

How are we helping East Suffolk residents to manage the rising cost of living?



ARE YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, WORRIED ABOUT THE COST OF LIVING?

We are helping East Suffolk **Ease the Squeeze** on the cost of living by making it easier to access the support available.



If you can't access the website at home, you can contact us by phone on 03330 162000 or we have **digital champions** who can help you to get on line.

Appointments are available at the Marina Centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays (10am – 4pm) and at desks within Halesworth, Aldeburgh, Woodbridge and Felixstowe libraries, please call 03330 162000 to book.

For information about cost of living support visit:
WWW.EASTSUFFOLK.GO.UK/SQUEEZE

We have set up new pages on our website to provide information, advice and links to organisations that can help:

[Ease the Squeeze on cost of living » East Suffolk Council](#)

We have developed a contact form for people who need help to access food and essential household items, to manage their money and with housing issues:

[Cost of living referral - My East Suffolk](#)

We have three Financial Inclusion Officers who can help with benefits checks, grant applications, budgeting, advice about debts and general money support. If debts are multiple or complex, we will refer on to our close partner Citizens Advice East Suffolk.

The East Suffolk Ease the Squeeze Programme

We held a series of workshops over the summer for staff, Councillors and partners to identify challenges, map existing activity and new ideas against our four priority themes:

- Money
- Food and Essentials
- Energy and Fuel
- Housing

More than 70 new project ideas emerged from the workshops, from which 12 priority projects were identified. East Suffolk Council has committed more than £300,000 to the Ease the Squeeze programme to date and we are hoping to secure more funding. We want to work with public sector partners, Town and Parish Councils, local voluntary organisations, community groups and businesses to deliver the best support that we can to residents.

We are holding 17 money roadshows – at least one in each town in the District between September and November 2022.

Read on to find out more about the 12 projects.

Warm Rooms

Warm Rooms were successfully piloted in Bungay last winter and involve a community venue opening for use by local residents. We will provide grants to cover heating, lighting and basic refreshments for a minimum of three warm rooms in each Community Partnership area. Ideally some of the Warm Rooms will be sponsored by/provided by local organisations and businesses. Where possible, we will try to combine Warm Room provision and existing activities to make budgets go further.

Warm Rooms enable people to stay warm without increasing their own energy bills and provide an opportunity to connect with others in the community, reducing isolation and loneliness, and for agencies to work with them to offer help and advice on everything from reducing their energy costs to managing their money. We are also working with the Rural Coffee Caravan to identify and support Warm Spaces in rural communities across East Suffolk.

Target = at least two large and one small Warm Room per Community Partnership area.

Cost = **£69,300 per year** (£8,700 per Community Partnership area, double in Lowestoft) **UKSP Project** plus **£15,000** for rural Warm Spaces in East Suffolk to be identified and supported in conjunction with Rural Coffee Caravan

Our Offer = £2,860 for a large Warm Room (£65 per six-hour session) and £1,980 (£45 for a six-hour session) for a small Warm Room, twice a week (minimum), 6 hours a session for 22 weeks between mid-October and mid-March. There can be flexibility on the time and length of session, depending on the circumstances.

Our Ask

- Help us to identify potential Warm Room locations, providers and sponsors
- Help us to promote Warm Rooms to the local community and share ideas to maximise their potential
- Sponsor a Warm Room (see costs above)
- Donate tea and coffee or other items (e.g. games, biscuits etc.) for a Warm Room
- Volunteer in your local Warm Room

Food Network Coordinator

We will build on the 2021/22 pilot in Lowestoft (funded through the Suffolk Collaborative Communities Board) and recruit a **Food Network Coordinator** who will establish a Food Network covering the whole of East Suffolk, working alongside the existing Lowestoft Food Network. The aim is to:

- Open up food pathways by bringing together foodbanks, pantries, suppliers and producers to ensure better co-ordination, fair distribution of food, less waste, increased sustainability and more visibility for local food producers and businesses
- Give individuals, families and communities access to sufficient key food items in accessible locations via food banks and other food projects, including Community Pantries, to improve health and wellbeing and reduce anxiety

Target = Food Network Coordinator in post for 2.5 years working across the district

Cost = **£103,738 for a Coordinator for 2.5 years.** **UKSP Project**

Our Offer = The Coordinator will work with Town/Parish Councils and local groups to identify opportunities to increase access to food, including locations for Community Pantries, and with food providers and suppliers to increase food supply.

Our Ask

- Work with the Coordinator to identify new sources of excess food in East Suffolk
- Donate unwanted food and other essential items, including baby and pet food, through the Food Network to ensure it reaches the places it is most needed.

Community Pantries

The Food Network Coordinator will work with the Communities Team and local communities to identify locations for **Community Pantries**. Community Pantries developed through the 'Your Local Pantry' franchise are run by local community organisations, churches or village halls. They have a membership from the local community who each pay a set amount (normally £3.50 - £5.50 per week) for a set number of items, plus any additional items donated by the local community.

