



Funded by
UK Government



BCP Food & Energy Support Fund – 2025/26 Impact report

This funding programme was delivered by Dorset Community Foundation on behalf of BCP Council, with funding awarded to successful groups in June 2025 and November 2025, for activities to 31st March 2026. All grants were used to address the impact of the cost of living crisis and spent on projects including: food parcels, food vouchers, community meals, food skills initiatives, Winter Warm Spaces, and services supporting people out of poverty.

- Total funding of £381,167.13 was awarded via 98 grants to 51 groups – this includes £7917.13 carried over from the previous year.
- Grant funded activities have directly supported **19,742 local residents**
 - 8703 In Bournemouth
 - 1571 in Christchurch
 - 9468 in Poole
- Projects have involved **1136 volunteers**

Summary - awards in June 2025

Grant recipient	Project area	Grant	Beneficiary households	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers	Project summary
AIMCommunity	Bournemouth (East & West Howe, Kinson, Wallisdown)	£5000	52 families 3 older people 1 disabled 8 vulnerable	64	3	WarmSpace drop in offering young people and their families a place to access food and learn skills to address the impact of the cost of living (e.g. food budgeting)
Bournemouth Churches Housing Association	BCP	£8000	34 families 2 older people 39 disabled 88 vulnerable	163	3	Food vouchers, clothing & essentials for young people, individuals, and families engaged with Domestic Abuse, Mental Health and Young People's Services.
Bournemouth Community Church	Bournemouth	£12,000	1035 families 50 older people 1075 vulnerable	2160	18	Distribution of butcher and greengrocer vouchers, and 'Time for Tea' community meals for local families
Bournemouth Foodbank	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£10,000	21 families 7 older people 10 disabled 20 vulnerable	58	10	Food parcels plus wrap around support for income maximisation / money management via a drop in with partners

Bournemouth Ymca	Bournemouth	£5920	80 vulnerable	80	3	Weekly hot meals for residents at Delta House
Christchurch Community Partnership	Christchurch (Burton, Somerford & Mudeford)	£8000	44 older people 6 disabled	50	15	Set up costs for a new lunch club and support for an existing one on Homelands estate
Christchurch Foodbank	Christchurch	£15,000	56 families 41 older people 120 vulnerable	217	26	Community meals, school holiday meals, recipe bags, winter warm pack, energy saving equipment, cooking on a budget workshops, Christmas community meal
Citizens Advice BCP	BCP	£8000	13 families 6 older people 23 disabled 10 vulnerable	49	1	Support for people facing poverty as a result of relationship breakdown or abuse; income maximisation, debt support, budgeting help, housing advice etc
Coastline Community Trust	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£10,000	500 families 250 older people 130 disabled 150 vulnerable	1030	72	Distribution of surplus food, community meals, essential items for the homeless, money coaching and warm space
EDAS	Poole (Branksome)	£6000	1 families 42 older people 25 vulnerable	68	2	Community Lunch Clubs and empowerment & resilience training – designed to address the impact of the cost of living and provide longer term resilience
Faithworks Wessex	BCP	£10,000	78 families 56 older people 51 disabled 35 vulnerable	179	18	Community Money Advice at various venues in BCP
Grounded Community	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£10,000	246 families 19 older people 25 disabled 158 vulnerable	448	47	Slow Cooker and Cooking on a Budget workshops, Community meals, food vouchers, Fareshare deliveries, Food Hampers
HealthBus Trust	Bournemouth	£5000	117 vulnerable	117	5	Hot meals for Healthbus patients, offered at YMCA Bournemouth, and Literacy Support sessions
Home Start Wessex	Bournemouth and Poole	£8000	54 families	54	2	Supporting homeless families at the Quay Foyer hostel in Poole, or Morrell House in Bournemouth; access to food & clothing, accessing grants/ benefits, budgeting skills
Hope Community Church	Bournemouth (Winton & Moordown)	£6000	35 families 63 older people 8 disabled 14 vulnerable	120	25	Free meals & activities, school holiday meals, warm space

Hope Housing ,Training and Support Ltd	Bournemouth	£6000	5 older people (65+): 14 disabled 84 vulnerable	103	0	Welcome packs containing essential items, cooking sessions supporting budgeting skills, warm clothing and electric blankets
Immaculate Conception and St Joseph's Church	Christchurch	£2740	20 families 40 older people 5 disabled 5 vulnerable	70	20	Contribution towards Becky's café, which offers a warm space, food and activities
International Care Network Ltd	BCP	£8000	48 vulnerable	48	3	Contribution towards existing advice service for asylum seekers & refugees, which helps to address the impact of poverty and prevent further financial crisis
It's All About Culture (IAAC)	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£6000	2 families 15 vulnerable	17	8	Supporting a weekly Caribbean lunch club
Kinson and West Howe Foodbank	Bournemouth (Kinson and West Howe)	£5000	150 families 25 older people 16 disabled 139 vulnerable	330	20	Food stock to help foodbank meet local demand
LOVECHURCH	Bournemouth (Boscombe, Eastcliff & Springbourne)	£10,000	600 families	600	30	Children's breakfast club, Fun n Food for families in school holidays (with FFC) including budget cooking tuition, CAP money courses to teach budgeting skills
Overcomers Outreach	Bournemouth	£3000	61 families 9 older people 141 vulnerable	211	11	Community hub serving mainly ethnic minority communities – warm space, meals, food parcels & signposting
Poole Communities Trust	Poole (Turlin Moor and Bourne Estate)	£10,000	1320 families 480 older people 480 disabled people 120 vulnerable	2400	22	To support foodstores in Turlin Moor and Bourne
Poole Community Exchange	Poole	£8063.63	44 families 356 older people 489 disabled 355 vulnerable	1244	100	Low cost food and essentials via the pantry, community meals, cookery tuition, social activities and food donations to other community groups
Poole Foodbank	Poole	£15,000	206 families 31 older people 253 vulnerable	490	54	Community meals, stock for the foodbank and recipe bags, distribution of air fryers and slow cookers with tuition

Poole Waste Not Want Not	Poole	£10,000	295 families 223 vulnerable 80 disabled 816 vulnerable	1414	28	Stock and recipe bags, cooking activities, distribution of energy saving equipment & warmth items, picnic bags for summer social trips
PramaLife	Poole and Bournemouth	£8500	200 older people 40 disabled 40 vulnerable	280	30	Lunch clubs for elderly people
Routes to Roots	Poole	£6000	5 older people 4 disabled 37 vulnerable	46	40	Community meals supporting homeless and vulnerably housed individuals
Safe and Sound Dorset	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£10,000	25 families 50 older people 75 disabled 100 vulnerable	250	33	Vouchers for meals for vulnerable women, meals to be provided at client sessions, and distribution of warmth items and energy efficient cooking appliances
Samee	Bournemouth	£5000	10 disabled	10	3	Programme of support for 10 young disabled individuals, helping them back into work
Somerford youth & Community Centre	Christchurch (Somerford)	£10,000	300 families 100 older people 100 vulnerable	500	5	Food stock and essential items for The Pantry
St. Thomas Church PCC	Bournemouth (Ensburry Park)	£1500	20 families 40 older people 5 disabled 10 vulnerable people	75	20	Community activities and Welcome Space with free food
The Friendly Food Club	BCP (Somerford, Boscombe, Turlin Moor, Muscliffe, Kinson)	£8000	59 families	59	2	Cooking workshops delivered in partnership with DorPIP, to support local families to develop improved financial resilience, cooking & budgeting skills
Townsend Community Association	Bournemouth (Townsend)	£10,000	200 families 100 older people 50 disabled 125 vulnerable	475	30	Breakfast club, air fryer demonstration and distribution with FFC, warm space with refreshments, stock for community fridge, cooking workshops with FFC
Unity in Vision	BCP	£5000				Hot meals, food parcels, warmth packs and cooking-on-a-budget – for ethnically diverse communities in BCP

Water Lily Project	BCP	£8000	36 families	36	4	"Living on a Budget" programme, designed to equip financially challenged women with essential budgeting skills and practical tools
West Howe Community Enterprises	Bournemouth (West Howe)	£2568.50	40 families 20 older people	60	4	Continuation of community cooking sessions, helping local families with financial skills and cooking skills
Winton & Parkstone Community Pantry	Poole and Bournemouth (Parkstone & Winton)	£6625	135 families 65 vulnerable	200	70	Contribution towards utility costs to support the pantry
TOTAL		£291,917,13		13,775 beneficiaries	787 volunteers	

Summary - awards in November 2025

Grant recipient	Project area	Grant	Beneficiary households	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers	Project summary
AIM Community	Bournemouth (East and West Howe, Kinson, Wallisdown)	£3000	(continuing support following June grant)	(continuing support following June grant)	(continuing support following June grant)	Warm Space for families facing cost-of-living pressures, providing hot meals, practical advice, and community (continuation from previous grant – same beneficiaries)
Ashley's Birthday Bank	Christchurch	£4000	160 families	160	2	Food shops for local families in financial hardship
Bee Mission 500 CIC	Bournemouth	£4500	3 families with children 15 older people 2 disabled people 55 vulnerable	75	9	Hot meals for the homeless and for elderly residents at Vale Lodge Supported Living facility
Bournemouth Foodbank	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£5000	10 families 11 older people 5 disabled 12 vulnerable	38	6	Winter Warmer: nourishing meals and a cozy space each week - bringing comfort, warmth, and community together through good food.
Bournemouth Spear Trust	Bournemouth	£3000	30 vulnerable	30	30	Employment support programme for young people aged 16-24
Citizens Advice BCP	Christchurch	£4000	2 families 86 older people 5 disabled	93	6	Project for older Christchurch clients; tailored advice on social issues including benefits, energy, and debt.

Citygate Church	Bournemouth	£5000	5 families 1 older people 3 disabled 2 vulnerable	11	7	Helping vulnerable adults in crisis access holistic care and tailored casework, building financial stability and wellbeing
Dorset Community Action	Christchurch (Somerford) and Poole (Parkstone)	£4500	15 families 32 older people 1 disabled 25 vulnerable	73	0	Cooking and household energy advice workshops with Somerford ARC and Poole Pantry
Faithworks Wessex	BCP	£3975	16 families 4 older people 3 disabled 9 vulnerable	32	11	Money Guidance work through group and individual sessions that help participants understand money management and break cycles of debt
Friendly Food Club	Bournemouth	£4000	45 families	45	3	Improve cooking access sessions in Central Bournemouth by piloting a part-time Community Engagement Coordinator; deliver 12 cooking sessions
GodFirst Church	Christchurch	£3500	550 families	550	30	Winter evening gatherings for families and Saturday Morning Breakfasts for families with young children
Hope Community Church	Bournemouth (Winton)	£3000	20 families 42 older people 6 disabled 12 vulnerable	80	32	Free meals and hot drinks to clients on low incomes alongside a warm space
Kinson and West Howe Foodbank	Bournemouth (Kinson & West Howe)	£5000	12 families 175 older people 30 disabled 33 vulnerable	250	20	Warm space during the winter months
MS Centre Dorset	BCP	£4000	60 disabled	70	15	Hot lunches for people with MS
Poole Communities Trust	Poole (Turlin Moor and Bourne Estate)	£5000	1463 families 532 older people 532 disabled 133 vulnerable	2660	22	A range of winter activities for the community foodstores in Turlin Moor and Bourne Estate
Poole Waste Not Want Not	Poole	£4000	Families - 85 Older people - 20 Other Vulnerable People 37	458	31	Warm space to enjoy hot meals, festive lunches and hampers, free budget advice cooking workshops, and food boxes
Recreate Dorset	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£4000	15 older people 5 disabled people 15 vulnerable	35	15	A partnership project between Recreate Dorset and Bournemouth Foodbank delivering a warm room, free creative activities and hot meal

Refugee Support Europe - Bournemouth Dignity Centre	Bournemouth	£4000	3 older people 1 disabled people 229 vulnerable	233	15	Winter clothing, hygiene items and food for people seeking asylum and refugees facing homelessness in BCP
The Parks Foundation	Bournemouth	£5000	36 families 38 older people 4 disabled 2 vulnerable	80	23	Community Sundays – running a social canteen in our park cafes, offering a warm space and a warm meal
The Power House (Poole)	Poole (Hamworthy)	£3000	87 families 13 older people 65 disabled 54 vulnerable	219	7	Warm Hub with hot drinks and nourishing food alongside a programme of creative and social activities
Townsend Community Association	Bournemouth (Townsend)	£2775	200 families 100 older people 50 disabled 125 vulnerable	475	30	Refreshments during the Fridge opening hours. Food to supplement surplus food that is collected. Christmas Community meal and family cooking workshops
We Are Humans CIO	Bournemouth (Boscombe)	£5000	50 families 60 older people 40 disabled 150 vulnerable	300	35	Hot meals, pantry items, hygiene supplies and weekend outreach to rough sleepers, plus warm space for local people
TOTAL		£89,250		5967 beneficiaries	349 volunteers	

Thanks to Dorset Community Foundation and BCP Council

"We are so thankful to Dorset Community Foundation for enabling our Warm Hub and other activities. Seeing people's lives transformed is such a joy."
Bee Mission 500 CIC

"The grant has enabled us to provide financial relief at a time when individuals are experiencing higher costs, limited budgets, diminished spending power due to benefit changeovers, sanctions and debt recovery. It has been an amazing and unexpected gift for individuals and families that are really struggling especially during the Winter." BCHA

"We have had a very positive experience working with BCP and DCF. We particularly valued the opportunity to share and hear "stories of change," which was a powerful way to reflect on impact, connect with others, and celebrate the work being done across the community. It also provided a valuable space for networking and building relationships." Coastline Community Trust

"The opportunity, process and all communications around this have been wonderful. The fund, and those involved with ensuring it goes to the places that will use it best, clearly have a real understanding of front line work, the importance of people and the needs that communities face." Faithworks Wessex

"From accessible and easy application processes to regular check ins, the whole experience of working with DCF has been a positive one and we would be keen to repeat with any further grants that may be available." EDAS

"Thank you for your trust and support to help enable us to continue to do the work in the community that we do. It is greatly valued and appreciated."
Poole Foodbank

"We want to thank you for your continued support. Over the last five years, we've built a strong, trusting relationship with you, and we are truly grateful to the whole team for believing in us. Your support, guidance, and partnership help us stay strong for our community, and you show what real community looks like—people coming together to make a difference." Poole Waste Not Want Not

"We are entirely grateful of the grant awarded to us. As with many charities, our operational costs are only increasing along with our number of service users which we see increase year on year unfortunately." Routes to Roots

"We are so grateful for the ongoing support we have received from you. I don't know how we would carry on providing essential provisions and items for these families, if it wasn't for organisations such as yourselves. Thank you so much." Townsend Community Association

Aim Community

Funded activities

We borrowed the Friendly Food Club Community Cooking Kits from West Howe Community Enterprises, and ran four Family Cooking Sessions with six local families each week. It was all about cooking, learning and spending time together in a relaxed, welcoming space to help families feel empowered about cooking more with their children. Families were really engaged, with most attending 3 out of the 4 sessions. Additionally we offered weekly creative activities and warm food to eat collectively.

Outcomes

Feedback showed the sessions created real quality family time. Parents loved having the chance to cook and connect with their children, and the sessions were described as fun, friendly and hands-on. Every family said their children became more curious about cooking, helping more at home, asking questions and picking up new skills. Every family also reported trying new ingredients like lentils, lamb and different spices, showing growing confidence to try new things. The sessions also gave everyone a chance to connect with their children, make friends and have something to look forward to each week. One participant shared that the project helped “to help me through a tough time, thank you so much,” showing its importance for emotional support.

Story of change

K is a mum of two who first came to us through the Family Hub after attending some parenting workshops. At the time, she was feeling overwhelmed and struggling with her mental health, often finding it hard to get out of the house. Since coming along to our Warm Space, things have really started to shift. She now comes regularly with her children, using it as a place to connect, relax and feel supported. She’s built friendships, and her children have a safe space to play, socialise and try new things. They especially loved the cooking sessions and learning new skills, trying different foods and doing something fun together. K says coming along has given her something to look forward to each week. Over time, she’s grown more confident and sociable, and feels it’s helped her through a really tough period in her life.

Sustainability

AIMCommunity will continue to seek funding to support this valued community work as well as looking at ways to support the work from internal sources too.

Ashley's Birthday Bank

Funded activities

We provided 20 families with Aldi vouchers @ £100.00 per family We provided families with food shops from Asda - ranging from £89.00 per shop, to £176.00 per shop (depending on size of family) The cost of food has increased dramatically, and your funding has allowed us to continue this vital service of providing food for local families in poverty.

