



Cost of Living Challenge Group 2022/23

Closure Report: March 2023



Better Lives
Lincolnshire

Foreword

In the Summer of 2022, the rising costs of fuel, food and other essentials were combining with existing disadvantage and vulnerability in our communities to put many households at greater risk of both immediate hardship and reduced opportunity and wellbeing. It was also placing the most vulnerable within our health and care system at significant risk. This at a time where there was also expected to be a spike in Covid and Influenza infections.

In response, the Better Lives Lincolnshire Leadership Team (BLLLT) set out measures to support residents and employees. A task force was commissioned and set up and became known as the Cost of Living Challenge Group, with the main purpose to review the potential impacts caused through the autumn/winter 2022/23 Cost of Living challenge, and to harness effort across all systems to shielding, where possible, the communities of Lincolnshire from the impact of the Cost of Living crisis.

Through partnership working by the District Councils of Lincolnshire, the Integrated Care Board, health and care providers, police and fire, LVET, faith and community groups, charities, local business, clubs, staff and the public, creating an opportunity to maximise knowledge, identification of risk and vulnerability, capacity for targeted support, signposting to meet the needs of residents impacted at this time. This was further enhanced by creating task and finish subgroups that worked collaboratively to deliver the key actions and continue to inform the challenge group on any emerging issues.

This closure report summarises the activity and achievements of the Challenge group to coordinate activity across Lincolnshire and focuses on the key areas of clear communication and signposting as well as promoting the wide range of new initiatives and range of support available to improve the outlook for members of the community.



Angela Andrews

Angela Andrews
Chief Executive



Ian Flytche

Ian Flytche
Chief Executive



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Ian Knowles

Ian Knowles
Chief Executive



Executive Summary

This report provides readers with a status update and overview of the actions delivered, key themes and any emerging issues facing residents and businesses. This is focused from the work delivered by the county wide sub-groups, data and emerging themes from frontline services, the work completed, as well as what work others in the county have done to address the ongoing Cost of Living Challenge. This is a closure report for the activity led by the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge stakeholder group.

The sub-groups had the responsibility of coordinating actions, acting as facilitators and enablers, working in partnership to encourage networking between existing organisations, establishing funding streams, improving consistency in communications and sharing best practice. Consideration is given to the existing funding gaps and the revised Government settlement outcome received by local authorities in December 2022.

There have been a wide range of financial support packages offered by Central Government, many of which are and continue to be largely administered locally, which the sub-groups have supported the delivery, including Household Support Fund 1-3 (HSF) and Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme (CTER). Some are being extended or replaced in 2023 and the ongoing impact of support to deliver these needs to be considered against the background of expected reductions to public spending as a result of the Local Government Settlement, as additional financial support for the Cost of Living, without understanding the scale of public full impact of spending cuts.

The report also highlights how the National, County and District initiatives supported and worked collaboratively with voluntary and community groups and to provide community led support which matched needs identified locally and the need to be adaptable to respond to the changing situation.

The breadth of organisations represented on the Challenge group, along with their connections have been a strength in effectively coordinating activity, reducing duplication and delivering signpost effectively by having a diverse group of people and organisations involved in the group.

This closure report also advises the end position and recommendations for the future direction with strategic leadership from the three Chief Executive Co-Chairs.



Introduction

Since early 2021, the Cost of Living challenge has been increasing across the UK, with the annual rate of inflation recently hitting its highest level since 1982.

Drivers of inflation include the rising costs of consumer goods and food, energy and fuel caused by factors such as pandemic related supply shortages and increased demand for products and energy as the economy recovers, along with the conflict in Ukraine and reduced exports from both Ukraine and Russia.

The Cost of Living challenge refers to the fall in 'real' disposable income in homes, which has been experienced since late 2021, as high inflation has outstripped wage and benefit increases. The challenge of the rising Cost of Living has become extremely important, with survey results, new statistics, forecasts, and stories on the impacts to businesses and individuals' lives continuing to make the news daily into 2023.

The Local Government Association has recognised the Cost of Living challenges and this year, along with the Association of Directors of Public Health, has produced their public health annual report (PHAR) focusing on this issue. Lincolnshire has been one of eight participating local authorities asked for their views and contribution to this report.

www.local.gov.uk/publications/public-health-annual-report-2023-supporting-communities-difficult-times

www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/responding-cost-living-challenges-lincolnshire

The Consumer Price Index:

This includes owner occupiers' housing costs, which rose by 8.8% in the 12 months to January 2023. The largest upward contributions came principally from electricity, gas and other fuels, transport, principally from motor fuels and second-hand cars, and food and non-alcoholic beverages. The July 2022 figure was the highest recorded annual inflation rate in the National Statistic series, which began in January 2006.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to January 2023, down from 10.5% in December 2022.

The largest downward contribution to the change in both the CPIH and CPI annual inflation rates between December 2022 and January 2023 came from transport (particularly passenger transport and motor fuels), and restaurants and hotels, with rising prices in alcoholic beverages and tobacco making the largest partially offsetting upward contribution to the change.

Our Greater Lincolnshire Local Economic Partnership has recently quantified this impact through the development of the Cost of Living Vulnerability Dashboard which takes published data and presents this to visually represent the impact of economic pressures on households. This includes financial measures (inflation and pay) alongside vulnerabilities to the impact of Cost of Living challenges (including both work based and poverty based vulnerability).

www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/evidence-base

Higher Costs:

Households have been subject to an increase in their Cost of Living, including paying more for:

- Food shopping and household supplies
- Gas, electricity and oil
- Fuel
- Rent or mortgage payments
- Travel costs through fuel price rises
- Mobile Telephone and internet costs

In addition, council related bills such as council tax, garden and bulky waste collection and leisure centre prices have increased due to increased costs to the council in delivering the services, e.g., for fuel. Businesses & Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector organisations have also been impacted by higher costs, such as fuel, for delivery of raw materials and finished products, and gas and electricity, the prices of which have not been capped for non-domestic customers.

There is help available and we have been at the forefront of highlighting how and where this can be accessed.

Many energy companies offered schemes or grants to help with home heating and energy costs. Winter payments have been promoted widely, especially by Citizens Advice with Community Lincs having a heating oil scheme and we have highlighted help, where applicable, with NHS costs related to prescriptions and other health costs.

Many organisations across the country, including those in Lincolnshire, have identified the rising Cost of Living, caused by the global political instability and rising economic uncertainty, as one of the most urgent issues facing people.

As we moved towards the winter months, Government responded with a package of targeted support, including a £400 energy bill discount for every household, a £150 energy rebate for council tax bands A-D, capping energy bills at an average of £2,500 until April 2023 and additional financial support for people in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance, Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

While this support has ensured that households are protected from average annual energy bills that were projected to rise to over £3,500, the increasing cost of household bills, fuel and food, rising inflation and higher interest rates resulted in continued financial pressure and hardship for large numbers of people. Many of these had not previously reached out for financial support.

In Lincolnshire, there was an acknowledgement from public sector organisations that they needed to identify the level of need across the county and to explore appropriate packages designed to support those most affected by the Cost of Living challenge.

