

## Year 1 Tackling Poverty Action Plan Report

### Part 1: Progress against the Year 1 Action Plan

The following table provides a progress report against the achievement of the actions contained in the Tacking Poverty Strategy Year 1 Action Plan

No.	Action	Progress
<b>Priority Area 1: Emergency Support</b>		
1.	Ensure foodbanks in Suffolk have access to sufficient food to meet current needs as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and deal with cost-of-living pressures.	52 foodbanks and other food projects have benefitted from £163,396 of funding providing 141,686 food items and £70,835 providing 72,764 non-food items. East Suffolk Council have supported 3 community pantries and launched a Pantry Grant Scheme.
2.	Find ways to make more fresh food available via foodbanks, pop-up shops and other means	Current discussions have not yet identified potential workable solutions; however, this will be picked up during 2023/24 through the Food Security programme.  East Suffolk Council have funded seven community 'growing space' schemes through their Field to Fork grants, have distributed 1,600 growing kits through eighteen schools in East Suffolk and have helped support eighteen 'Comfort Food' locations (places which provide free hot meals and drinks to people struggling with the cost of living).
3.	Recruit a caseworker who can support foodbank clients access support to tackle the root causes of their situation	Action changed in favour of providing £150,000 of additional funding to Citizen Advice organisations for 2022/23 to increase capacity considering cost-of-living pressures.  Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils have provided additional funding to Citizen's Advice organisations to deliver debt advice and support to households at risk of hardship and have been working with Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice in the delivery of a Cost-of-Living Forum to build better inter-organisational collaboration and shared learning.  East Suffolk Council have set up a <a href="#">Cost-of-Living referral scheme</a> providing one-to-one support to Suffolk residents, including financial inclusion work, which has helped over 800 residents so far.
4.	Put in place a regular programme of communications to ensure people are aware of the support available	Regular communications are in place to promote the support available in Suffolk, including creation of <a href="#">Cost-of-Living webpages</a> , <a href="#">Cost-of-Living leaflet</a> in a range of different languages

		<p>and distributed online and via community organisations and public engagement events, , regular social media promotion of the <a href="#">Local Welfare Assistance Scheme</a>, <a href="#">Warm Homes Suffolk</a> and other financial support services, including general money-saving advice, national support and regular press releases culminating in press articles and interviews.</p> <p><a href="#">Babergh</a> &amp; <a href="#">Mid Suffolk</a> District Councils, <a href="#">East Suffolk Council</a>, <a href="#">Ipswich Borough Council</a>, <a href="#">West Suffolk Council</a> all have dedicated Cost-of-Living Webpages.</p> <p>East Suffolk Council have run seventeen roadshow events to raise awareness of cost-of-living support for residents in their area.</p> <p>Suffolk County Council's Financial Inclusion and Advice team have been running Cost-Of-Living support workshops to increase the awareness of the full range of available support to professionals working with people who may be experiencing financial hardship.</p> <p>Specific promotion by councils and the <a href="#">Rural Coffee Caravan</a> took place during the winter across all districts to raise awareness of 'Warm Spaces' (places people could go if they were in fuel poverty and struggling to stay warm.)</p>
5.	Continue to underwrite the cost of the Suffolk Advice & Support Service (SASS)	Agreement was gained from Suffolk Public Sector Leaders to underwrite LWAS and SASS cost up to £1 million. Current services ran until September 2022 when a new model/service commenced.
6.	Continue to underwrite the cost of the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) for 2022/23	Agreement was gained from Suffolk Public Sector Leaders to underwrite LWAS and SASS cost up to £1 million. The original LWAS scheme ran until September 2022, with a new and improved service starting in October 2022 to allow self-referrals and an easier application process. During 2022/23, funding from the Household Support Fund and Local Welfare Assistance Scheme has supported a total of 20,383 application from households for a total of £4,142,638

No.	Action	Progress
<b>Priority Area 2: Increasing Incomes, Reducing Costs</b>		
1.	Run a pilot trial of the Poverty Proofing the School Day Initiative	The programme started in January and runs until July with 7 Suffolk schools.