Outcomes

I don't think a lot of people realise how many families are living in poverty around us. Children going hungry, parents feeling despair and guilt. The request for food shops has increased a lot in the past 2 years, and the cost increases all the time. To be able to provide food for these families is so crucial. Parents often feel useless or a failure, through no fault of their own. The thought of all these smiles on faces when they are able to have a hearty, fulfilling meal, which also brings families closer; makes them happy; improves wellbeing, mental health, school attendance, sleep patterns etc. It is vital that we can continue to do this.

The constant increase in food costs has made it difficult to support some families as much as we would like to. We already top up food shops with food bank vouchers, and suggest that families go to the local Community Fridges etc. Our priority is always the children, so we ensure that nappies, baby milk, toddler foods etc (where applicable) are always provided.

Stories of change

A mother had escaped domestic violence and was re-homed from a different County. She had no family and very little possessions. As well as beds, bedding, toys, clothing, household items etc; we provided enough food and provisions to fill her cupboards and fridge. She was overwhelmed with our support, and told us that it will help them make a new lives for themselves, and feel "homely" in their new flat.

A young dad had got full custody of his two young sons, due to his partners substance abuse. As well as clothing, baby equipment, toys etc, we provided fresh food, cupboard food, frozen food, nappies, baby milk etc. He was so grateful, as had to give up his job to look after the boys and didn't know which way to turn

Sustainability

We fundraise through events, grants, token schemes, company donations. We are lucky to have local support, and at busier times such as school holidays and Christmas we are normally supported with additional food items to get the families through these periods.

Bee Mission 500 CIC

Funded activities

We prepared and delivered regular hot meals to people experiencing homelessness, food insecurity and isolation. Each week our volunteer team cooked and distributed freshly prepared meals designed to be nutritious, filling and varied. Meals typically included a hot main dish such as chilli with rice, pasta meals, stews or curry. We delivered meals directly to people sleeping rough, individuals living in temporary accommodation and those experiencing severe financial hardship. Alongside food provision we distributed essential items such as warm clothing, toiletries, dog food and occasionally sleeping bags.

A key part of the project was our weekly meal service at Vale Lodge supported accommodation. These meals provided residents with the opportunity to come together and share food in a welcoming and social environment. We also provided signposting to local services including food support networks and homelessness services.

Outcomes

For many beneficiaries, the meals provided by Bee Mission 500 represented the only guaranteed hot meal they received during the week. Beneficiaries frequently commented that the quality of the meals helped restore dignity and made them feel valued. Many people experiencing homelessness can feel invisible or isolated, and the regular weekly contact helped build trust and meaningful relationships. Conversations allowed individuals to open up about their circumstances and seek help.

The weekly meals at Vale Lodge were particularly effective in bringing residents together. Sharing meals in a welcoming environment helped residents build friendships and feel part of a community, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. The project also enabled greater access to support services. Through informal conversations and signposting we were able to connect beneficiaries with other organisations providing housing advice, food support, healthcare and welfare assistance.

For our volunteers, the project created opportunities to learn new skills, including food preparation, food safety and community outreach, while developing confidence and a strong sense of purpose through helping others.

Story of change

I was homeless and receiving 3 meals a week from Bee Mission, when with their support, I was finally housed, I wanted to give back and volunteer to help cook dinners for my friends that are still on the streets.

Sustainability

One of the key learning points from delivering this project was the importance of consistency and trust when working with people experiencing homelessness and extreme hardship. Regular weekly engagement allowed relationships to develop over time, making beneficiaries more comfortable seeking help or accepting referrals to other services. We also learned that the demand for food support during the winter months was higher than anticipated. We adapted by preparing additional meals on some evenings and making greater use of donated food supplies where available.

We were delighted that in Jan 2026 we received funding from National Lottery Awards for All and in Nov 2025 from Wessex Water. In 2025 we have also invested in fundraising support and are developing a diversified funding strategy that includes applying for grants, building partnerships with local businesses such as JP Morgan and HSBC. In 2026 we will be introducing an educational beehive where we will offer paid workshops in beekeeping.



Bournemouth Churches Housing Association

Funded activities

Our project covered customers utilising our Domestic Abuse, Young People's and Mental Health outreach services. The money was utilised to obtain supermarket cards that could be utilised for food and warmth provisions for those struggling with cost of living and other impacts and also to provide social activities and cooking sessions.

Outcomes

The grant has enabled us to provide financial relief at a time when individuals are experiencing higher costs, limited budgets, diminished spending power due to benefit changeovers, sanctions and debt recovery. It has been an amazing and unexpected gift for individuals and families that are really struggling especially during the Winter. Food has been the primary concern for most, especially those with families, though supermarket cards were also used to buy clothes, gloves, and heaters. Part of the grant was used for social activities based around food: individual and group cooking sessions. Brunches & pizza nights (in young people services) as well as activities such as afternoon tea, easter egg hunt and picnic at the refuge allowing individuals and families to come together and enjoy communal eating, involvement and support. Being able to offer activities has enabled services to foster a community feeling and enable friendships and comradeship to develop naturally, providing a supportive and collaborative environment. Additional support was also offered in the form of cooking and money management courses and debt advice.

Stories of change

A new customer with autism moving from temp accommodation had nothing to move with. We provided them with two cards so they could get bedding, kitchenware and a weeks worth of shopping. They were so grateful that they were able to move into her first ever home and not feel like she moved in with nothing. She came from St Mungo's where she had been for 2 years after escaping DV so had left with none of her belongings. She still had very little and this was her 1st official home of her own. She had been referred to our Mental Health Outreach team since moving in. Being able to provide such support really enabled the supportive relationship going forward and was a good way to build trust and rapport straight away.

"I came to refuge with nothing. My perpetrator manipulated and controlled all my money. It has been nice having financial control again and being able to buy things I want whilst still getting the support and help from you with supermarket vouchers and food bank vouchers. Regarding the activities, when I moved into refuge and my own flat, I thought it can be isolating at times and that I wouldn't always mixing with residents, however when you have those activities, I have the opportunity to speak to other people in the refuge. I'm not going to knock on someone's door here but because I had been isolated and lost all my friends in the past, with the activities you can start to have conversations and do things with the other ladies here. I have walked to the shops with a few of the ladies a couple of times. My favourite activity was the avocado breakfast. That was nice to get up for something.

Sustainability

We will continue to source organisations that donate food and items to continue with workshops and activities. We occasionally receive small donations of money which we can use towards welfare and utilise other organisations such as Hope for Food to help equip customers who have very little home resources. We also continue to look for suitable grant funding.

Bournemouth Community Church

Funded activities

We have been able to give out vouchers for our local butcher and greengrocer using the bulk of the money, and use the remainder to fund our family community meals, each week. We regularly see at least 7 or 8 families each week, and the community aspect of that is growing week on week.

Outcomes

Our local community has benefitted so much from the vouchers, the shops involved feel like they are working with us, embracing the wrap around care we offer as a community hub. The offer of fresh food that can be chosen provides dignity and a real sense of worth to people. LIFEhouse is very good at providing ongoing support to people/families and this money contributed greatly to this ongoing support, especially in the Time for Tea funding.

Stories of change

"Time for Tea gives us a guaranteed safe place to come as a family-my young kids look forward to coming, even my 15 year old son attends which shows the attraction the place has. I have personally, from being isolated in a previous relationship and then coming to TjT, made several friends there and so have the kids, broadening our outlook and connecting with other families."

"I am a single grandad bringing up my grandchildren- I have benefitted from having the vouchers for the butcher as well as Time for Tea meals...the ability to choose what my family will eat cannot be understated, the food parcels from the Foodbank are wonderful when in a crisis, but the children often don't like a lot of the food given, but I can choose sausages/ chicken that I know they will eat. Time for tea is amazing and enables us to meet up with different families in various situations and I don't feel alone. The support from the team is really good."

"The selection of fruits available at Roebridge makes me so happy...I normally find fruit a luxury as there isn't any spare money for anything other than essentials but being given a voucher feels like I have won the lottery....and I can buy a little of many things from a fruit shop. Thanks, you don't know how good it makes me feel :)"

Sustainability

The work will continue for Time for Tea, as we also get funding elsewhere towards this work, but the vouchers are solely paid for with the DCF funding, so will not continue beyond the life of this grant.

Bournemouth Foodbank

Funded activities

Bournemouth Foodbank's money management service has provided tailored, one-to-one support to people facing financial hardship. We have provided budgeting guidance, debt advice, and referrals to specialist services where needed. The service focuses on early intervention and long-term change, addressing the underlying causes of poverty rather than just immediate need. By embedding income maximisation support within the foodbank, we reach individuals at a critical moment and help prevent repeat crises.

In the winter, we opened café doors every Wednesday lunch to welcome anyone facing financial hardship into a warm, friendly space. Each week, we served hearty, home-cooked meals such as soups, casseroles, and other nourishing dishes. Alongside this, we offered a safe and welcoming environment where people can relax, share conversation, and know they are not alone. Volunteers and staff are on hand to talk, support, and signpost to further help if needed. Friendships continue outside the café, strengthening community ties and reducing loneliness.



Outcomes

Over the last year, our debt advice provision supported clients to reduce or manage a total of £236,000 of debt, directly alleviating financial pressure and improving household stability. Alongside this, we have supported hundreds of individuals to access welfare benefits, grants and other entitlements, and challenge incorrect decisions; increasing income and helping people meet essential living costs. A recent client survey found that 60% of clients had little or no confidence in managing their finances when they first engaged with the service; following support, 100% reported a good level of confidence. Clients frequently report reduced stress and anxiety, improved mental wellbeing, and greater ability to provide for their families.

Winter Warmers has welcomed individuals experiencing anxiety or other mental health challenges, who have used the project as a supportive way to socialise and work towards improving their wellbeing. Individuals who initially received food only, left the project able to share their life experiences and seek ongoing support from our other financial support services.

Story of change

'Pauline' came into the Life Centre in Winton, where she lives in temporary accommodation with her 8-year-old child. She has had a turbulent past and is a victim of human trafficking. It became clear that Pauline was struggling with managing bills and finances. She disclosed that she had never had to deal with bills or finances before. This had resulted in her falling behind on a couple of bills. It also became clear that Pauline was only receiving the standard element of Universal Credit. Our adviser supported Pauline to apply for LCWRA, which we anticipate could increase her monthly income by around £423.27. This would also relieve the pressure of having to look for work - giving Pauline space to seek support for her past traumas. Alongside this, the advisor worked with Pauline to help her understand each household bill and supported her to build a manageable budget. We were able to help lower her water bill by £68 and supported her in applying for Council Tax Support, which reduced her council tax bill to £26 per month, saving her an estimated £980 over the year. Pauline no longer relies on the foodbank as a regular source of support and now only visits occasionally.

Sustainability

We ran a successful Aviva match funded Crowdfunder into January 2026, which provided funding to extend our holistic advice manager's role. We are currently waiting for the outcome of our stage two national lottery application, which could enhance our services across BCP for money guidance for three years.

Bournemouth Spear Trust

Funded activities

The grant allowed us to complete two cohorts of 16-24 years olds who are NEET and facing at least one significant barrier to finding meaningful work and setting off on their chosen career path. Short-term funding challenges due to a partner of three years not being able to continue funding us, meant that we had to make the tough decision to continue with a two staff programme. This normally leads to a corresponding drop in intake to 12 from 15 clients. However, our staff saw great need and determination in those who were introduced to Spear through our referral network and persisted in an intake above this level. It is too soon to say how well the graduates are doing in terms of securing rewarding roles in the workplace, but our current track record would lead to between 70% and 75% finding work in the 12 months of completing the programme. All graduates will continue to receive 12 months of coaching and support until they find jobs what will place their lives on a different trajectory.

Outcomes

With a good proportion of our clients on the Spear programme being second generation unemployed, our activities, especially the workplace visits and interview day, establish the validity of work as an achievable and beneficial path. Our mock interview days prepare clients for their first interviews and how to learn from each experience, whatever the outcome.

We were assisted by someone who has autism in making changes to some of the ways in which our programme is delivered and the suggestions around small, but significant changes to our training room meant a lot of our clients were more at ease and able to get more from the programme.

One of our graduates is now working for DWP because she saw the impact finding the right role can have on an individual and their family. 'T' now advocates for Spear Bournemouth and will be taking part in our presentation at the Talbot Village Trust event on 30th April.

Story of change

One young woman was involved in the day of handing out CVs to local businesses, with the aim of getting hired. When she went in to the Oceanarium to drop off her CV, she was asked if she could sit for an interview on the spot. As she had been through our mock interview day, she felt confident enough to say 'yes' and was interviewed and hired on the same day!

See link for a video of Harvey, one of our graduates from Bournemouth

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtL73A_qFqQ

Sustainability

We see continued need in our area for the Spear Programme in BCP. We have an ongoing relationship with the Talbot Village Trust and have been selected as a focus project. This includes being invited to present alongside Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at an upcoming event to showcase the variety of needs in the area to an invited audience of civic and business leaders from BCP. We are also in collaboration with Faithworks on delivering a programme for a sizable grant from the Royal Foundation in response to them identifying BCP as a key area for needing support.

Bournemouth Ymca

Funded activities

The funding allowed us to provide a hot meal for lunch for up to 65 clients once per week, over a 20 week period. This has helped to improve the wellbeing of our clients and also has a positive impact on their mental health.

Outcomes

The hot meals have been well received and greatly appreciated by our clients, for some it may be the only hot meal they get to eat. Client's wellbeing and mental health as well as physical health is improved when they can easily access a hot meal from our restaurant. Although there are alternative options available locally like soup kitchens, the clients do not always have the motivation to go to these, and instead end up just eating snack food or unhealthy things that are cheap and easy to access. A hot meal provides essential ingredients and nutrients to keep them healthy and also to extend their life expectancy (homelessness can reduce this by 30 years). It is difficult to find funding that allows us to purchase the extra food and materials required to produce the hot meals and costs of doing this are constantly rising (20% rise over the last year).

Stories of change

Marcus, who has been homeless since 15 and has had drink and drug issues, is hugely grateful to YMCA Bournemouth:

"I don't really think I'd still be here if it wasn't for them. The food provision here is ok as I can get breakfast and buy snacks, but being able to come down and get a hot meal has really helped me out. When I don't eat properly I feel anxious and lacking in energy and just can't be bothered to do anything. To be honest, without this place there are a lot of people in here that wouldn't be alive."

Emma, who has lived at the YMCA for a short while has issues with her cardiovascular system due to being out on the streets for years, alongside a limited and unhealthy diet. She says

"Being able to access nutritious food is brilliant, and has helped me prioritise what I eat and am doing with my body. I just wouldn't bother to eat if it wasn't easy to get the food, by just going downstairs."

Sustainability

Unfortunately we do not have the money to be able to pay for the food to feed the clients this extra day. We will continue to offer a lunch menu which they can buy food from, and Sunday lunch twice a month, but will be unable to provide the free hot meal mid week which this grant has allowed us to do.

Christchurch Community Partnership

Funded activities

We expanded our existing Homelands lunch club. We have also launched a new one in Burton in partnership with St Luke's Church which is a slightly different model in that it has an hour of activities as well as lunch. This targets the underserved areas of Burton, Somerford/Mudeford and also included some isolated Highcliffe residents. Attendees are referred through our usual referral partners as well as mail dropping flyers to areas that house older potentially isolated residents.

Outcomes

It has connected isolated residents and enabled them to build new friendships as well as giving them the benefit of a nutritious meal in an enjoyable environment. The new Burton lunch club (titled Fun, Food & Friendship or Triple F!) has been codesigned with the attendees so they have been able to decide what kind of activities they'd like to do each week as well as helping to design the menu. All attendees have reported positive benefits to their quality of life and some have also been signposted to other groups and activities such as the monthly Coffee Connections in their local areas.



Stories of change

R was referred into our services a year ago struggling with depression and feeling very isolated. She started attending the Homelands lunch club and we also signposted her to activities run at a community centre close to her home. She then also came with her adult son (who is both profoundly deaf and autistic) to our monthly Sunday Roasts where they started helping with setting up. R was also one of the beneficiaries who volunteered to be part of our project with student from the Arts University Bournemouth. From these activities she has become a registered CCP volunteer with the new Triple F club and J, her son, is also involved doing the catering. As a result of this Rony tells us their relationship (which was at times very challenging) has improved beyond recognition.

Another J was also referred by their housing provider SNG, was completely isolated, having been relocated from Weymouth as a result of his lower limb amputation; a result of previous drug use and Type 1 Diabetes. After a period of 1:1 support from one of our Christchurch Angels, J joined the Homelands lunch club and really enjoyed it despite being much younger than most of the attendees. Although he has had significant ongoing health issues, sadly including a second amputation recently, he has felt very supported both by new friends he has made and our staff team (who ensure he doesn't eat too many desserts and also carry glucose tablets on the bus for him). Despite being wheelchair bound J is still attending Homelands and has also now joined Triple F and is really enjoying that too.

