






Tackling Poverty Action Plan Report 2023/24

The following table provides a progress report against the achievement of the actions contained in the Tackling Poverty Strategy 2023/24 Action Plan.

Priority Area 1: Emergency Support		
No.	Action	Progress
1	<p>Suffolk Community Foundation will continue to run the Surviving Winter campaign supporting people experiencing fuel poverty.</p> 	<p>The Surviving Winter appeal has raised £153,478 which has helped some of the most vulnerable households in Suffolk. Over 1,200 applications have been received from households for support. However, Surviving Winter brings many other services to local people. Working with Citizen’s Advice Ipswich and branches across Suffolk, 87% of applicants were referred to the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme enabling them to access government help which is available for people who are struggling to afford the basics, such as food, heating, clothing, and fuel.</p> <p>In addition, 940 people were helped via income maximisation support, a review to check that individuals are receiving the right benefits and advice on moving into paid employment, childcare costs, and benefit changes. Grant payments continue to be available for people who are struggling, and there are local organisations who are also able to help.</p> <p>Together, we have helped people like Miranda: “Thank you so much. I received the monies into my account, and I am so grateful for your help. This is making a real difference to people who live alone and work and still struggle to pay utility bills. There have been times I have stayed at work longer in order to stay warmer!”</p>
2	<p>Continue to run the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme during 2023/24 and focus on improving awareness of the scheme.</p>	<p>12,404 applications totalling £3,629,050 were approved with most applicants listing household fuel cost as a reason for applying. We also ran a proactive Scheme where some households were pre-identified. 3,495 household were assisted under this scheme with a total spend of £1,048,500.</p>


Priority Area 2: Increasing Income, Reducing Costs

No.	Action	Progress
1	<p>Develop and deliver year one of the £1.5m Supported Food Networks programme, including recruiting a team to develop community solutions, moving residents away from foodbank use to more sustainable food provision.</p> 	<p>Community Action Suffolk were commissioned to deliver the programme and staff started in November 2023. In the short time since then, the programme has carried out mapping to understand what existing food aid provision is in Suffolk and building relationships with those providers as well as identifying local needs. Seven themes have been identified for the programme to prioritise its work and funding towards, those being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Food Supplies • Wrap Around Support Services • Facilities • Funding Support • Volunteer Support • Supporting Children’s Needs • Accessibility
2	<p>Warm Homes Suffolk will deliver a pre-payment meters household support project which will identify pre-payment households and provide support and interventions aimed at reducing cost and improving health.</p> 	<p>The pre-payment meter project received 446 enquiries and was able to provide 209 home surveys. 356 Individuals were supported providing an average household income uplift of £116.</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>East Suffolk Council will deliver on actions within their Ease the Squeeze programme.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Help Hub has taken over 1,700 referrals for help with the rising cost of living. • East Suffolk Council Financial Inclusion Officers have provided specialist financial advice to over 350 people. • We have welcomed over 6,000 people to our Warm Welcomes • We have supported five new community pantries and a range of smaller pop-up food projects. • We have funded two Uniform Banks. • We have provided grants to 15 Community Growing Spaces and over 1,400 Field to Fork growing kits to families in 23 of our most deprived LSOA's.
<p>4</p>	<p>Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council's will deliver on their Cost-of-Living 5-point plan. Focusing on activities around maximising income, accessing advice, food insecurity and poverty, fuel poverty, health, and wellbeing.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household Support Fund: BMSDC supported 84 households in Babergh with their housing costs through HSF, and 91 in Mid Suffolk. All applicants received benefits and budgeting advice, as well as referrals to other support where appropriate. 224 people were signposted to LWAS. Communications campaigns promoting HSF reached over 7800 people and raised awareness of the fund to private landlords, agents, PRP's, schools and our own tenants. • Financial Inclusion Support: Financial Inclusion Officers supported 298 households last financial year (147 BDC and 151 in MSDC). In total they helped residents to access £217,422.42 in unclaimed benefits, and £22,776 in charitable support (this does not include HSF). • Holiday Activities and Food: Family Fun Days were delivered across both districts, 3 in Babergh and 2 in Mid Suffolk. Over 120 children are estimated to have attended each event, with a total of 139 picnics given out, 140 books and over 300 activity packs. 100% of attendees surveyed advised they would return next year. • Fuel Support: Communications campaigns on support to heat homes across the winter reached over 19,000 people (not including people reached through parish publications). We also launched a 'fuel poverty toolkit' to help BMSDC staff identify support for residents to heat their homes, the toolkit had been used over 1200 times since launch and has received positive feedback from staff. • Living Well in Winter Grant: Over £45,000 paid to community organisations this winter, £29k in BDC and £16.5k in MSDC. The grant funded organisations to provide social spaces, activities, and opportunities, which support the wellbeing of