2.	Increase the promotion, uptake, and use of Healthy Start Vouchers	<p>Public Health and Health Visiting teams have worked with Sustain to promote the scheme and identify barriers to take-up. Comparing uptake % by district, there has been an increase in take up between August 2021 and March 2023.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="965 300 1552 635"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="965 300 1196 448">District/Borough</th> <th data-bbox="1196 300 1279 448"></th> <th data-bbox="1279 300 1420 448">August 2021 Uptake (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1420 300 1552 448">March 2023 Uptake (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="965 448 1196 485">Babergh</td> <td data-bbox="1196 448 1279 485"></td> <td data-bbox="1279 448 1420 485">54.85%</td> <td data-bbox="1420 448 1552 485">59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="965 485 1196 521">Ipswich</td> <td data-bbox="1196 485 1279 521"></td> <td data-bbox="1279 485 1420 521">53.01%</td> <td data-bbox="1420 485 1552 521">61%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="965 521 1196 558">Mid Suffolk</td> <td data-bbox="1196 521 1279 558"></td> <td data-bbox="1279 521 1420 558">51.57%</td> <td data-bbox="1420 521 1552 558">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="965 558 1196 595">East Suffolk</td> <td data-bbox="1196 558 1279 595"></td> <td data-bbox="1279 558 1420 595">60.86%</td> <td data-bbox="1420 558 1552 595">66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="965 595 1196 635">West Suffolk</td> <td data-bbox="1196 595 1279 635"></td> <td data-bbox="1279 595 1420 635">55.10%</td> <td data-bbox="1420 595 1552 635">63%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District/Borough		August 2021 Uptake (%)	March 2023 Uptake (%)	Babergh		54.85%	59%	Ipswich		53.01%	61%	Mid Suffolk		51.57%	60%	East Suffolk		60.86%	66%	West Suffolk		55.10%	63%
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3.	Maintain high take up of Free School Meals and if possible, further increase it	<p>Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Schools continue to work hard to promote take-up of Free School Meals. Current take-up figures are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 = 21,371</li> <li>• 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 = 24,824</li> </ul>																								
4.	Lobby government to expand entitlement to Free School Meals so all families living in poverty have access to it.	Work is ongoing to further understand local needs including using the Poverty Proofing the School Day project which is identifying barriers to families taking up the offer of free school meals.																								
5.	Roll out use of the LIFT dashboard across District & Borough Councils to provide better targeted support	East Suffolk Council have piloted the LIFT dashboard for 2 years. However, this action for a wider rollout has been on hold during majority of 2022/23 due to data sharing issues needing resolution before proceeding with a wider rollout.																								
6.	Put in place a regular programme of communications to promote take up of financial support	Regular communications are in place to promote the support available in Suffolk, including creation of <a href="#">Cost-of-Living webpages</a> , <a href="#">Cost-of-Living leaflet</a> in a range of different languages and distributed online and via community organisations and public engagement events, , regular social media promotion of the <a href="#">Local Welfare Assistance Scheme</a> , <a href="#">Warm Homes Suffolk</a> and other financial support services, including general money-saving advice, national support and regular press releases culminating in press articles and interviews. All District & Borough Councils also have dedicated Cost-of-Living Webpages. East Suffolk Council have run seventeen roadshow events to raise awareness of cost-of-living support for residents in their area.																								

		Suffolk County Council's Financial Inclusion and Advice team have been running Cost-Of-Living support workshops to increase the awareness of the full range of available support to professionals working with people who may be experiencing financial hardship.
7.	Increase awareness of and access to local credit unions	Credit unions have been promoted through Suffolk Infolink, Cost of Living Leaflets and through cost-of-living events.
8.	Increase the number of employers in Suffolk that meet the definition of offering 'good work'	The Suffolk Health & Wellbeing Board have agreed on 'Good Work & Health' as one of their 4 key priorities in their <a href="#">2022-2027 Strategy</a> . Work to increase the number of employers offering 'good work' will be delivered through the Best Work & Health partnership delivery plan starting in 2023/24.