Sustainability

We will continue, through attendee payments and other grant funding we have applied for. We believe this to be a good model for similar provision in other underserved areas such as Highcliffe and would like to extend it in the coming year to at least one other area if possible.

Christchurch Foodbank

Funded activities

The funding was used to hold our Christmas dinner supper for 100 individual struggling with isolation and loneliness. We purchased soup kettles and held winter warm cookery workshops for struggling individuals and families. Topped up our food parcels and winter warm packs for families (hot water bottles, hats, gloves, blankets).

Outcomes

Our feedback from the young men on the cookery course has been amazing, they feedback that their confidence has grown with both finances and shopping, also with being able to good proper homecooked meals. The men especially will say how good it is to be involved in the group and meet others.

The winter warm packs and tips have helped to stop families and individuals go into fuel poverty debt.

The community supper for some is the only meal they eat with others, bringing community and helping to overcome isolation.

Some of those we help have gone on to become a volunteer.

Stories of change

KT was a young man brought up in care. As a care leaver he was struggling to organize himself and run a home. We have been able to assist with that, bringing him to the community supper, helping him to learn to cook and run his finances responsibly. KT benefitted from warm packs, food parcels, and meals and this has helped him build a community and have the confidence to run a home. This has helped him to move forward in life.

Due to relationship breakdown MB found himself homeless. MB benefits from the community supper, shower and clothes washing facilities available at the meal, as well as food top ups and blankets. This fund has helped keep him alive during the winter and build his trust in those around him

Sustainability

We will continue to go out for further funding. As a self-funding Foodbank+ it is important for us to keep working in the community and we can only do this with grants like this.

Citizens Advice Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole

Funded activities

We operated a series of tailored advice activities working alongside key partners, Waterlily Project and Safe and Sound, aimed at alleviating destitution for those who have experienced or experiencing domestic abuse. The sessions aimed to increase knowledge of finances, targeting income maximisation, support with debt and budgeting to enhance financial resilience, alongside casework with other issues such as housing, family court issues and immigration issues. We carried out these activities on a bi-weekly basis at the Water Lily Cafe in Christchurch, and the Well Cafe in Boscombe.

We allocated an adviser to be our Age Well Adviser based in our Christchurch office to be a focal point in co-ordinating and receiving referrals from Christchurch PCN, alongside targeting and engaging with clients in the community that are aged 65 years old and over. The aim was to reduce clients needing follow up appointments within their local health care setting. We focused on the key determinates relating to stress and anxiety which exacerbate pre-existing health conditions, such financial insecurity, housing, family and legal issues. Our adviser provided timely, income maximisation, budgeting support alongside providing support on other issues which the clients were facing. Outreach delivery was available for those who were unable to get into our main office.

Outcomes

Women experiencing domestic abuse were facing crisis linked to financial hardship, housing instability and difficulty navigating their legal rights. Through the grant, we supported 52 households. The support helped stabilise household finances, reduce immediate stress, and prevent situations from escalating into homelessness, unmanageable debt or fuel poverty. Clients reported improved confidence in managing money, increased income through benefit entitlements, and greater ability to meet basic needs such as food, energy and housing. Partnership working with the Waterlily Project and Safe and Sound, also strengthened referral pathways and ensured clients received holistic support.

The winter project enabled us to pilot tailored advice delivery through health-based referrals in Christchurch, targeting older and vulnerable residents experiencing cost-of-living pressures. Whilst we did not hit our envisaged target of 140, we managed to support 93 clients with a range of financial based issues. The support helped to reduce financial stress, improve financial stability and increase confidence in managing complex issues that result from financial insecurity. The project was especially valuable for people experiencing digital exclusion. Providing telephone and face-to-face support enabled clients to access help they would otherwise have struggled to access.

A key area of learning from this project related to engaging clients once they had been referred into the service. In practice, some clients were difficult to contact and/or faced challenges in reengaging with upon our initial contact. We learned that referrals alone were not always enough to secure engagement and that some clients required additional reassurance and time to build trust between from referrals. We mitigated this, by reviewing room allocated at local PCNs to be able to operate internally to break down barriers in the first instance for support. Alongside this, where a client disengaged, we booked in a follow up call 6 weeks after initial contact to see if they needed any ongoing support.

Sustainability

The role working with Water Lily and Safe & Sound will continue through our General Advice Service, and will encompassed into our Outreach programme, but will be reduced in scope, while we look at identifying additional funding sources. We will look to further deepen our relationship with Christchurch PCN, and monitoring developments on a potential PCN Hub being opened in Christchurch. We have retained the current Age Well adviser, who will continue to undertake and co-ordinate clients that are referred into CABCP. We anticipate that we incorporate this into our General Advice service, but we are actively reviewing funding opportunities to further enhance the role.

Domestic Abuse: More than just abuse

citizens
advice

Bournemouth
Christchurch
& Poole

Through the BCP Food & Energy Support Fund, we have been able to enhance our work with those who have encountered a domestic abuse relationship.

Working with partners, including the Waterlily Project and Safe and Sound, we have been able to deliver a service which can help support victims of domestic abuse find their way to an independent life away from abuse, and access to support.

Emma's Story

Emma attended the Waterlily drop-in, visibly distressed, seeking support for domestic abuse. She had recently fled a 10-year relationship involving physical abuse and coercive control and is now a single parent to two children aged 9 and 16. Since leaving, Emma has faced significant financial hardship.

Her Universal Credit was stopped after she was incorrectly assessed as having savings above the threshold, and due to health issues she is unable to work. Arrears had begun to build, and both her PIP and her daughter's DLA changes increased her financial uncertainty.

At the drop in, Emma brought a collection of unopened letters and expressed feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to turn.

How we worked with Emma

We supported Emma in the short-term through issuing food bank vouchers and applying for the Household Support Fund.

Looking at Emma's long term financial security we helped her reinstate her Universal Credit, providing **£1613.98** per month, alongside successfully applying for PIP for her and her daughter, providing cumulatively over **£700** of additional monthly support. Alongside this we supported Emma in getting child maintenance and a non-molestation order in place. Emma is also engaging in ongoing debt advice.

These actions helped stabilise her finances and increased her confidence to move forward.



Working with health partners: Christchurch PCN

citizens
advice

Bournemouth
Christchurch
& Poole

Clive's Story

Clive was referred to us by Christchurch PCN referral, seeking help to navigate his PIP application and wider financial situation. He had recently lost his father in November 2024 and was now living alone in the family home, which he and his brother had jointly inherited. With probate granted and the property due to be sold, Clive faced uncertainty around his long-term housing and income. He reported struggling with paperwork, understanding his benefits, and managing day-to-day finances, as his father had managed all household bills before his death. Clive was unemployed, long-term sick, and living with disabilities, relying on Universal Credit with a notional income reduction due to savings. He felt overwhelmed by the PIP process, unsure of deadlines, evidence requirements, and the overall system. He contacted us multiple times seeking guidance and reassurance as he tried to adjust to significant life changes while managing his health.



How we worked with Clive

We helped Clive to apply for PIP, and helping Clive to fill out the application form, whilst also explaining his rights throughout the process, and avenues of appeal in case he wasn't successful in the initial application.

Alongside PIP support, we assisted with his Council Tax Support (CTS) application, completing the form, outlining required documentation, and guiding him on submitting it through the Christchurch Library. We clarified his entitlement to benefits following his father's death and helped him understand the financial implications of the inherited property.

Clive did in the end manage to get a successful claim for his PIP, on the enhanced rate for the daily living component, while also getting a successful CTS application. Whilst Clive still finds it difficult to understand certain things, he feels in a better position, and feels less stressed by his finances.

Citygate Church

Funded activities

The in-house caseworker supported 11 individuals directly, delivering 27 interactions in person, by phone, and through follow-up. Casework was tailored to individual circumstances and included emotional support, practical guidance, signposting, and follow-up. This involved supporting access to food provision such as parcels, community pantries, and social meals, alongside benefits and financial guidance, housing support, and wellbeing services. Alongside casework, individuals could access emergency food provision and specialist partner services on site. During the reporting period, 1,387 food parcels were distributed, supporting 2,198 people. Casework clients also accessed services including income maximisation, grants (including the BCP Household Support Fund), debt and budgeting support, utility assistance, mental health and wellbeing services, terminal illness care and bereavement support, housing advice, social inclusion, and support for vulnerable migrants.

Outcomes

Through in-house and partner support, the funded activity enabled timely, responsive casework, helping individuals stabilise immediate situations and connect with ongoing specialist support. Many arrived in acute distress, presenting with anxiety, low mood and instability. Through immediate emotional support, practical guidance and access to food provision, individuals were helped to stabilise and reduce crisis. The co-located model reduced barriers to engagement and enabled individuals to access both immediate and ongoing support in one place. For example, Marie Curie reported 108 interactions, supporting 32 individuals with ongoing bereavement and end-of-life care. Collaboration with CMA, Bournemouth Water and Citizens Advice resulted in £2,787.95 in debt write-offs, 22 individuals supported into debt resolutions, and £22,496 in increased income through benefits and grants, alongside improved understanding of household budgeting. Over time, this support contributed to increased confidence, wellbeing and resilience. Individuals were better equipped to manage their circumstances, engage with services and take steps toward stability. One individual reflected *“I wouldn’t have managed without it”*.

Stories of change

One individual visited Citygate Community Hub after a change in circumstances due to ill health left them unable to afford food and under increasing financial pressure. *“I basically went without food until a friend told me about the food bank. I walked in the door and burst into tears.”* They received emergency food alongside immediate emotional support, practical guidance, and advocacy from an Access Wellbeing Coordinator. *“Within half an hour she managed to get me sorted.”* They have continued to access support at the Hub, including food provision and financial guidance. They have also engaged with the Hub’s in-house caseworker to become more active and connected in the community, including exploring creative and community-based opportunities. They continue to engage with support. *“I can’t fault you guys at all. I would recommend Citygate Community Hub to anyone!”*

An individual experiencing acute emotional distress alongside financial and family pressures, was introduced to the Hub’s in-house caseworker while collecting an emergency food parcel. During this conversation, the individual received emotional support alongside a calm, structured discussion and signposting to appropriate services. They were connected to additional food provision, financial guidance and wellbeing support, and left with a clearer understanding of next steps. Shortly afterwards, the individual reported a significant improvement in their emotional state and began engaging with some of the support they had been signposted to, sharing that they no longer felt overwhelmed or without hope. This early casework intervention reduced immediate risk and enabled the individual to begin engaging with support services and practical solutions.

Sustainability

Ongoing funding will be secured through a combination of sources. This includes continued grant applications to trusts and foundations, alongside statutory and local authority funding where available. The work is also supported by Citygate Church through regular giving of its members, as well as in-kind contributions.

Coastline Community Trust

Funded activities

- Joy Café operated as a warm, welcoming space six days a week, with a dedicated community worker and a strong, committed volunteer team.
- Our seasonal community meals created welcoming, inclusive spaces where people were nourished by fresh, free, hot, healthy food and meaningful connection. Over 800 people attended our summer al fresco two-course dinners, while 142 people joined eight winter lunches. We also ran a six-session school summer holiday breakfast club, serving 16–20 children (plus parents) per session, and hosted a Christmas Eve two-course lunch for 50 people.
- Our surplus food provision expanded significantly, with food collected from four supermarkets and redistributed four days a week. This provided consistent access to fresh produce, bread, and essential cupboard items for those in need. We supported individuals in crisis through 46 emergency food and essentials boxes, alongside tailored signposting to longer-term support and integration into community life.
- A six-week CAP Money Course equipped eight participants with vital budgeting skills, while five new volunteer money coaches were trained to sustain future delivery.

Outcomes

Access to free, nutritious meals and surplus food has relieved immediate financial pressure for individuals and families, particularly during school holidays and the winter months. Emergency food and essentials boxes provided vital crisis support, ensuring people did not go without basic necessities at critical times.

Beyond meeting practical needs, the project has created consistent opportunities for connection and belonging. Community meals and the Joy Café warm space have reduced isolation, improved wellbeing, and fostered a sense of dignity and inclusion. For many, these spaces have become trusted entry points to seek further help.

The CAP Money Course has equipped participants with the skills and confidence to manage their finances more effectively, while training new volunteer money coaches has strengthened our ability to offer ongoing support.

Stories of change

J was referred to Joy Café by his doctor, as he was struggling with both physical and mental health challenges alongside financial pressure due to unemployment. On his first visit, he was invited to join a free community lunch that had just begun. Initially, he stood on the edge of the space, unsure and not ready to sit down. After gentle encouragement, he took a deep breath and joined the table—later sharing this was a significant step. During the meal, he began to open up about his struggles and his passion for upcycling. The following day, he returned and shared it was the first night in a long time that his depression had not prevented him from sleeping. Since then, he has attended every community lunch and regularly visits Joy Café.

R, a single mum of two, shared at a community lunch that since moving house she could no longer afford to feed herself, often going without so her children could eat. We provided a double portion, a food voucher, and invited her to future meals and activities. She said this support came at exactly the right time, relieving immediate pressure.

Sustainability

Due to the end of this grant, we will need to scale back some activities until further funding is secured. However, key elements will continue: our surplus food distribution will remain in place, and CAP money coaching and support will continue through our trained volunteer coaches.

Dorset Community Action

Funded activities

We ran a series of mini courses on how to get your five a day on a budget, providing a range of cooking/food skills and household energy advice workshops. The grant was spent on staff time to run the workshops, support / train local volunteers, and materials costs. We delivered 10 workshops at Somerford ARC and Poole Pantry covering the following: Eating vegetarian meals, Seasonal shopping and buying wonky, Using surplus food websites and apps, Batch cooking, Energy-efficient cooking, Cutting down on food waste and Grow your own food, indoors and outside. Slow cookers were purchased to give away to attendees along with ingredients to make soups and stews (workshops included a tutorial on how to use a slow cooker and create fresh, healthy meals with recipes cards).

Outcomes

The grant has enabled all attendees to look at healthier food and life options, reduce their food waste, save money by cooking efficiently and learn how to batch cook. Learning how to use and being given a slow cooker, has helped and encouraged attendees to prepare meals using different healthy ingredients, eat healthier and have a more balanced diet. Attendees also expressed interest in growing their own food and have begun to try and grow herbs, tomatoes, salad and other vegetables. Delivering the workshops from a local community centre has enabled the attendees to learn about and access other types of support on offer.

Stores of change

Attendee one is partially sighted and hadn't been able to use a standard cooker for many years. After receiving a slow cooker, she is now able to independently cook meals for herself and her husband which has given her confidence and a feeling of more independence.

Attendee two was a vulnerable adult who lives with his mother. He told us that the workshop has enabled him to learn how to cook for himself and help his mum at the same time. He enjoyed learning about ingredients and how to cook soups and stews. The community feel of the workshop also gave him the chance to meet new people and find out more about events and help that is available to him at the venue.

Attendee three was an older lady who has used what she learnt at the workshop to provide meals for her grandchildren. She told us that she wished something like this had been available when her children were little but is glad her grandchildren will benefit from it. She is working on reducing food waste by using all of the vegetables (broccoli, carrots and beetroot) and is interested in finding out more about community food gardens nearby.

Sustainability

We are hoping to continue the work during the same months next year as we have seen a massive need for the workshops and the impact they have made. We are currently looking for funding to provide growing workshops (Seed2Plate) at both Poole Pantry and Somerford ARC in response to the interest in growing fresh fruit and veg. A local sheltered housing estate has residents that would be interested and would benefit from the workshops.



EDAS

Funded activities

EDAS delivered fortnightly Community Supper Clubs and the rolling Empowerment and Resilience Training Programme.

The Foodie Clubs provide a free two-course meal, a warm and welcoming space, and access to informal advice and signposting. Attendance was consistently strong, and we also distributed essential items including hygiene products and, during the winter months, Winter Warmth Packs. In response to increased demand, we expanded provision by increasing food quantities and incorporating more themed sessions to promote engagement and emotional wellbeing.

The Empowerment and Resilience Training Programme was delivered in four-week rolling blocks, covering financial literacy, budgeting, energy use, and cooking on a budget. Due to participant feedback, we adapted sessions to include more practical, interactive elements such as live cooking demonstrations and simplified financial tools. We also introduced additional one-to-one support for participants requiring more tailored guidance.

Outcomes

Through our Foodie Clubs, beneficiaries have accessed regular, nutritious meals in a warm and welcoming environment, helping to alleviate immediate pressures around food and energy costs. Just as importantly, these sessions have reduced loneliness, strengthened social connections, and created a safe space where individuals feel valued and supported.