Emerging Needs

It was identified that additional support must be targeted at those most affected by the Cost of Living challenge. Emerging needs were broadly categorised as:

1. The need for identifying appropriate resources and capacity to meet demand. This applied across all organisations.
2. The need to identify funding to support specific actions, and to ensure due diligence and that appropriate governance arrangements were in place.
3. A requirement for a centralised and maintained source of information that is accessible to all, consistent across the county and is published as widely as possible across partner organisations.
4. The need for better information sharing and signposting between and across organisations.
5. The need to establish satellite provision of key services for isolated residents and rural communities.
6. Identification of an exit strategy that ensure individuals and communities have the right support in place to ensure resilience and self-sufficiency in the medium to long-term.

Across the county organisations have come together to deliver, or enable others to deliver and help to those in need. This has included the creation of leaflets signposting people towards help, updating their websites with links to local, county and governmental assistance, encouraging people to claim the benefits they are entitled to and coming together to plan and deliver community wellbeing events.

Delivery and Governance:

- Regular County Challenge group meetings co-chaired by District Council Chief Executives
- Regular sub-group meetings and subgroup leader meetings
- Committee updates in line with District corporate governance timetables



Summary of Sub-Group Progress

On the recommendation of the county-wide Cost of Living Challenge group, four sub-groups were created in October 2022, to deliver consistent actions and identify emerging themes across the county to deliver focused coordinated actions in the four key areas of Warm Welcome Spaces, Food Support, Economic Resources and Communications.

The purpose of these sub-groups was to co-ordinate plans and actions and to monitor and track progress to ensure effective delivery. West Lindsey District Council, City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council are leading this on behalf of county with the meetings taking place regularly and providing update reports on progress, best practice, shared learning, and responding to feedback on emerging pressures and national guidance.

The groups provided regular updates including a collection of key messages that all partners can use as part of their messaging.

The logo for 'Help for Households' is centered within a white rectangular box with a thin black border. The text 'Help for Households' is written in a bold, dark green, sans-serif font. The background of the entire slide is a solid dark green color.

Help for Households

The key messages for residents:

The Cost of Living challenge is affecting us all. To find out what help may be available to you, locally visit individual council websites.

- Working with partners, Lincolnshire councils have come together to help support our residents through the winter months. For information and advice across the county: <https://lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org/>
- For support with the Cost of Living and energy saving tips from the national Help for Households website: <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk>
- Lincolnshire's range of community support organisations that will be able to assist with emergency food, food support such community larders or low-cost food provision. The nearest location can be found on the Greater Lincolnshire partnership website: <https://lincolnshirefoodpartnership.org/>
- Councils and their partners across Lincolnshire are working together to help provide welcoming spaces for residents to access free of charge. Where there is a guarantee of a warm, supportive and safe welcome at venues across Lincolnshire and can be found on the website: <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/>
- Local Citizens Advice is continuing to support residents during the Cost of Living challenge who don't have enough money to live on, helping them to maximise their income and get help to afford essentials like bills and food Access to Lincolnshire locations can be found on this link: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Economic Resources:

Economic Resources has recently been focused on finalising county and district proposals for the Household Support Fund, supporting the Holiday Activities and Food Programme and promoting Multiply, the government-funded programme to help adults improve their numeracy skills. This includes proposals through HSF with City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey to support residents and voluntary partners and Lincolnshire County Council to support families and single households with a focus on gradually removing food bank dependency by accessing community grocers.

Funding sources either available or being sourced include National Grid Community Support Fund; CAF £3 million funding for small groups; NHS Winter Pressures Funds; Social Justice Fund; THRIVE Appeal through Lincolnshire Foundation; UK Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds; Energy Bill Support Scheme - Alternative Funding; Collective Oil Buying and Bulk Buying Warm Packs Schemes.

Mapping of available funding sources being undertaken by Lincolnshire Community Foundation - Local Government Settlement includes Household Support Fund 4, a range of Cost of Living Allowances and increase in National Minimum Wage.

Full details of Cost of Living financial support available nationally and locally across Lincolnshire can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

Support with Debt Management and accessing Welfare Benefits made a significant contribution towards managing household bills as well as having a positive impact on the local economy through increased citizens spending power.

Food Support:

Food banks and food support organisations are providing more than emergency food supplies and are often the first place that people go to for support at time of challenge.

They are currently also providing a safe place to make referrals to other services; an app (Restore) is currently being used in the food bank in Lincoln which allows informed point of referral and is a virtual triage system. Social media campaigns have been positive for some in gaining increases in direct debits for food banks to use to match demand; Household Support Fund 3 has been approved also provides resources for districts.

Food banks in towns and cities also provide development support through coaching for new and developing groups setting up as food banks. This support from larger more mature organisations would provide focus on signposting for grant funding. All food support to be encouraged to register on the Greater Lincolnshire Food Partnership food bank webpage (below) as well as on the Connect to Support Lincolnshire (CTSL) website linked with the district council websites:

<https://lincolnshirefoodpartnership.org/>

Coordinated activity is now in place with a range of community and charitable groups to work with food producers, suppliers, distributors and supermarkets to collect and redistribute for local need and across the whole district. This means good quality surplus food from across the food industry can get to frontline charities, schools, breakfast clubs, homeless shelters, older person's lunch clubs and community cafes.

FareShare have been a key collaborator across the County providing food support by redistributing food so that it reaches charities, school breakfast clubs, older people's lunch clubs, homeless shelters and community cafes. However, by March 2023 demand for their services

had significantly increased and they continue to work with the sub group to identify any new avenues of food supply. A link to their wide range of support and services can be found below:

<https://fareshare.org.uk/>

However, it should be noted that FareShare has recently announced closure of its Lincoln food redistribution depot from the end of June 2023, however have stated that they remain fully focused on providing the same service to all our existing members, minimising any impact on food supply or service offered.

As we moved to the end of Winter 2023, HSF funding was allocated from the county to the districts, with HSF3 providing the opportunity for local distribution of part of the allocation to recognise local food support in payment to gain the best return on the investment for the people using the services. This is being reviewed again for HSF4 as the demand for food is outstripping the ability to supply and this includes personal donations that used to top-up this supply.

Food education, including new ways to grow and cook food is an emerging theme that has been identified for both immediate and long-term benefits for health and wellbeing especially highlighted during the Cost of Living challenge. Some of the activities that now support this work include:

- Community Food Growing - in schools, community gardens and allotment associations
- Workshops - for local food producers to sell direct and through local food hubs
- Allotments Cooks - growing, cooking and eating, with this also active on social media
- TastEd - scheme of work, lesson plans and resources, which are currently free for schools with an online resource toolkit: www.tasteeducation.com

- Garden Hubs for youth groups
- The VCSE and Faith Sectors are working with other partner agencies to develop affordable food supplies through Community Groceries as an alternative to food banks with a focus on promoting greater independence.

Warm Welcome Spaces:

These have been developed across the county through the third sector, District Councils and Lincolnshire County Council. Details are available on the national Warm Welcome Space Website and have also been actively and effectively communicated through a variety of communication channels including social media platforms.



City of Lincoln Council have produced the following video about Bridge Central, which is the new home of Bridge Church in Lincoln.