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<b>Priority Area 3: Wellbeing &amp; Life Chances</b>																										
1.	Deliver a cultural programme in Suffolk Libraries focused on children's literacy	Suffolk Libraries have recruited a new Children's Librarian who is developing a new library offer for schools to increase engagement and involvement as well as working on new pilot projects aimed at families across the county.																								
2.	Continue to develop the Holiday Activities & Food programme.	<p>The Holiday Activities &amp; Food programme has continued to be developed in partnership with District and Borough Councils to further increase the number of children able to access the provision.</p> <p><b>No. of children accessing:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Holiday Period</th> <th>No. of children accessing 2021</th> <th>No. of children accessing 2022</th> <th>Increase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Easter</td> <td>1,392</td> <td>6,998</td> <td>+5,606</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Summer</td> <td>5,349</td> <td>8,141</td> <td>+2,792</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christmas</td> <td>3,006</td> <td>4,637</td> <td>+1,631</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>No. of meals provided:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Holiday Period</th> <th>No. of children accessing</th> <th>No. of children accessing</th> <th>Increase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Holiday Period	No. of children accessing 2021	No. of children accessing 2022	Increase	Easter	1,392	6,998	+5,606	Summer	5,349	8,141	+2,792	Christmas	3,006	4,637	+1,631	Holiday Period	No. of children accessing	No. of children accessing	Increase				
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			2021	2022		
			Easter	5,011	26,491	+21,480
			Summer	32,094	55,476	+23,382
			Christmas	7,734	18,548	+10,814
			Total	44,839	100,515	+55,676
3.	Investing £2.5m to tackle the mental health impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic	As part of the Public Mental Health programme, the Tackling Poverty programme has been able to allocate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£61,363 Food &amp; Financial Wellbeing Grant Programme supporting 17 VCSE organisations for projects addressing the cost-of-living and its mental health impacts.</li> <li>£81,739 Financial Education for 3 VCSE projects as well as an extension of the Multiply programme to 17–18-year-olds.</li> <li>£200,000 also agreed in 2022/23 for spend in 2023/24 for projects addressing mental health for unemployed people and people experiencing in-work poverty.</li> </ul>				
4.	Pilot trial a grant programme in partnership with VCSE partner organisations that can provide small grants to individuals to help overcome barriers to escaping poverty.	Working with Suffolk Community Foundation, the £50,000 Breakthrough Fund has been agreed and will run in 2023/24 to fund approximately 10 VCSE organisations to pilot the approach				
5.	Set up a Tackling Poverty funding programme to test innovative approaches to tackling poverty	The Tackling Poverty Innovation Fund was launched in 2022/23 and has funded 4 VCSE organisations for £80,681. Projects are delivering during 2023.				

No.	Action	Progress
<b>Priority Area 4: Preventing Poverty</b>		
1.	Fund a community development role within Community Action Suffolk to support and grow the community-led early years provision sector	This role and the support programme is now in place <a href="https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/projects/parent-child-groups-suffolk/">https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/projects/parent-child-groups-suffolk/</a>
2.	Set up an Experts by Experience initiative that brings together people with experience of poverty with local decision makers to look at issues faced by people living in poverty and then identify and implement solutions that will improve people's lives	Suffolk County Council commissioned Healthwatch Suffolk to undertake this in-depth co-production initiative and are currently recruiting participants. <a href="https://healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk/poverty/">https://healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk/poverty/</a>