The Empowerment and Resilience Training Programme has equipped participants with practical skills and knowledge to better manage their finances, reduce energy costs, and cook affordable, healthy meals. As a result, individuals report increased confidence, improved financial literacy, and a greater sense of control over their circumstances. Many have also engaged with wider support services following signposting.

Stories of change

'Bill' was an 83-year-old man living alone who became a regular attendee at our Foodie Club and completed the 4-week Empowerment and Resilience Training Programme. On first engagement, he was experiencing significant social isolation and difficulty managing day-to-day financial pressures.

Through the training, Bill developed practical skills in budgeting and understanding energy tariffs. He applied this learning at home and shared it with his son, helping him review his household energy provider and switch to a more cost-effective tariff, resulting in reduced bills. Beyond the practical outcomes, Bill benefited from increased confidence and connection within his community. Following his passing, his son personally thanked me for EDAS's support, acknowledging the lasting difference the support had made to both Bill and the wider family.

Andy, aged 73, experienced low confidence, limited social interaction, and reduced engagement in family life. Through consistent participation, Andy rebuilt structure and purpose in his week, gained practical cooking and budgeting skills, and improved his mental wellbeing. He has since reconnected with his daughter and grandchildren and gained confidence in cooking meals from scratch for his family, strengthening those relationships.

"Since I've been attending EDAS I have been able to manage my life so much better... I look forward to meeting up with other like-minded people... and I always find the staff... willing to listen and help."

Sustainability

Sadly, we are unable to continue without support of a grant or charitable trust donations. We are actively seeking this through fundraising applications.

Faithworks Wessex

Funded activities

We delivered face-to-face financial guidance and debt support across our BCP sites. We provided one-to-one debt advice, income maximisation checks, and benefits assessments, working with individuals and families to identify practical solutions and agree manageable repayment plans with creditors. Support was focused on those already in crisis, and to prevent depending problems, including households accessing foodbanks and community centres. This work ensured people received consistent, practical support to stabilise their situation, reduce debt, and move forward with greater confidence and control.

During the winter we delivered 5 practical, interactive courses covering budgeting, benefits, debt reduction, and confident financial decision-making. We facilitated group discussions, hands-on exercises, and tailored advice to create a supportive learning environment. We trained volunteers to deliver sessions.

Outcomes

Individuals and families have been supported to reduce debt, increase income, and regain a sense of control over their situation. For many, this has eased immediate stress around rent, bills, and day-to-day living, while also improving mental health and overall wellbeing. Beyond finances, the support has restored hope. People who felt overwhelmed and stuck have been able to take clear, manageable steps forward, knowing they are not facing challenges alone. The combination of expert advice and consistent, face-to-face support has helped rebuild confidence and stability.

The introduction of Money Guidance during winter has made a noticeable difference across our foodbanks and wider projects. It has helped shift conversations beyond immediate crisis support, creating space for more reflective and practical discussions around managing money day to day. There has been more consideration of what is essential, more forward planning, and a growing focus on making limited income stretch further in realistic ways for each household.

Stories of change

M was experiencing significant financial difficulties. Her debts had built up following a bereavement, and she was also facing persistent issues with her utility provider. Over several months, we supported her in resolving these challenges, including assisting with a formal complaint to the utility company. We contacted her creditors to stop the ongoing pressure that was causing her considerable stress and helped her review her income and expenditure to ensure she could manage her finances going forward. With this support, M was eventually able to enter into a Debt Relief Order, giving her the chance to reset and have a fresh start. During the process, she also had food support from the foodbank and they supplied her with a microwave and fridge freezer. She expressed deep gratitude for the kindness, helpfulness, and the emotional and practical support she received from CMA. She is also booked to attend the Money Course to help her maintain good budgeting moving forward.

One participant attending the Money Guidance course explained that it prompted them to pause and reflect more intentionally on how they were spending money, rather than reacting to financial pressures as they arose. They reported becoming more aware of everyday spending decisions, thinking ahead about upcoming costs, and making more deliberate choices about priorities.

Towards the end of the month, family members contacted them to check they were okay, as it was unusual not to receive a call asking to borrow money. For the participant, this was a powerful moment of realisation, highlighting how embedded the previous pattern of financial shortfall had been, and how noticeable the change was to those around them. *“I’ve started thinking before I spend now. I’m trying to remember and be ready for what I know is coming”*

Sustainability

We will continue funding this work through a mix of grants from trusts and foundations, and support from local partners such as the council and other statutory services. We are also building new funding relationships. We are very keen to extend the Money Guidance work; so we have added this aspect into our joint bid to the Lottery with Bournemouth Foodbank, to provide a “Money Matters” programme for all BCP foodbanks (Money guidance, income max, debt advice).

Friendly Food Club

Funded activities

Following 3 attempts at running our own courses Oct-Dec 25, we struggled with attendance, despite working alongside BCP Family Hubs, various social prescribers and health visiting teams. We changed our approach to collaborating with other community groups that support pregnant women and after discussion with DCF, we agreed to extend the reach from just pregnancy to include all early years and women. This proved extremely positive.

In the Winter, we delivered Springbourne Cook & Connect. We starting up new conversations with 15 community groups within Springbourne/Boscombe area, as well as Council Communities team, libraries, doctors surgeries and social prescribers, to enable us to continue to reach potential beneficiaries.

Outcomes

Participants consistently reported improved understanding of healthy eating, with increased confidence to make small, practical changes that can have a lasting impact. Guidance on early years feeding was described as invaluable, particularly in building confidence to introduce a wider range of foods including vegetables, pulses and allergens, supporting healthier long-term outcomes. Bringing together women in similar situations within a friendly, non-judgemental environment helped reduce isolation, foster peer support, and build new friendships, contributing to improved overall wellbeing. Cost of living pressures were directly addressed through simple, low-cost recipes and shared tips on affordable food shopping. Participants reported increased confidence in using budget-friendly ingredients such as tinned pulses and lentils.

Our Springbourne Cook & Connect sessions have so far reached a group that we had not initially identified, which are adults with learning disabilities. The impact on this group attending the weekly sessions is already beneficial with comments about learning new skills and replicating recipes at home. The indirect benefit has also been on their support workers, who have also learned new cooking skills as a result, that has in turn enabled them to have a new activity to do together.



Stories of change

Emma joined our Eating Well in Pregnancy sessions at Townsend Family Hub while 8 months pregnant and experiencing severe complications that limited her mobility. Despite this, she remained highly engaged, motivated by a desire to improve her family's diet. She valued learning about healthy swaps and how nutrition supports both her baby's development and postnatal recovery. She described the experience as enjoyable and informative, recommending it to other expectant mothers and wishing she had accessed it earlier. Emma has since welcomed a healthy baby boy and reports feeling positive and confident about weaning, stating she is now "looking forward to putting the information into practice, rather than dreading it."

Jamie, a participant at Safe & Sound, had been rebuilding her life after leaving an abusive relationship, with very low confidence and little motivation to cook, often relying on minimal meals. Initially hesitant, she agreed to help prepare a group meal, despite fearing judgment from others. With support, Jamie and four women cooked minestrone soup and flatbreads for 25 people. The positive feedback had a profound impact, leaving her emotional and boosting her confidence. She continued attending and cooking over the following weeks, growing in confidence each time. Jamie has since expressed interest in volunteering with Friendly Food Club, reflecting on the experience by saying, "I can't believe the power of food... I haven't had that in years."

Sustainability

One of our key challenges is now meeting the demand for our services in Springbourne. We will be applying for additional grants to support all of this work and we are also investigating paid-for courses for those that can afford it, which will aim to fund more free courses for vulnerable groups.

GodFirst Church

Funded activities

We have put on 4 evening community evenings for families. We spent the fund, as planned, on equipment that will last beyond these parties and resource further parties, including a sandpit, children's tables and chairs, bean bags, tuff trays, games and lego. We also purchased tshirts for volunteers. The rest of the funding was spent on food, activities, and craft materials on the night and giveaways and activities to take home to complete together as families.

Outcomes

We have seen a diverse group of people coming together to have fun and food during the winter months. The joy on children's faces as they arrive is so wonderful. All respondents reported that events like this have a positive impact on their family's wellbeing, highlighting the importance of accessible, inclusive community spaces. Some described the events as "fantastic" and said their children "had a great time". 95% of respondents reported improved connection with their community, with 77% saying this improved "a lot." This demonstrates that the events are not just enjoyable, but actively helping people feel more connected, supported, and part of something bigger.



Importantly, the impact extends beyond those who attended, showing the wider reach into family life. These shared experiences create opportunities for families to spend quality time together, build confidence in social settings, and develop stronger interpersonal connections.

Stories of change

"My daughter (5) enjoys sharing about these events with her friends and these community parties help her see the importance of including and loving others. It has helped her develop friendships even at a young age. Our friends (adults and children in families) enjoy being in this setting and enjoy the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Children can familiarise themselves in an informal way with the building and the people there, and gain confidence."

"I really like the activities, they are very creative. I really liked the grab the doughnut because after all that hard work there is a reward... Every time I eat doughnuts now, I think of the party. I like how they have the table tennis. Ten out of ten for the food. If people have low cash, it means they can feed their family and have fun as well" (10 year old child at the party)

"I have helped as a volunteer at every party, except one. My daughter loves the party, so I come along too, as a volunteer. For me, the best thing is the sense of community. Everyone seems to be smiling and so happy to be there, the volunteer team is very friendly and organised and it's a pleasure to serve on the team to help make these free community events happen. The parties are full of joy and it's lovely to see everyone smiling and happy, enjoying themselves at a free event. It's really important to build pride and a sense of joy within the community. Thank you to the donors who are helping to make these happen."

Sustainability

One of the challenges in these events is we don't know how many will attend, as we don't ask families to book in. We don't want to waste food but we always want to have enough and be generous! Going forwards we will ensure we do food in big portions that is easier to cut or split into smaller portions if needed. This work will continue but not as frequently, we have monies to do 3 more of these events in 2026 but I would like to continue them at monthly intervals if possible so more funding is required to keep them as free events for families.

Grounded Community

Funded activities

We expanded Food Pantry coordination hours to sustain seven-day provision and meet increasing demand, ensuring households experiencing hardship could access consistent support. Food vouchers and winter hampers were distributed to families most affected by rising living costs, helping to stabilise budgets during the colder months. We delivered eight community meals, including three cultural cooking events, and secured six months of FareShare membership, increasing our weekly food supply by approximately 40kg. Energy efficiency advice was embedded within all activities. We provided warm meals at The Garden Rooms Café every Friday during Dec and Jan, creating accessible winter community spaces.

During this period, we identified growing isolation and food poverty among women and mothers who were frequently sacrificing their own food intake. In response, we introduced a 17-week women's breakfast and support group 'Gather & Grow', delivering wellbeing and cooking workshops, recipe cards and ingredients.

Outcomes

We provided practical support to households experiencing food insecurity while strengthening community connections during the winter months. Families were able to access nutritious food more consistently, helping to stabilise household budgets and reduce reliance on emergency crisis support. Increased Pantry capacity allowed us to respond to more referrals from partner organisations and maintain a welcoming and dignified service for those facing ongoing hardship. Cooking demonstrations, shared meals and practical workshops helped participants build confidence in preparing affordable meals. These activities encouraged skill sharing and strengthened community connections around food.

The Gather & Grow sessions proved particularly valuable in addressing isolation among women. Feedback collected during the programme shows strong engagement, with most participants returning regularly and 92% identifying social connection as their main reason for attending. The majority of respondents reported improved confidence and wellbeing, while 84% said they felt less isolated. Participants consistently described the group as welcoming space where they felt comfortable, supported and able to connect with others.

Story of change

"Before attending the breakfasts, I felt disconnected from people. Although I queued for The Pantry every day, I did not speak to anyone and did not feel part of the community and my mood was often very low. The women's sessions give me something to look forward to. I love that it is an all-women space with women of different ages coming together. Being part of the group lifts my mood and gives me a positive boost for the day. I have also made a friend through the group, we used to queue next to each other without talking, but now we speak every day and support each other. The sessions help me feel included, connected, and part of the community again"

Sustainability

The work will only continue in part as we currently do not have any additional funding to deliver the level of support this grant afforded us. We still receive 40% of our core costs from National Lottery. We were able to extend our Gather and Grow sessions by 1 month, thanks to funding from Bournemouth Foodbank. We successfully implemented our new Pantry Membership scheme (launched June 25) which generates some income and will continue to seek other suitable funds.



HealthBus Trust

Funded activities

The grant enabled us to deliver 20 weeks of hot meals and literacy support for individuals experiencing Homelessness; we provided 706 hot meals to 117 individuals; an average of 35 meals each week. The weekly sit-down meals at the YMCA were once again incredibly well received, offering vital nutrition and emotional support. For a third year running, we saw significant health and wellbeing improvements in patients.

Outcomes

These meals offered more than just nourishment; they created a safe, welcoming space where people could connect, build trust, and access vital support. One patient told us the meals were his only chance to sit with others with a knife, fork, and conversation. He began working with our volunteers to improve his literacy and complete essential forms. Thanks to this support, he is now registered with a GP and accessing ongoing care.



Our dedicated volunteers also provided one-to-one support to apply for benefits, or access referral services. Many individuals struggle with literacy barriers that prevent them from getting the help they need, so this support proved critical to their progress.

The project has played a key role in improving physical health through nutrition, while also reducing isolation and anxiety. For many, it marked the first step in a longer journey toward healing, stability, and safe accommodation.

Stories of change

“Ben, aged 31, has spent the past six months sleeping rough in Bournemouth town centre after years of instability and time in prison. Struggling with addiction and exposed to physical violence on the streets, he connected with our team through the weekly hot lunches. After six to seven weeks of attending, Ben felt safe enough to engage. With the help of our volunteers, he completed essential forms and is now registered with a GP. He shared how grateful he is to finally feel like he’s on the right path to recovery, with better access to healthcare and support.”

“Gwen, who faces complex mental health challenges, has moved in and out of temporary housing for years. For her, the weekly hot lunches are the highlight of her week, she described them as *“the best days of her life.”* The space provides safety, especially as a woman, and allows her to connect with others without fear. Since receiving regular nutritious meals and moving into a hostel, Gwen has noticed a boost in her mental wellbeing. She now has hope for the future, with aspirations to improve her health, secure permanent housing, and work full-time. A simple meal and kindness have set her on a new path.”

Sustainability

We’ve seen significant benefits to both physical and mental well-being by providing good quality hot food alongside access to care, referrals, and wider support services. This combination has helped individuals begin to rebuild and change their lives for the better. We are actively seeking further funding and undertaking new fundraising efforts to continue this vital work. We are incredibly grateful to the BCP Food and Energy Support Fund for their support.

Home Start Wessex

Funded activities

Weekly two-hour support groups over 17 weeks, for homeless families with young children living at Quay Foyer in Poole and Morrell House in Bournemouth. Through the sessions, we provided practical support including helping families access food banks and community food provision, distributing food vouchers, and supporting access to essential items such as nappies, baby formula and clothing. We also helped families navigate benefits, manage limited household budgets, and access grants and advice related to energy costs and debt. Alongside this, we offered emotional support to reduce stress and build resilience, recognising the significant impact of financial hardship on parental wellbeing.



Outcomes

Through access to food vouchers, community food provision and essential items such as nappies and baby formula, families were better able to provide for their children on a day-to-day basis. This reduced immediate pressure within the family and ensured children's basic needs were consistently met. Practical support around budgeting, managing energy costs, accessing benefits and avoiding debt helped parents feel more in control of their finances. Many developed greater confidence in planning and preparing low-cost, healthy meals and navigating available support. Emotional support within the groups reduced stress and isolation, improving overall wellbeing for both parents and children. Peer support networks also developed, strengthening resilience beyond the sessions. As one parent shared, the support was "life changing" due to the ongoing, non-judgemental advice and consistency provided.

Story of change

We are currently supporting a single mother and her two children (aged 16 and 4) who have been experiencing homelessness for two years. The family's situation is critical, characterized by a complex intersection of chronic physical health conditions including Fibromyalgia and Sleep Apnoea and significant mental health barriers such as CPTSD and suspected ADD. Both children are currently undergoing ADHD investigations, with the eldest attempting to navigate her GCSEs within the high-stress environment of temporary accommodation.

We drafted a formal briefing for the Local MP. This successfully resulted in a scheduled meeting to advocate for a permanent housing solution. We facilitated a referral to Steps to Wellbeing for specialist trauma support. We implemented neuro-inclusive financial coaching. This included a comprehensive budgeting plan that addressed "dopamine-seeking" impulse spending by removing "one-click" purchasing and introducing "body doubling" strategies for shopping. We secured membership with Poole Waste Not Want Not, enabling the family to access groceries at 50% of retail cost.

