

'Ease the Squeeze' Tackling the Rising Cost of Living in East Suffolk

Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities




Ease the Squeeze Programme - Progress

EASE THE SQUEEZE



- Ease the Squeeze branding
- Ease the Squeeze website pages: [Ease the Squeeze on cost of living » East Suffolk Council](#)
- Contact form for referrals/self-referrals
- UKSP Fund bid submitted
- Financial Inclusion Strategy developed
- 16 roadshows in market towns September - November 2022
- 70+ projects identified through the workshops for staff, Councillors and partners and the June CP Board meeting
- 12 priority projects identified through a voting process

Tackling the Rising Cost of Living
Financial Inclusion Framework



1. Outcomes, Objectives and Associated Activity

1.1 Outcomes

The aim of the East Suffolk 'Help with Money' Financial Inclusion Programme is to increase the financial wellbeing, resilience, and capability of East Suffolk residents, through:

- Increased income
- Decreased spending
- Getting debts under control
- Increased access to suitable financial products and credit
- New / increased confidence with budgeting

1.2 Objectives

To help residents of East Suffolk to manage the rising cost of living and support recovery from financial impacts of Covid-19

- Help those already struggling/at crisis point AND
- Lead preventative support to increase financial resilience
- Support people to deal with specific life events which impact their finances e.g. divorce or losing a job
- Raise awareness of existing support available in communities and remove barriers to access
- Provide budgeting and money advice (maximise income, reduce expenditure, deal with debt, help to access grants)
- Upskill East Suffolk Council and partner staff to 'Make Every Contact Count' in terms of financial inclusion
- Enable community groups, voluntary organisations, Community Partnership partners, Town and Parish Councils to better support the people they work with around money
- Increase access to financial products (especially bank accounts)

1.3 Associated Activity

This work will complement the Suffolk Tackling Poverty work programme, strategy, and action plan. You can find more information about the programme at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/tackling-poverty/>. Key issues identified through co-production by this group around poverty include:

1. Stigma and social isolation	6. Involving people with lived experience
2. Employment	7. Seeking support
3. Stability	8. Barriers to improving circumstances
4. Financial resilience	9. Mental health
5. Food and fuel poverty	

1

Cost of Living Programme – Priority Projects



1. Network of Warms Rooms (E3)
2. Food Network Co-ordinator (F1)
3. Community Pantries (F3)
4. Handyperson Project (E9)
5. Cooking on a Budget Classes (F7)
6. Microwaves/Slow Cookers/Hobs (F11/F15/H12)
7. Comfort Food (F5)
8. ID Document Fund (M8)
9. Field to Fork Projects (F8)
10. Clean, warm bedding/Winter Warmth Packs (E12/E2)
11. Digital and Phone projects (M5)
12. School uniform/prom/interview Clothes Banks (F14)



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships
Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



Money



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Financial Inclusion Officers / Strategy

There are now 3.1 FTE **Financial Inclusion Officers** in the ESC Communities / Housing Teams – Megan Clifford (Senior) , Jade Goodfellow, Nick Bickers and Tracey Pike

There is a new referral form on the Council website where people can self-refer or be referred for help with food/essentials, money or housing issues. The requests for support with money go to the Financial Inclusion Team via a new email address – helpwithmoney@eastsoffolk.gov.uk.

They will be working with people around debt, income, budgeting and credit including:

- Benefits entitlement checks
- Completing a Standard Financial Statement
- Budget coaching and advice
- Applications for benefits and/or grants
- Support with one or two debts (if multiple/complex then will refer to Citizens Advice)
- Support at first appointments with banks/creditors

As part of the ETS programme, the Team have a small pot of funding - **£2,000 per year** - to enable people to purchase replacement birth certificates or driving licenses (documents required to set up a bank account).



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships
Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



Food and Essentials



Food Network Coordinator (F1)

Community Pantries (F3)

We are working with Community Action Suffolk to build on the 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 bring together foodbanks, pantries, suppliers and producers to ensure co-ordination, communication, and fair distribution and, ultimately, that individuals, families and communities have access to sufficient food items in accessible locations.

The Coordinator will work with the Communities Team to identify locations for, and help to develop, **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/£4.00) per week for a set number of items, plus any additional items donated by the local community. We are also exploring a mobile Community Pantry offer.

The first 'Your Local Pantry' in East Suffolk, the Kirkley Pantry in Lowestoft, is going from strength to strength with 150 members and an associated café.

Target = at least one Pantry per Community Partnership area (there is already one in place and 2 in development in Lowestoft)

Cost = £103,738 for a Coordinator for 2.5 years. £28,000 for 7 Community Pantries (£4,000 per Pantry)

Both UKSP Projects



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships
Bringing ideas to life

EASE THE
SQUEEZE



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

DONATE TO
**EAST SUFFOLK
COMFORT FOOD**
HERE

Comfort Food provides free meals to people in need, here and in other venues across East Suffolk.

Add £5 (or any amount) to your bill to buy a meal for someone who needs it.

Comfort Food (F5)

Comfort Food is based on Thin Ice run by Access Community Trust at Sam's Café in Lowestoft during Winter 2021/22. We are looking for up to four local café's 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, disability organisations and ESC staff.

Local 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 organisations and businesses.