3.	Write to government asking them to enshrine the existing commitment to UN Sustainable Goal 2 (No Hunger) into domestic legislation.	Letter sent by the Leader of the Council in March 2022.
4.	Capture learning from the Covid-19 pandemic response to ensure there is a plan to ensure people can access food in the event of another emergency	Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic response will in part inform the development of the Food Security programme in 2023/24 which seeks to improve food security in Suffolk communities.
5.	Conduct the initial scoping and research into the potential to set up a Local Food Partnership using the Sustainable Food Place model.	Funding approved in February 2023 to progress this action during 2023-2025.
6.	Work with schools, the VCSE sector and parents to ensure all children have access to good quality financial education.	Three VCSE organisations have been funded for a total of £81,739 to test financial education projects. A further £50,000 has been awarded for an extension of the Multiply programme to 17–18-year-olds who are not currently covered under that programme.
7.	Develop poverty awareness training sessions and materials for public sector staff and councillors	Suffolk County Council's Financial Inclusion and Advice team have been running Cost-Of-Living support workshops to increase the awareness of the full range of available support to professionals working with people who may be experiencing financial hardship.  Poverty Awareness training has been deferred to 2023/24
8.	Add the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010 into the councils Equality Impact Assessment process so due consideration is given to inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.	Completed during 2022
9.	Review internal systems and processes on key services that support people on low incomes to ensure that they provide timely and easy access to support and don't inadvertently cause issues.	The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme is the first process that has been improved. Changes have been made to move to a self-referral process and a simplified application process.  With the socio-economic duty now added to the Equality Impact Assessment, new projects and service changes have to consider socio-economic disadvantage in their design.
10.	Develop an 'ask' of national government identifying specific areas that require national government intervention	Tackling poverty informs our working with government on a range of topics. So far, we have informed the Suffolk devolution deal which includes proposals that would help improve our ability to tackle poverty and there has been recent work with the Department of Work and Pensions around data sharing to enable more proactive support to be targeted to those in most need.

## Part 2: District Council Work to Tackle Poverty

The following is a list of work that district councils have delivered which tackles poverty but is in addition to activities detailed in the above Action Plan

<b>Babergh &amp; Mid Suffolk District Councils</b>			
Developed a <a href="#">Cost of Living Action Plan</a> which lays out immediate and medium term steps to supporting households struggling with the cost of living.	Distribution of the Household Support Fund by our Tenant Support Team who also provide wrap around budgeting and benefit support	Delivery of group and one to one <a href="#">Digital Skills</a> sessions in Suffolk Libraires, in conjunction with the free iPad loaning scheme, to reduce digital exclusion	Development of a 12-month retrofitting programme for council stock which improves energy efficiency in the lowest EPC rated properties through improved insulation
Appointment of a Cost-of-Living Coordinator to work across disciplines to ensure that the Councils are meeting the needs of people impacted by the current crisis.	Amendments to our Council Tax Reduction benefit to enable a 100% discount to be awarded to eligible low-income households.	Delivery of Winter Warmth Funding to create a <a href="#">network</a> of warm spaces across the district	Linking in owners of empty properties with our <a href="#">Central Suffolk Lettings</a> team to increase the number of affordable privately rented properties.

<b>East Suffolk Council</b>		
Developed an extensive <a href="#">Ease the Squeeze</a> programme of work to support households struggling with the cost of living.	Recruited three new members of staff to carry out financial inclusion work	Piloted Winter Warmth packs which have since been rolled out Suffolk wide.
Funded 40+ projects through their Cost-of-Living community grants and 32 organisations running Warm Rooms		Launched a handyperson scheme

### Ipswich Borough Council

Cost of Living event run in partnership with Seetec targeted at those on Jobseekers allowance or UC to discuss energy bills, cost of living and training & education opportunities. Cost of Living Flyer produced to support residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.	Funding provided for slow cookers and cookbooks. Further additional funding was set aside for foodbanks. Recipe book created for residents visiting the top up shops – recipes included ingredients available from top up shops.
Carried out a range of promotional activities to raise awareness of the energy bill support scheme, alternative fuel payments, discretionary housing payments and a new council tax reduction scheme.	Funded thirty-six groups Community Resilience Fund (14 food banks/top up shops) & eighteen warm hubs, up until March 23.

### West Suffolk Council

In addition, to the core work on the government funded Holiday Activities and Food Programme, West Suffolk Council have worked with activity providers to seek funding to provide an offer during half term holidays as well.	Provided funding to new and existing community groups to provide luncheon clubs, warm spaces, and initiatives to tackle social isolation.
Funding provided for a number of warm spaces throughout West Suffolk to run from October through to March.	Commissioned Dentaid in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.