The support provided the 16-year-old with the nutritional fuel necessary for cognitive focus during her GCSEs, and supporting behavioural regulation and developmental milestones for the 4-year-old through a stable diet.

We have moved this family from "survival mode" toward structured recovery. The mother is now equipped with the tools to manage her neurodiversity and finances, providing a resilient foundation for her children's education and wellbeing while we pursue a permanent home.

Sustainability

We have an income generation plan which includes diversifying our income streams. As well as from vital grants we fundraise through corporate/business partnerships, online campaigns and at events.

Hope Community Church

Funded activities

The grant supported food provision in our non profit café. This includes free fresh cooked hot meals and drinks to those in need of all ages during term time and extra meals for school children and a parent during school holidays. Over the winter this provision ran alongside our warm space with extra facilities in the form of access to TV , board games, pool table, library as well as warm up facilities; hot water bottles, throws, & laundry/clothes drying & coat bank.

Outcomes

School holiday meals meant that families on low incomes were able to feed their children as well as have an outing where the children can meet other children and have access to play and craft activities. The ability to choose food for themselves from a menu rather than be offered a set menu means that this is seen as a treat which boosts mental health for families & meets food needs.

Meals for adults have been relied upon by our community of people trying to manage on low incomes. Coming to the hub means a lot more to them than just accessing food, it is an important community for our clients where they can meet others, make friends and reduce loneliness and isolation. Our volunteers know our customers by name (and often their food orders). Our cafe manager will sit down with each person to discuss any needs and arrange for referrals where needed. Volunteers are also supported and we work closely with other support partners in Winton so we can cross refer clients according to need. The warm space is valued over the winter as somewhere people can come and keep warm and use our facilities eg laundry and drying facilities .

Stories of change

"One young volunteer (school leaver) who was extremely shy struggled with client contact so we created a behind the scenes role for him. He left to go on a full time course but once finished he asked to come back as a volunteer and is now working on food hygiene qualifications to offer to employers. He has had to build courage to ask for food support help. He feels safe in our community and has been friended by another volunteer who is helping him & encouraging him, boosting his self esteem & he is now taking on a role with more customer contact.

A newly retired lady with significant mental health issues has found that she is able to access the hub because it is somewhere where she feels safe. Previously she had been unable to go to cafes or places outside the family. She said she had felt ok and accepted & not judged at the Hope Hub.

A retired gentleman suffered severe depression after losing his dog & was encouraged to come to the Hub as a means of getting out of the house & reducing isolation . He found the presence of dogs and friendly welcome meant that he felt comfortable enough to stay and started coming regularly with a relative. It was a long time before he felt able to chat to others but we have seen the progress made over time just by being able to be somewhere amongst others in a non-threatening environment.

Sustainability

We hope to keep the non profit cafe going in the short term with volunteers but without a salaried manager opening hours could be reduced. We will be unable to offer free meals except through our pay it forward board which will be insufficient for the demand. Last year when we ran out of funding we saw a significant reduction in clients who could not afford food even at our very low prices. We can only continue with grant funding.

Hope Housing ,Training and Support ltd

Funded activities

We delivered weekly cooking and budgeting sessions for residents, focusing on practical skills such as planning low-cost meals, shopping on a budget, and managing household finances. These sessions were well attended and gave residents greater confidence in making healthier, more affordable choices.

We also provided welcome packs for new residents moving into Hope Housing. Many people arrived with very few belongings, so these packs, including bedding, toiletries, towels, crockery, and warm clothing. During the winter months, we distributed warm clothing and provided small hardship payments where needed. This meant we could respond quickly to urgent needs such as heating, food, and travel costs.

Outcomes

The project has made a real difference to people who were struggling with the rising cost of living. Many residents arrived with very little, so receiving a welcome pack helped reduce immediate stress and allowed them to feel more settled from the start.

The cooking and budgeting sessions have been especially valuable. Residents have gained practical skills and confidence in managing their money, planning meals, and making better use of limited budgets. The sessions also helped bring people together. Many residents experience isolation, and these group activities created a sense of community and mutual support.

Winter support was essential. Providing warm clothing and small hardship payments helped residents stay warm and avoid crises during a particularly difficult period.

Story of change

Sarah came to Hope Housing after leaving an unsafe situation. She had no stable income, very few belongings, and was struggling with anxiety. When she moved in, she received a welcome pack with essential items, which immediately reduced some of the pressure she was under.

She started attending the cooking and budgeting sessions but was very quiet at first. Over time, she became more involved, learning how to cook simple, low-cost meals and manage her weekly budget. During the winter, she also received warm clothing and additional support through the hardship fund, which helped her manage rising costs and reduced her stress.

Since then, Sarah has grown in confidence and is engaging more with support. She is now taking positive steps towards independent living and feels more hopeful about her future.

Sustainability

We will continue to seek funding from local trusts and foundations, alongside community fundraising and donations.

Immaculate Conception and St Joseph's Church

Funded activities

Becky's Cafe continues to be a community of guests and volunteers built on a commitment to care and mutual respect. We are able to open virtually every Thursday, owing to our wonderful large team of volunteers. We have provided a wide range of delicious home made soup, sandwiches and cake as well as fresh fruit, biscuits, tea and coffee. We have also provided food vouchers this year. We held a Christmas Party and other special events which were greatly appreciated. One of our very elderly guests made an enormous Christmas cake. She was paid using grant funds. Over the 3 and a half years, it's been going, there has been an increase in the spirit of community in the local area. The locals know about us and stop to chat at bus stops, and in the street. The Food Bank refer people to us.

Outcomes

The home made cakes are particularly appreciated by our guests, and also the lovely fresh home-made soup and sandwiches. But probably more importantly, is how our guests are made to feel - valued and welcomed, and in this sometimes dark and isolating world of ours, that aspect is prized above all else. Lots of Christmas cards received from our guests reflect the gratitude they feel for our efforts. Some guests try their hand at table tennis, others read the newspapers and magazines, do puzzles, but mainly, they come to make friends.

Stories of change

Our youngest guest is a toddler; she started coming aged 3 weeks, and comes regularly with her dad, and granny. In gran's words, the cafe has been "brilliant." 'Sophie' loves going, she can't wait to get there, knows where everything is, and has learnt to socialise with everyone, especially now that she is walking around the tables. The older guests love her and interact with her. Her family are so pleased that they've got somewhere to go that is safe and not a financial burden. Their house is quite small for the 3 generations living there and gran's mental health was suffering, but Becky's provides a weekly outlet.

Sam, a rough sleeper, came to our town for a couple of months during the year, and stayed longer than he had intended because of the support he received from Becky's and Christchurch Food Bank. At that time, we had switched briefly to a more simple offering of coffee and home made cake (but have since reverted to sandwiches etc). However to recompense people such as Sam who clearly needed a nice lunch, we bought vouchers from a local sandwich shop, to give to anyone who was homeless. We saw our role with Sam as working with the Food Bank, to act as a stepping stone so that he could regain his confidence and place in the world. He has since moved on from our town. He commented on getting his dignity restored.

Sustainability

We will continue through donations, and hopefully other sources of funding but at this stage we are unfunded by grants for the coming year. We want to see Becky's continue to thrive and provide its special service to the community, and we have a large body of volunteers who are committed to doing this, and give freely of their time and energy.



International Care Network Ltd

Funded activities

Advice services for asylum seekers & refugees - addressing the impact of poverty and preventing further financial crisis.

Outcomes

Advice and support is a crucial part of ICN's work with asylum seekers and refugees but as a service area it can be harder to secure funding for. Having this grant therefore makes a difference to our organisation, allowing us to sustain this work and support vulnerable individuals and families to address immediate financial needs as well as providing advice and guidance that prevents them from reaching the stage of food and energy poverty. We have supported service users to access benefits they are entitled to, to find work, to pay bills, to secure affordable housing and maintain their tenancies, for example.

Stories of change

A Vietnamese couple were referred to ICN by Home Start as they had a small baby and the woman seemed isolated. Our team contacted them and arranged a home visit to the woman and child. They established that the man had Leave to Remain and was working in a nail bar while the woman was an asylum seeker. Although they had some income from his work, they were struggling to pay council tax and other bills on top of their rent. ICN arranged for a food bank voucher and help with getting nappies for the baby. They checked on other support they were receiving from Home Start, etc. They arranged a second visit with the man also present where they helped him apply for Universal Credit and Child Benefit. At a further visit, they supported him to apply for a Council Tax reduction.

The family are now better off and managing financially. ICN continues to check in on them, encouraging the family to engage in ICN community activities such as our Conversation Corner for women with young children.

A single mother came to the ICN Welcome Hub to get help with her e-visa and ask about financial support for some essentials she needed for her flat; the flat had basic furniture but lacked essentials such as bedding, kitchen equipment and a vacuum cleaner. Our adviser checked on her money situation and issued her with a food voucher before arranging for Migrant Help to contact her about her e-visa. She then spoke to Acts for Sharing who were able to provide these essentials and delivered them within a few days. The service user was further supported to join community ESOL classes with ICN and talk to the Job Centre about finding part-time work.

Sustainability

We will continue to fundraise from multiple sources, particularly Trusts, Foundations and other Grants sources.

It's All About Culture (IAAC)

Funded activities

It's All About Culture used the funding to deliver a series of community-centred cultural, creative and social activities designed to reduce isolation, celebrate multicultural identity, and strengthen local belonging. The core programme included weekly Crafty Social sessions featuring board games, crochet/knitting, and informal conversation spaces that encouraged intergenerational connection and gentle creative engagement. Alongside this, IAAC delivered culturally themed social events, including the Caribbean Social, which highlighted food, music, and heritage while fostering cross-community understanding.

Outcomes

Our weekly cultural and social sessions have reduced isolation, particularly among people who are new to the area, living alone, or lacking regular community contact. Participants report feeling more confident, more connected, and more comfortable engaging with others from different backgrounds. The relaxed, creative environment has helped people build friendships, improve wellbeing, and experience a sense of belonging they previously lacked.

Events such as the Caribbean Social have strengthened cross-cultural understanding and contributed to a more vibrant, cohesive local atmosphere.

The funding strengthened our capacity, increased our visibility, and allowed us to build momentum toward becoming a recognised cultural hub in the community.

Stories of change

Hi, my name is Zac and I have been going to IAAC for the past 3 years, during which time my confidence has grown. Especially within the last 12 months. I have found myself socialising and doing things that I previously wouldn't have dreamt of doing. I have severe mental health issues which have disabled my abilities and social skills, but through IAAC and the help and support they provide my mental health and the complications that arise from that have been nurtured. From this I have become a better person and have more self esteem. IAAC isn't just somewhere to go, it's somewhere to be seen, heard, valued and respected. Most importantly, I look forward to seeing everyone every week, IAAC has been like a crutch for me.

We have a young lady named Keri, who came to the UK from China with nothing. She started popping into our weekly craft group and slowly integrated herself within the community and British culture. Since then she has gone on to gain citizenship and she is now navigating her way around the community. She is attending classes, registered with the Jobcentre and living a fully inclusive British lifestyle. We also have helped her with food vouchers and small shopping items. Just seeing her development is such a lovely thing and we are proud as well as happy that she could utilise our services.

Sustainability

IAAC plans to sustain its work through a mixed-income approach. We will continue applying for small and medium grants, while developing earned-income opportunities through workshops, cultural events and partnership delivery. We are also exploring sponsorship and in-kind support from local organisations aligned with our mission.

Kinson and West Howe Foodbank

Funded activities

The money was used to buy stock for our 3 day emergency parcels. A mixture of stock was purchased; food, hygiene products and basic cleaning items, such as washing up liquid and washing pods for clothes. Your grant provided approx 10% of the stock given out during the grant period.

During the winter, the grant enabled us to open The Sanctuary - a welcoming community space. The Sanctuary now hosts a range of weekly activities, including two foodbank sessions, a community coffee morning, and a knit-and-natter group. It also provides a warm, safe place for anyone in the community who needs somewhere friendly and supportive to spend time, as well as offering a community lunch. This funding has also allowed us to purchase a washing machine and tumble dryer, giving local residents the opportunity to wash and dry their clothes - an essential service for many who are struggling.

Outcomes

As a charity that relies solely on grants and personal donations, the sharp decline in private giving—linked to increased living costs—has created significant challenges in maintaining adequate stock levels. This funding bridged that gap. The grant enabled us to provide approximately 330 emergency parcels to individuals and families experiencing acute financial crisis within our community. At a time when the rising cost of living has placed increased pressure on already vulnerable households, this support has ensured that people in hardship could access essential food, hygiene products and basic cleaning items, helping to relieve immediate stress and maintain dignity.

The Sanctuary provides comfort, dignity, and a sense of belonging for those who may otherwise have nowhere safe to go. The washing machine and tumble dryer has offered a vital practical service for people without access to laundry facilities. This has supported health, hygiene, and self confidence, enabling beneficiaries to attend appointments, work, and school with dignity.

Stories of change

A two-parent family with four children began accessing the foodbank regularly from Christmas 2025. Just one week before Christmas the father was unexpectedly made redundant. At the same time, the family were adjusting to the arrival of their newborn baby, who was only four weeks old. The mother was on maternity leave and therefore not receiving full income. With household earnings suddenly reduced to zero and the increase in costs associated with a new baby, the family quickly found themselves unable to meet basic living needs. They applied for Universal Credit, but like many families, faced the unavoidable waiting period before the first payment. Over several months, we were able to provide food parcels, toiletries and household essentials, baby items including nappies and wipes. In addition to practical aid, the family engaged with our Financial Inclusion Programme, delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice. Through this service, they received guidance on maximising income, accessing entitlements, and navigating the benefits process.



A single lady in her 70s has recently begun accessing the foodbank for support with essential food items. Although she has always managed her finances independently, a combination of rising living costs and personal family circumstances has significantly affected her ability to cope. She has had to prioritise using her limited benefits income to cover her energy bills. This has left very little available for food or other day-to-day essentials. Her financial situation worsened when she accumulated debt after trying to support her sister, who has terminal cancer. We provided regular food parcels, basic toiletries and cleaning products, warm clothing and access to emotional support during visits. She has been referred to our Financial Inclusion Programme, which aims to reduce the long-term pressure she is under and prevent further deterioration of her wellbeing. The support has helped her feel less alone; as she continues to work through her financial challenges, the foodbank remains a steady, reassuring source of help.

A single mother and her 15 year old daughter became homeless following a sudden unexpected change to their housing situation. With no support network, they were placed into emergency accommodation in a local hostel. While this provided temporary safety, the environment was crowded, unsuitable for a teenager studying for exams, and lacked access to basic facilities such as laundry. The mother was referred to The Sanctuary, where she was able to use the washing machine and tumble dryer to ensure her daughter had clean school clothes and could maintain her dignity and routine. The Sanctuary provided a calm, warm, and welcoming environment for the mother to spend time during the school day. Support from staff and volunteers helped her feel valued and reassured, enabling her to cope better with the pressure of homelessness while continuing to support her daughter's education and wellbeing. The family's situation is now improving, and the mother reported that The Sanctuary "was a lifeline during the most uncertain period of our lives".

A 75 year old man was recently bereaved after losing his wife. Having arranged her funeral through St Andrews Church, he found himself struggling with deep loneliness and the sudden isolation of living alone for the first time in many years. Encouraged by the church, he began attending the weekly coffee morning at The Sanctuary. Although initially quiet and reserved, the warm welcome from volunteers and the gentle, friendly atmosphere helped him feel comfortable. Over time, he began to chat with others and form new social connections. The coffee morning quickly became an important part of his week, giving him a reason to leave the house and a place where he felt seen and supported. He has shared that the group gives him "something to look forward to", helping reduce his isolation and improving his emotional wellbeing during a very challenging period.

Sustainability

We anticipate funding our ongoing work through a combination of grant applications, community fundraising, and individual donations. The Sanctuary space has now been fully established, and once we are able to return to the main Sanctuary building (following the temporary relocation due to flooding), we expect the project to grow from strength to strength. We anticipate expanding our programme based on the needs and interests of local residents.

LOVECHURCH

Funded activities

- Take-away nutritious breakfast for local primary school children weekly during term-time, encouraging engagement in class and learning (Nov – Mar)
- Fun 'n' Food during the summer holidays, October and February half terms - weekly lunch and children's activities to those eligible for free school meals.
- Provided budget cooking lessons to children and families attending our Fun 'n' Food, teaching children and families how to cook well on a budget.
- Trained one money coach and ran 3 CAP Money courses for local families and students equipping them with budgeting skills.

