

## A DIFFICULT WINTER AHEAD

Christmas is now just around the corner, and we are unfortunately anticipating that the combination of the removal of the Universal Credit uplift and the rise in fuel and food prices will mean that this winter period and beyond will be a very difficult one for many households. With this in mind, this newsletter contains a lot of detail on Shropshire Council's Household Support Fund which will be available until March 2022 to support people who are struggling.

There's also other SFPA updates and the usual links to news and resources we think might be of interest to our network.

We'll be back with more updates in the New Year.

## SFPA UPDATES



### Money Counts training sessions

In November we ran two training sessions with [Citizen's Advice Shropshire](#) for frontline staff and volunteers to help them approach conversations around money with the people they support and to use the new '[Worrying About Money?](#)' leaflet as an active resource.

We have now uploaded recordings of the sessions to our website for anyone who was unable to join the sessions. You can watch them on our website [here](#).

A special thanks to the Highland Money Counts Partnership for sharing the resources for these sessions which we have adapted for Shropshire.

To register your interest in future sessions or to receive free hard copies of the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet please contact [sophie@shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk](mailto:sophie@shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk)

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### Children's food insecurity research presented at Health and Wellbeing Board

We were pleased to present the findings and recommendations from [our research into children's food insecurity in Shropshire](#) at the Health and Wellbeing Board. As well as being a great starting point for future work around these recommendations the report was also picked up by local media, you can read the article [here](#).

## SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Shropshire Council has been allocated just over £2million by the Government as part of a new Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people and families this winter. This fund is available until March 2021 and will be used for a variety of support:

### One off payments of £115

3,600 low income households that are in receipt of Universal Credit (at a level that is below the threshold for free school meals or free prescriptions) can apply for a one-off payment of £115 to support them in meeting their food, energy and other essential costs this winter.

The form can be accessed at [www.shropshire.gov.uk/hhsupportfund](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/hhsupportfund).

### Support available through the Welfare Support Team

Money to support Shropshire households with fuel costs has also been given to Shropshire Rural Communities Charity and Marches Energy Agency but there is also money for local welfare provision which will use for a number of things:

- Food
- Energy and water
- Essentials linked to energy and water (e.g. cookers, fridges, freezers, cooking equipment, sanitary products, soap, warm clothing, blankets, boiler service and repair)
- Wider essentials (eg phone bills, broadband, other clothing, school uniform, essential transport-related costs, other essential furniture - this list is not exhaustive)
- Housing costs "in exceptional circumstances"

Shropshire Council have advised that because they have more money, they can help more people and this will mean that for many people, the usual restrictions put in place for the normal Local Support and Prevention Fund applications will not be applied to this new funding. If someone is struggling financially, please encourage them to contact the Welfare Support Team on **0345 678 9078**.

If you are supporting the person, then with your customer's consent, they welcome any information that you feel would support them in their application.

### Free school meals and warm clothing

More than £800,000 will be spent on extending the provision of free school meals into the holidays, and setting up a new warm clothes initiative through the county's schools. Around 8,000 children in schools and pre-school settings will receive support with food costs equivalent of £15 per week during October 2021 half-term, the Christmas holiday, and spring half-term 2022. The scheme will be facilitated by a child's school or early years provider, who will distribute this directly to families, mainly via supermarket vouchers.

# SHROPSHIRE NEWS

## **Shropshire Good Food Partnership launch their Good Food Charter**

The charter sets out the newly formed partnership's statement of intent and ways in which individuals, organisations and businesses can help to build a good food movement in Shropshire. Find out more on their **website**.

We're pleased to say that the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance has joined the Shropshire Good Food Partnership steering group. A great opportunity for the alliance to engage in partnership working. We'll be sharing and highlighting the work we are doing to tackle food insecurity and linking in where there are opportunities to collaborate with others.

## **Food bank demand rising in Shropshire**

Many food banks in Shropshire are reporting a sharp increase in the number of people needing their support.

## **Schools in Shropshire could be hit with extra bills to balance out school meals cost**

Under changes being proposed by the local authority, extra fees are set to be imposed on the 60 schools in the county which use its in-house catering and cleaning service, Shire Services.

## OTHER NEW/RESOURCES

[Spill the beans- Bite Back 2030 report suggests that the School Food Standards are routinely not being upheld](#)

[Wales to introduce free school meals for all primary school aged children](#)

[Healthy Start scheme is going digital, here's what you need to know](#)

[Millions on low income households pulled under by arrears while living costs rise](#)

[Families furthest below Minimum Income Standard excluded from social security gains](#)

[Citizens Advice new data suggests 1 in 10 families – equivalent to 3.2 million households – are facing a financial crisis this winter.](#)

[Money can make or break your mental health](#)

[If businesses are serious about ending food poverty they must pay their own staff a real living wage](#)

[Half of UK families £110 worse off a year since 2019](#)

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Don't forget that our website the [Shropshire Larder](#) brings together the support available in Shropshire for people on low incomes