Scan the QR Code or click the link below to watch:

<https://vimeo.com/808360850/6f0ea4bf8f>

A mapping exercise was undertaken along with intensive work with all relevant partners to ensure the county list of Warm Welcome Spaces gives a complete and comprehensive picture of the provision across Lincolnshire. Appropriate health and safety and safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Warm Welcome Spaces provide a warm and safe place, social activities and social networks, refreshments including a meal, healthy living, signposting to other services including debt advice and income maximisation. In the longer-term, these offers, where appropriate, are being extended to provide Community Wellbeing Hubs across the county.

Although the Challenge Group will stand down with Winter 2022/23 drawing to a close the Warm Welcome group, along with the 4 Task and Finish groups that have been established, will continue over the Spring and Summer to ensure arrangements are in place for Winter 2023/24 and provision is immediately available at that time.

The groups are operating with a County wide focus with all funding and procurement activities being undertaken jointly. The four Task and Finish Groups are focused on the following:

1. Warm Welcome Host funding
2. Warm Welcome Pack funding, joint procurement and distribution
3. Business Engagement such as subsidised/reduced cost Soft Play provision for families after school, sponsorship etc

Demand Analysis to confirm existing need and project future need based on the further energy price increase due in April 2023 and wider price increases thus enabling the provision for Winter 2023/24 to be targeted effectively, securing the most impact.

Further funding support to develop and sustain Warm Welcome Space and the provision of Warm Packs in preparing for challenges during Winter 2023/24 is currently being explored by the WWS Sub-Group.

Communications:

The communications sub-group works in conjunction with the Local Resilience Forum's Warning and Informing group and reports on local and national Cost of Living initiatives around the county; ensuring consistent messaging across the county with links in from NHS Communications Teams.

The group communicates on a regular basis to share good practice and ensure they are all delivering the same or similar messages in a way that the public can understand.

Consideration is also being given to alternative communications mediums for those people not able to access virtually. The Government provided detailed communication in the form of the Cost of Living toolkit that offers further information about the Government's Help for Households, including Cost of Living payment for people on means-tested benefits.

www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/communicating-help-for-households-and-cost-of-living-payments

The communications teams at the county's local authorities, third sector partners, NHS and many more have been signposting people to help and advice through leaflets, posters, events and face-to-face meetings.

Many partners compiled useful cost of living support leaflets for their residents. The City of Lincoln one received coverage from local and regional media. These documents highlighted relevant schemes available for eligible residents strongly during the cost of living challenge.

A key tool used has been social media. Using City of Lincoln Council as an example, since the cost-of-living challenge began, have used Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to get their messages out to residents and businesses. To date, in the five months from 1 September 2022 to 31 January 2023, their posts reached more than 17,000 people.

At North Kesteven District Council, their cost-of-living specific web page received more than 6,200 views in the same period.

All district councils had significant views to their dedicated cost-of-living webpages. At Boston, their page received almost 7,000 views while East Lindsey's page saw more than 3,200 visits and South Holland had 2620.

South Kesteven had a number of dedicated pages devoted to the challenge, all of which saw an impressive total of 17,400 visits. Their

social media pages also did well, with more than 20 posts issued, reaching more than 35,000 people. An event held by the authority - a Cost of Living fair - attracted almost 100 people to come along and seek advice from experts about benefits, money saving and other useful topics.

In West Lindsey, more than 14,000 visits were made to the authority's dedicated Cost-of-living benefits support page, with these messages being supported by ongoing social media posts which generated more than 2,000 impressions on twitter and reached upwards of 11,000 people on Facebook. A Cost of Living Crisis Summit was hosted by the authority in September 2022, bringing together partners from over 30 local organisations to understand the level of need and to explore appropriate packages designed to support those most affected by the Cost of Living challenge.

The Summit was a call to action, designed at strengthening partnership working across West Lindsey and providing detailed research and focus so as not to over-commit and create paralysis by overwhelming services.

Graphics created have been shared across authorities and the recent 'warm welcome spaces' video filmed in conjunction with Bridge Church in Lincoln has been well-received and clarified to viewers what they can find at such facilities.

Connect to Support Lincolnshire (CTSL):

Working with key stakeholders in the challenge group and partners, Lincolnshire councils have come together to help support our residents through the winter months.

The signposting to information, help and support both online and through the contact centre and webchat services has been provided, across the County, though the Connect to Support Lincolnshire website. Usage data is as follows:

Cost of Living Support page analytics (Period: 20/10/22 to 31/01/23 – since page has been live on the site):

- Users - 437
- Page views - 743
- Unique page views - 639
- Average time spent on page - 3 mins 12 secs
- Most users (342) accessed the page directly via the URL (which has been shared through comms emails).
- Cost of Living page remains 6th highest visited page/area on the site during this period (behind: Homepage (2581), Directory (1484), Blue badge scheme and parking (643), Mental Health (545), and Information and Advice (542)).

The number of users accessing Cost of Living page, per month:

- Oct 2022 - 65
- Nov 2022 - 223
- Dec 2022 - 157
- Jan 2023 - 147



Emerging Customer Demands

All authorities have witnessed a significant increase in demand for their services and advice since the Cost of Living challenge began.

For example, in West Lindsey alone, the district council saw:

- From Q1 to Q2 in 2022: there was a 14% increase in Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support claims and a 56% increase in Discretionary Housing Payment applications.
- An 8% decrease in payments awarded.
- Between 1 September and 30 November their Customer Services received 128 calls, 75 walk-in customers and 29 email enquiries specifically requesting support with Cost of Living issues.
- 36 referrals were made to the Citizens Advise energy redress scheme and 2 referrals through to the Wellbeing Service.

Support with household bills and food support were the main requests with other requests including:

- Mortgage costs and petrol to travel to work
- Debts with fuel bills and large monthly payments disabled children
- Struggling with all costs after having a baby
- Off grid support needed to bulk buy oil
- Assistance with upfront rental costs and furnishing new Acis property
- Animal care costs
- Arrears with water bill
- No access to the internet or own transport to source financial assistance available Cost of school uniform and winter coats
- Unable to afford transport to hospital appointments
- Needing transport support to take children to free LCC activities over school holidays



Citizens Advice

There has been a significant increase in Citizens Advice support across the county throughout the duration of the Cost of Living challenge.

Customers presenting with debt concerns are helped with maximising income through benefit take up or present with Universal Credit and are also helped with a debt or housing issue.

Citizens Advice continues to support residents during the Cost of Living challenge, who do not have enough money to live on, helping them to maximise their income and get help to afford essentials like bills and food. Providing residents with support to claim all of the welfare benefits they are entitled to makes a significant difference to their income and their life choices.

This includes helping those who are unemployed, working and on a low income, sick or disabled, of State Pension age, a carer or those responsible for children. Everyone is feeling the impact of the Cost of Living challenge, but we know that some will be hit harder than others and are more vulnerable.

Citizens Advice data to end of 2022 shows an increase in issues associated with the Cost of Living. As an example, data shows an increase in charitable support and food banks the first half of this financial year compared to the same period last year.