This project benefits local food businesses as well as the individuals and families who access the hot meals and offers an opportunity 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 (£1,000 per Comfort Food location or £4,000 per Community Partnership area) initially



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Field to Fork (F8)

Field to Fork involves providing starter growing kits to residents in 23 of the most deprived areas of the District to educate, inspire 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.

Once the starter kits have increased 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 five grants** to Community Gardens/Allotments per annum

Cost = £20,190 per year (1,000 growing kits at approximately £50 each and minimum 5 community growing space grants)

UKSP Project



Sweet Potato Curry

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium-sized sweet potatoes
- 1 green pepper
- 2 red onions
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 can coconut milk
- 250g plain yoghurt
- 250g plain flour
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tsp curry powder
- ½ vegetable stock cube



Cooking on a Budget Classes (F7)

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!

Participants will eat together following the class and receive take home food packs and recipe cards to enable them to practice their new found skills.

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.

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

Cost = £17,304 per year (£541 per session)

UKSP project



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Microwaves (F11), Slow Cookers (F15), Hobs (H12), Kettle Packs (F6)

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 plus a cooking on a budget recipe book.

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 Covid-19 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

Cost = £9,492 (180 items plus 180 cookbooks)



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Uniform Bank (F14)

The average cost of a school uniforms per year is around £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 site 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 (£3,000 per new Uniform Bank plus £1,500 each for the two existing Uniform Banks)



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



Energy and Fuel



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships
Bringing ideas to life

Warm Rooms, Warm Hearts

East Suffolk Council's Warm Rooms Charter

You will get a warm welcome as well as a Warm Room.

Every time you come to a Warm Room, you'll be given a warm welcome from any staff and volunteers. We're here to help and support.

Everyone is treated equally, with dignity and respect

Everyone has a right to be warm, so everyone in a Warm Room will treat people, and be treated by people, with dignity and respect.

Your Warm Room will be a safe space

Your Warm Room will stick to the individual safeguarding policies that it always uses, and to food hygiene rules too! If you see a possible hazard, or you are worried by something you see please tell someone.

We'll not tell anyone about you needing a Warm Room

If you want to share the reasons you need a Warm Room, someone will listen, but they won't tell anyone else unless you give them permission, or they must because of their safeguarding policies. Talk/ask if you want help - Warm Rooms are part of a much wider programme of support.

It doesn't matter why you need a Warm Room

Every Warm Room is a non-judgemental place; whatever the reason you have for coming in, you'll be treated the same and never judged. Please do the same.

Making your Warm Room a better place.

If you've got ideas about improving your Warm Room please tell us!



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Network of Warm Rooms (E3)

Warm Rooms were piloted in Bungay last winter and involve a community venue (village hall, community centre or business space) opening up for use by local residents – thus saving them the costs of heating their own homes next winter.

We will provide grants to cover heating, lighting and basic refreshments for a minimum of three warm rooms in each Community Partnership area – both large and small. Ideally some of the Warm Rooms will be sponsored by local businesses. We are also working with the Rural Coffee Caravan to enable smaller Warm Spaces in rural communities.

Warm Rooms enable people to stay warm without increasing their own energy bills and connect with others in the community, reducing isolation and loneliness. Warm Rooms also provide an opportunity for agencies to work with them to try to reduce their energy costs.

Target = at least two large and one small Warm Room per Community Partnership area (operating at least twice a week for 22 weeks)

Cost = £69,300 per year - £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 operating twice a week (minimum) for 22 weeks between mid-October and mid-March plus **£15,000 for the Rural Coffee Caravan** for their work in rural communities.

UKSP Project



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Handyperson Scheme (E9)

This project will look to install low-cost energy efficiency measures in the homes of people on low incomes or with health conditions living in private rented or owner-occupied housing who 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 will be identified who can fit low energy LED bulbs, draught-proofing for windows and doors, reflective panels behind radiators, curtains, chimney balloons and loft-hatch covers.

The support may open up access to other schemes such as the 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



East Suffolk
Community
Partnerships

Bringing ideas to life

**EASE THE
SQUEEZE**



EASTSUFFOLK
COUNCIL

Winter Warmth Packs (E12/E2)

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 to residents.

The packs will include a duvet, fleece blanket, hat, gloves and scarf, LED light bulb pack and letterbox, window and door draughtproofing strips.

A bid is being submitted for a Suffolk-wide offer but the ETS funding will boost (increase from 110 to 310) the number of packs available in East Suffolk.

We are also currently exploring additional heated items that can be included in the packs e.g. hand warmers, heated blankets or provided separately.

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

Cost = £11,500 per year [£50 per pack]

Cost of Living Programme – funding

Source	Amount
<u>Staffing Costs</u>	
Covid Community Fund/Covid Corporate Reserve	£196,000
<u>Projects</u>	
Covid Community Recovery Fund	£44,000
Enabling Communities Budgets (2021/22)	£18,000
Enabling Communities Budgets (2022/23)	£52,500
Boost Sustainable Food Funding	£40,000
Community Partnership Board	£100,000
Donation from EEM	£1,600
Reallocated from Hidden Needs	£5,000
Reallocated from Covid Community Fund	£3,000
Household Support Fund 2021/22 (underspend)	£94,301
Total	£358,401
Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	£50,000
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£228,100
	£278,100