

Surviving Winter

Impact report 2024/25



**Dorset
Community
Foundation**

Donors step in to help



Our Surviving Winter appeal was supported by 105 donors, including 14 new contributors

THROUGHOUT THE winter 2024/25 Dorset Community Foundation raised £58,034.11 through our Surviving Winter Appeal, which raise funds to support older and vulnerable people in fuel poverty.

We raised funds from 105 donors, including 70 who supported the appeal previously, 14 new donors and 22 anonymous donors.

Gift Aid is retained by DCF as a contribution to the costs incurred in running the campaign.

Funds raised were significantly lower than our best year in 2022/23, when we raised £104,105.41.

The cost of living crisis has impacted donations as well as cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance, some donors regularly donated their payment to the appeal.

To mitigate this risk we were able to secure funds from a number of other grant-making organisations throughout the UK, to whom we extend heartfelt gratitude.

Being in fuel poverty means you can cannot meet the costs of adequately heating your home. This could be because of low income, the cost of energy (e.g. expensive prepayment meters), or the type or age of the heating system.

It was so helpful. I was able to buy a large load of logs for my wood burner. I have no central heating. It is my only form of heat. I am very grateful.

We really appreciated this grant since my husband became disabled and unable to work, so any financial help takes a lot of worry away from me, as I deal with all the bills for our household.

Without this money I would have had to use food money to subsidise my heating which would have affected my health.

It was a life saver. I paid my boiler service and put some towards my grocery bill. We had to take out a lifetime mortgage to pay for a new boiler and a new roof. We are trying to pay the interest to stop the debt compounding. We have had our house on the market since last September, reduced it drastically but we still haven't sold. So the grant helped all round. Thank you.

Surviving Winter grant recipients include those living in park homes, which are poorly insulated or difficult to heat, and households using oil, coal and bottled gas, the costs for which have risen exponentially.

Regardless of their location, recipients reported that their property is poorly insulated and difficult to heat. More clients than previous reported that they rely on Oil/LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) for heating.

A Surviving Winter grant of £200, distributed via Citizens Advice, supports energy bills and enables households to switch the heating on during cold weather, and can support the purchase of smaller items to help vulnerable people keep warm.

Grants are a vital source of support for vulnerable households often choosing between heating and eating.

Some 80 per cent of grant recipients were recorded as having a disability or long-term health condition.

Those aged over 60 are particularly at risk from the impact of cold weather.



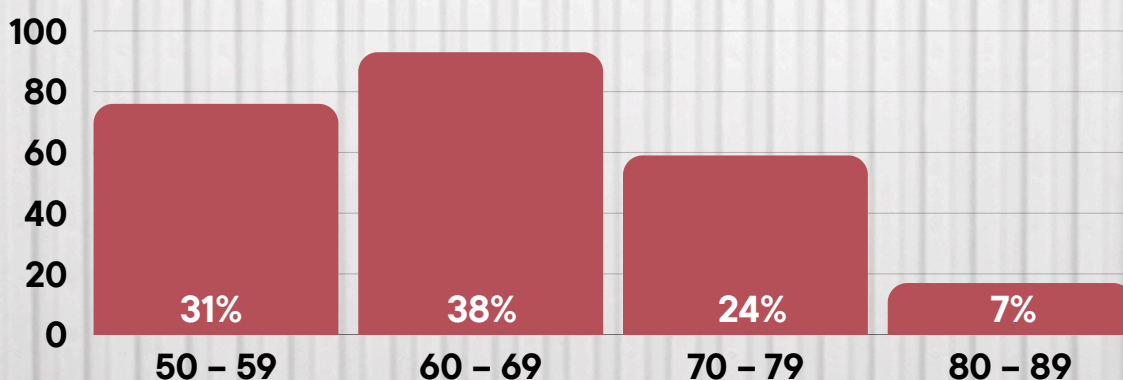
Park homes are poorly insulated and hard to heat

We also offer Surviving Winter grants to those aged 50 to 59 where they have health conditions and are on the highest level of benefits.

Some 30 per cent of this year's grant recipients were in this group, who often fall outside any criteria for additional support, even though those with a long term health condition or disability are frequently identified as being in or at risk of fuel poverty.

Of our grant recipients, 58 per cent were single people with no dependents.

