

Cost of Living Action Plan – Review 2023/24

Throughout the winter of 2023/24, there were a variety of initiatives that were run by the wellbeing team throughout the winter of 2023/24 in response to the Cost of Living Crisis.

These have been categorised into six areas, with each areas providing vital support for residents.

Activity	Date initiated	Key Delivery Partners	Activity	Outcome	Cost Allocation
Advice and Support, Health and Wellbeing:					
International Older Peoples Day stalls in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington and promoting the community pop up at Castle Quay:	October 2023	Age UK Oxfordshire, Trading Standards, Citizen Advice	Communication with older people at day stalls in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington This included electric blanket testing.	Electric Blanket Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kidlington - 120 attended, 74 blankets tested (28% failure rate) - Bicester –70 attend, tested 81 blankets (32% failure rate) - Banbury - 108 attended, tested 80 blankets (with a 34% failure rate) 298 people attended these meetings. When the electric blanket fails, and as it is unsafe they are disposed of.	£2,000
Advice and Support:					
Who can help?' booklet – refresh and promotion	November 2023	All Voluntary Sector Partners and statutory provision	Leaflets refreshed and distributed across the district and within CDC services.	Distributed to community partners, parish councils and warm welcome spaces. Engaged and worked internally with housing, customer services etc that engage with vulnerable services.	Officer Time.

Food Insecurity:

<p>Food Grants for Community Food Provision</p>	<p>October 2023</p>	<p>Community food Network Partners</p>	<p>Food Grant community scheme awarded up to £3,000 in grants to community groups for community projects relating to food.</p> <p>These grant schemes can cover support to cover cooking sessions, cooking equipment, cookery or edible garden project as well as foodbank support.</p>	<p>25 groups have benefitted from this grant scheme, which concluded in March 2024, at the end of the financial year throughout Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.</p> <p>It is estimated that 4234 Households were supported through a variety of projects, with many ongoing, increasing the potential reach.</p> <p>Feedback:</p> <p>The RVS Community Cornhill Centre have been able to continue the funding of the Friday club which provides subsidised, nutritious meals whilst reducing isolation and strengthening community bonds.</p> <p>In the grant evaluation form, the Cornhill Centre noted that ‘The Cornhill Centre wishes to express its gratitude to Cherwell District Council for awarding us this grant. Your support has been instrumental in sustaining a service that goes far beyond a meal; it fosters connection, combats isolation, and nurtures well-being among our members’.</p>	<p>£66,000</p>
<p>Activate and Eat Club Half term provision.</p>	<p>Half terms (summer, October, February and Easter)</p>	<p>Schools in Cherwell</p>	<p>Activate and eat half term sessions were held over half terms throughout Cherwell</p>	<p>There were 1,838 attendances at these sessions which were held in the summer, October and Easter half term.</p> <p>In the easter half term, over the 2 week period, there were 234 attendees at these sessions over the period.</p>	<p>£13,654.50 - HSF4 allocation</p>

Additional support to distribute surplus festive food.	December 2023 and January 2024	Cherwell Community food network,	Additional support and festive lunches held over the festive period.	5 Christmas lunch events across Cherwell District in partnership with community partners to support. Information was distributed to the Cherwell Food Network on Christmas food provision/surplus food distribution.	No budget
Food Insecurity and Health and Wellbeing:					
Healthy Eating recipe swap	March-March 2024	Cherwell Community food network	Recipes shared through partners and internally at CDC.	Work completed with Sunrise Multicultural Project and Sunshine children centre creating diverse recipes. Groups also encouraged to think about reducing food waste by submitting recipes to be shared as part of food waste action week. New recipe book planned using community food grant funding for launch July 2024	Officer Time but no budget
Expanded winter warmers programmes (provides a warm meal to residents to eat in a warm space and another to take away)	November 2023	The Hill, Cherwell Collective, BYCE	Expansion to the winter warmers was launched in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.	Banbury – winter warmers program expanded to deliver and make hot soups (using surplus food) for residents within a 3.5-mile radius of Banbury Cross. Working with The Hill and the Royal Voluntary Service. The senior lunch is also run by the Hill and offers a social space and food for elderly residents. Bicester – Bicester open doors lunch was included, and residents were supported by volunteer’s driver’s scheme if they wished to attend. Kidlington – Cherwell collective lunch scheme and transport provision.	£12,000 – HSF4 Allocation

