

Local Government response to cost-of-living crisis

24th October 2022

WLGA: Working to support Welsh Councils



- Establishment of an **WLGA cost-of-living group** to co-ordinate internal activity across all policy areas with the aim of developing a Local Government cost-of-living position
- Desktop exercise to **map the cost-of-living activity** across Councils
- Developing web content for WLGA website signposting **to the support available** across Welsh Councils and through other government departments
- Co-ordinating events/seminars to provide elected members and officers across public, social, voluntary and third sectors with **opportunities for learning, sharing good practice and showcasing collaborative approaches to service delivery**
- Progressing work with **Wales Tackling Poverty and Inequality Officer Network** to understand the challenges, issues and opportunities being faced by councils
- Comprehensive **cost-of-living communications strategy** to support clear, consistent and transparent messaging across Welsh Government and Local Authorities
- Mobilisation of WLGA Digital Team to assist councils in **simplifying access to their services** and supporting a **no wrong door approach** to accessing support
- Ensuring **every contact with the council counts** by raising awareness of current data sharing and collaboration opportunities

Councils: Working to support its residents



- Governance and accountability
- Targeting and co-ordinating support
- Accessibility of affordable products and services
- Early intervention and crisis prevention
- Awareness raising and information sharing

Councils: Working to support its residents

Governance and accountability

- Cross-party and All-party working groups
- Public Service Board sub-groups
- Cost-of-living task forces
- Cost-of-living and Poverty Partnership
- Multi-agency steering and operational groups
- Business Resilience forums
- Task and finish groups
- Accountable manager Cost-of-living workshops
- Cost-of-living work programmes, action plans and strategies

Targeting and Co-ordination of Support

- Vulnerability mapping
- Mapping of existing provision
- Poverty Dashboards
- Development of “customer intelligence”
- Exploring options for proportionate universalism
- Identifying Cost-of-living co-ordinators and community connectors
- Expansion and enhancement of existing frameworks for LA, commissioned and community based support
- Inclusion of poverty as a theme within plans for SPF grant funding
- Practical support for the wellbeing of staff and volunteers

Councils: Working to support its residents

Accessibility of affordable products and services



- Co-ordination of various food initiatives including ensuring adequate emergency food provision, community fridges, food pantries, delivered meal boxes, slow cooker programmes, community cooking champions, free fruit for high schools, well-fed meals on wheels, food stores and hospital to home safety boxes
- “Take what you need shelves” in schools for bags/coats and uniform recycle/exchange schemes
- Provision of baby bundle essentials and development of baby banks
- Lunch vouchers for families attending hospital appointments at lunch time
- Promotion of social tariffs
- Affordable credit options / avoidance of illegal money lenders
- Collaboration between college and community centres to offer free/reduced costs services such as haircuts, manicures, massages
- Provision of community and subsidised transport
- Supporting development of heating oil syndicates
- Development of mutual aid programmes
- Wood banks to re-use fell trees
- Promotion of trusted partner take up to allow referrals into Fuel Foundation fuel voucher scheme

Councils: Working to support its residents

Early intervention and crisis prevention



- Introduction of warm hubs and welcome spaces
- Extension of existing offers within education, youth and community settings to include extended hours, provision of meals and access to advice services
- Preparing Christmas support including toy banks/Christmas food parcels and meals
- Relaunch of street based schemes to take support to the communities
- Buddying/Befriending service to prevent social isolation
- Warm clothes donation boxes and provision of warm packs to individual unable to attend warm spaces
- Additional hardship style funding to assist those households in most need
- Targeting of discretionary spending elements of WG and UKG funding to provide citizen centric support – with key aims of preventing homelessness and ensuring families have warm homes and food on tables
- Bespoke financial support for homeowners and self-employed
- Additional payments to support retentions of foster carers and supported lodgings providers
- Introducing extra expense claim runs for council staff that travel a lot for work alongside an increase in mileage rate
- One-off payments for lower paid council staff

Councils: Working to support its residents

Awareness raising and information sharing



- Cost of living web pages to centralise support
- Online directory of cost-of-living support and interactive maps of warm spaces and other “help near me”
- Increasing capacity in financial inclusion services
- Promotion of DAF and other grant schemes and take up of social utility tariffs
- Upskilling of front line staff to ensure every public service contact counts
- Supporting local and national campaigns to increase benefit take up
- Targeted campaigns to increase take of locally administered Welsh benefits
- Drop in sessions in community settings
- Promoting cost-of-living interventions taking place across communities including through private sector e.g. kids eat free during half term, community spaces in Asda branches
- Briefings for internal and external stakeholders and partners
- Establishing food and fuel champions to offer bespoke advice and support
- Creation of digital and physical assets detailing support available
- Targeted communication at residents
- Campaigns to support households with understanding energy costs and how to save energy
- Procurement of technical energy efficiency advice services
- Cost of living roadshows / summits and other shared learning events
- Commissioning of new advice line services and introduction of local area co-ordinators in communities