

What support is available?

The forum gave us an opportunity to come together and share insight on the support available locally for those in hardship, as well as discuss the challenges people are facing.

Below is a brief summary of the available support discussed during the forum, with details of how to access this. Alongside this are details of support relating to some of the gaps identified, appreciating that while this support may not completely mitigate these issues, it may still be of benefit.

For further information on the services and support available to people, **Suffolk Infolink** is a useful resource: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/home.page>

Joining the **Suffolk Warm Handover** enables organisations to securely refer residents between services for support, for more information can be found on the Suffolk Information Partnership website: <https://suffolkinformationpartnership.onesuffolk.net/warm-handover/>

INFORMATION AND INSIGHT ON THE COST OF LIVING

Mid Suffolk Council webpages	A break down of support for food & essentials, energy, housing, and to boost income. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/cost-of-living
Suffolk Infolink	https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/costofliving
Help for Households	Government pages detailing the support available nationally with the cost of living. https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/
SODA's Cost of Living Dashboard	Soda produce a monthly dashboard monitoring the impact of the cost of living across Suffolk, this can often be drilled down to more local levels. Cost of Living - Healthy Suffolk
Leaflets and signposting	Mid Suffolk District Council have worked with the Independent Food Aid Network to create leaflets to help people who are "Worrying about money" The ' Worrying About Money ' leaflet can be found online here There is also a digital signposting form , to help people find support in there area: https://www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/mid-suffolk Suffolk County Council have also produced cost of living leaflets to help people access support. https://suffolk.pagetiger.com/cost-of-living-support/mid-suffolk-2023 If you would like paper copies please contact Elysa Dale: elysa.dale@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk Mid Suffolk District Council also have a flyer to help organisations signpost to support for cost of living issues.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Local Welfare Assistance	Help with the cost of essentials https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LWAS
Household Support Fund	Help with the cost of rent (open until April '24, subject to extension) https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/household-support-fund
British Gas Energy Fund	https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/
Other energy provider grants	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/struggling-to-pay-your-energy-bills/
Social landlords	Some social landlords also have hardship funds, including Flagship, Samphire, Newtide, Housing 21 and Havebury, and Orwell.
Industry benevolent funds	https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/

SUPPORT WITH ITEMS

Stowmarket Relief Trust	[Applications temporarily suspended] Applications must be via a referral agency. These are listed at: https://www.srtonline.co.uk/
The Rope Trust	Application must be via a referral agency. More information at: https://www.theropetrust.org.uk/
Forge Church Furniture Bank	https://www.forgechurch.com/for/
Forge Church Moses project	https://www.forgechurch.com/for/
Winter Warmth	A referral must be made by professional or someone who works for a voluntary sector organisation (available until April '24) https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Winter_warmth_pack_referral
Suffolk Baby Bank	Can provide clothing an essential items for babies and children, including uniform. https://www.suffolkbabybank.co.uk/
Library 'help yourself' racks	https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/advice/be-kind-in-kind

IMPROVING FINANCIAL CAPABILITY

The Mix	The Mix have an online Money Works course for young people to support with budgeting. https://www.themix.org.uk/get-involved/skill-up
Multiply Suffolk	Realise Futures are currently delivering Multiply Suffolk which supports people over 19 to build every day numeracy skills, including free courses on money management. https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/service.page?id=RAJbS9_g1qs
Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk	Services include advice on benefits, financial capability, debt, housing, employment and more. https://midsuffolkcab.org.uk/
Anglia Care Trust	Providing debt support, as well as a range of other issues including domestic abuse and supported housing. https://angliacaretrust.org.uk/

