

## Cost of Living Team – Action Plan

This action plan shows the activities undertaken by the Cost of Living Team so far during 2023, and future activities.

Completed Actions	
Action	Details of actions taken
Cost of Living advice and referral process to be implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referral form produced and live from 21 August 2023</li><li>• Internal online link provided to SKDC staff and Members to complete the form on behalf of residents</li><li>• COL Team provide the following support to residents:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Budgeting advice</li><li>◦ Referral to relevant support organisations</li><li>◦ Income and Expenditure review</li><li>◦ Issuing of household support fund vouchers</li><li>◦ Liaison with charity organisations for support – furniture, white goods and grants</li></ul></li></ul>
Household Support Fund voucher process to be implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voucher process in place</li><li>• Internal online link provided to SKDC staff and Members to complete the form on behalf of residents</li></ul>
Provide project management support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ongoing project management is undertaken by the Cost of Living Co-Ordinator</li><li>• Liaison with SK communications team to ensure social media updates are issued as needed – such as 'Tak Money Week – 6 to 10 November' and HSF Awareness Week – WC 16 October'</li></ul>

Completed Actions	
Action	Details of actions taken
Manage a comprehensive action plan of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plan which is monitored as part of fortnightly Cost of Living meetings with the Head of service and Cost of Living Team</li> <li>• Key activities from the action plan are included within this document</li> </ul>
Liaison with internal teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for all SK residents</li> <li>• SK Tenants are support through the tenancy services team, however, were there are specific Cost of Living enquiries, internal referrals are made into the COL Team</li> <li>• Support identified for Ukraine residents from point of sign up</li> </ul>
Liaison with partners and external support organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cost of Living Co-Ordinator has developed positive working relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grantham Partnership Board</li> <li>○ Jubilee Church – Coffee morning (outreach event)</li> <li>○ Jubilee Church – toddler event (outreach event)</li> <li>○ Manor Court Pension Credit Clinic – Outreach event</li> <li>○ Jubilee Church – Veterans and Family Open Day</li> <li>○ Essex Road Pension Credit Clinic – Outreach event</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Co-ordinate responses to government support initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household Support Fund</li> </ul>
Ensure the Cost of Living website is up to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The website is reviewed regularly and updated as needed</li> <li>• Details can be found here: <a href="#">Cost of Living help and support   South Kesteven District Council</a></li> </ul>

Completed Actions	
Action	Details of actions taken
Ensure Case management is up to date and provides clear outcomes – such as number of residents supported, value of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed case management is available on all financial support provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrap-around support</li> <li>Household Support Fund – administered by SKDC</li> <li>Household Support Fund – administered by Lincolnshire Community Foundation</li> <li>HB Only Cost of Living Payments (via Post Office vouchers)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Be the Single Point of Contact for Cost of Living enquiries for via the Cost of Living email address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of Living email box has been set up</li> <li>Online Cost of Living referral form</li> <li>Inclusion of COL Team in SKToday (Summer edition)</li> <li>All SKDC staff are aware of COL Team and how to contact</li> <li>Support organisations are aware of COL Team and how to contact</li> </ul>
Attend external meetings and represent SKDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cost of Living Co-Ordinator represented SKDC at the following meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome Warm Spaces (hosted by North Kesteven DC)</li> <li>Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion partnership (hosted by City of Lincoln Council)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Future Actions			
Action	How action will be achieved	Responsible	Target Date
Actively contribute to the Welcome Warm Spaces Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend and contribute to the meetings for actions relating to the warm spaces for 2023/24</li> <li>Visit warm spaces to offer cost of living advice</li> <li>Actively share ideas to improve the 2024/25 warm spaces</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	Immediate
Increase number of warm welcome spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaison with Members, Parish Clerks and warm welcome spaces (who registered in 2022/23)</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	Immediate
Energy Advice / Vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive basic energy advice training</li> <li>Distribute emergency energy vouchers to residents as well as offer advice to reduce ongoing costs.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	Immediate
Actively contribute to the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend and contribute to the quarterly meetings.</li> <li>Share any information to appropriate SKDC teams.</li> <li>Assist the organisers with the arrangements for the upcoming Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Conference.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	Immediate
Develop and maintain a positive relationship with all foodbanks across SKDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visits to Foodbank Coordinators within the district to share ideas on how best to help clients.</li> <li>Actively seek referrals for clients that have used foodbanks that may benefit from additional financial advice.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	Immediate
Digital Inclusion for vulnerable and elderly residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting residents with digital forms such as pension credit checks and discretionary housing payments.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	Ongoing

Future Actions			
Action	How action will be achieved	Responsible	Target Date
Develop and manage information sharing protocol between SKDC and Support Organisations / advice agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain relationships with support organisations by attending events, seminars and doing Cost of Living talks.</li> <li>Sharing information and ideas to improve delivery of service to our residents within the legal guidelines.</li> <li>Attend community engagement events in the form of Cost Of Living Clinics in Library's, Jobcentres, children's centres.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	Ongoing
Energy Advice training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To seek a provider for basic energy advice training for the Cost of Living Team.</li> <li>Distribute emergency energy vouchers to residents as well as offer advice to reduce ongoing costs.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	January 2024
Re-introduce the Strategic Working Group (SWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send invitations to relevant officers: COL Team, Communications, Community Engagement, Community Safety, Housing, Revs and Bens.</li> </ul>	Head of Service	5 January 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure corporate wide awareness of the issues facing our residents and how teams are able to support</li> <li>Produce a holistic action plan, with the inclusion of all relevant SKDC Teams</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	First SWG meeting
Review potential of a third HB Only payment in March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review any uncashed vouchers and chase up residents.</li> <li>Review remaining funding to distribute among HB only residents.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	March 2024

Future Actions			
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Review remaining 2023/24 HSF funding for potential distribution during 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review any remaining funds from previously expired vouchers.</li> <li>Ascertain criteria for a 2024/25 welfare fund in the absence of another HSF Scheme</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	March 2024
Community Engagement in the form of Cost-of-Living Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange events within the community at libraries, warm spaces, Children centres, jobcentres to offer budgeting skills, benefit checks and basic financial education i.e., pension credit checks</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	April 2024
Community Engagement in the form of Cost-of-Living Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange events within the community at libraries, warm spaces, Children centres, jobcentres to offer budgeting skills, benefit checks and basic financial education i.e., pension credit checks</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	April 2024
Furniture Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review ways to source assistance from other organisations to help residents in need of furniture</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	April 2024
New tenant Cost of Living Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgeting Advice / referrals to external organisations for new tenants (appropriate additional support to that being provided by SKDC Tenancy Services Team)</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	May 2024
Proactive support for donation of second hand uniforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the PTA of schools within the district and discuss the potential of a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand uniform donation.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	June 2024
Develop SKDC Directory for External Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a directory of local charities offering aid, referral /contact details for external agencies, Food provision</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Team	June 2024

Future Actions			
Action	How action will be achieved	Responsible	Target Date
Review credits on rent accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Income Recovery Team Leader to ascertain those accounts with credit.</li> <li>Contact tenant to arrange refund or transfers.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	August 2024
Review credits on Council tax accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Council Tax Enforcement Team Leader to ascertain those accounts with credit.</li> <li>Contact tenant to arrange refund or transfers.</li> </ul>	Cost of Living Co-Ordinator	August 2024