For the Citizens Advice Lincolnshire constituency for the period September 2022 to January 2023 the top 5 issues that clients saw them about were:

Top 5 Cost of Living Issues	Latest 3 Months	3 Months Last Year	Change %
Charitable Support and Food Banks	942	802	140 (17%)
Energy	714	296	418 (141%)
Personal Independence Payment	671	619	52 (8%)
Financial Capability	386	325	61 (19%)
Debt Assessment	316	255	61 (24%)
Total of all clients with an issue	892	2,385	507 (21%)

This data reveals the ongoing issue of Energy price increases with a 141% uplift in support request when compared with the same period last year. Rent arrears with housing associations and private landlords has increased, resulting in an increase in those threatened with homelessness.

In October 2022, the Citizens Advice Service Delivery Manager went on a Q&A session on BBC Radio Lincolnshire to get the message out about the cost-of-living support available to people and how to access our services.

Evidence suggests that it is very common for people with debts to become ill with stress, depression and mental health issues especially when they are being harassed by their creditors who constantly telephone and threaten action by bailiffs and the courts. Such illness frequently leads to the inability to work which exacerbates the situation further.

The impact on the health of those already in debt or those likely to get into debt will only worsen. Citizens Advice can refer residents to their specialist debt caseworkers, where the caseworker undertakes all dealings with the creditors and can support with Breathing Space

(the Debt Respite Scheme introduced in 2021 which gives people legal protection from creditors for up to 60 days whilst they get help with their problems). This support greatly reduces anxiety, stress and mental health issues and improves wellbeing. Debt clients can, in the same way, be referred for advice on maximising benefits and managing their daily finances.

Given the clear link between poverty and ill-health, helping residents with their debt problems, to maximise their income and manage their finances will enhance their wellbeing and enable them to participate in their local community. All help to residents will reduce social isolation and depression and enable residents to move forward with their lives.

All Citizens Advice staff delivering advice are fully trained and competent in their respective advice areas however they are looking at further training around energy, (NVQ level 3 Awareness) to support residents further, e.g., Warm Home Discount, Priority Services Register, energy efficiency advice, grants, behavioural change, tariff and switching, payment renegotiations and rescheduling.



Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Sector

There has been an increased demand on food banks due to cost and supply of food and Community Spaces due to cost of heating a home and impacts on mental health.

Increased costs for groups running a community venue are especially impacted with the increase costs of heating, fuel and electricity. We have also been considering the impact on staff, volunteers and support services. This includes online advice guidance for unpaid carers and a staff support package for the VCSE sector with details included in Appendix 3 Cost of Living Library.

Other costs and challenges include:

1. Salary costs
2. Volunteer expenses
3. Cost of products (food, supplies, materials)
4. Cost of equipment (purchase or hire)
5. Vehicle/travel costs
6. Volunteer shortage.
7. Funding challenges and seeking new grants and alternatives post pandemic

In addition, staff recruitment continued to be a challenge due to salary issues and the increase in the minimum wage. The funding environment is also proving to be incredibly competitive, whilst demand has increased significantly.

A staff support package aimed at recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers together with a Funding Matrix providing funding sources for voluntary and community groups has been provided and communicated across the sector by LVET & LCF.



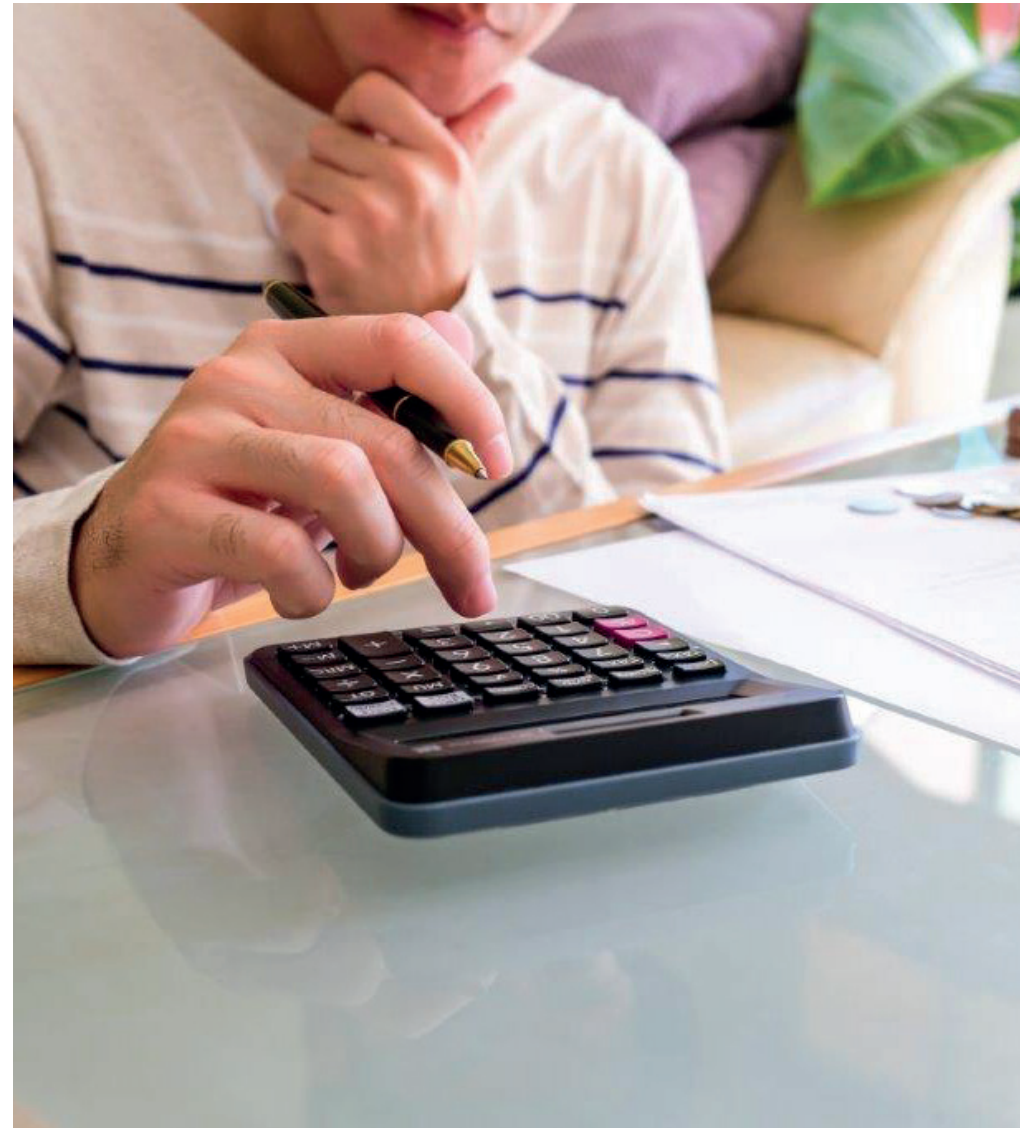
Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion continues to be a key objective for many organisations to tackle in Lincolnshire. The Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership (LFIP), which is currently chaired by the Assistant Director Shared Revenues and Benefits for City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council, brings together organisations and partners to promote and raise the profile of financial inclusion across the county. LFIP aims to ensure that everyone has the capability and opportunity to access appropriate financial services and products needed to participate fully in society.