		<p>our communities despite cost-of-living challenges. The grant funded community cafes, film nights, lunch clubs, family sessions and many other initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Network Officer: BMSDC utilised Shared Prosperity Funds to procure a Food Network Officer to work alongside the Food Partnership Officer within Community Action Suffolk, and engage with foodbanks, pantries, and community food projects to strengthen the food network across BDC & MSDC.
5	Work with partners to deliver a communications campaign aimed at highlighting and promoting uptake of underclaimed benefits and social tariffs	<p>Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council have delivered a promotional campaign around Pension Credit.</p> <p>Suffolk County Council have been promoting uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers.</p>


Priority Area 3: Wellbeing & Life Chances																			
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1	Maintain high take-up of Free School Meals and where possible, further increase it	26,507 Suffolk children were accessing free school meals at the end of the 2023/24 financial year.																	
2	Continue to deliver the Holiday Activities & Food programme funded by DfE, to enrich the lives of young people eligible for Free School Meals	<p>The Holiday Activities & Food programme has continued to be developed in partnership with District and Borough Councils to bring on new providers and continue to grow and develop the menu of activities available. Programme attendance statistics for children accessing free holiday club places below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Holiday Period</th> <th>2021 attendance</th> <th>2022 attendance</th> <th>2023 attendance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Easter</td> <td>1,392 children</td> <td>6,998 children</td> <td>4,387 children</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Summer</td> <td>5,349 children</td> <td>8,141 children</td> <td>15,534 children</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christmas</td> <td>3,006 children</td> <td>4,637 children</td> <td>3,134 children</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Holiday Period	2021 attendance	2022 attendance	2023 attendance	Easter	1,392 children	6,998 children	4,387 children	Summer	5,349 children	8,141 children	15,534 children	Christmas	3,006 children	4,637 children	3,134 children
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3	Deliver the Poverty Proofing the School Day project with 7 schools and share the learning with those who can make changes, to make it easier for children in poverty to fully engage in school activities without stigma	<p>The poverty proofing project was completed during 2023/24 with the 7 schools having received their audit report. An overall project report identifying common themes has been produced by Children Northeast.</p> <p>There has been a delay to sharing the learning due to a lack of staffing capacity. This part of the action is now underway and will be delivered during 2024/25.</p>																	
4	Work with the Tackling Poverty CCB Sub-group to identify potential approaches to reducing poverty-related stigma	<p>All actions consider poverty stigma in their design and delivery, but we have not been able to progress a specific action on reducing poverty stigma yet. However, it is a key part of both the poverty proofing the school day action to share that project's learning</p>																	

		with schools. It is also a key part of the poverty awareness training that is in development. Further approaches are also currently being researched.
5	Commence the Routine and Manual Workers Stop Smoking project in Ipswich to improve health outcomes and reduce outgoings	<p>The project has delivered stop smoking interventions to routine and manual employees and their colleagues within 3 large businesses and organisations, Network Rail, OCS and SCC/ Vertas. Stop smoking support has been offered to 126 smokers using swap to stop and referrals to Feel Good Suffolk for NRT support or Allen Carr easyway. Quit data is currently not available, however 123 smokers have set a quit date.</p> <p>The project has been extended for another year through smoke free generation funding and will continue to offer on-site, out of hours stop smoking services to routine and manual employees and colleagues in Suffolk businesses and CICs.</p>
6	Development of the Suffolk County Council Wellbeing Procurement Ask - giving consideration in the award of contracts to businesses who support their employees.	<p>Wellbeing Ask in place January 2024. Available here: https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/202401-Wellbeing-Social-Value-Basic-Ask-in-Suffolk-FV-1.0.pdf</p>
7	<p>Support the Tackling Poverty Together co-production project in addressing the priorities of those who have lived experience of poverty.</p> 	<p>In terms of supporting priorities to be addressed most of this work will happen during 2024/25 towards the end of the project once the priorities have been agreed but monthly grant management meetings have been used to identify the emerging priorities and develop relationships and approaches ready to be in a position to develop and implement solutions during 2024/25.</p>
8	Identification and delivery of the Public Mental Health programme projects to improve the mental health of people experiencing unemployment or in-work poverty.	<p>£141,000 was awarded to organisations to deliver income maximisation support to targeted groups of people identified in research by Suffolk Mind as being least likely to meet their emotional needs. The funded organisations were Citizens Advice East Suffolk, Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk), Anglia Care Trust, Citizens Advice West Suffolk, Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice, River Church, Disability Advice North East Suffolk, Racing Welfare and BSC Multicultural Services.</p> <p>£59,000 has been added to the Good Work & Health programme contract specifically towards activity and interventions relating to workplace financial wellbeing. This programme begins in 2024/25.</p>
9	To reduce digital poverty and increase digital skills through a £250,000 Digital Inclusion Fund. Targeting groups most likely to be	<p>Two projects have been funded so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve Active, Lowestoft - £22375.50 funding to provide infrastructure, devices and staffing to support a programme delivering digital skills sessions

