

Surviving Winter

Impact report 2022/23



**Dorset
Community
Foundation**

12th year of appeal sees a huge rise in donations

WE ran our 12th Surviving Winter appeal between October 2022 and April 2023, raising £104,105.41.

The appeal was supported by 299 donors, including 79 who supported the appeal previously. There were 63 new donors and 157 who gave anonymously. Gift Aid is retained by DCF as a contribution to the costs incurred in running the campaign.

Funds raised were significantly higher than last year (£59,230).

This is largely due to increased support from people in Dorset, plus generous support from local companies and charitable trusts.

We were supported by Sovereign Housing Association, Superior Ltd, The Redlynch Charitable Trust and The Stonebarrow Trust.

The appeal raises funds to support older and vulnerable people in Dorset over the age of 50 who are in fuel poverty.



The Surviving Winter appeal is now in its 13th year

We especially encourage those in receipt of the government's Winter Fuel Allowance who feel they can manage without it, to consider donating to the appeal and helping someone in less fortunate circumstances.

"The grant helped us a great deal it paid our fuel bill which allowed us to pay other things we needed."

"I didn't know about this grant and it has been a lifeline for me. I am 73 and disabled, not very computer savvy but the people at Citizens Advice did all the work for me."



Being in fuel poverty means being unable to meet the costs of adequately heating your home.

This could be because of low income, the cost of energy (for example, expensive prepayment meters), or the type or age of the heating system. Surviving Winter grant recipients include those living in homes that are poorly insulated or difficult to heat, park homes or households using oil, coal and bottled gas – the costs for which have risen exponentially.

The appeal works with Citizens Advice to distribute grants of £200, helps

bills in the coldest months.

The grants bring certainty and allow recipients to switch on their heating during cold weather, as well as paying for smaller items such as electric blankets and warm clothing to help vulnerable people keep warm.

Feedback from grant recipients illustrate that receiving a Surviving Winter grant not only enables households to keep warm over the winter but supports improved mental health.

The stress and worry about affording to pay their bills has an enormous impact on mental health so recipients are extremely grateful for the grant.

Living in a cold home puts health at risk, especially for those with health conditions that are exacerbated by the cold.

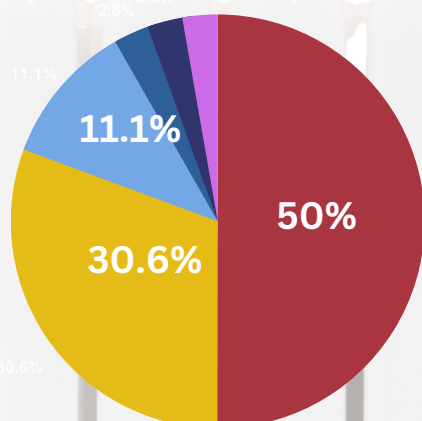
People over 60 are particularly at risk from the impact of cold weather. We also offer Surviving Winter grants to those age 50 to 59 where they have health conditions and are on the highest level of benefits. Some 28 per cent of this year's grant recipients were in this group.

They often fall outside criteria for extra support, experience difficulties with Universal Credit and are frequently identified as being in or at risk of fuel poverty.

"Well done... I felt I had to send a thank you card but it doesn't even begin to cover the peace of mind their help afforded me."

"I have struggled a lot with health problems which means I'm on a restrictive diet which proves expensive and plus the spiralling costs of food and energy mean it's very hard."

" I have a health condition that is severely impacted by the cold. Heating my home is of paramount importance and helps avoid potential hospitalisation. Thank you for your support."



How the grants were spent

- "I paid it all to my utility company bills."
- "I paid some my bills and some to something else."
- "I bought an item to keep me warm."
- "I put it towards an oil/coal/wood delivery."
- "I bought wood for the fire."
- "I helped my daughter and paid my utility bill."



Partner sees inquiries rise

Advisors at Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck, our partner in the Surviving Winter campaign

DURING this year's campaign our partners Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck distributed £101,200 of funding to 506 Dorset residents in fuel poverty – a 17 per cent increase from last year.

Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck distribute Surviving Winter grants of £200 per household by co-ordinating applications made through Citizens Advice offices across Dorset.

They receive a contribution of £10 per grant awarded toward their costs and we also made an £800 contribution to support their Fuel Poverty Advice Line.

Households applying for a Surviving Winter grant

have a follow up call with a Energy Adviser from Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck.

This enables full exploration of the household's situation, relevant energy advice to try to reduce costs, as well as other income maximisation checks to help prevent the need for future grants.

The Surviving Winter scheme compliments statutory funds from the Household Support Fund (Department for Work & Pensions) also distributed by Citizens Advice, which prioritises families and younger households. This support helped households forced to

choose between heating and eating.

Due to high demand outstripping income from our appeal, the grant application process was closed for three weeks in January – the first time this has happened since the scheme began 11 years ago.

However, all eligible applicants in this period did receive grants either by waiting or through other discretionary support.