FOOD SUPPORT

Foodbanks, pantries and other projects are mapped on Suffolk Infolink	Suffolk Infolink.
Community Pantries in Mid Suffolk	
St John's Pantry, Needham Market	IP6 8DG Thursday 9.30-11am £3 per bag
Stowmarket Pop Up Shop, The Catholic Centre	IP14 1AP Wednesday 10:30am - 12:00pm Free
Debenham Parish Pantry	IP14 6SN Wednesday 10-11am £3
Food Partnership Team	Any community interested in starting a food project can contact the Food Partnership Team at Community Action Suffolk for advice and guidance. https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/community-food-partnership/
Too Good to Go	https://toogoodtogo.co.uk/en-gb/consumer
Registering for free school meals	Low income families can check their eligibility and apply for free school meals here , this passports them for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (see below), and other wrap around support.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Suffolk Information Partnership	<p>A “Warm Handover” referral platform for professionals. Organisations that are signed up can securely refer people to various services.</p> <p>https://suffolkinformationpartnership.onesuffolk.net/warm-handover/</p>
Meet up Mondays	<p>https://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/meetupmondays-home/</p>
The Mix drop in activities	<p>https://www.themixstowmarket.org/whats-on/dropin</p>
Social Prescribers	<p>Social prescribers can support people who are socially isolated or lonely to engage with community services. People can self refer, or referrals can be completed by a professional with permission, in the Stowmarket/ Needham market area referrals can be sent to C4h.suffolk@nhs.net or by calling them on 01394 332265. More information here Social prescribing and community outreach services - NHS Suffolk and North East Essex ICB</p>
Good Neighbour schemes	<p>Different schemes have different offers of support to members of their communities. Some schemes offer community transport, befriending, and practical ad hoc support.</p> <p>https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/projects/suffolk-good-neighbour-network/</p>
Community Transport	<p>Suffolk on Board can help people plan a route using community and public transport.</p> <p>https://www.suffolkonboard.com/</p> <p>Low income households may be able to get support or reclaim the costs of travel to hospital appointments (eligibility criteria apply)</p> <p>https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/</p>
Suffolk Libraries	<p>Suffolk Libraries run a range of events many of which are free.</p> <p>https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/whats-on</p> <p>Libraries also offer support to get online, see below.</p>
Holiday Activities and Food Programme	<p>This programme is funded by central government to provide free activities and food to low income children during the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. Mid Suffolk District Council top up the funding to provide activities across half terms.</p> <p>See here for Easter, summer and Christmas events: https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advic e.page?id=Zj4vWQtEbvA</p> <p>See here for half term events: https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/school-holiday-activities#timetable-of-activities</p>

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Suffolk Mind	Suffolk MIND have a variety of free resources to support people with their mental health https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/advice-information/free-courses-and-support-for-you-in-2023/
Suffolk User Forum	An independent mental health user led involvement, peer support and advocacy organisation. https://www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/
Wellbeing Suffolk	People can self-refer to Wellbeing Suffolk , who also deliver free training sessions to businesses and organisations. Those in crisis can call 111 to speak to a trained mental health professional.
Kooth	Provides free anonymous online counselling and emotional support for 11-25 year olds. https://www.kooth.com/

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

Suffolk Libraries	Public access computers which are free to use, iPads are available to loan with data, staff are available to assist. https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/visit/in-the-library/using-library-computers They also run various sessions to help people get online and use their devices, and can hand out free mobile data to those without access to the internet: https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/whats-on?days=0&type=computer-courses
Digital Skills Sessions	Various organisations run in person sessions to help people use their devices and get online. Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils https://www.babergh.gov.uk/the-council/digital-journey/digital-skills-events/ Communities Together East Anglia https://www.communitiestogethereastanglia.org/
Finding Support	Suffolk Infolink has a breakdown of the support available to help people get online. https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=JUVQKfv8Xnc
Online Courses	There are a range of simple, self-paced online courses to help people boost their skills. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/digital-skills-online-courses

SUPPORT WITH ENERGY/ UTILITIES

Surviving Winter	<p>Can support with fuel vouchers to top up prepayment meters, and with oil deliveries (eligibility criteria applies).</p> <p>https://www.citizensadviceipswich.org.uk/surviving-winter/</p>
Warm Homes Healthy People Suffolk	<p>Support for private tenants and owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.</p> <p>https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/</p> <p>Also offers emergency heating where needed (included social rented tenants).</p> <p>https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/warm-homes-healthy-people</p>
Oil Buying Clubs	<p>Community Action Suffolk operate an oil buying syndicate for households across Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, which reduces the upfront cost of oil for households through bulk purchasing.</p> <p>https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/business-support/community-oil-buying-bulk-lpg/</p> <p>There are also other oil buy clubs, people can find a local one here: https://www.oil-club.co.uk/search?term=suffolk#results</p>
Eastern Savings and Loan	<p>Offer an interest free oil loan of £500 to support with the upfront purchase of oil, funded by East Suffolk Council but available across Suffolk. This is subject to availability and a small membership fee.</p> <p>https://www.eslco.co.uk/products-and-services/loan-products/suffolk-oil-loans/</p>
Fuel Vouchers	<p>Citizens Advice can refer households for fuel vouchers if they are risk of disconnection. Households can either call their local office, or the Suffolk Advice Line on 0808 278 7868 for a referral.</p>
National Energy Action	<p>Have a helpline for those who cannot heat their homes and resources to help people with costs:</p> <p>https://www.nea.org.uk/get-help/</p>
Social tariffs	<p>Broadband and phone use</p> <p>https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs</p> <p>Water</p> <p>https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/extra-support/tariff-options/lite/</p>