Outcomes

We have provided 11,261 meals through our Kid's Breakfast and Fun 'n' Food sessions. On the days we serve breakfasts, teachers notice a calmer atmosphere, with children more settled, focused and ready to learn and anecdotally, attendance is positively affected. Holidays can be a stretch financially and families find the food support invaluable. It also builds community and provides activities for children. Finding ways to keep their children active and entertained can be expensive for families. Our food provision has helped ease the pressure on families who would otherwise struggle without free school meals. By including fresh fruit and veg, we're supporting healthier habits as well as meeting immediate need. Through our partnership with Friendly Food Club, families are also gaining confidence to cook low-cost, nutritious meals at home, which has a longer-term impact. Our CAP money courses are helping people take control of their finances. Last year, CAP relieved over £21,509 worth of debt, which has been life-changing.

"We come to Fun n Food whenever it is on. I have 5 children I bring with me. They all enjoy all of it but some like to go outside and play football, some like arts & crafts, and all of them enjoy the cooking part, and decorating their own desserts. It's a fun Wednesday when we come and all children enjoy coming."

Story of change

"Thank you so much for leading the CAP money course in February. Appreciated all of your time and effort to make sure we got the most from the course. It is an excellent course. It challenged me with thinking about 'essential' and 'optional' spending. My goal for the course was to increase my confidence to make good decisions. This course definitely has helped me with that. I found their suggestion useful to have a yearly spreadsheet, looking at what expense comes at various months of the year and plan accordingly. My finances are quite straight forward with just me and no mortgage, rent or debt. Thank you once again and well done leading. In appreciation."

Sustainability

The work will continue through seeking further grant funding and individual donations.

MS Centre Dorset

Funded activities

We have used the grant to provide subsidised hot and healthy two course lunches for our members, together with helping to pay our increased utility bills. Our membership numbers have increased considerably in the past 6 months and we feel people with MS are hearing about our improved facilities and in particular the special community lunches we are providing, thanks to your fund.

Outcomes

Most members agree that the lunches ensure that they eat one nutritional meal a day, and that it helps them to save money.

Stories of change

One member, who is wheelchair bound said that it helps her hugely because she usually has cold food/sandwiches, as she finds the process of cooking very difficult.

One member mentioned that due to her disability, she feels isolated, so coming to the Centre gives her the feeling of belonging to a caring community. She says that sitting down to a hot cooked meal is an important social part of her week and she wouldn't miss it for anything!

Sustainability

We were concerned that by having subsidised meals rather than free, would cause many of our members to stop having our cooked lunches. But this hasn't happened - initially only 3 members started to bring in sandwiches rather than pay for lunches, but interestingly 2 of these members now stay for our cooked lunches! With the increased number staying for lunch and the rise in food and inflation, it has meant our costs for buying ready meals has increased. Our volunteer chef has decided that to keep costs down, he now regularly cooks meals from fresh ingredients. This not only helps us financially, but because we have asked members what their favourite meals are, we are able to provide even better meals for them.

We will definitely be continuing with our hot lunches for the future because it has become such an important social part of our community. In order to finance the Centre, throughout the year we hold various fundraising events. These include 3 Fairs, Quizzes, Sponsored bike rides and walks, tea at Wimborne St Giles, charity book tables at Tesco stores, coffee mornings and afternoon teas and applying for grants.



Overcomers Outreach

Funded activities

- Homeless outreach - distribution of food and groceries
- Warm space - providing a place that is warm and comfortable for people to come to interact
- Youth clubs - for different age groups
- Workshops for families Heaters and fans refreshments

Outcomes

It has improved wellbeing and mental health, it has provided food and warm/cool environment for people to meet and congregate, it has created a space of safety and sanctuary for vulnerable and marginalised people to meet and be supported. It has supported families facing poverty through cost of living crisis A safe space for youths to meet for activities and refreshments

Stories of change

We were supporting a young lady that became homeless due to her vulnerability in her home and we supported her with food and a place to stay when she feels lonely. We helped with emergency Electron when she ran out of energy as a one off. She has now got a place to stay after spending about 3 months sleeping in a tent.

Another person we supported passed away last year, after dis-engaging with us when we could not continue to support them due to lack of funding. It was very sad to loss someone due to lack of funding. However, we were able to give him food regularly and also give a safe space to come. His mental health was improving and he was started having contact with his daughter again. This shows how essential this grant is to people who are marginalised and hard to reach.

Sustainability

We continue to apply for grants, however, we are approaching local businesses to support the community projects. We also have individual donations, food bank and distribution that was paid for but we are now registered to get free food to give out to the community. We have created a donation page on our website for individuals and businesses to donate easily.

Poole Communities Trust

Funded activities

The grant was used to contribute towards the salary of the store co-ordinator, payment of the storage/space rental at each site and a contribution towards the cost of food. All these 3 areas are critical to the running of the food stores. At Christmas we bought some additional items, Christmas puddings, mince pies etc. We also purchased some basic toiletries, toilet rolls are always very much in demand, shampoos and shower gels. As we have an average of 120-140 families across the 2 stores each week and each family can have 10 items this means a minimum of 1200 items each week need to be replaced.

Whilst most customers are able to pay the £3.50 donation for their weekly shop the store co-ordinator is always very open to letting people pay when they get their benefits or at a better time for them and people are always very conscientious about paying. Sometimes if they have more money they will forward pay for a few weeks which they say works well for them. Often people referred to the food bank then become food store customers thus relieving some pressure on the foodbanks.

The warmer space and café alongside the stores were very well used over the winter period particularly, enabling the local communities to have a warm, comfortable and free space to relax and enjoy a catch up and of course a cuppa. Access to Wi-Fi continues to be a bonus for staff, volunteers, visiting advisers and local residents as so much information is now only accessible through the use of the Internet. During this time the warmer spaces had visits from the NHS for Flu and Covid vaccinations, WiFi essential for this, the Wardrobe foundation, Live well Dorset health checks, local residents fundraising for the skatepark, Wellbeing advisors, Social Prescriber. In both Turlin Moor and Bourne Estate there are few opportunities to catch up with friends and family in a community space and many people tell us it is the only time during the week when they meet up.

Outcomes

The food stores continue to be a really important part of the week when local residents know they can meet up with others, have a chat and of course get access to affordable food. Every week we are told about the difference it has made to them knowing the store is there. On average we have 5 new members a month, over 2 weeks in March we had 7 new members. This is a reflection of worries and concerns they have about forthcoming increases to energy, petrol and water charges. On a weekly basis people will chat and tell us about the difference the stores make to them being able to cope with life more easily and how reducing financial pressures makes a huge difference to them. Through coming along to the stores people find out about other activities (e.g. free wellbeing breakfasts, free adult dance classes, energy advice) thus reducing loneliness and isolation. Some will tell us that store day is the only day they go out and meet and chat to others but having that built into their week is all they need. Several new customers in the past few months have said what a great way it has been for them to meet up with other locals and make friends which would have been very hard otherwise with so few community opportunities. The first week back after Christmas many told us how much of a difference it made to them having the treats like a Christmas pudding or mince pies and the £10 voucher was a real bonus that they could not have been happier about.

Stories of change

D is a man in his 40's, lives alone and is mainly estranged from his own family. He started having home deliveries from the store, he had a lot of health problems and this had left him with a lot of facial disfigurements. Gradually the volunteer who rang him each week persuaded him to come into the store to shop, he started this and has gradually gone from strength to strength, he now comes in early each week and is a regular volunteer to help set up the store. D says because of the store it has given him the incentive to keep fighting through his various treatments. He says he has found his family.

Whilst attending a BCP event in Hamworthy in February we met a woman who has recently separated from her partner and has 2 young girls aged 4 and 7 years. She was in a distressed state having been recently rehoused to Turlin Moor after a very difficult separation. She is completely new to the area. She was very interested to hear about the food store and various activities available and has since come along and is now a regular weekly customer at the food store. She has also engaged with the various agencies that come along to the warmer space and has said already she feels much more informed about a range of services and activities on offer locally as well as having access to affordable food regularly.

Sustainability

We will continue to research and apply for grants as and when we can We will try to build on monthly individual money donations as well as individuals who do a shop and donate it to the store We will continue to make contacts with local stores who can make donations, either through a platform or local contacts

TURLIN MOOR COMMUNITY WARM SPACE

WHAT DOES OUR FOOD STORE & WARM SPACE MEAN TO YOU?

What would you do without the Tuesday Warm Space / Cafe / Food store

"I would not come out the house"

"it would have a devastating impact on the community"

"Taking this away will create less community engagement and connectivity and a vital source of mental wellbeing"

"you wouldn't be able to have your conversations, i think everyone looks forward to it"



COMMUNITY WARM SPACE

How would things change...

if you couldn't volunteer anymore?

"I would massively miss being part of such a hopeful, practical resource in our community"



Poole Community Exchange

Funded activities

The funding helped us continue to deliver Free and low cost food and essentials (toiletries and sanitary products) to Poole Pantry members (3x/week) - Low cost community meals at lunch times (3x/week) and after school as part of the Regenerate project (2x/month) - Free cookery tuition (3x/week) - Food bank parcels as a satellite for Poole Food Bank - Low cost, subsidised leisure and wellbeing activities such as art classes and Tai Chi, and Rave in the Nave discos. - Food donations to hostels, domestic violence refuges and Moor Community Food - a winter warm space with advice from Ridgewater Group on reducing utilities costs - pastoral support through Chaplaincy Services.

The grant has contributed to 17% of our costs stretching our donated income that bit further and enabling us to keep going. Some of our volunteers have been able to provide help and advice, and referred people to appropriate agencies.

Outcomes

"I'm new to Poole, a survivor of domestic abuse, I have PTSD and I'm in recovery from alcohol. Coming here helps me to connect, eat well and socialize."

"Although I have a mild learning disability, I can achieve many skills in playing the piano, art and drawing and socializing"

"The pantry helps with providing food during the cost of living crisis in a well laid out area and at a reasonable price. Fruit and Veg helps me to eat more healthily. In turn it also helps me with budgeting other bills. Community lunches are well cooked, well balanced and priced well."

"To meet people, make friends, it has changed my life and saved my life."

"I have been volunteering for 3 years. I began following my mother's death. I enjoy the sense of community and appreciate the support and friendship of everyone involved in this project"

Stories of change

I recently relocated to Poole after experiencing domestic abuse. At the same time, I was in the early stages of alcohol recovery. Moving to a completely new area while managing my mental health was incredibly difficult. I was very isolated, lonely, and struggling with CPTSD symptoms... I found the volunteering opportunity for the arts and crafts table online at a time when I really needed something positive to focus on. Volunteering has been genuinely life-changing. It gave me a safe place to go, a sense of purpose, and something to look forward to each week... I've made new friends and connections and slowly rebuilt my confidence. Being part of such a welcoming and inclusive community has helped me feel accepted just as I am... Sitting down for a community meal helps reduce loneliness and creates a real sense of belonging. I've found that I'm now able to support others too, especially those struggling with their mental health, which makes me feel useful and valued again. I also use the community pantry for food shopping. As a vegetarian on benefits due to my mental health, fresh fruit and vegetables can be expensive, so this support is a massive help and eases financial stress.

I attended with a young lady I support, initially so she could make friends, volunteer and build confidence. We were made so welcome and with her confidence growing because of the friendliness and genuine inclusion, she now volunteers. The Pantry has also been invaluable to me, as a pensioner and carer for my elderly relative. I have been able to buy nourishing food which has helped enormously with budgeting on our government pension. I cannot stress enough how valuable this support is. I no longer feel embarrassed to ask for help or to shop there, which I might have done in the past.

Sustainability

We are appointing an experienced volunteer fundraiser to encourage donations from our community, make grant applications and direct fundraising. Planning to set up a community pottery and hoping to sell donated craft items.

Poole Foodbank

Funded activities

The funding enabled us to provide a wider range of essential food support, including staple items, fresh produce and recipe bags, ensuring families could access nutritious meals during periods of significant financial strain. The grant also enhanced our capacity to run community meals, groups and activities that offer safe, welcoming spaces for people to connect, share concerns and receive appropriate one-to-one or group support. These sessions continue to play a vital role in reducing isolation, particularly for older residents, single men and lone parents.

In addition, we introduced five money-management courses, attended by 3–10 participants each. These courses offered practical budgeting guidance and supportive conversations that helped individuals take meaningful steps towards improving their financial stability.

Outcomes

The grant has enabled us to continue providing nutritious food at a time when rising living costs—especially the increasing price of fresh produce—have placed many households under severe strain. We have been able to provide low energy appliances to clients who are struggling with high utility costs, helping to reduce running expenses and manage household budgets more sustainably. Our community meals, groups and activities have also continued to play a vital role in reducing loneliness and isolation. Older residents, single men and lone parents have benefited from these safe, welcoming spaces, where they can share concerns, build confidence and feel part of a supportive local community. The introduction of five money management courses has been especially impactful. Participants developed practical budgeting skills, increased their financial confidence and felt more able to take control of day to day challenges.

Stories of change

A few months ago, Paul (name changed) came to us quietly with a food parcel voucher. He didn't want to trouble anyone; he simply asked for a little help. As trust grew, he gradually shared more of his story. Paul had once lived a stable life with a home and successful career, but rising living costs, debt and unexpected circumstances made his housing unaffordable. He became homeless and spent three years living on the streets, keeping himself hidden so he wouldn't "be in the way." Through patient conversation and gentle encouragement, Paul began to accept wider support beyond food. At his own pace, he engaged with partner organisations including Routes to Roots Poole, Shelter, Community Money Advice and Access Wellbeing Dorset. Step by step, he started rebuilding his life.

Paul now has the keys to his own accommodation. It is small and unfurnished, but it is warm, safe and his. The change in him is clear — his shoulders are lighter, his smile comes more easily and hope has returned. We continue to support him with food, household items and ongoing relationship. His journey demonstrates the power of dignity, compassion and joined up community support.

Andy joined our money management course feeling extremely anxious. He shared that he "hates going to new places" and becomes very nervous in groups, so his mum attended the first session for reassurance. The supportive environment helped him feel safe, and by the second week he was confident enough to attend on his own. Over five weeks, Andy developed practical budgeting skills, improved his understanding of household bills and built meaningful confidence. He now feels more in control of his finances and better able to manage everyday pressures.

Sustainability

We have an established programme of fundraising activities that we will continue to develop. Our income is strengthened by strong, long-standing relationships across the local community, including Poole-based businesses, supermarkets, and churches. In addition, we benefit from a committed group of regular monthly individual donors.

Poole Waste Not Want Not – FIRST GRANT

Funded activities

The grant enabled us to keep our shelves stocked with fresh chilled items, cupboard essentials, and hygiene products, while also supplying hundreds of free food bags and meeting all dietary requirements, including specialist items for children with allergies or intolerances. We supported over 300 households weekly, delivered 943 free meals and 742 emergency parcels, and created a safe space where 95% felt better, 100% saved money, and 90% felt part of a community.

We delivered 48 cooking workshops, “Fun with Food” sessions, and holiday support. We provided 75 picnic bags during school holidays and ran smoothie-making workshops that led to a significant behaviour change—90% of children chose smoothies over fizzy drinks afterwards. To support this change at home, we supplied smoothie makers for families to continue healthy habits. We also distributed 36 multi-cookers to help reduce energy costs. Although reduced funds meant we could not purchase as many as planned, our partnership with Ridgewater Energy enabled us to offset this and still provide 60 warm snuggle blankets to families in need.

Outcomes

The project has made a profound difference to the lives of members. Families who once relied on the cheapest basics told us they were finally able to enjoy high-quality food and healthier ingredients. One mother reported her daughter’s skin problems eased because they could finally afford nutritious food. These small supports created big changes: children tried new foods, families cooked together, and members began choosing fresh produce with confidence. Shopping habits shift, smiles return, and a sense of dignity is restored. The wider community benefited a safe space where people felt listened to.



Story of change

“I have to say, the people at Waste Not Want Not are truly beautiful people who give so much inspiration to me and to others. I am honestly so grateful to have found Erika, Leanne and the team. They have helped me massively, and words can’t express how much it has meant. I was someone who fell into financial difficulties after the suicide of my husband, suddenly becoming a single mother to two children aged 7 and 5. My company closed down because I was grieving, and starting again from what felt like the very beginning was incredibly hard. But having the support of Waste Not Want Not made such a difference. They weren’t just there with food—they helped with financial struggles, offered friendship, and were simply someone to talk to. They gave my children a Christmas they hadn’t had for the last two years, one we will never forget. Erika helped me with energy-efficient appliances when mine had broken, and even provided special days out, like tickets to the pantomime. I am honestly speechless. I call them my angels from above. Thank you, Waste Not Want Not, for helping me through the hardest time of my life and putting smiles back on my children’s faces—and mine too!”