The first 'Your Local Pantry' in East Suffolk, the Kirkley Pantry in Lowestoft, is going from strength to strength with almost 150 members and an associated café. We are exploring the idea of a mobile Community Pantry that can cover multiple, more rural, locations. Community Pantries are a proven model that deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits, with each family saving between £500 and £750 a year and each pantry reducing food to landfill by 2.5 metric tonnes.

Target = at least one Pantry per Community Partnership area (there is already one in place and two in development in Lowestoft)

Cost = £31,500 for 7 Community Pantries **UKSP Project**

Our Offer = £4,500 per Community Pantry to cover Year 1 franchise fee, fridges and freezers, racking and till

Our Ask

- Help us to identify suitable locations and host organisations for Community Pantries
- Help set up a donation scheme locally (through the Food Network Coordinator) to ensure a steady flow of donations
- Sponsor your local Community Pantry
- Promote your local Pantry to your local community
- Donate food and other essential items to your Pantry
- Donate (or sponsor) electrical goods to your local Pantry (fridge, freezer etc.)
- Volunteer in your Community Pantry
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Community Fridges: Hubbub Foundation/Co-Op

If you are a not-for-profit organisation, would prefer to set up a Community Fridge for your neighbourhood and are intending to do so within six months and sustain it for at least three years, you could apply for funding from the Hubbub Foundation and Co-Op.

They are looking for applications in regions with a sparsity of Community Fridges – which includes Suffolk/East Suffolk - and will prioritise Community Fridges that support groups in areas with high levels of multiple deprivation.

Each successful applicant will receive £3,000 to cover the initial costs of setting up the fridge, and a further £1,000 one year after opening. **Deadline to apply is 30 October 2022.**

Web-Site for details/applications [Community Fridges | Hubbub Foundation](#)

Handyperson Scheme

This project will install low-cost energy efficiency measures in the homes of people on low incomes or with health conditions, who live in private rented or owner-occupied housing, cannot carry out the work themselves and cannot afford to pay for someone else to do it. People who can afford to pay for the work will be able to benefit from access to trusted traders.

A **network of 'handy people'** across the district, who can fit low energy LED bulbs, draught-proofing for windows and doors, reflective panels behind radiators, curtains, chimney balloons and loft-hatch covers, will be identified. The support may open up access to other schemes such as the Warm Homes, Healthy People project, Surviving Winter Fund and Green Homes Fund

Target = The projects should result in reduced energy losses and **warmer homes for up to 900 households** across an 18-month period.

Cost = **£94,560** for an 18-month project

Our Offer = Local groups and projects can refer people into the Handyperson scheme

Our Ask

- Promote the scheme across East Suffolk to help people stay warm this winter
- Help identify specific homes where residents might benefit
- Sponsor or donate energy saving kit e.g. LED light bulbs
- Identify local tradespeople who could be part of the East Suffolk Handyperson Network

Cooking on a Budget classes

We are funding **Cooking on a Budget classes** aimed at giving families the skills and confidence to cook healthy, balanced meals on a tight budget. Ideally these classes will include some locally grown ingredients – potentially those grown from the Field to Fork starter kits (see next page)!

Participants would eat together following the 'Cooking on a Budget' class and receive take home family food packs and recipe cards to enable them to practice their new found skills. They will also be encouraged to stay in touch with each other for ongoing support. We would like to evolve the Cooking on a Budget sessions into 'Cook and Share' sessions in community venues (F23) as people become more confident in their cooking skills. Participants could also access a piece of low energy cooking equipment (see below).

Target = **32 workshops** in two phases – **at least four classes per Community Partnership area**

Cost = **£17,304 per year** **UKSP project**

Our Offer = Four classes in each Community Partnership area

Our Ask

- Provide or help us to identify a venue for the workshops
- Sponsor a 'Cooking on a Budget' session or series of sessions in your local area
- Sponsor or donate the ingredients for one or more session
- Help us to promote the sessions to target families and individuals

Low Energy Cooking Kit / Kettle Packs

ESC Officers have identified that a proportion of the population don't have the facilities and/or cannot afford to heat food and are therefore living off sandwiches and cold food. This project will involve purchasing a stock of energy efficient **microwaves**, small and large **slow cookers** and one and two ring **electric hobs** for distribution. We will provide an energy card alongside the items to help mitigate any additional energy costs and a relevant recipe book to accompany their new equipment. We'll also provide an email address and phone number for ongoing support with using their items.

We will also be providing '**kettle packs**' of food items for people who only have access to boiling water from a kettle and for various reasons can't use the cooking items above. The need for this was proven through the Access Community Trust pinkorange project during the pandemic.

Target = **90 Slow Cookers** (50 large and 40 small), **50 Hobs** (25 two ring and 25 one ring), **40 microwaves** and relevant cookbook for each item of equipment initially. **100 Kettle Packs** initially.

Cost = **£9,492**, Kettle Packs funded through SCC

Our Offer = We will identify people who would benefit and take referrals so do let us know if you have anyone in mind. We will hold stock for distribution or can provide you with stock if you would like to hold a set.

