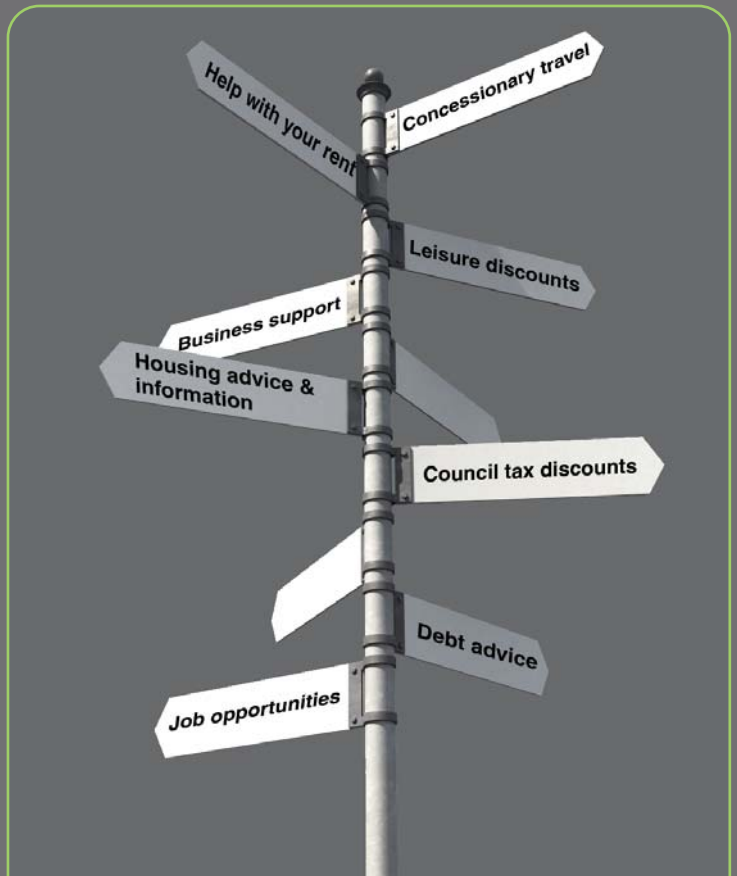




Helping West Dorset during the **recession**



www.dorsetforyou.com/recession/west



West Dorset District Council offers a range of services to help residents and businesses that might be affected by the recession.

Housing

The housing team provides help and advice about all areas of housing, including:

- **Homelessness** - If you are having any kind of housing problem, your first step should be to contact the West Dorset Housing Advice Centre as soon as possible on 01305 251010. You will be able to speak with an advisor who can provide advice and information. Alternatively visit www.dorsetforyou.com/homelessness/west If you are facing financial difficulties with your housing costs or are concerned that you may lose your home, contact the district council as soon as possible. The advice centre has a money advisor to help people with their financial planning.

- **Affordable homes** - Many affordable homes are planned in new developments across the district. The council's policy is that one in three new homes built should be affordable to meet local housing need. If you are interested in the opportunity of shared ownership visit www.dorsetforyou.com/affordablehousing/west or call 01305 251010. The MyPlace website offers government funded schemes that are designed to make home ownership in Dorset more affordable. If you cannot afford to buy a property on the open market visit www.search4myplace.co.uk
- **Care and repair** - The West Dorset Care and Repair Agency gives practical help to home owners to repair and adapt their homes. The trained staff give advice on grants and loans and other ways of funding the cost of the work. A financial assessment can be carried out to find out if you can claim benefits or allowances, and help is given with making the claim. For more information visit www.dorsetforyou.com/carerepair/west or call 01305 252405.
- **Home insulation** - Grants and advice are available to keep fuel bills down and your home warmer and you don't necessarily have to be receiving benefits to be eligible. Further information is available at www.dorsetforyou.com/energygrants/west or by calling 01305 251010.

For further information about housing in West Dorset visit www.dorsetforyou.com/housing



Housing benefit

Housing benefit is to help people on a low income pay their rent. You can be eligible if you rent privately or rent from a housing association.



You can use the online calculator to see if you may be entitled to benefits. Visit www.dorsetforyou.com/benefitscalculator

Benefits are not awarded automatically and must be claimed for.

