

Ease the Squeeze Update – September 2024



East Suffolk Community Help Hub

The East Suffolk Council Community Help Hub supports residents who are struggling with the cost of living and a range of wider issues. The team has two halves – Community Help Officers and Financial Inclusion Officers.

Our Community Help Officers – Adults and Families triage referrals for help and resolve immediate issues, including access to food and other essentials. They offer a supported access model, where they provide a bridge into a wide range of organisations including Social Care, Mental Health, DWP, health services including GPs, and local voluntary and community groups. They have now taken over 2,000 referrals for help, with a particular focus on supporting those who are marginalised and excluded.

The Financial Inclusion Officers work with residents who need help with their money, including through budgeting and money advice appointments, benefits checks, and grant applications for essential items. They can also help people to access essential ID documents.

If you would like to know more about the Community Help Hub and meet the Team Leaders, please dial into our **Briefing Session at 6.30pm on Wednesday 18th September.**

There is an online referral form at: [Community Help Hub referral - My East Suffolk](#) or customers can call our customers services team on 0333 016 2000.

Ease the Squeeze Programme

The following Ease the Squeeze projects will be operating this winter:

1. **Warm Welcomes** – grants for community groups to operate Warm Welcomes this winter are now available – for details and links to the application form and guidance notes, please see page two of this document.

For more information, please contact Sam Kenward, sam.kenward@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

2. Page 3 of this briefing includes details, including links to the application form and guidance notes, about the Winter 2024/25 **Cost of Living Community Grant Fund** (made possible with funding from Suffolk County Council)

It would be great if Councillors could support the promotion of these grant schemes in their wards – both are aimed at Town and Parish Councils, voluntary organisations and community groups

3. Louise Biddiscombe is employed by Community Action Suffolk as the **East Suffolk Food Network Coordinator**. Louise will be supporting the Lowestoft and East Suffolk Food Networks and enabling individual projects providing food to residents across East Suffolk
4. We will provide top up funding to **Community Pantries** to help them manage demand for food this winter and are working on an accreditation scheme that values those projects that make referrals to organisations who provide wraparound support and advice to residents to enable them to change their circumstances. We are also commissioning a research project to look at what else we could do to support robust food pathways in East Suffolk.

For more information, please contact Gemma Fraser, gemma.fraser@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

5. We are funding a third year of **Cooking on a Budget** classes but will add in classes for individuals (rather than just families) and also a focus on using specific cooking equipment e.g. a slow cooker or air fryer.

For more information, please contact Joss Mullett, joss.mullett@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

6. **Cooking equipment** - we still have a stock of slow cookers, small and large electric hobs and microwaves, and will be adding air fryers to our stock this winter.

For more information, please contact communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

7. We will be distributing additional **Field to Fork Growing Kits** after Christmas and are currently reading through the survey results from year 2 to identify what seeds and other items to include in the kits...

For more information, please contact Andy Jolliffe, andrew.jolliffe@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

8. We are providing funding to individual schools this year to enable them to set up **Uniform Banks** and providing top up funding to our wider Uniform Banks (Beccles, Carlton Colville Felixstowe and Leiston) to buy branded items (whilst working with SCC to encourage schools to move away from unnecessary branded items and single uniform suppliers).

For more information, please contact Gemma Fraser, gemma.fraser@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

To find out more details about each project, including some statistics from previous years, please see the detailed programme update taken to the Community Partnership Board meeting earlier today (11th September): [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://document.ashx(cmis.uk.com))

Read on for more details about the two community grants...

East Suffolk Council Winter Grants 2024-25

Warm Welcome Grants

Up to £3,000 per grant – depending on ward size (between £1,000 and £3,000).

Warm Welcomes should operate for at least 8 hours per week between November 2024 and March 2025 and provide a safe, welcoming and staffed (this could be volunteers) heated space that's conveniently located for the local community. In addition to offering a warm space and hot drinks, Warm Welcomes will ideally offer support around the cost of living and inequalities, access to free or reduced-cost food, activities to reduce social isolation/improve wellbeing and a warm community welcome.

This funding could be used for:

- Energy costs contribution (for additional hours that your building is open)
- Food and drink provision
- Activity provider (who can draw people in)
- Purchase/hire of resources e.g. craft materials, books etc.

The grant application window for Warm Welcomes opened on Monday 2 September and closes on Monday 30 September, enabling Warm Welcomes to start in early November.

Warm Welcomes are part funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Overview: [Warm Welcomes grant scheme » East Suffolk Council](#)

Guidance: [Warm-Welcomes-Grant-Scheme-guidance.pdf \(eastsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

Application Form: [Warm-Welcomes-grant-scheme-application-form.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Cost of Living Community Grants

Up to £2,000 grants for a wide range of community-led projects – as long as they support multiple individuals and families to keep warm, well, fed and/or connected to others in the community this winter. Projects could include smaller Warm Welcomes/Warm Spaces that want to open less than 8 hours a week.

The grant application window for Warm Welcomes opened on Monday 2 September and closes on Monday 30 September. Projects should run between November 2024 and March 2024 - communities of all sizes are eligible to apply.

The COL Community Grants are funded by Suffolk County Council through the Collaborative Communities Board.

Overview: [Cost of Living Community Grant Fund » East Suffolk Council](#)

Guidance: [CoL-Comm-Grant-Guidance.pdf \(eastsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

Application Form: [CoL-Comm-Grant-App-Form.docx \(live.com\)](#)