Our Ask

- Help us to promote the 'low-cost cooking kit' scheme
- Identify individuals who would benefit
- Sponsor or donate new electrical items or energy vouchers
- Support and encourage people to use their item
- Sponsor or donate food items for the kettle packs

Comfort Food

Comfort Food is based on the Thin Ice project run by Access Community Trust at Sam's Café in Lowestoft last winter. We are looking for up to four local cafés in each Community Partnership area who will receive funding to provide a hot meal and drink on presentation of a Comfort Food card. These cards will be distributed by selected partners including food banks, Citizens Advice East Suffolk, Disability Advice Service and Disability Advice North East Suffolk, Town and Parish Councils and ESC staff.

Residents will be encouraged to participate by donating a meal/drink for someone else in the community as part of a 'pay it forward' initiative. We will also be seeking sponsorship from other local businesses. This project benefits local food businesses as well as the individuals and families who access the hot meals and offers an opportunity for our Financial Inclusion Officers to engage with residents about other ways in which we can support them to manage their money.

Target = **at least four Comfort Food locations per Community Partnership area** (there is already one in place at Sam's Café in Lowestoft)

Cost = **£32,200 per year**

Our Offer = Up to £1,000 per Comfort Food venue (£500 to be paid up front) x four Comfort Food locations per Community Partnership area

Our Ask

- Help us to identify suitable food businesses to host Comfort Food and encourage them to participate
- Sponsor a set number of additional meals/drinks at your local Comfort Food location
- At an individual level, donate a meal and drink for someone else in the community

Field to Fork

Field to Fork involves providing starter growing kits to residents in 23 of the most deprived areas of the district to inspire, educate and enable people to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The kit will include recycled plastic window planters, seed packets, compost, gardening gloves, tools and full instructions.

Alongside the starter kits to increase interest in the idea of 'grow your own', we will provide small grants to community farms/allotments/gardens to make additional space available to local residents for larger scale grow and eat activities.

Target = **1000 growing kits** across the 23 most deprived LSOAs and **at least eight grants** to Community Gardens/Allotments per annum

Cost = **£26,190 per year UKSP Project**

Our Offer = Grants of up to £2,000 per Community Garden/Allotment to help local people to grow their own food together and Starter Growing Kits for some of your most vulnerable residents

Our Ask

- Help us to identify new community spaces where food could be grown and groups and individuals who could support growing projects e.g. by advising new growers
- Sponsor a community growing space
- Help us to promote the growing kits to our target families
- Encourage local people to donate excess food and seeds
- Sponsor the growing kits (£50 per kit) or equipment for the growing spaces (e.g. spades, seeds, plants, gloves)

Winter Warmth Packs

Building on the work of the Warm Homes Team last winter, we are proposing to work in partnership with Access Community Trust to develop expanded Winter Warmth packs which can be posted out/delivered to residents. Recipients will be able to choose from a menu of items, depending on their circumstances and needs, up to a maximum value of £50. Options will include a duvet, fleece blanket, hat, gloves and scarf, LED light bulb pack and letterbox, window and door draughtproofing strips and heated items e.g. hand warmers, heated blankets or heated seat warmers.

A bid is being submitted for a Suffolk-wide offer, but the ETS funding will boost (from 110 to 310) the number of packs available in East Suffolk for residents of all tenures. We are also exploring additional heated items that can be included in the packs or provided separately e.g. hand warmers, heated vests and/or heated blankets.

Target = **310 Winter Warmth Packs** if SCC funding secured, 200 Winter Warmth Packs if just ES funding

Cost = **£11,500 per year**

Our Offer = **Funding for Winter Warmth packs and their administration.** Local groups and projects can refer people for a Pack

Our Ask

- Help us to promote the Winter Warmth scheme and refer people in
- Identify additional items that could be part of the Winter Warmth Packs
- Sponsor/donate items to be included in the packs
- Encourage businesses and organisations to donate items

Uniform Banks

The cost of a school uniform per year can be up to £315 per child and it is estimated that 1.4 million items of school uniform are thrown away each year. The aim is to build on existing successful **School Uniform Banks** such as those in Lowestoft and Beccles to develop a network of uniform banks across the district (at least one in each Community Partnership area).

Following a scoping exercise to ensure that we understand what is already in place through schools and community groups, we will identify potential locations and host groups. New clothes banks will be provided with a grant to set up the uniform bank, including for racking, storage and publicity but the host location will cover rent and bills. Where banks are already in place, we will provide a voucher for shoes and possibly shirts and adhesive labels for clothes to stop them going astray.

Target = at least one Uniform Bank per Community Partnership area (in addition to the Lowestoft and Beccles ones)

Cost = £21,000

Our Offer = £3,000 per Community Partnership area (six CP areas) for each new Uniform Bank, to include equipment, promotion, vouchers for shoes and vouchers for labels, and £1,500 for existing Uniform Banks for vouchers/additional stock (two CP areas)

Our Ask

- Help us to identify a host location for a Uniform Bank
- Sponsor or donate items for the Uniform Banks and/or vouchers for shoes
- Help promote donation to the Uniform Bank
- Volunteer in your local uniform bank