For more information visit www.dorsetforyou.com/benefits or call the benefits team on 01305 211930.

Council tax benefit

West Dorset District Council's part of the council tax charge is one of the lowest in the country.

Some residents are entitled to a reduction in their council tax, such as:

- Single resident discount (25%) for those living alone or where all other residents are disregarded because of their circumstances such as full-time students, care workers, carers for example
- Exemptions or reduced rate for some empty properties
- If you need an extra room or space because someone in the property has a permanent disability

For more information about whether you could get help with your council tax visit www.dorsetforyou.com/counciltax or call 01305 211930.



Leisure

District council leisure centres charge less for people claiming benefits and to those who are disabled (their carer can also go free, when accompanying the disabled person). Free swimming is also available at the Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre for those aged 16 and under and aged 60 and over from April 2009. For more information visit www.dorsetforyou.com/leisure/west

Travel

Concessionary transport fares - West Dorset residents aged 60 or over or who are disabled can enjoy free bus travel anywhere in England with a bus pass. For more information visit www.dorsetforyou.com/buspass/west or call 01305 251010.

Parking permits - There are different types of permits available to make parking in West Dorset District Council's car parks easier and cheaper for regular users.

Season tickets - Season tickets allow 24 hour parking in the long stay car parks throughout West Dorset.

Six monthly shoppers permit - This gives shoppers two hours parking per day in the short stay car park or three hours if a valid disabled badge is displayed.

Three to eight day shoppers permits - These permits allow parking in any of the district council's car parks and are available from the car park attendants or tourist information centres.

For more information about parking permits and how to apply visit www.dorsetforyou.com/parking or call 01305 252240.





Work

www.dorsetforyou.com/jobs has a range of council vacancies from across Dorset, offering good conditions and career prospects. Other job vacancies can be found at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

The council is arranging for a free phone line to be installed in the council's offices in Glyde Path Road, Dorchester that can be used to contact JobCentre Plus directly to find out about vacancies.

Business rates

The council provides rate relief to qualifying businesses in rural areas, some small businesses and has the discretion to offer hardship relief to businesses in exceptional circumstances.

For more information visit www.dorsetforyou.com/businessrates or call 01305 211990.

Supporting local businesses

- The council has cut the time it takes to pay invoices to businesses to help improve suppliers' cash flow.
- From April 2009, Business Link, in partnership with West Dorset District Council, will provide further free business advisory clinics. For more details call 0845 600 9966.
- The Dormen project is a free scheme providing mentoring support to businesses. For more information visit www.dormen.org.uk or call 01202 607530.
- Support for the construction industry through Weymouth College's new Construction Centre at Poundbury in Dorchester is available through specialists clinics organised by Business Link.
- If you are considering setting up your own business, there is support for start-up businesses at the Enterprise Connection centres at Granby and Poundbury. For more information visit www.enterpriseconnection.co.uk

West Dorset District Council works closely with Business Link to ensure good access to publicly funded business support, advice and training. Business Link is the recognised access point for business advice and solutions, providing a gateway to business support initiatives. The Business Link service is free and impartial. Visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest or call 0845 6009966.



Where to go for help:

West Dorset District Council

Stratton House, 58/60 High West Street, Dorchester DT1 1UZ
Tel: 01305 251010
www.dorsetforyou.com

Age Concern Dorchester

Local charity promoting the well being of older people in south and west Dorset.
Tel: 01305 269444
www.acdorchester.org

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice. There are centres in Dorchester, Bridport and Sherborne.
Tel: 0845 231 0400
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Community Legal Service Direct

Helps people deal with their legal problems, providing free information, help and advice on a range of common legal issues.
Tel: 0845 345 4 345
www.clsdirect.org.uk

Job Centre Plus

Offers jobs and benefits advice.
Tel: 01305 328000
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

National Debt Line

Free confidential advice.
Tel: 0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Business Link South West

Provides free advice and support for businesses in the South West.
Tel: 0845 600 9966
www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest

Business Debtline

A national business helpline offering free independent advice.
Tel: 0800 197 6026
www.bdl.org.uk

We can supply this information in large print, in audio formats or have it translated into another language. Please call 01305 252271.