

Briefing: Tackling the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Shropshire

Shropshire's Social Task Force: Working Together for Solutions

Organisations in Shropshire have been working together to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis through a social taskforce, chaired by Executive Director for Public Health Rachel Robinson. This taskforce brings together organisations to work in partnership to create a joint response to the cost-of-living crisis. Our partners include Citizens Advice Shropshire, Age UK, Marches Energy Agency, Community Resource, Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, and many other key organisations who have been contributing via the taskforce and its subgroups.



Cost of Living Communications

With our partners we have developed three key messages we want all Shropshire residents to know:

- If you or someone you know is worried about money or is struggling right now, **you are not alone.**
- There may be **simple steps** you can take to cut costs or maximise your income.
- If you are getting into debt or your mental health is suffering, **do not wait to get help.**

We are encouraging residents worried about money to:

- Visit the [cost of living help page](#) for information on what support is available in Shropshire.

- Use our [checklist](#) to see if there are any steps they can take which may help them to cope with rising costs. Recommended steps include using a benefits calculator to check they are not missing out on income, exploring schemes which help with household bills, getting support with debt, and reaching out for mental health support.
- Use the [‘Worrying About Money’ leaflet](#) to identify which organisation in Shropshire can offer support.

Our communications group are working to develop further resources to support residents through the winter.



Shropshire Warm Welcome

To help residents stay warm and safe this winter, Shropshire Council and partners are compiling a list of venues, including libraries, village and town halls, community centres and faith buildings, where residents can go during each venue's normal opening hours to enjoy the facilities and keep warm. The list will be available soon on the [cost of living help page](#).

Cost of Living Training

It is important that frontline staff and volunteers can signpost residents to the support which is available.

Partners including Shropshire Council, Community Resource, the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, Age UK, Community Resource, Marches Energy Agency, and Shropshire Citizens' Advice have developed a 2-hour online training session. Almost 500 people registered to attend the training sessions.

For a recording of the session and signposting resources please contact shropshirecostofliving@shropshire.gov.uk.

Cost of Living Helpline

The Social Taskforce is working with partners to develop a helpline for residents. Based within Shropshire Customer Services, support will be targeted at households most vulnerable to the cost-of-living crisis.

Shropshire Local

The Shropshire Local team will be available in the Local Hubs in Shrewsbury and Ludlow and visiting libraries over the winter to support residents. See their timetable [here](#).

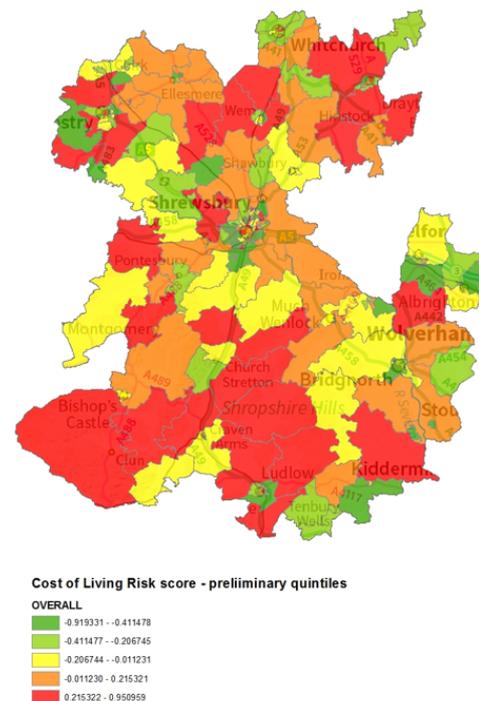
Cost of Living Data

Working with partners we have developed a preliminary index of vulnerability to the cost-of-living crisis. We will be using this mapping to help with the targeting of communications and support across the County.

Cost of living: Index of Potential Risk

The index is evenly weighted across 15 measures -

Household Fuel Risk	Proportion of households in fuel poverty based on "Low Income Low Energy Efficiency" (LILEE) methodology
	Median gas consumption (kWh per meter)
	Median elec consumption (kWh per meter)
	Housing in poor condition indicator
Cohort Risk	Houses without central heating indicator
	Years of potential life lost indicator
	Comparative illness and disability ratio indicator
	Acute morbidity indicator
	Mood and anxiety disorders indicator
Travel Fuel Risk	Household overcrowding indicator
	Road distance to a post office indicator (km)
	Road distance to a primary school indicator (km)
	Road distance to general store or supermarket indicator (km)
Economic Risk	Road distance to a GP surgery indicator (km)
	Income Score (rate)



Lobbying

In July, the social taskforce wrote to Shropshire MPs raising concerns about the potential impact of the cost-of-living crisis on our residents. The group received a response from the Treasury in the weeks following acknowledging the points shared and promising that the government is working on solutions.

Financial Support for households

Shropshire Council have been administering funds from Central Government to support households. Teams have been taking a targeted, cash first approach, to ensure that the funds reached the most vulnerable households:

- The Household Support Fund. This fund is targeted at households most in need to help with rising living costs. Households have been supported via direct payments, energy grants and via the Welfare support team.
 - The Energy rebate. This scheme ran from 1st April-30th September. The Revenues and Benefits team made payments of £150 to the majority of households in bands A-D. Where eligible residents didn't apply for the rebate, it has been credited to their council tax account, and amended bills were sent to residents in the week ending 30 September 2022.
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Sustainable Warmth Shropshire

The Council's Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency team (AWEE) are delivering a large grant programme, worth approximately £7m as part of the Government's Sustainable Warmth Competition. Branded as **Sustainable Warmth Shropshire**, these grants support vulnerable residents to install a range of energy efficiency measures, focussing on a fabric-first approach to help reduce energy use and improve comfort at home. A wide range of measures can be supported including first-time double glazing, insulated doors, wall and roof insulation and low carbon heating such as air source heat pumps. More information and a link to apply can be found at <https://shropshire.gov.uk/private-sector-housing/affordable-warmth-and-energy-efficiency/>. The Council's Keep Shropshire Warm service can help residents through the grant application process and can provide additional energy advice and support. The team is available on 0800 112 3743 or via advice@mea.org.uk

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

HAF allows children and young people aged 4 (in reception class) to 16, who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM) and for those who have been referred by a professional to access free holiday activity, during the Spring/Easter, Summer, and Winter/Christmas school holidays.

Shropshire Council is working with local schools, voluntary and community organisations, and childcare providers to run the programme, over the next two years.

There is something on offer for everyone, including; sports, arts, cooking, forest schools and other exciting opportunities. Free nutritious meals are provided at each session.

For more information on the programme in Shropshire, please go to - www.shropshire.gov.uk/HAF



Any questions please contact shropshirecostofliving@shropshire.gov.uk