LFIP works to develop, implement and, when available, gain funding for positive solutions to improve financial inclusion for all people within Lincolnshire. LFIP also provides a forum for sharing good practice and information.

In terms of scope of activity, LFIP works in partnership to coordinate the discussion, development and delivery of services and identify issues connected to the alleviation of financial exclusion in Lincolnshire. Areas of activity include but are not limited to: Banking Services; Insurance and savings; Financial capability; Affordable and responsible credit; Debt advice and emergency help; Advice and support to access welfare benefits and entitlements.

LFIP held a highly successful conference at the Jakeman's Community Stadium in Boston on 21st February 2023, bringing together 120 attendees from a wide range of organisations, focussing on 'Financial Wellbeing' and Cost of Living matters. Speakers included; Money and Pensions Service, The Trussell Trust, Boston Foodbank, Citizens Advice, Centre for Responsible Credit, His Church, Notts and Lincs Credit Union and Department for Work and Pensions. Feedback from the event has been really positive, and connections have already been made to further help address Cost of Living issues in the county.



Conclusion

This Cost of Living Challenge Group has now concluded its work with agreement that the sub-groups will continue to meet monthly and report on any emerging issues to the Co-Chairs ahead of the Autumn period.

We would like to thank all those who have participated in the Cost of Living Challenge Group and to the leaders of the sub-groups who have authored this report.



Appendix 1

Lincolnshire Cost of Living:
Sub-Group Responsibilities
and Key Messages

All Working Groups will:

1. Working Group Lead to coordinate with the other subgroup chairs to share knowledge, report progress and emerging concerns collectively to the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group.
2. Working Group Lead to report progress to the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group.
3. Working Group Lead to report emerging concerns to the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group

Actions:

1. The four subgroup leads will meet on a fortnightly basis to update on progress, share learnings and respond to feedback regarding emerging pressures. An update from this meeting will be shared with the Cost of Living Challenge groups ahead of the fortnightly meeting.
2. Each subgroup lead will approach nominated and required colleagues representing organisations from the Cost of Living Challenge Group to create the working of the specific groups to take actions forward

The responsibilities of the 4 Subgroup Workstreams are as follows:

Welcoming Warm Space: Evonne Rogers

1. Provide a link to the objectives set by the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group responding to feedback regarding pressures.
2. Provide localised feedback on challenges being faced by warm spaces.
3. To understand how the districts and stakeholders can register their warm space.
4. To understand how the districts and stakeholders can further support residents in the use of a warm space.
5. Co-ordinate activities in response to the actions directed by the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group

Key Messages:

1. Promoting the Warm Welcome website - this is to ensure the following:
 - a) That our most vulnerable residents know where their nearest warm space locations are.
 - b) to encourage warm space hosts to register on the site to enable increased coverage of known locations and provide the warm space hosts with support to ensure their offer is health and safety compliant etc.
2. A mapping exercise has been undertaken which has cross referenced all the warm space locations against our highest areas of need across the County, factoring in areas of high deprivation and fuel poverty etc. All these areas, except for Sutton on Sea and Sutton Bridge are covered with work well underway to ensure

provision is in place for these two areas (it should be noted that Trusthorpe already has a warm space location which neighbours Sutton on Sea).

3. Work is currently underway to look at funding opportunities for warm space hosts going forward into Autumn/Winter 2023/24.
4. Work is also currently underway to look at funding for Warm packs and a wider role out scheme of Warm packs again going forward into Autumn/Winter 2023/24.

Economic Resource: Martin Walmsley

1. To identify, assess and move forward with applying for and / or distributing appropriate funding streams to cost of living initiatives.
2. To work with a range of partners to ensure the most effective and joined-up use of funds.
3. To ensure identified funding is directly paid to residents/businesses in need in the most efficient manner.
4. To promote the availability of funds to residents, businesses and partner organisations.
5. To lobby national organisations for further funding.

Key Messages:

1. Promoting Connect to Support Lincolnshire cost of living page (connecttosupport.org)
2. Promoting individual Lincolnshire Councils' Cost of living web pages.
3. Promoting national 'Help for Households' website Help for

Households - Get government cost of living support.

4. To ensure messages are also open to those without access to the internet, e.g. hard copy leaflets Cost of Living Leaflet.
5. One 'funding area' for organisations to review/update

Food Support: Nova Roberts

1. Provide a link to the objectives set by the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group and pressures identified from all key stakeholders.
2. Provide localised feedback on challenges to the access and supply of food and use of food banks.
3. To understand how the districts and stakeholders can further support residents accessing the Food Support.
4. To understand how the districts and stakeholders can communicate and signpost to Food Support.
5. Co-ordinate activities in response to the actions directed by the Lincolnshire Cost of Living Challenge Group

Key Messages:

1. Promoting the Connect to Support Lincolnshire cost of living website, contact centre and online help with specific reference to the food support - <https://lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org>
2. Promoting access, use and communication of the Greater Lincolnshire partnership for all food banks by postcode search map - <https://lincolnshirefoodpartnership.org> - so residents and stakeholders can access and signpost to the most convenient and local Food support.

3. Collaborate on current emerging issues and themes to provide feedback to the County Challenge Group to address the challenges to the access and supply of food and use of food banks.
4. Promoting best practice and coordinating activities to enable all districts and stakeholders to further support residents accessing the Food Support provided.
5. Advising on proposals and provide funding opportunities for funding via partnership working and central government schemes including Household Support Funds for specific options for support to food groups.

Communications: Joint leads Sarah Curtiss and Steven Welsby

1. To provide targeted communications directing people towards helpful local and national resources and links.
2. To work with other CoL group chairs to ensure consistent messaging is delivered in a consistent manner across the county.
3. To liaise with partners and ensure messaging is clear and concise and doesn't promise anything that can't be delivered.
4. To ensure all communications are delivered in an empathetic and positive way where appropriate.
5. To build trust with customers that the advice they are receiving is balanced and not biased in any way.
6. To analyse what is being done to communicate support nationally to learn from previous campaigns to get the best possible outcome.