Sustainability

We have developed relationships with two key funders and continue to work closely with local businesses, building a strong network that helps sustain our charity. We are also expanding our fundraising activities and exploring new income streams to ensure long-term stability.

Poole Waste Not Want Not – WINTER GRANT

Funded activities

Over 140 festive hampers were packed and distributed, including essential food, fresh produce, and treats, helping households enjoy a nutritious and celebratory meal. In addition, 130 joints of meat, 40 crisis food parcels, and vouchers were provided to members in urgent need, ensuring that everyone had access to the food and resources necessary to enjoy the holidays. With the generous support of Ridgewater, we were also able to purchase additional warm coats for families most affected by the cold winter months, helping to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Outcomes

Beyond practical support, the grant created opportunities for social connection and emotional well-being. Older members living alone participated in festive sing-alongs, community lunches, and activities in the shop, reporting feelings of inclusion and reduced isolation. Parents described feeling less anxious as children experienced joy and excitement during festive events. Feedback forms and conversations consistently highlighted the emotional impact of the support. Members expressed gratitude, relief, and joy. One parent commented *“The last two Christmases had been so stressful, the boys didn’t get much. Walking through the doors at PWNWN has changed our life. The boys had the best Christmas ever, and you even gave us tickets to the panto!”* The Winter Grant has not only addressed financial and practical needs but strengthened community bonds, uplifted spirits, and created lasting, positive memories for all who participated.



Story of change

“They’ve been an incredible support to our family during one of the hardest times in our lives. Their food and essential household items have eased our financial stress and continue to make a meaningful difference. The support we received also uplifted our mental well-being, giving us stability, security, and comfort during tough times. We’re especially thankful to Erica, who is always kind, supportive, and ready to help. Thoughtful gifts like the electric blanket that keeps me warm every winter and the air fryer that’s made daily life easier are just a few examples—there’s so much more, it would fill a book 😊.”

Sustainability

To sustain and grow this work, we will continue to strengthen partnerships with organisations such as Ridgewater, local schools, voluntary groups, and community businesses. These collaborations provide in-kind contributions, expertise, and wider reach, enabling us to deliver support efficiently and effectively. We also plan to seek further funding from statutory sources, charitable trusts, corporate partners, and community fundraising initiatives.

PramaLife

Funded activities

Warm space and Lunch Club at Salvation Army Boscombe, Warm space and Lunch Club at Old Rope Walk Hamworthy, Warm space and Carer/Drop-in at The Beacon Church Canford Heath, funds to The Beacon Church to develop a Soup Lunch. Every week, we had been receiving surplus food from Asda including bread, cakes, fruit, veg and other items – for people to take as needed.

Outcomes

People have been socially included and engaged in activities. We have reduced isolation. All of the attendees have benefitted from additional signposting, services and support as a result of coming to the lunch Club. We have put 121 interventions and support in place for a number of the individuals during the course of the funding. 6 people have received payments from the Household Support Fund. 12 people have received energy saving and advice measures from Ridgewater Energy, including being issued with a heated throw each. All have received information about Access to Food initiatives locally.



We have provided volunteer opportunities that have also addressed mental health issues of some people who were needing support themselves.

Story of change

At Old Rope Walk Lunch club one resident said *“what are we going to do without this lunch club, I’m going to be so lonely without it”*. This has resulted in one of the residents, who is also a PramaLife Volunteer, stepping up to co-ordinate an alternative proposal. As of the second Tuesday of April, this volunteer has been to the Fish and Chip Shop to order 25 portions of Fish and Chips, which has been paid for by each individual wishing to be included in a revised ‘lunch club’. The Charge to each participant is £5 which is £3.95 for the Fish and Chips and £1.05 towards a pudding course! Pudding is something simple like meringue nests, fruit and cream, or apple strudel and ice cream. This will be repeated every second Tuesday of the month. For the fourth Tuesday of every month the volunteer is arranging a simple ploughman’s lunch with a pudding to follow. At the same time we are approaching a local Care home who have offered to support us, and we are asking for a sandwich and cake lunch every month, plus a member of care home staff to come and ‘serve’ the residents. This would not have happened without the initial funding.

Sustainability

Activities at all three locations will be ongoing using a combination of volunteer support, and donation of both cash and kind.

- The activities at The Beacon Church are ongoing supported by the Church and PramaLife Volunteers.
- The Warm Space and Lunch Club at The Salvation Army Hall in Boscombe will continue by using Volunteer Cooks from The Salvation Army and Volunteers from PramaLife. All attendees of this activity are encouraged to donate £5 for the lunch and refreshments etc.
- The Warm Space and Lunch Club at Old Rope Walk will cease, however a resident is organising a Fish and Chip Lunch once per month, and I am talking to a local Care Home to ask if they will provide a sandwich and cake lunch once per month at this venue as well.

Recreate Dorset

Funded activities

We set up a new community drop-in session to extend the oversubscribed Community Mondays drop-in session. Alongside a weekly 2 hr creative workshop, held on a Friday afternoon, we offered vouchers for the social canteen held at the Bournemouth Foodbank so the participants could go together to enjoy a social meal. This has helped the group form new friendships and who otherwise would not feel confident to go to the social canteen meal.

Community Fridays was set up to test the delivery of a workshop at the end of the week and to spread the numbers from the Monday session. However the challenge was that many participants wanted to attend both workshops, so this would have meant not being able to increase the number of places and offer space for new attendees. This did cause challenges in managing those who because of their high needs, would just turn up to both. The solution was changing from a drop-in session to pre-booking, one so the workshop leaders can safely manage the numbers, but also to offer spaces fairly across our community.

Outcomes

The difference Community Fridays has made to our beneficiaries has been the strong networks that have been formed because they work together on joint activities and then go as a group to the social canteen, so they share a table and continue the conversation. We know now that many of the attendees will continue to visit the social canteen and meet up here with other members of the group.

Story of change

2 individuals who have attended our Community Mondays have now joined the Community Fridays and have built a strong friendship and bond through attending the workshops. Both have issues with their mental health, are autistic and lack social skills to feel comfortable in groups situations. However, both were introduced by a friend and so felt confident to attend the workshop and meet others. We now can't keep them from attending on their own, but they do feel safer and more at ease when they both attend together. They are very happy to participate in the workshop activities which at the start seemed to be quite daunting and overwhelming. The careful and meaningful support offered by the workshop leader and the volunteers has overcome this anxiety and made them feel welcome and part of the group. They are now keen to input into ideas for activities and have found the addition of the meal at the social canteen a great end to the session where they can have a good meal and continue their conversations.

Sustainability

The 2 hour workshop however can only be delivered if we find additional funding.

Refugee Support Europe - Bournemouth Dignity Centre

Funded activities

We supported people newly arrived in the UK, those placed in dispersal accommodation in the BCP area, and those in Home Office hotel accommodation. We distributed 45 Welcome Packs and supported a total of 233 people across our services: 89 through monthly top-up shops, 77 through warm winter support, and 22 people facing homelessness. This included individuals with no recourse to public funds, those with leave to remain but unable to secure accommodation, and people eligible for asylum support who were left homeless or destitute due to delays in accessing their rights. We provided emergency items such as raincoats, waterproof trousers, thermal hats, and gloves.

Outcomes

Access to Welcome Packs, monthly top-up shops and warm winter items meant members had appropriate clothing, hygiene essentials, hot drinks & snacks, reducing daily stress and allowing them to maintain their wellbeing and dignity. Regular access to the Dignity Centre reduced isolation, helped people build connections and strengthened a sense of belonging within the community. Practical support enabled members to better navigate systems such as asylum processes, housing and welfare, helping to prevent situations from escalating into deeper crisis. Many of our members living in Home Office hotel accommodation only have one change of clothes and the hotels only do laundry once a week. This can result in people not being able to leave the hotel when the weather is bad, causing increased loneliness.



Stories of change

"Thanks for everything you've done for me. I'm very thankful to you, my friend, because no one helped me except you." M arrived in the UK by small boat and was wrongly accused of piloting the boat. He spent three months in HMP Winchester before being found not guilty. He was still sentenced with entering the country illegally despite having claimed asylum at the port of entry. He was released from prison with no money and no idea of where he was. He ended up in Bournemouth, street homeless with only the clothes he was wearing. We quickly established that the Home Office had incorrectly withdrawn his asylum claim on the basis that he had 'failed to maintain' contact. It took two weeks to get the Home Office to agree to reinstate M's asylum claim and provide emergency accommodation. During that two weeks we provided M with a safe, warm place to be during the day, clothing, a sleeping bag, and a referral to Red Cross for a destitution payment so he had some money to buy food. The Centre provided M with community - members offered help with translating, much needed peer support, accompanying him to mosque and helping M to adjust to being in a new country after a traumatic few months.

B was left with no choice but to sleep on the streets after receiving refugee status and just 28 days notice to leave Home Office accommodation. Although BCP Council had secured him a room, delays in processing his deposit meant he couldn't move in. We provided storage for his belongings, a place to rest during the day, and a Sleep Pod and Emergency Pack to keep him warm and dry overnight. B's mental health deteriorated rapidly while he was street homeless. We worked closely with local Community Support Officers, who supported him in moments of crisis and helped bring him to the Centre. B describes the Dignity Centre as his home and us as his family, and tells us that the Centre provided him a place of safety, with no judgement, even when he was in crisis and being turned away by others. After 16 nights sleeping on the streets B was able to pick up his keys. The smile on his face was priceless.

Sustainability

The need in the BCP area is increasing, particularly as more people are dispersed into the area and newly recognised refugees face homelessness following the (reduced) move-on period. We have recently applied to national funders and are arranging a meeting with BCP Council to explore further funding opportunities.

Routes to Roots

Funded activities

The funding was used to contribute to the provision of 10 meals per week to help support homeless and vulnerably housed adults. The funds were also used towards general running costs and overheads at the Genesis Centre.

Outcomes

Since receiving your grant in June 2025, we have seen 471 different people over 348 different sessions which amounts to a total of 8751 attendances overall. Each attendance results in a person being fed a meal, receiving access to warmth, clean clothing, showers and clothes washing facilities. Within the centre we have facility to invite other supporting agencies in enabling direct access to further assistance for many. Your grant will have contributed greatly to our general running costs as well as feeding those in need.

Stories of change

One of our over 65 year old service users presented as rough sleeping in a tent outside a church in Poole. We were able to feed, provide access to showers, laundry and donated clothing. This service user accessed our monthly volunteer chiropodist and weekly GP volunteer as required. We tied them in with the Council who work from our premises on Friday mornings and this service user was placed initially into supported accommodation and continued to access service until accommodated in more permanent council accommodation. Throughout the time spent with us, they have also learnt to read with Ready Easy who regularly work from the Genesis Centre, and happily now has new glasses and a hearing aid via our partnership with Specsavers. Once accommodated in a permanent Council Flat, we helped them to purchase some furniture too.

A couple who were rough sleeping outside accessed SWEP which is run from our premises when temperatures fall below zero, along with laundry, showers, clothing donations and regular meals. They worked with We are With You (addiction services) and the council who placed them in supported accommodation initially and then helped them into private rented accommodation for which we again helped provide them with furniture.

Sustainability

Our work is funded entirely through donations and any grants that we are able to secure.

Safe and Sound Dorset

Funded activities

We have supplied approximately 700 meal vouchers to be spent at The Well cafe for the ladies who attend our sessions. These are given out monthly so they can eat in a warm, social setting and bring friends and family. We have provided light meals and refreshments at our weekly sessions over the past year, these bring people together for wellbeing activities and social inclusion. The Well cafe and our sessions also act as a warm space in the winter months so ladies can come in somewhere warm and eat. We have also purchased approximately one hundred heat appliances such as heat pads and clothes dryers for use in winter.

Outcomes

The support is immeasurable and provides a significant impact for our women who struggle in many ways, particularly with poverty, disability, isolation and poor housing. This impacts their ability to feed themselves, keep warm and socialise. So to be able to provide food and warm refreshments at our sessions, which can be attended by up to 30 women in one go, provides some of our women the only meal they might have that day in a supportive, social environment and the opportunity for us to make healthy meals on a budget, share recipes and give some of the ladies the chance to volunteer in preparing meals. In addition the meal vouchers allow the ladies to purchase meals and drinks at The Well cafe, allowing them to eat in a lovely, cafe setting which otherwise may not be accessible to them. Being able to give out the warm appliances has also been a great gift for people, some who cannot afford to heat their whole homes, so it allows them some warmth.

"I am completely alone, no family contact, only professionals checking on me weekly or three monthly. Having Safe and Sound Dorset to contribute to and receive food vouchers means such a lot. Although I am not seeing or talking that much to folk, knowing there are some people who care about me makes a difference."

Story of change

"The Well is an accessible warm room where folk may meet, chat, get good food and drink definitely be entertained by the wonderful staff and volunteers. I appreciate having this resource where different social prescribing groups can meet. I have increased social contact with a wider variety of people from the wider community. I can craft, paint chat enjoy music the decorations and celebrations. It is a place I can meet friends when my flat would be inaccessible due to stairs. A friend who uses a wheelchair is able to join me and we can craft together again. We can get affordable nutritious food and drink. The soup maker, electric blanket and heater have helped when my boiler cut out. I have gained confidence and my voice is stronger from singing, talking and certainly laughing more. The cooking group has increased my hand dexterity, speed and concentration. The food we produce has helped me be more interested in eating better. This has helped me lose weight and be more motivated."

Sustainability

We will continue to apply for funding for this type of project.

Samee

Funded activities

The grant supported our extended 42-week version of our 'Getting Ready for Tomorrow project', enabling us to cover the travel and transport costs for all 10 disabled young people.

Outcomes

The grant enabled us to pay for the transport costs only of 10 young people to travel to and from our hub in Bournemouth over a 42-week project period. This enabled the young people to receive transformational employability skills development and helped exponentially improve their chances of getting into employment, training or further education.

Stories of change

L is a young adult challenged with medical and physical impairments. With multiple health challenges to handle every day, L joined the project to get employability support and see if they could start a baking business from home. Over the 42-week project, L researched and completed a comprehensive business plan and she passed the environmental health home and hygiene inspection with the inspector approving L to run a baking business from home. L also received support liaising with their landlord granting her permission to bake and trade from home. As L was about to launch her bakery business, they encountered a few health problems, so launching was delayed but really promising start, and L is determined to officially launch her business once her latest medication assessment has been conducted and her health settled. Her confidence is booming!

O is an avid reader and loves books. O has severe health issues, particularly seizures. When O joined the project they wanted to explore any type of work involving books including opening a book cafe. During the 42-week project O wrote a well researched and robust business plan plus cash flow forecast. On paper, the business idea was sound, but O's health got worse and so she cleverly decided to change direction.

O still wanted to work with books, but realised that the stress of running a business was going to impact negatively on her health challenges, so instead, her project mentor and volunteers helped O to search for apply for part-time employment in any book stores across the BCP region. And with just 3 weeks left on the project, O successfully started a work trial at Waterstones Castlepoint store.

Sustainability

We will continue to search for any suitable grant opportunities that will enable us to further transform the lives of disabled adults across the BCP area.

Somerford youth & Community Centre

Funded activities

We have used these funds to purchase food and essential cleaning, health and hygiene items for people to pick when they come to the Pantry. It has allowed us to buy some items in bulk which has helped.

Outcomes

For those who use the Pantry it provides a community hub for them to come and chat with staff and other members. It also means that they all have access to food and items which they would not otherwise be able to afford.

Story of change

A 14 year old youth club member has been able to take food home to his mum and his younger brother who has severe additional needs and who he is a carer for. It has allowed him time away from home where he can have some space for himself. A male member has developed a rapport with another pantry member who lives local to him and who brings him in so that he is able to do a shop.

Sustainability

We undertake continuous searching for funding

St. Thomas Church PCC

Funded activities

We continued with our Community Welcome Spaces, all day Wednesday and Friday morning. The Project has also been expanded to include a gardening group. They have grown their own fruit and veg to share with everyone. They have also put small plant boxes outside the Church to grow flowers. It is a joy to see.

During the cold weather in late December 2025, the Severe Weather Extreme Protocol (SWEP) was invoked. For 6 nights we accommodated 7 or 8 rough sleepers from the streets of Bournemouth, giving them food and somewhere dry and warm to sleep. We also offer a free monthly clothes swap and a free monthly Friday Breakfast.

There is also a Monthly Parish Lunch, which is open to anyone in the Community and is also free.

The money from the Grant has been used to pay a proportion of the Gas and Electricity bills.