	digitally excluded such as benefit claimants, the unemployed, disabled people, those with sensory impairments, those aged 75+ living alone and those with no formal education	<p>to children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities in and around Lowestoft and Beccles. The funding is to be used to enable IA's service users, their families, staff, and volunteers to be better digitally connected, empowered, and upskilled and improve their life chances and employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DANES, Lowestoft - £15,499.04 to fund DANES's "Easy IT" project which will teach its clients living with a disability the basics of IT, including working with people who are disabled and living with long-term health conditions (and their carers) to help them to put into practice basic IT skills using a laptop or iPad, understand the importance of staying safe online and know how to do this and have the confidence and competence to access and use the DANES laptops.
10	Implement the Breakthrough Grants Programme	<p>8 Organisations were funded in May 2023. BME Suffolk Support Group (Ipswich), Bury Drop In (Bury St Edmunds), Haverhill Community Trust (Haverhill), Lighthouse Women's Aid (Ipswich), Men's Advice Recovery (MARS) BPD Group (Mid-Suffolk), Reach Community Projects (West Suffolk), Suffolk Law Centre (Suffolk), Lightwave Community CIO (Red Lodge). The programme runs until March 2025. Interim reporting suggests that the funding approach is having the anticipated effect of supporting people in poverty with small sums of support to help them overcome barriers to improving their situation.</p>

Priority Area 4: Preventing Poverty		
No.	Action	Progress
1	Develop a countywide Food Security Strategy to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and prevent people falling into crisis.	This action is being moved to 2024/25 to allow sufficient time to conduct the background work required for an application to the May 2025 Sustainable Food Places programme.
2	Set up a dedicated Fuel Poverty Retrofit Delivery Team to ensure funding is secured, a pipeline of work developed and the most vulnerable households' benefit	Awaiting response

3	Develop poverty awareness training content. Deliver to professionals who provide services to families who are experiencing poverty.	Content has been developed for an e-learning module which is now in the design phase. Training will be launched during summer/autumn 2024.
4	Delivery of three financial education pilot projects to evaluate ways to improve access to high quality financial education for children and young people and better prepare them for spending decisions in their future.	The three projects funded have completed. Suffolk Coastal Debt Centre (£5,000): worked with 15 schools to deliver financial education to Year 5/6 children reaching 452 pupils in East Suffolk. Citizens Advice East Suffolk (£22,500): worked with 6 schools reaching 282 pupils. Reach (£4,239): worked with 141 children and young people. Evaluation reports suggest that the pilot projects have successfully engaged pupils and taught practical skills
5	Deliver the Plus Point Ipswich financial education and life skills coaching pilot programme for 16–18-year-olds	PlusPoint Ipswich commenced in March 2023 and ran for 12 months, the project delivered Financial Education to 16–18-year-olds in Ipswich and supported young people who are NEET or potentially NEET (including SEND), identified groups in education and apprentices to build confidence when applying for full time employment or further education through workshops, 1-2-1 sessions, face to face or online. The project engaged with 155 young people (against a target of 150), delivered 22 workshops and 25 1:2:1's.
6	Identify ways to increase awareness of and access to credit unions to ensure people have access to affordable credit	£20,000 was secured to work in partnership with Eastern Savings & Loans Credit Union (ESLCU) to increase awareness of and access to credit unions. For the first part of the campaign, there have been 125 new credit union members. In addition, the work has involved promotion on a range of topics relating to financial wellbeing more generally. We have also worked with ESLCU and the Money & Pension Service (MAPS) to embed some of the MAPS financial wellbeing resources on the Eastern Savings & Loans Credit Union.
7	Delivery of the Best Work & Health partnerships 2023/24 delivery plan	Key Achievements by the Best Health and Work Partnership 1. Utilised Suffolk CoC led data & insight to support development of the Good Work & Health Programme, as well as confirming the commissioned provider as Get Set UK. The programme will focus on provision of a resource hub aimed at supporting Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, an ambassador network to support businesses with good practice in good work and healthy

		<p>workplace practices, as well as a support service for small businesses to identify areas of improvement for supporting good work & health practices for employees, including financial wellbeing support.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Developed a communications/feedback mechanism on good work and health and wellbeing topics for local enterprises to feed into and hear about developments in this space (led by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce) 3. BHAW Partnership members committed to three task & finish groups to review evidence and best practice on key areas identified by the group, producing recommendations, sharing wider and/or implementing the recommendations. These topics included supporting women at work (Menopause), supporting line managers, and bereavement (ongoing). 4. Mapping system wide programmes of activity focused on employment, skills, & good work & health to better understand strengths and gaps in the delivery of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to help inform and strengthen relationships (ongoing)
8	<p>Work in partnership with the Money & Pension Service to facilitate greater engagement with the Money Guiders training programme amongst frontline professionals in the public and voluntary sectors in Suffolk.</p> 	<p>Added November 2023 as an action following request originating via Community Action Suffolk through VCSE Leaders Forum.</p> <p>So far, 150 people across the public and VCFSE sector have signed up for the training and are beginning to complete it.</p>