

Food & Warmth Grant Scheme 2023/2024

Guidance notes for applicants

As fuel costs and food prices escalate, low-income households are increasingly turning to food banks for essentials. Yet at the same time, the food network of food banks and larders are seeing a decrease in supply. Many food banks are faced with the same rising fuel and food costs as the residents they seek to help.

The impact of fuel poverty in our districts is also a public health crisis. Since the pandemic more people cannot afford to heat their homes to a reasonable temperature, and evidence strongly suggests that growing up and living in cold homes has a direct and detrimental effect on health.

Community spaces and warm spaces are facing an increase in demand from residents that are struggling with high energy costs. We would like to offer grant funding for existing services and extension of existing services so that people can stay somewhere warm for longer.

This grant scheme is designed to provide financial support to assist the voluntary and community groups, food banks, fridges and larders, and town and parish councils who play a vital role supporting residents, many of whom were already disproportionately impacted by the pandemic financially and in terms of their health.

How much is available per application?

£2,000 to £5,000 to individual groups/organisations or up to £10,000 for groups/organisations working collaboratively on a project to work with residents to mitigate against the public health impact of a lack of access to warm homes and food.

Who is eligible?

Constituted not for profit community and voluntary organisations, community interest companies or non-profit organisations who are based in the district and assist residents with food or energy support or benefit our residents by providing initiatives/projects to help with cost-of-living hence promoting resilience in our communities.

- Local 'not for profit' organisations e.g., VCS organisations. This can include a company limited by guarantee which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members, whose primary purpose is to benefit the residents of South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse
- Not for profit preschools and PTAs for local authority run schools or Academies, can apply for items that meet the criteria of this scheme and are not considered business as usual (non-statutory elements of the education programme).
- Town and Parish Councils

- Food banks
- Community fridges
- Food larders
- Food organisations who redistribute surplus food across the South Oxfordshire district.

Who is not eligible?

- Other local authorities/public sector bodies (for example Oxfordshire County Council, NHS trusts and schools)
- Individuals
- Profit-based businesses (private businesses)
- Political parties and lobbying groups
- Religious bodies where the monies will be used for religious purposes or religious buildings.
- Community groups not formally constituted.
- Groups who do not support residents in the South Oxfordshire district.
- Nationwide organisations (except where they have a local constitution and/or local bank account. We may also make exceptions if a project clearly relates to a local hub/branch of the organisation)

These lists are not exhaustive, and the council's decision is final.

What can we fund?

- Purchase of food supplies and essential supplies such as household cleaning products, toiletries, consumables either for distribution to residents or for use by the organisation to ensure the safe provision of goods to residents.
- Purchase of additional equipment to store and supply food.
- Purchase of equipment to keep residents warm e.g. hot water bottles and blankets, and cooking equipment to distribute to residents e.g. saucepans and slow cookers.
- Purchase of general equipment for specific food and/or warmth projects e.g., gardening/cooking equipment
- Future energy bills at the premises of VCS organisation or food larder/bank.
- Future fuel costs for distributing food supplies.
- Future travel costs relating to a specific food and/or warmth project.
- Future additional staffing costs such as short-term hiring of additional staff, freelance project workers or a short-term increase in hours for a specific food and/or warmth project (not core salary costs).
- Future marketing/advertising/printing costs for food and/or warmth projects.
- Future room hire/short-term rent costs.
- Projects that might include cooking clubs/gardening clubs and educational activities that promote healthy food choices, saving energy and keeping warm, budgeting etc. The list is not exhaustive.

What we will not fund

- Statutory activities/requirements that either the council or another public-sector organisation is responsible for delivering.

- Lost income
- Projects that specifically benefit private businesses
- Political activities, lobbying or campaigning.
- Loan payments
- Revenue costs such as lease of property, core salary costs, and travel and subsistence costs for staff/volunteers.
- Insurance, vehicle or building repairs and maintenance.

Application process

1. The Grant scheme opened on **23 October 2023** and closes at midday on **27 November 2023**.
2. Organisations apply using the council's online grants management system ('the system'), accessible from our website www.southoxon.gov.uk/grants. This **MUST** include the following information:
 - The name of the group/organisation
 - A formal constitution or similar governing document
 - A copy of the most recent audited accounts
 - The geographical area they are representing.
 - The latest bank statement in the organisations name who is applying – no more than 2 months old
 - A description of the support or activity the group/organisation will provide with the funding
 - Details of how that spend will be monitored and due diligence carried out
 - Confirmation that if awarded the funds will be spent by 31 March 2024
3. The council will aim to reach a decision within four weeks of the grant scheme closing.
4. Council officers will check the eligibility of the application (including the additional checks if required) and liaise with the applicant, if necessary, to establish eligibility.
5. If eligible, officers will prepare a short summary of the applications for determination by the Head of Policy and Programmes.
6. If an application is not eligible the community hub team will discuss the issues with the applicant and return the application to them for resubmission once the issues are resolved. If the issues cannot be overcome, they will reject the application on eligibility grounds and notify the applicants accordingly.

Award Process

1. The community hub team will record the outcome of all applications on the grants system and either;

- a. send a grant offer letter to the applicant that will include our standard (and any special) conditions and a grant acceptance form they must complete and return.
 - b. inform the applicant that they were unsuccessful.
2. The applicant must sign and return the acceptance form, confirming they will meet all our conditions and give the bank details for their organisation.
 3. On receipt of the acceptance form the grant payment will be made in line with the offer letter. **All payments must be made by BACs to an account in the name of the organisation making the grant application.**

Monitoring and Reporting

- The district council will request an end of project monitoring form from funded groups to ensure compliance to the grant.
- Ensure timely return of any request for information to the district council.
- Failure to provide these details by the deadlines requested may result in funding being clawed back.

Standard conditions

- Organisations/groups must only use the funding for initiatives, work or items covered by this grant policy.
- to submit a monitoring form on our grants system when the project is finished to update us on the project.
- to mention the council in any publicity of the project. Please contact us at communications@southandvale.gov.uk for quotes, logos, press release feedback
- Monies must be spent by the end of the grant scheme (31 March 2024)
- The grant recipient shall keep a financial record of the spending of the grant and retain a copy of any appropriate invoices and receipts and submit these to the district council if requested.
- Organisations/groups are responsible for considering where their initiatives need to take account of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, and subsequently complying with the relevant legislation.
- Organisations/groups acknowledge that the council accepts no responsibility or liability for the services/activities the groups deliver with the funding, now or in the future.
- Organisations must confirm if they have received any Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) in this financial year and/or the previous two financial years, in excess of £315,000. This may also have been called De Minimus State aid if you received it prior to 1 January 2021.
- We will only pay the grant upon receipt of a completed/signed acceptance form.