Grant recipients by age



Life-changing support



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

DURING WINTER 2024/25, our partners Citizens Advice East Dorset & Purbeck distributed £49,000 of funding to 245 Dorset residents in fuel poverty.

It distributed Surviving Winter grants of £200 per household by co-ordinating applications made via Citizens Advice offices across Dorset. It receives a contribution of £10 per grant awarded towards its costs.

The Surviving Winter scheme compliments statutory funds from the Household Support Fund (Department for Work & Pensions), also distributed by Citizens Advice.

This year it prioritised families and older residents who were impacted by the loss of the Winter Fuel Payment.

Due to high demand outstripping income from our appeal, the grant application process was closed in early February 2025, two months before the usual closing date.

This is the second time this has happened since the scheme began, with last year's scheme ending in March.

Fortunately, Citizens Advice received some match funding from Southern Gas Network (SGN) allowing them to administer a further 150 grants under the Surviving Winter criteria, which were distributed by March 18, 2025.

The cost of living continues to have a significant impact on households already struggling to make ends meet, with continuing uncertainty in the energy market, added to changes in the energy price cap by Ofgem.

Low income households with no ability to increase their monthly income (e.g pensioners and/or those unable to work due to disability etc) continue to be under a huge pressure to meet the increased energy costs.

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ability to increase their monthly income, such as pensioners and those unable to work due to disability, continue to be under a huge pressure to meet the increased energy costs.

Further support and advice is provided to households applying for a Surviving Winter Grant via Dorset Energy Unit, run by 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 income maximisation checks to help increase their household income and prevent the need for future grants.

The Dorset Energy Unit covers the whole of Dorset, including BCP.

The Energy Team continues to adapt and respond to the latest updates and guidance. Advisors have started to see more tariffs become available, including fixed tariffs set below the Energy Price Cap rates.

It allows the team to offer this advice and information on possible cheaper energy.

Its advisors work with households to look at energy saving measures, assist with supplier problems and make formal complaints or take action further to the ombudsman.

Once again there was a clear need for households to have the extra support from the Surviving Winter scheme to identify extra income and other avenues of help available to them.

Citizens Advice Business Development Manager Katrina Ford said: "Citizens Advice is very grateful to Dorset Community Foundation and to all the donors for their generosity in making these grants available.

"Having the Surviving Winter grants enabled us to provide direct support to households who are in need, giving them much needed security around their energy provision through the winter months."

Citizens Advice case study

citizens
advice

JEAN IS 72 and lives alone. She has a number of health conditions, including angina, osteoporosis, asthma. As well as this, she is immunosuppressed.

She receives her state pension, as well as pension credit, PIP, housing benefit, and Council Tax Support.

But as she lives in a park home she has found it difficult managing the cost of her bottled LPG and electricity. She spends £160 a month on LPG bottles and £60 on electricity.

Jean had a full Energy Advice appointment, and as part of this, was supported to apply for a Surviving Winter grant.

She said the grant meant she was able to keep her home warm, which reduced her worries about how she was going to afford the bills.

The grant covered at least a month's worth of heating (LPG bottles. Jean was very grateful and said it eased her fears about being cold. She was also able to manage her health conditions better.

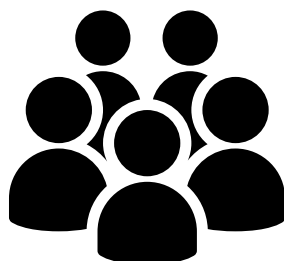
Jean said the grant kept her warm and she was able to use electricity for the time being, while an insulation grant was applied for on her park home. Hopefully this will mean she will find it easier to keep her home warm in the future.

Surviving Winter 2024/25 in numbers



£58,034.11

Raised in 24/25



105

Donors in 24/25



80%

Grant recipients with a disability or long-term health condition



11%

With a disability



69%

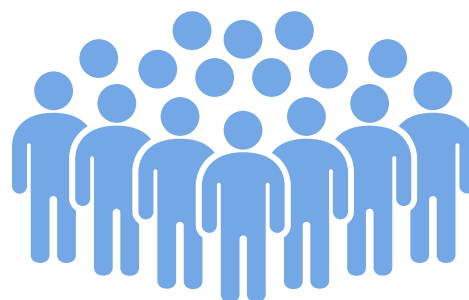
With a health condition

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

Those aged over 60 are particularly at risk from the impact of cold weather and households in this age bracket who are experiencing fuel poverty, are eligible for a grant.