Membership to each group (may include others to deliver identified workstreams):

Welcoming Warm Space (Lead: Evonne Rogers, North Kesteven District Council)

- Paul Carrick, City of Lincoln Council
- Nichola Holderness, South East Lincs Partnership
- Diane Krochmal, West Lindsey District Council
- Sian Wade, Transform Lincoln
- Claire Moses, South Kesteven District Council
- Katrina Evans, Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils
- Emily Ward, Lincolnshire Voluntary Engagement Team

Economic (Lead: Martin Walmsley, City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council)

- Paul Carrick, City of Lincoln Council
- Sue Fortune, Lincolnshire Community Foundation
- Simon Hawking, Acts Trust
- Caroline Killeavy, Lincolnshire YMCA
- Graham Metcalfe, Department for Work and Pensions
- Barry Earnshaw, LVET
- Roxanne Warwick, South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- Michael Ryan, Carers First
- Abdul Siddiqui, Lincoln Mosque
- Sarah Franklin, GamCare
- Rachel Aylmer, Childrens Links
- Simon Richards, Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire
- Lauren Jarvis, West Lindsey District Council
- Stacey Otter, Anglian Water
- Catriona Paton, Gainsborough Crisis Action Team

Food Support (Lead: Nova Roberts, West Lindsey District Council)

- Carol Drury, South Kesteven District Council
- Jon Hinde, InvestSK
- Evonne Rogers, North Kesteven District Council
- Grant White, West Lindsey District Council
- Amy Colley, Lincoln Food Bank
- Ticky Nadal, Lincolnshire Food Partnership
- Emily Ward, Lincolnshire Voluntary Engagement Team
- Mandy Baxter, Boxes of Hope
- Mandy Elmer, Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service

Communications (Leads: Sarah Curtiss and Steven Welsby, City of Lincoln Council)

- Patrick Astill, South Kesteven District Council
- Julie Heath, West Lindsey District Council
- Hannah Williams, North Kesteven District Council
- Shaun Gibbons, South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- Emily Ward – Lincolnshire Voluntary Engagement Team (LVET)
- Paul Chandler – Active Lincolnshire
- Kerry Stocks – Shine Lincolnshire

Appendix 2

Cost of Living
Financial Support
across Lincolnshire

Fund	Cost	Application Process/Deadline	Comments/Further Information
Household Support Fund wave 3 (HSF3)	Lincolnshire £5.46m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCC issuing £100 through schools to qualifying families (Early Years, Free School Meals) in Nov 2022 Housing Benefit recipients not entitled to national Cost of Living Payment £650, to receive a payment of £250 by end Jan 2023 District Schemes running/ ran – phase 1 to 31.1.23, phase 2 Feb/March 2023 	HSF3 runs to 31.3.23 (or when funding exhausted, whichever is sooner)
Household Support Fund wave 4 (HSF4)	Lincolnshire £10,929,370	Unknown at present	To run for the whole of 2023/24 (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) - Household Support Fund guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England (www.gov.uk)
National Grid Community Matters Fund	Grants up to £10k	Deadline was 15th November 2022	<p>National Grid Electricity Distribution has teamed up with Localgiving to deliver a record £2.5million of funding to charitable organisations tackling fuel poverty in their communities. With the increase in fuel costs and the cost of living, many families will find paying their bills a struggle at this time of year. National Grid Electricity Distribution is calling on charities, councils and community groups small and large across its four regions, to apply for grants of up to £10,000 to support people who need extra help this winter. The fund is open to all non-profit and statutory organisations, big and small, based in these locations who are supporting households experiencing fuel poverty.</p> <p>The programme is now live and accepting applications until midnight on Monday, October 31st 2022. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by Tuesday, 15th November 2022.</p>

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)	Around 120 charities will receive grants between £5,000 and £50,000, with an average grant of £25,000. CAF will also provide resilience building tools and information to put organisations into a stronger position for future work.	The deadline for charities to express their interest for the first round is 23rd November 2022.	<p>Local charities across the UK are encouraged to apply for the new fund if they are addressing social injustice or working towards social equity to create a fairer society. Half of the available funds will be focused on organisations supporting refugees in the UK.</p> <p>CAF launches new fund for small charities focused on social equity (cafonline.org)</p>
NHS winter pressures funding	Funding grants, which are available in two categories: 1. Funding proposals up to £10,000 for single local areas 2. Funding proposals up to £20,000 for countywide initiatives	Deadline was 15th November 2022 (was extended by a few days, but now closed)	<p>Seasonal pressures funding is now available to all VCSE organisations to support people who may have a mental health or social care need over the winter months. We would like to hear from your organisation if you can help us deliver and support projects that will do some or all of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people to avoid accessing a GP appointment or emergency service by accessing alternative solutions and building their own self-care • Work in partnership with existing services to support people to safely return home from hospital more quickly • Enable people including carers and families, to gain additional support to help them with their mental health and wellbeing needs and reduce demands on our local NHS mental health services. <p>If you think your organisation may be able to work with us to help people in your community over the winter months. We need to hear from you! Please complete the attached applications form for funding grants, which are available in two categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding proposals up to £10,000 for single local areas 2. Funding proposals up to £20,000 for countywide initiatives

Bishop of Lincoln's Social Justice Fund	Grants up to £2,500	30th November 2022 (decisions notified by mid-January 2023)	The Community Foundation is currently administered by the Bishop of Lincoln's Social Justice Fund which seeks to make grants of up to £2,500 available to those smaller not for profit organisations and Anglican churches faced with increased demand for local services, or that have decided to open their doors during the Winter months to help residents stay engaged, keep safe and warm. Priority will be given to requests to cover the cost of food, heating, and support to improve mental wellbeing, with the panel particularly keen to hear from interventions in our rural communities.
North Kesteven District Council Health, Wellbeing and Resilience Fund	Grants up to £5,000	2nd December 2022	<p>Charitable and community organisations within North Kesteven are encouraged to apply for grants to move forward projects that promote health and wellbeing within the District. Grants of up to £5,000 are available to charitable, voluntary and community organisations, church groups, community interest companies, non-statutory agencies etc, that are based in the District and either already delivering crucial services, or those able to clearly demonstrate where there is a gap and have a workable solution to address and support the emotional wellbeing of local residents. The North Kesteven District Council Health, Wellbeing and Resilience Fund is being administered by the Lincolnshire Community Foundation. Bids will be considered from existing and new organisations and can be to extend ongoing services or create new initiatives.</p> <p>To access the North Kesteven District Council Health, Wellbeing and Resilience Fund speak with Lincolnshire Community Foundation grants officer Helen Carter at the Foundation on 01529 305825 or see www.lincolnshirecf.co.uk (the direct page link is: https://lincolnshirecf.co.uk/grants/north-kesteven-district-council-health-wellbeing-and-resilience-fund/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)</p>