The increasing cost of living crisis, uncertainty in the energy market and increase in the energy price cap on April 1, 2022, continues to have a significant impact on households already struggling to make ends

meet and unable to increase their income.

There is huge pressure to meet increased energy costs and measures such as switching tariff or supplier are no longer available.

Cost of Living Payments are not enough to cover all the increases households are facing in food, fuel and energy costs.

Energy Advisers look at other energy saving measures, assist households with supplier problems and make formal complaints or take action further to the Ombudsman.

Citizens Advice reached more people than ever before and the Surviving Winter grants felt for many like a lifeline.

Although the service supports financial resilience and grants clearly help households to manage their current situation, a Citizens Advice survey of Surviving Winter recipients shows that the majority of households are nevertheless anticipating that they could still need help next year.

A spokesman for Citizens Advice said: "We are very grateful to the community foundation and the donors.

Surviving Winter grants enabled us to provide direct support to households who are in need, giving them much needed security."

Case study

STEVE sought help from Citizens Advice's Energy Unit because he was worried about his energy costs.

He is 70 and lives alone in a privately-owned, two-bedroom park home.

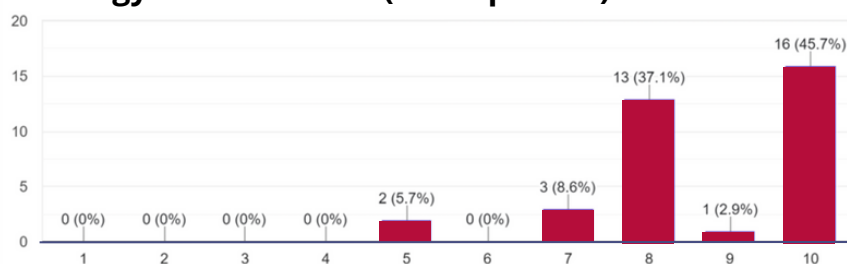
His wife used to deal with all the household admin. He does not have access to the internet and is not IT literate.

He also has trouble with reading and writing and has extensive health issues which affect his mobility and cause him to feel the cold.

Steve is in receipt of disability benefit, a state pension, and has received help from Citizens Advice to apply for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Pension Credit to maximise his income.

- Steve was supported to apply for and receive a Surviving Winter grant.
- He was provided with energy saving tips to reduce consumption.
- He was advised on the increased Winter Fuel Payment for this year only, and the Park Warm Homes Discount.
- He was supported to call British Gas who advised the client is on the new billing system. The representative was advised Steve needs to be on the Priority Services Register, that he cannot use the internet to submit meter readings and that he would like paper billing.
- We referred Steve to LEAP (Ridgewater Energy) for simple energy saving measures to be installed in his park home.

Out of ten, how worried are you about the cost of energy in the future? (35 responses)



Case studies

JOHN is a 78 and lives in a park home with his wife.

He was concerned with the high costs of energy, and the lack of support available to park home owners. He is sub-metered for electricity supply by the site owner, and uses LPG Calor gas bottles. His site owner is receiving the energy bills support scheme payments, and they have stated their intentions to split the discount between every home on the site, which John is not happy with because the discount will be diluted to a very small amount for each recipient.

- John was supported to apply for and receive a Surviving Winter grant and a Winter Warmth grant. This provided him with £200 towards energy costs, as well as a £200 supermarket voucher.

BARRY lives alone in social housing property and has mental health difficulties, a visual impairment and is also asthmatic.

He is on a low income of ESA in support group; PIP daily living and mobility. The property is electric only, with Quantum Dimplex electric radiators. There is also a hot water tank he switches on and waits for it to heat up. He was switched to a Smart PPM due to having a debt with SSE and he wanted support to liaise with SSE over debt recovery.

- An adviser registered John's interest in the Park Home Warm Home Discount through the Charis website to ensure he will be contacted once the scheme opens.

- He was provided with practical energy saving advice to help him lower his usage and reduce electricity costs, as well as ensuring that Calor gas bottles last longer before needing to be replaced.

- He received advice on what the site owner can charge for electricity, and the sub-metering rules that mean he will not benefit from the pass-through regulations in the Energy Prices Act 2022. He was advised he will need to wait for the Government's alternative EBSS fund.

- Adviser reminded John of the winter fuel payment and pensioner cost of living payment, total £500.

- He was supported to apply for and receive a Surviving Winter grant.

- An adviser liaised with SSE, who confirmed his account had debt on back of Smart PPM, that recovery would not start until April and agreed to set it at £4 a week.