## Part 3: Other local initiatives contributing to Tackling Poverty

This section shines a spotlight on some local initiatives that are supporting Suffolk residents, and which contribute to tackling poverty in Suffolk.

### Suffolk Community Foundation – [Surviving Winter Campaign](#)

Along with the many other grant schemes the Foundation manage that help support local charities, the Suffolk Community Foundation runs the annual Surviving Winter Campaign which aims to support people experiencing fuel poverty. Data shows that around 75,000 households in Suffolk struggle to heat their homes. The Surviving Winter Campaign is a fundraising campaign that seeks to raise funding to support individuals experiencing fuel poverty. Working with Citizens Advice Ipswich and Warm Homes, Healthy People the funding provides grants to cover immediate fuel costs as well as providing energy and money management advice to individuals with the aim of helping people escape fuel poverty in the longer term. Research from previous years has found that with this additional advice that the average benefit to households from the advice has been £1,000 meaning that this advice continues to benefit households in the long term.

### Suffolk Libraries – [Be Kind Winter Campaign](#)

Suffolk Libraries have always provided a safe, warm sanctuary for anyone to come and spend time in or find support and resources. For winter 2022, they brought in additional initiatives to combat the cost-of-living crisis including free hot drinks/soup, warm clothes, device charging and the provision of free essential items. In addition, some libraries also hosted drop-in sessions from Barclays Bank (to help with money management and financial health) and Citizens Advice (providing advice on issues like housing, benefits, money, debt, immigration, relationships, and employment).


This is in addition to all the current services which include free [Wi-Fi](#) and [computer access](#), a wide range of [online advice and resources](#), free [menstrual products](#), free [events](#) and [social groups](#), [free support and advice sessions](#), a [dedicated health and wellbeing service](#) and of course free [books](#) including an [extensive eLibrary](#).

### National Literacy Trust – [Get Suffolk Reading](#)

Get Suffolk Reading is an initiative funded by Suffolk County Council and established with the support of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders. It aims to improve children's literacy skills by inspiring families to read together, helping parents to support their children's literacy skills and working with schools to aid the teaching of literacy. Information on some of the impact from year one of the initiative can be seen in the infographic below.

# Get Suffolk Reading impact – year one



<b>Wellbeing</b>	<p>Take 10: More than 6,500 people from schools, libraries and local businesses took part in first Take 10</p>	<p>Take 10: 3,000 attendees at virtual author event, 50 entries to pet photo competition, engagement with business with 'book and biscuit' activity</p>	<p>Community bookshelves/reading corners: From the Water Lane Leisure Centre in Lowestoft partnership – estimated total visitors is 3,090 each week with swimmers, sibling, parents, walk-in visitors and schools.</p>
<b>Early years</b>	<p>"It's helped us expand our book collection for our 3 year old who loves reading but it is often expensive. She always loves the activities too." Lynette, Haverhill parent of two children</p>		<p>Our work in Lowestoft has helped promote the value of reading to young children. Following a visit to a family hub the staff rearranged their room so that books were more of a focus for families. And our story trail at the start of the summer increased the number of young children signing up to the Reading Buddies challenge.</p>
<b>Aspiration</b>	<p>"I chose to volunteer to support Get Suffolk Reading because of my love of reading – plus it's a brilliant initiative and as much or little commitment as you choose." Jane, Debenham Literacy Champion</p>	<p>Haverhill skills escalation day (themed 'I'm working towards my big dreams') – 250 primary aged children dressing in costumes and doing roleplay and written activities about aspirational careers.</p>	
<b>Supporting schools</b>	<p>£340,000 in-kind and funded schools programmes secured</p>	<p>Little Big Book Club in Stowmarket: 96% of children said it was fun to read with parents 100% of parents would recommend LBBC to other families</p> 	<p>"Thanks so much to Get Suffolk Reading's delivery of beautiful books. We have decided to gift every child a book when it's their birthday. Thanks for the amazing support you give us." Maxine, teacher at Crawford's Primary</p>