				Throughout this program approximately 135 households have been supported.	
Food Insecurity and Maximizing Income:					
Food Vouchers	October 2023 – March 2024	Food Banks, Community Fridges and key partners e.g. Sunrise MCP	Food Vouchers given to residents through community partners.	Two rounds of applications (before and after Christmas). After Christmas vouchers increased from £50 to £75. Increase number of groups who can distribute vouchers across Cherwell. 742 vouchers distributed through community partners.	£32,075 total spent on food vouchers from October 2023 - March 2024
Fuel Poverty					
Relaunch the Cherwell Warm Welcome Network, encouraging more partners	October 2023	Various community partners	Warm Welcome network relaunched in October 2023, and aimed at including more partners	48 warm spaces were held this year – and increase on 30 the year before. Gaps were filled on the previous years, with more rural areas signing up – 18 villages had signed up, and engagement with new groups had continued. A Warm Welcome pack containing information was circulated at these groups. These included who can help booklets. Positive feedback from groups involved. Feedback: The Banbury Community Fridge was also provided with funding to support the construction of consultation and warm space room which provides a supportive environment for residents of Banbury.	£250

				It provided warm welcome space for residents to provide a warm space.	
Expand Fuel support programme. Extra Warmth	November 2023	Citizens Advice	Project launched in November 2023 and helped support residents across CDC and in particular our rural areas and BF wards.	58 Households are members of the scheme in the Cherwell District	£13,770.00 - HSF4 Allocation
Reduced membership fees for Oil Co-op for rural residents with oil heating	November 2023	Community First Oxfordshire	Project launched and full subsidies available. Scheme offers a discount for oil prices and individuals as part of it know in advance of paying for it. Offers the best price for residents and saves individuals from having to shop around for the best price.	58 Households Supported throughout the district.	£7,000.00 - HSF4 Allocation

Household Support Equipment Grant	December 2023 and January 2024	Food banks, Community centres	Grant scheme has been set up for community groups to apply for up to £5000. Equipment (air fryers, slow cookers, LED lightbulbs energy efficient equipment) will then be handed out to residents.	<p>There have been 6 groups that have received support from this for up to £5000 across Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington</p> <p>It is estimated that 720 Households supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 300 with children - 100 with pensioners - 320 others <p>Feedback:</p> <p>The Sunrise Multicultural Centre wrote in their evaluation report that ‘This grant was amazing! and made a big difference to the people who received the larger electrical items. It’s also something they were not expecting as we usually are not able to support in this way, and I feel like it really gave people a boost when we have them to them.’</p>	£23,524.45 -HSF4
Draught Busters Pilot Scheme	December 2023 and January 2024	Heat Upper Heyford	Scheme which provided equipment for residents to draught-proof their homes. The equipment provided included draught excluders. It reviewed homes to see where they can reduce heat loss.	The scheme started with a pilot in Upper Heyford, however due to warm weather it was held over until the 2024/25.	£3,000 - Household Support 5

Health and Wellbeing, Food Insecurity and Food Poverty

Cookery skills and shared cooking programme	January to March 2024	Good Food Oxfordshire Cook together, eat together Cherwell Collective	Creation of a share cooking programme that was created through holding shared cooking sessions at community partners.	There are a variety of sessions that have been held at local community partners including, Cook together, eat together sessions. GFO have a shared map of cookery spaces and activities – this is shared with residents at events and in partner venues.	Officer Time and Resources
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Money Maximisation

Debt and money advice;	December 2023 and January 2024	Trading Standards, Citizens Advice, CDC (Cherwell District Council) Revenues and Benefits team,	Supporting residents with the debt and money advice. Linking with partners on scam awareness and Loan sharks, domestic abuse.	Who can help leaflets and Support Service Leaflets updated distributed across the district, online and in GPs. Money advice support offered through in person events and online. Internal teams at the council aware of necessary routes and signpost residents– these include waste, revenue and benefits and housing. Energy Matters – Citizens Advice 327 Household’s supported (1299 Individuals)	Officer Time and Resources
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Health and Wellbeing

Period Poverty Grant Scheme	April 2024	Cherwell District Council, Community Partners	Grant offered for up to £150 to help community groups/warm welcome spaces/food support surfaces to purchase period products for residents of Cherwell to support period poverty.	Delivery of period products to support residents in need. Good News Stories: Thanks for sending this across. This will be hugely beneficial in supporting some of the girls at the Primary School. I know the Head Teacher has been buying sanitary products and I have taken donations up to the School as well. Thank you to everyone at Cherwell who work so hard to support those in need. – Hooky Neighbours Pantry We'd like to provide these in our parish centre, which is used by a range of vulnerable groups. Thank you for taking this initiative! – Banbury St Mary	£12,000
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