Outcomes

There are a lot of people who come who live on their own. They enjoy the chance to meet and interact with other people. Everyone enjoys the free hot drinks, biscuits, cakes and sandwiches. The monthly Clothes Swap is proving very popular in the Community. It is also good for the environment as we are able to re-cycle items.

Stories of change

'J' has his own mental health issues. He comes every week and is involved with the activities. He plays Scrabble every week with 3 or 4 other people. He also enjoys doing jigsaw puzzles I can see how much pleasure he gets from doing the puzzles and I get a lot of satisfaction from helping him.

The last time that I saw 'K' was about 30 years ago. We played for the same cricket club and were often in the same team on a Saturday afternoon. Last year he had a stroke. Most weeks his wife brings him along. He thoroughly enjoys himself and is always pleased to see me. He was very emotional when he was given a cake on his Birthday.

Sustainability

We are actively searching for further sources of funding. We recently applied to the King Charles III Charitable Fund. We were unsuccessful on this occasion.

The Parks Foundation

Funded activities

Alexandra Park Café - 7 Community Sundays. This park location does not have a carpark and due to the persistently wet weather, far fewer people were in the park than usual. We instead focused on Winton and Redhill cafes.

Redhill Park Café - 15 Community Sundays, really well attended. The Café Manager and her volunteer team enjoyed creating various homemade soups and meals, including a joint activity with members of the local Nigerian community. More than half the beneficiaries came to more than one meal, including one family who came to almost all of them.

Winton Park Café - 15 Community Sundays, mixed response. Some Sundays were busy and others not, usually linked to the wet weather.



Outcomes

Based on feedback from those who came to the Community Sunday meals, the majority came along in order to have a free meal (or low cost / pay what you can, if you can). Almost every beneficiary mentioned the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and some referred to having had to use foodbanks in the last few months. Being in the company of others was also important to some, but this was to a minority; this surprised us, as we'd imagined more lone beneficiaries would attend for companionship.



Stories of change

"As two busy dads, the Community Sundays at Redhill cafe has been a highlight of our week. Friendly service, hot and healthy food for the kids that doesn't break the bank during a cost of living crisis. Our Sundays at Redhill cafe have been cosy, caring and community centred."

One of our volunteers has significant special educational needs and when they first started volunteering with us, were really quiet and nervous. For this project, the Café Manager taught them how to make soup. By the fourth or fifth week, this volunteer was sitting with beneficiaries, chatting with them, showing them where cards and games were kept, talking about their charity role.

"I really loved making soup. I enjoy speaking to the people eating. Some are old and lonely so I talk to them and tell them about our café."

One of the beneficiaries who benefited from this friendship told us:

"I've enjoyed having my lunch here with other people and not feeling bad for only being able to pay a little towards it. I've also enjoyed chatting with [volunteer] who always gives my dog a treat and remembers our names. I used to come to this café a few years ago but it's so much nicer now with a lovely lot of people who work here. I will definitely come back again soon."

Sustainability

We should have carried out some research to determine peoples thoughts about the idea & their preferred day. With such high attendee numbers at similar activities, we were confident this would work but feel that a day mid-week may have been better than a Sunday. This was one-off activity thanks to this funding.

The Power House (Poole)

Funded activities

This funding enabled The Power House the hub to remain open during Winter 2025/26 through covering electricity to heat the premises. Alongside hot drinks, we provided homemade fresh soup and stew made by two members of our Community Team . First Aid training for two staff members. Bus Fare subsidy enabled 4 individuals to attend activities and/or volunteer. 3 Cornerstone Patch Nature Makers Saturday Sessions (moved to the hub for the colder and wet months). 16 Upcycling Café Sessions. 5 Upcycling Workshops with UpTown Junk. 20 Thrive Arts & Crafts Drop-In with option to stay on for soup/stew until 1pm. 18 Knit & Natter sessions with soup/stew. 8 Creative Wellbeing Sessions with option to stay in the Warm Hub for soup/stew. 6 Winter Gathering for Wellbeing sessions by CoCreate Dorset with the option to stay in the Warm Hub to socialise. 5 Saturday Open House. 2 Snug Counselling Sessions. 8 people visited the hub solely for Warm Hub without an activity.



Community Use: 8 CoCreate Arts Wellbeing Sessions, 1 CAP Money Course, 2 LiveWell Dorset Check-Up Sessions, 1 Access Wellbeing Drop-In, 2 U3A Bridge Sessions, 2 Archie's Legacy Women's Group sessions, 3 Creative Writing For Wellbeing Sessions, 2 Community Haircuts.

Outcomes

219 individuals had access to a welcoming Warm Hub and activities that supported their wellbeing in their local community. 119 of these were new visitors and approximately 90% of all hub visitors attended regularly or for more than two visits. 13 individuals on low income had hot nourishing food. Attending our Winter 2025/26 Warm Hub: 70% had somewhere warm they would not have had otherwise, 100% had access to activities they would not have had if the Hub was not open, 100% would have stayed at home if they had not gone to the Hub, 80% have improved mental health, 70% have reduced stress/anxiety, 60% have reduced depression, 90% have reduced loneliness, 80% have improved confidence, 90% have made friendships they wish to continue.

Story of change

RF (39) was a new Warm Hub volunteer following attending Creative Wellbeing Sessions (CWB) and staying for Knit & Natter. RF was worried her improved wellbeing following the course would deteriorate. Living in West Howe, the bus fare subsidy funded by this grant enabled RF to stay connected to the hub.

"The warm food, heating, connecting with people and the bus fare ensure that I get out of the house every week guaranteed. Going to the warm hub gives me a structure to my week and helps my general self-care, as it gives me a reason to make the effort to be clean, well presented and dressed for the day. I wouldn't do that just for myself. Doing this on a weekly basis has a knock-on effect of feeling better, more positive in myself and improves my feeling of self-worth... I like that there's no pressure on anyone, you can dip in and out of the activities depending on how you feel on the day... I really enjoy the food we have here at the hub. I have a nourishing bowl of soup which I eat with others. It's simple and comforting. It also feels good that some of the ingredients have come from Cornerstone Patch (our community garden)... There are regular visitors that I've become friends with."

Sustainability

Our utilities are covered until Winter 2026, and we hope to be able to continue to remain open to offer a Winter 2026/27. Our Community Team is funded for another 18 months with match funding for a Youth Project Lead. We currently have half our core and hub operational costs for Year 3. Our new Project Manager is helping us create a fundraising strategy. We will be launching a CrowdFunder to help fund wellbeing activities, including bus fare subsidies and low-cost counselling. Plans to offer more paid activities with tiered pricing and Pay It Forward options, as well as fundraising events in the hub, are also in process.

Townsend Community Association

Funded activities

- Weekly hot breakfast sessions for up to 35 residents at the Community Centre, alongside the provision of ready meals for older/venerable people
- Social food trips to help older residents connect, particularly those living alone or at risk of isolation.
- Purchase of fruit, vegetables and essential items to supplement surplus food collected for the community fridge, as well as regular FareShare deliveries.
- Cooking workshops for both children and adults, a cooking equipment demonstration session and a seasonal community event.
- Distributed air fryers to local residents to support healthier, low-cost cooking at home.
- Festive community celebration

Outcomes

Weekly breakfasts and shared meals created a regular, welcoming space where residents could connect, particularly benefiting older people / those living alone who may otherwise be isolated. The provision of ready meals and access to the community fridge helped alleviate food insecurity for vulnerable households. Cooking workshops and demonstrations equipped both adults and children with practical skills to prepare healthy, low-cost meals while the distribution of air fryers enabled participants to cook more efficiently at home. The project also strengthened community connections, encouraging volunteering and peer support. Overall, the grant has helped build a stronger, more connected community with improved wellbeing and resilience. As an organisation, the funding allowed us to expand our reach, deliver more consistent food support and respond flexibly to local needs.

Story of change

'John' is a middle-aged man living alone who had been experiencing poor mental health and long periods of isolation. He had fallen into a routine of sleeping during the day and being awake at night, often skipping meals or relying on low-cost, low-nutrition food and energy drinks. John began attending the weekly breakfast sessions and accessing the community fridge, helping him gradually establish a healthier daily routine. Over time, this improved his sleep pattern and overall wellbeing. Access to regular, nutritious meals significantly improved his diet. He began trying a wider variety of foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables. Importantly, regular contact with volunteers and other attendees reduced his sense of isolation and helped build his confidence. He now attends consistently and reports feeling more motivated, connected and positive about his future.

'Sarah' is a single parent who was struggling with rising food costs and limited access to fresh ingredients. She accessed the community fridge and attended family cooking workshops with her children. This enabled her to provide more balanced meals at home and reduced financial pressure. The cooking sessions helped build her confidence in preparing low-cost, healthy meals and her children became more engaged in trying new foods. Sarah developed connections with other families, reducing feelings of isolation. She reports that the support has made a lasting difference to both her family's diet and wellbeing.

Tom is a retired gentleman who lives alone and often popped into the community fridge for a bit of fresh fruit or bread. On weeks when surplus was low, he sometimes went home with nothing and would quietly say he'd "manage somehow." After the grant allowed us to top up essentials, Tom began finding the items he relies on more regularly. He told volunteers that having a guaranteed few basics each week meant he didn't have to skip meals anymore and it gave him a reason to get out of the house and chat with familiar faces.

Sustainability

Buying food to supplement the surplus food we collect would only be possible with further grants. To continue providing the same scale as we currently have with additional food / learning workshops the charity would need to fundraise further.

Water Lily Project

Funded activities

A 6 week "Building Financial Confidence and Taking Control Course" was developed with input from Citizens Advice. The course ran 6 times and covered all areas of building financial confidence and control. Content:

- Week 1 - Smart Budgeting and Cost Saving Hacks
- Week 2 - Master Your Budget: Build Confidence in Your Finance
- Week 3 - Unlock Support: How to Access Resources (including Citizens Advice Input)
- Week 4 - Shop Smart: Budget Friendly Grocery Tips & Meal Planning
- Week 5 - Real World Practice :Savvy Shopping Trip to LIDL
- Week 6 - Putting it Together (Practical Cooking Session using what was learned from Savvy Shopping Week 5)



Outcomes

All of the women who attended the course gave positive feedback.

"I learnt so much through this course, I feel I will be able to manage my finances in a far better way. Thank you it will make such a difference to my family"

"100% just what I needed"

Stories of change

Sarah fled Domestic Violence with her two children and was living alone for the first time. In her 1:1 support session she shared that she had been overwhelmed, with mounting bills and irregular income. This was causing her deep anxiety around money. Through the Building Financial Confidence and Taking Control course, Sarah began to understand her finances and learn some tools she could use to manage them more effectively. In the early sessions she learnt how to map her income and outgoings against her essential spending. In her 1:1 session we then helped her to map her finances into what was affordable and then contacted her utility providers to help set up manageable payment plans. This was transformational. Sarah reported a massive reduction in anxiety and more in control of her finances. She described the course as "life-changing"



Leanne was experiencing financial hardship that was impacting mental health. She was frequently skipping meals to ensure her children could eat. The session on accessing support was a turning point for her. In her next 1:1 support session we worked together to get her connected with several external services to help her. We also helped her to apply for some additional financial help she had not known was available. Over the six weeks of the course, we saw Leanne learn and put into place practical budgeting skills which helped her to begin to plan her spending. Leanne is now eating a lot more regularly, managing her money more effectively, and is making significant steps towards building stability financially into her life.

Sustainability

We will however be seeking funding to repeat this course as it was massively beneficial to the women who attended.

We Are Humans CIO

Funded activities

Feeding rough sleepers and the homeless at our weekend street outreach and meals at our cafe on Monday night. Providing before school breakfasts for our Kids and Parents Breakfast Club. Running our Community Pantry, Providing a safe warm space on Tuesday and Saturday afternoon.

Outcomes

We distribute freshly prepared food, hot drink, water, hygiene items, shoes, clothing, towels, tents, sleeping bags, sleep pods, plus help and advice to the homeless and needy, at times and dates when the other providers are not operating, most notably at the weekends and public holidays.

We hold a weekly Pensioners' Lunch Club, providing food and much needed social contact for the senior community. We run a Kids and Parents Breakfast Club during term time, giving balanced nutrition to children who would otherwise go to school hungry. There is a safe, warm space cafe on two afternoons each week, where the homeless and vulnerable can get food and a hot drink, respite and social interaction. A community Pantry runs on one day each week, without needing a referral or facing a series of questions about their circumstances.

We have strict and enforced policies on respectful behaviour, and no drugs or alcohol are permitted: any breaches are dealt with by a temporary or permanent ban. This means that our service users and volunteers can be assured of a safe environment.

All services are provided free of charge, and without prejudice or judgment. Our service users are marginalised and feel ignored by society; we treat them with dignity and respect as fellow humans, worthy of equality. We help the homeless and vulnerable to keep warm, dry, fed and hydrated, whilst offering them help and advice to assist them to move on and, in many cases, find settled housing.

Story of change

As a deliberate policy, WE ARE HUMANS does not ask for any information from our service users. Therefore, no information is kept on our service users. This means that we are unable to provide case studies.

Sustainability

Demand for our services is rising. We are therefore budgeting to cater for larger numbers at all our services: an approximate 25% increase across the board. We use lessons learned and project reviews to make continuous improvement in our services, always at an economic cost. We continue to develop a solid base of committed volunteers and regular donors, who support us on an ongoing basis. We also undertake fundraising activities by attendance at festivals, car boot sales and sponsored events.



West Howe Community Enterprises

Funded activities

We have completed 9 'after-school spoon' cooking sessions, throughout June 25 to Mar 26. We have completed 10 Gather and Graze sessions. These events are now a regular fixture.

Outcomes

These sessions give local residents the opportunities to come and cook with their children or with a group of like minded people, in a safe environment. They learn new skills, eat different food and may also learn some social skills too.

Our Community Cook Nicola has gained experience and her confidence in running sessions has dramatically increased. Nicola was a volunteer until a couple of years ago. She is encouraged to put her own stamp on these sessions and this has enabled her to learn as she is going and not be worried about 'doing things a certain way'. Nicola is encouraged to build on what she has learnt and create a future based around Community Cooking in the Henry Brown Centre.

Stories of change

'Steven' came to a mens shed Gather and Graze cooking session feeling very nervous and anxious. He was referred by Dorset Mind. It has given him some normality and he is able to socialise and get out more. The menu for that particular day was Curry and Naan, he said he was not very confident before the Gather and Graze session, his general cooking experience was for his grandparents, which involved something from the freezer, he had no cooking skills. He also stated that he had never eaten Naan bread until this day and the fact that he even cooked it himself was even better!

'Holly' and her 2 children 'Leo and Lilly' have been regulars at our Family After School Spoon sessions. Holly states that before coming to these sessions, cooking at home was limited, ('who likes clearing up?!'), space is at a premium and the kids can lose interest quickly, Coming to one of the sessions at Henry Brown, is so affordable, it is on the doorstep and there is social intergration. Holly says that they now cook more as a family, these sessions have helped with healthy eating, developing motor skills for the children, chopping and cutting, mental skills, including maths, for the weighing and measuring. The children eat well, and are aware of fresh ingredients and food hygiene.

Sustainability

We have been fortunate to gain further funding through the Neighbourhood fund but we are also self funding some of the work through the success of what has been produced in the past year or two.

We have learnt that food is a popular common language in this community, however we are keen to build resilience ensuring the community are not reliant on 'hand outs' but can gain skills and knowledge, such as budgeting and cooking skills to equip them and their families for the future.



Winton & Parkstone Community Pantry

Funded activities

The grant has covered our heating, refrigeration and lighting costs in our halls at Parkstone and Winton; our bin collections at Parkstone; one new freezer to replace an old broken one at Winton; and a new WPCP specific insurance policy.

Outcomes

This project has provided food, sustenance, places to meet; warmth, and created a sense of belonging for our clients. For our volunteers, many benefit from having a reason to "get out and about". Friendships have been forged. Skills have been developed as leaders and responsible volunteers. Clients often wait for 2 hours before we open up a session just to have others to talk to.

"I love to come to WPCP as all the volunteers are so kind and lovely. In addition I have made many friends and I share fellowship with them. Thursday and Sunday are the highlights of my week."

Story of change

"You all do a massive impressive job, all of your time dedicated to helping others on Thursdays and Sundays and all the staff at Winton that do the same since joining the church. It's made me a different person, I know I act the fool and laugh a lot but being there has given me a sense of massive life changing times since losing my twin brother I didn't think was possible. So thanks again and looking forward to another busy year" (Volunteer)

Sustainability

We anticipate regular donations from our church members; individual donations; appeals and grants will enable us to continue. Significant grants enable us to grow and sustain what we have already become. It will be a constant challenge which the Grant has enabled us to minimise.