BNA	Individual bids	Current application window ends 16.3.23	<p>Before you can apply for funding you will need to register for an account first. You will need to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief description of the organisation’s background, aims and objectives and current activities/services and achievements. • A full description of the project requiring funding - what do you want to do, who will be involved, where and when will it take place and how will it be managed? • Full details of funds raised already for the project and any shortfall. How have you identified the need for this work? Please provide evidence to support this. • Do you need any permission from any third parties for the project? If so, please provide full details and the current status. Please provide full details of what difference or changes the project will make to people/ community i.e. what are the projected outcomes? • Please provide full details of how you intend to monitor and evaluate the work so that you know whether or not you have been successful. • Please provide full details of the proposed timetable for the project and individual stages if applicable. • Please provide full details of the project costs and budget. • Copy of the last 3 years financial statements (if produced) • Signed letter from the head of the organisation - this should be uploaded (in Microsoft Word or PDF) • Any other information - you have the opportunity to mention anything you would like us to note if not already mentioned.
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<p>Ofgem - Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme</p>	<p>A total of £3 million in funding is available to charities and community energy groups in England, Scotland and Wales for projects that help energy consumers in vulnerable situations to reduce their bills and carbon emissions.</p>	<p>The deadline for applications is 5pm on the 30th January 2023.</p>	<p>A total of £3 million in funding is available to charities and community energy groups in England, Scotland and Wales for projects that help energy consumers in vulnerable situations to reduce their bills and carbon emissions. The funding is made available through the Ofgem Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme which supports projects that help households most at risk from cold homes and high energy bills by distributing payments from energy companies who may have breached Ofgem rules. Organisations need to be registered with the Energy Redress Scheme. Organisations that have not yet registered with the scheme must do so 10 working days before the closure of the relevant Fund to allow time for eligibility checks to take place.</p> <p>There are four funding streams open in this round that will enable charities to deliver a range of new and innovative energy related projects designed to tackle fuel poverty and support the transition to net zero.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Main Fund contains £1.9 million - aimed at projects seeking grants between £50,000 and £300,000 that will support households in vulnerable situations. 2. The Small Project Fund contains £200,000 – aimed at projects seeking grants between £20,000 to £49,999 that will support households in vulnerable situations. 3. The Innovation Fund contains £450,000 – aimed at projects that will develop innovative products or services to benefit households. Applicants can apply for grants between £20,000 to £200,000 4. The Carbon Emissions Reduction Fund contains £450,000 – aimed at projects that will reduce UK carbon emissions and empower households to reduce their carbon footprint. Applicants can apply for grants between £20,000 to £200,000
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Cash for Kids	Grants are £50 per child per household	TBC	Cash for Kids is granting out of £1 Million of Help across the UK, to support children and young people through the cost-of-living crisis. In response to the crisis hitting so many families right now we've launched this new fund, to provide emergency essentials that support the physical and mental well-being of children who are struggling. These could include food, clothing and household energy costs, but we'll also consider anything that helps meet children's most basic needs.
The abrdn Financial Fairness Trust	Charities, voluntary organisations, think tanks, campaigning groups, research bodies and universities can apply for grants of between £10,000 and £200,000 for strategic work that improves the living standards and personal finances, especially for those on low-to-middle incomes.	The deadline for applications is 1pm on the 5th June 2023.	The abrdn Financial Fairness Trust's grant programme is looking to support proposals from organisations across the UK seeking funding for policy work, campaigning and research focused on three areas that influence financial wellbeing: income; spending; and assets. These might include wages, pensions and taxation, gambling, borrowing and repayment problems, and savings. Between fifteen and twenty grants are awarded each year and priority is given to work focusing on younger generations.
Redress energy voucher fund	An issue up to three fuel vouchers per household, £28 for a single person household and £49 for a family.	Within 2022/23, providing funds still available. Scheme now closed, February 2023	Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire has been awarded funding to support clients who are struggling to afford fuel and are at risk of self disconnection from their energy supply. This document will detail the eligibility criteria for the scheme, the referral process, and common questions. In order to be eligible for the scheme clients must meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay for their energy by prepayment meter. • Be at risk of self-disconnection from their energy supply. This may mean extremely low credit on their meter, and an energy debt on their meter which has a severe impact on their ability to maintain sufficient credit.

- Unable to top up their meter due to insufficient income or an unexpected expense.
- Live anywhere in the UK

We can issue up to three fuel vouchers per household, £28 for a single person household and £49 for a family. Clients will need to be referred to the scheme our Google Form linked below. This must not be shared with clients.

<https://www.citizensadvicesouthlincs.org.uk/redress-energy-voucher-form/>

You will need the following information to make a referral:

- The client's name
- The client's contact details
- Evidence that the client is responsible for the energy supply see information in the eligibility criteria
- Details of the client's supplier
- Consent to share information with Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire and our third party [eVouchers.com](https://www.eVouchers.com)

The form will guide you through the application process and will not let you complete the form without providing the required information. All evidence will need to be sent by email to fuel.vouchers@citizensadvicesouthlincs.org.uk when emailing please ensure that it is clear which application the evidence relates to by including the client's name and postcode. Referrals will be processed by the CASL Admin Team. We are aware that there is likely to be a high demand for vouchers and therefore we can only guarantee that vouchers will be issued within three working days.

Appendix 3

Cost of Living
Library

Date	Source	Description	Link(s)
15/09/2022	Chris Wheway	Details of grants available to charities and community energy groups that support households most at risk from cold homes/high bills	https://energyredress.org.uk/announcements/ps22-million-available-charities-and-community-groups-through-ofgem-energy-redress
15/09/2022	Laura Edlington	Stakeholder toolkit provided by the Cabinet Office Communications team to support the communication of the Help for Households scheme	Communicating Help for Households.pdf
15/09/2022	Dan Moss	Online self-assessment to support fire safety elements within the home	https://www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc
15/09/2022	Melanie Carroll	Church action of poverty - Cost of Living pages	https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/cost-of-living-crisis-6-useful-church-responses/
23/09/2022	Rachel Rousseau	National Fire Chief Council Cost of Living toolkit	NFCC Cost of Living Toolkit.pdf
30/09/2022	Martin Walmsley	Money Advice Network Information	https://www.maps.org.uk/
15/10/2022	Martin Walmsley	Get Help to Buy Food & Milk (Healthy Start)	https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/
28/10/2022	Olivia Magee	Online advice and support for unpaid carers	https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/help-and-advice/ https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/campaigns/lightentheload/
11/11/2022	Ian Fytche	Anglian Water Cost of Living support	https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/air-2022/air-2022/overview/casestudies/helping-with-the-cost-of-living-crisis/
18/11/2022	Barry Earnshaw	Government Cost of Living Autumn 2022 fact sheet	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2022-cost-of-living-support-factsheet/cost-of-living-support-factsheet#contents

30/11/2022	David Stacey	NHS Midlands Cost of Living Resource Pack	Winter Pressures & Cost of Living.pdf
01/12/2022	Nova Roberts	Report on the Cost of Living impact on children and families	https://www.cih.org/media/qcojptr4/0508-cost-of-living-crisis-volfive-v1.pdf
02/12/2022	Angela Andrews	Bradford's Cost of Living website	https://costoflivingbradford.co.uk/
06/12/2022	David Stacey	Alternative systems of support	https://www.neighbourly.com/ https://www.helpmystreet.org/
15/12/2022	Evonne Rodgers	Warm Spaces locations	https://lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org/information-and-advice/cost-of-living-support/
13/01/2023	Emma Milligan	Cost of Living - ONS statistics	https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costofliving/latestinsights
16/01/2023	Glen Garrod	Healthwatch Lincs survey	https://www.healthwatchlincolnshire.co.uk/news/2023-01-13/cost-living-affecting-your-health-have-your-say
02/02/2023	David Stacey	GLLEP dashboard	https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/evidence-base/

Appendix 4

An interview with
Director of Public Health,
Professor Derek Ward

Source: The Public health annual report 2023:
Supporting communities in difficult times | Local
Government Association

Responding to Cost of Living challenges in Lincolnshire:

Introduction:

Lincolnshire is one of the largest counties in England. Much of the county is rural with many dispersed populations of a few homes based around agriculture. This brings additional cost of living challenges including transport costs, households not connected to gas supplies so relying on oil heating, and people living at a distance from sources of support.