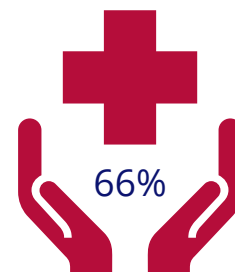
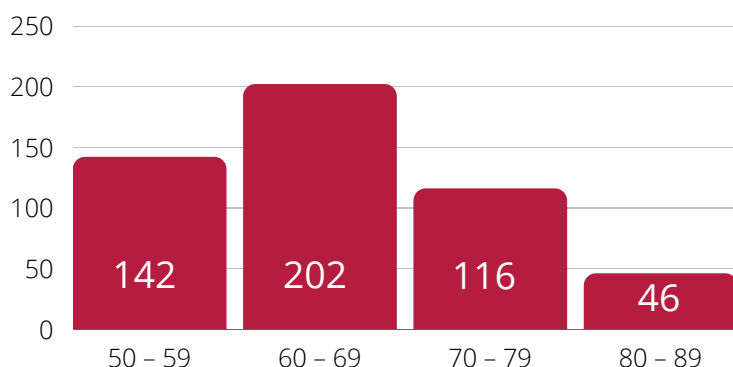
- All EBSS payments had been redeemed direct on to the meter.

- It was confirmed Barry was on single rate tariff and this suited him.

- He was referred to the Centre for Sustainable Energy, which issued him with a heat blanket pack.

Surviving Winter 2022/23 in numbers

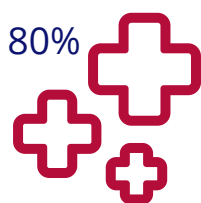
Grant recipients by age



Have a long-term health condition



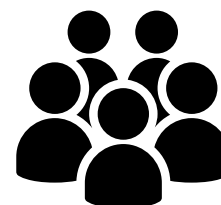
Have a disability



Have a long-term health condition or a disability



£104,105.41 raised



299 donors

Grants by postcode area

THE highest number of grants were awarded to households living in Weymouth and Portland. This is consistent with previous years as these are known to be the areas with highest levels of fuel poverty / vulnerable households.

There has been a decrease in clients from Bournemouth and Poole, possibly due to the Household Support fund being available. There was a rise in grants in North Dorset, where we have had many clients struggling due to being off mains gas supply.

Post code	Post code area	No. of grants	Area
BH1	Town Centre, Springbourne, East Cliff	9	
BH2	Bournemouth Central, West Cliff	2	
BH3	Talbot Woods, Winton	0	
BH4	Westbourne, Branksome Woods	3	
BH5	Boscombe, Pokesdown	2	
BH6	Southbourne, Tuckton, Wick	6	
BH7	Littledown, Iford	0	
BH8	Malmesbury Park, Queens Park, Strouden Park, Townsend, Holdenhurst, Throop	6	
BH9	Winton, Moordown, Throop, Muscliff	1	
BH10	Kinson, East Howe, Northbourne, Redhill, Ensby Park	5	
BH11	Kinson, Bear Cross, West Howe, Wallisdown	11	Bournemouth: 45
BH12	Branksome, Alderney, Upper Parkstone, Wallisdown, Newtown	15	
BH13	Canford Cliffs, Sandbanks, Branksome Park	0	
BH14	Lower Parkstone, Lilliput, Penn Hill	8	
BH15	Town Centre, Hamworthy, Oakdale	7	

Post code	Post code area	No. of grants	Area
BH16	Upton, Turlin Moor, Lytchett Minster, Lytchett Matravers	9	
BH17	Canford Heath, Creekmoor	3	
BH18	Broadstone	0	Poole: 42
BH19	Swanage, Studland, Langton Matravers	20	
BH20	Wareham, Wool, bere Regis	34	Purbeck: 54
BH21	Wimborne, Corfe Mullen	28	
BH22	Ferndown, West Moors, West Parley	25	
BH23	Christchurch, Mudeford, Highcliffe	24	
BH24	Ringwood, St Leonards, Ashley Heath	1	
BH31	Verwood, Three Legged Cross	2	
SP5	Sixpenny Handley	1	
SP6	Alderholt, Fordingbridge	0	Christchurch & East Dorset: 81
DT1	Dorchester	26	
DT2	Dorchester	28	
DT6	Bridport	17	
DT7	Lyme Regis	4	
DT8	Beaminster	1	
DT9	Sherborne	24	West Dorset: 100
DT3	Chickerell, Broadwey, Radipole, Osmington, Preston, Littlemoor, Portesham, Abbotsbury, Langton Herring	21	
DT4	Weymouth town centre, Melcombe Regis, Wyke Regis	74	
DT5	Portland, Fortuneswell, Easton, Southwell, Weston, The Grove	30	Weymouth & Portland: 125
DT10	Sturminster Newton	8	
DT11	Blandford Forum	26	
SP7	Shaftesbury, Compton Abbas, Fontmell Magna, Donhead St Andrew, Donhead St Mary, Berwick St John, Motcombe	17	
SP8	Gillingham, Stour Provost, East Stour, West Stour, Kington Magna, Buckhorn Weston, Milton on Stour	8	North Dorset: 59



DORSET Community Foundation would like to thank all those who donated to the 2022/23 Surviving Winter Appeal, including DCF fundholders.

Our grateful thanks go oncvce again to Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck for distributing grants.

We would also like to thank all the organisations and individuals who helped us publicise the appeal and the grants available - including BBC Radio Solent, Bournemouth and Dorset Echo, Dorset View, Dorset Biz News, Wessex Water and BCP and Dorset Councils. We could not reach the people who need our help without you.