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.

Consistent with previous years, 80 per cent of grant recipients were recorded as having a disability or long-term health condition. Some 11 per cent had a disability and 69 per cent a health condition. While this was a requirement for eligibility in the 50 to 59 age group, it was not the same for those aged over 60. Yet most of those receiving the grant were recorded as having a disability or LTHC.



28%

Aged 50 to 59 with a health condition




58%

Single people

Grants by postcode area

THE HIGHEST number of grants were awarded to households living in Weymouth & Portland. This is consistent with previous years as these are known to be the areas with highest levels of fuel poverty and vulnerable households. There was an increase in grants allocated in Bridport, 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	2	
BH2	Bournemouth Central, West Cliff	0	
BH3	Talbot Woods, Winton	1	
BH4	Westbourne, Branksome Woods	1	
BH5	Boscombe, Pokesdown	1	
BH6	Southbourne, Tuckton, Wick	1	
BH7	Littledown, Iford	0	
BH8	Malmesbury Park, Queens Park, Strouden Park, Townsend, Holdenhurst, Throop	5	
BH9	Winton, Moordown, Throop, Muscliff	2	
BH10	Kinson, East Howe, Northbourne, Redhill, Ensbury Park	2	
BH11	Kinson, Bear Cross, West Howe, Wallisdown	0	Bournemouth: 15
BH12	Branksome, Alderney, Upper Parkstone, Wallisdown, Newtown	5	
BH13	Canford Cliffs, Sandbanks, Branksome Park	0	
BH14	Lower Parkstone, Lilliput, Penn Hill	3	
BH15	Town Centre, Hamworthy, Oakdale	6	
BH16	Upton, Turlin Moor, Lytchett Minster, Lytchett Matravers	5	
BH17	Canford Heath, Creekmoor	2	
BH18	Broadstone	0	Poole: 21
BH19	Swanage, Studland, Langton Matravers	12	
BH20	Wareham, Wool, Bere Regis	14	Purbeck: 26
BH21	Wimborne, Corfe Mullen	7	
BH22	Ferndown, West Moors, West Parley	7	
BH23	Christchurch, Mudeford, Highcliffe	2	
BH24	Ringwood, St Leonards, Ashley Heath	1	
BH31	Verwood, Three Legged Cross	3	
SP5	Sixpenny Handley	6	
SP6	Alderholt, Fordingbridge	0	Christchurch & East Dorset: 26
DT1	Dorchester	19	
DT2	Dorchester	18	
DT6	Bridport	25	
DT7	Lyme Regis	3	
DT8	Beaminster	7	
DT9	Sherborne	6	West Dorset: 78
DT3	Chickerell, Broadwey, Radipole, Osmington, Preston, Littlemoor, Portesham, Abbotsbury, Langton Herring	21	
DT4	Weymouth town centre, Melcombe Regis, Wyke Regis	31	
DT5	Portland, Fortuneswell, Easton, Southwell, Weston, The Grove	6	Weymouth & Portland: 58
DT10	Sturminster Newton	4	
DT11	Blandford Forum	8	
SP7	Shaftesbury, Compton Abbas, Fontmell Magna, Donhead St Andrew, Donhead St Mary, Berwick St John, Motcombe	4	
SP8	Gillingham, Stour Provost, East Stour, West Stour, Kington Magna, Buckhorn Weston, Milton on Stour	2	North Dorset: 18
TA20	Thorncombe	1	
	unknown	2	



After being diagnosed with cancer my main concern has been how to pay my bills since I have only been receiving SSP and borrowing money from relatives. I had had to turn all of my heating off. The grant made a huge difference in that I could have some heating on when I came out of hospital after my operation. Thank you so much.

We really appreciated this grant since my husband became disabled and unable to work so any financial help takes a lot of worry away from me as I deal with all the bills for our household. Thank you for your help



**Dorset
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WE WOULD like to thank everyone who donated to the 2024/25 Surviving Winter Appeal, including DCF fundholders.

Our grateful thanks go once 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.