Planning and Co-ordination:

Lincolnshire is an upper-tier council with seven districts. The county, districts and partners from the NHS, the voluntary and community sector, housing providers, and others work closely together on strategic development and local delivery. Successful collaboration during the pandemic is forming the basis of partnership work on the economic crisis. The districts and their local partners have the primary role in delivering support. Public health leads on advice, data and intelligence including district profiles, and identifying overlaps, synergies and gaps. It provides support and coordination for strategic planning and local delivery.

Two long-standing partnerships have an important role in developing cost of living support. The Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group is responsible for interface areas such as the disabled facilities grant and warmer homes. Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership (FIP) works to improve financial resilience and wellbeing in areas such as financial capacity, responsible credit, debt advice and emergency help, and benefits. The FIP agreed key principles to frame the cost of living work response: clear communication; coordination; act decisively and at speed when needed; influence-up to government on the problems people are facing.

Lincolnshire has established a senior task force of all partners, including the integrated care board, county and district councils, community and voluntary sector and businesses, to review the impacts of cost of living through the autumn and winter and to harness the efforts of all partners to support communities where possible.

Cost of Living Support:

The district councils have set up comprehensive cost of living pages highlighting the full range of support available across Lincolnshire and within their areas. The information is accessible through the districts and the overarching Lincolnshire Connect to Support website.

<https://lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org/information-and-advice/cost-of-living-support/>

As well as co-ordinating efforts to ensure consistency in support across the county, each district has also taken action of their own (supported through the countywide taskforce by public health advice). Examples include the City of Lincoln Council publishing and issuing a cost of living support leaflet to households in the city and West Lindsey District Council holding a Cost of Living Summit, the findings from which have been taken forward through the taskforce.

Warm spaces in districts across the county are registered on the national warm and welcome portal.

<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/partners>

Public Health has supported this by co-ordinating core county council related advice, such as safeguarding and domestic abuse guidance, for communities seeking to establish warm spaces.

Lincolnshire has a highly active food partnership which works to promote all aspects of food related health, poverty and sustainability across the county, including information on community food growing and food banks.

<https://lincolnshirefoodpartnership.org/>

Districts are involved in this process. For example, City of Lincoln supported the Lincoln Community Grocery to re-locate to a permanent premises in January 2023, supported by the Government's Be Lincoln, Town Deal and in partnership with the Message Trust. The grocery also offers free courses in cooking, life skills and budgeting.

Impact on Future Plans:

Public health and partners will monitor and respond to the economic crisis through the winter and evaluate the position in the Spring. Unlike the pandemic, which took up most of public health time and resources, the health and wellbeing strategy is still being delivered.

The immediate crisis will pass, but there will be a legacy of increased health inequalities which will need renewed efforts. The DPH's Annual Report for 2022 analysed local data across four types of communities in Greater Lincolnshire and will be used to support the delivery of health, care and wellbeing support, including addressing risks associated with cost of living challenges.

Lincolnshire County Council is coterminous with Lincolnshire integrated care system. Lead Lincolnshire councillors and the DPH attend the integrated care board (ICB) and the Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison chairs the integrated care partnership.

The NHS is increasingly engaged in the health inequality agenda, including its role as employer and anchor organisation for relationships with communities, such as potential for local procurement. There is a

strong joint approach to population health management and the ICB has agreed a joint team with the council to work on health inequalities.

Another area for future work should be developing a whole-person approach in secondary prevention so that effective healthcare is aligned with action on the wider determinants. For example, making sure that people with asthma can use inhalers properly while also tackling environmental issues such as cold or damp homes.

More can be done to learn and apply the lessons of COVID-19 which also apply to the economic crisis. For example, there needs to be greater focus at a local level on developing resilience in vulnerable groups that are impacted most by such pressures.

National Changes that could make a difference:

- Longer funding settlements for councils of five years or more to allow greater financial stability and better planning. If this is not possible immediately, there should be plans to work towards this.
- Better, more timely, place-based data and intelligence from the ONS to assist local planning.
- A renewed national focus on those who would benefit from greater support. For example, unpaid carers who, national campaigns show, do not receive equitable treatment in terms of benefit entitlements.

Councillor Perspective:

As a county council, much of the delivery of health and wellbeing support, including for the rising cost of living, is through Lincolnshire's district councils. Public health has a planning and coordination role.

I am a district and town councillor, as well as executive councillor for health and care, and I see the excellent work done in partnership with the districts. I am particularly proud that we have maintained progress on homelessness since the pandemic, with very few people sleeping rough through this winter. Working with the voluntary and community sector, we have an extensive system of food banks plus other initiatives, such as low-cost bags of food available.

I am a member of Lincolnshire's Integrated Care Board and our colleagues in the NHS are supporting the cost of living response. In the longer term, some of the coastal areas of Lincolnshire have received levelling up funding, including the Campus for Future Living at Mablethorpe. This partnership with the NHS, local universities and others will be a centre of excellence for health and care training, technology and good practice. The DPH and I are working closely with this initiative to make sure that it makes the greatest difference to local health and prosperity.



Appendix 5

How a difference
has been made

The customer of one of the district councils has a disabled child who comes to stay. He has a feeding machine that needs to be kept on overnight & heating constantly on to keep warm, which the customer was struggling with on a low income. An award of £100 Co-op vouchers was made for help with gas/electric top ups.

The customer of one of the district councils has extreme anxiety and suicidal thoughts. A referral was made for a food parcel and the council arranged for the parcel to be delivered direct to the customer. Also a cash award of £100 from the Housing Support Fund was made to help with gas/electric costs.

A referral was received from a hospital, regarding a family which were struggling with the rising cost of living and keeping the house warm for their teenage daughter who was receiving treatment for cancer. A £200 award was made which the father was able to use towards petrol, food and gas/electric tops up. The council also referred them through to Development Plus for a warm pack. They were incredibly pleased with their pack and said the radiator heat reflectors were making a real difference.

Self-referral from a district council's resident who was on maternity pay but had just found out that she would have no job to return to as her place of work was closing down due to rising costs. Due to reduction in her maternity pay, the council was able to help with a £200 award of Co-op vouchers for her and her children.

Struggling with the rising cost of living on her income of Universal Credit, a district council made an award of £200 to their resident. It was also noticed that this customer had arrears on her Council Tax and was not in receipt of any Council Tax Reduction (CTR), which she was entitled to based on her income. This customer had not previously been engaging with the authority but once contacted, the customer completed a CTR form with the staff member and is now claiming CTR for the year.



Appendix 6

Case Study:
Warm Welcome Space at
Bridge Street Church, Lincoln

We took on the building a number of years back, knowing that we needed a community space for the area. As the winter has come and it's got colder, the need for a warm space and facilities for people to come and have a tea, coffee, toast, soup, whatever they need, and sometimes it's often a natter as well.

It's really important when people come to warm spaces that it is free of charge, that there is no underlying cost to be able to come in.

You don't have to be a member. Sometimes there's big community meals that happen in the spaces. It is open to all and there isn't that barrier of cost which is so, so important.

The age group that we have coming in here is quite varied. It's not a child space, it's more of an adult space. So I would say 17, 18 onwards, right up to people in their nineties.

We do try to signpost people to different areas, but at the same time trying to maintain this kind of, not just the warm space, but a warm environment for people.



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