfordDC](https://twitter.com/StratfordDC)



[www.linkedin.com/company/stratford-on-avon-district-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/stratford-on-avon-district-council)

# UBUS



Bringing U closer together.

To register or for more information please

01789 264491

[UBUS@vectare.co.uk](mailto:UBUS@vectare.co.uk)

If you live in an area with limited public transport or you struggle to use public transport because of mobility or health issues then **UBUS** could be for you.

**UBUS** is a dial-a-ride service for people of all ages in the **Stratford-on-Avon District**, operating between **10:00am and 7:00pm, Monday to Friday.**

supported by



Stratford-on-Avon District Council



Warwickshire County Council



## Council Tax Help

**Are you, or someone in your household, living with:**

- a degenerative brain disorder such as Alzheimer's
- a learning disability
- other kinds of dementia
- a severe stroke
- severe or chronic mental illness

**and are entitled to one of the following benefits:**

- Employment Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- increased Disability Pension
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Income Support that includes a disability premium
- the care component of high or middle rate Disability Living Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit

**then you may be entitled to a Council Tax discount**

**and save money off your Council Tax bill**

For more information please contact Revenues on

01789 260990

[revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk)





## Who lives in our district?

Census 2021 has started to be released in earnest by the Office for National Statistics. The results shown are what we know so far in general terms for the District. Once data to parish level is made available, we fully intend to send every parish council their own set of results.



Total population

**134,700**

+ 11.80% since 2011

Stratford-on-Avon saw the **3rd highest % growth** across the West Midlands

52% female



48% male

# census 2021

Median age

**48**

Stratford-on-Avon is joint **35th oldest district** out of 335 across England and Wales

England & Wales = 40 years

15 years and under	<b>15.29%</b>
16-64 years	<b>59.54%</b>
65 years and over	<b>25.17%</b>
(85 years +)	<b>3.41%</b>

There has been a **27.5% increase** in the number of people aged 65 years and over since 2011



**91.6%** born in the UK

**8.4%** born outside the UK  
+ 2.2% points since 2011

Top 5 countries of birth outside UK

<b>1,560</b>	Poland
<b>903</b>	Romania
<b>743</b>	Ireland
<b>684</b>	South Africa
<b>597</b>	India





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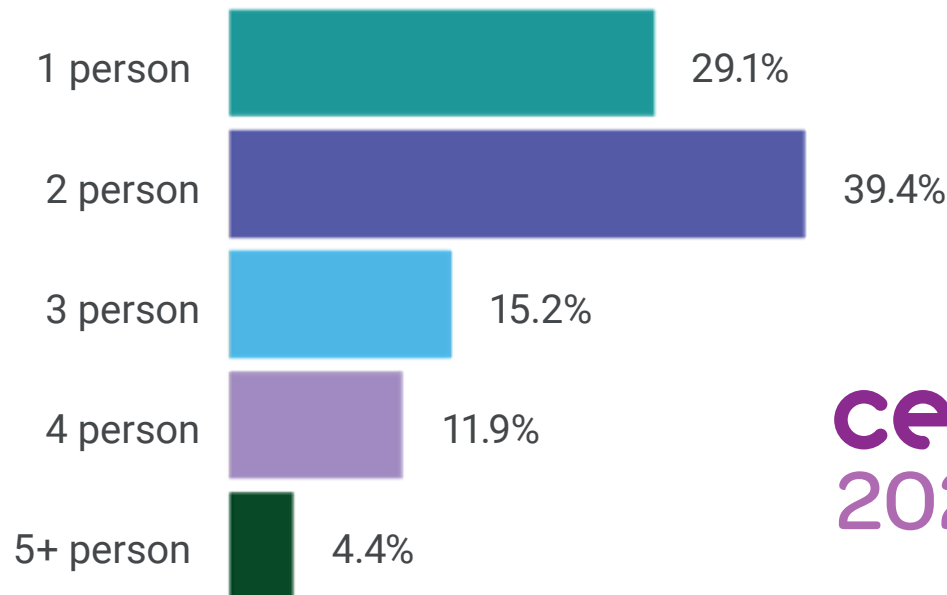


**59,500**  
households

+ 14.6% since 2011

### Household composition

Stratford-on-Avon district has an **above average** number of households with **pensioners** and **below average** number of family households with **children**



**census 2021**

Stratford-on-Avon    England & Wales

single person households aged 66 years+	15%	13%
single family households aged 66 years+	14%	9%
married couple (under 65) with no children	13%	10%
lone parent family with dependent children	5%	7%

