

Community First Surviving Winter Fund and Warm and Safe Briefing Note No. 19-035

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Background

Wiltshire Community First administer a Surviving Winter grant of £300 per person to help vulnerable residents pay for winter costs (<https://www.wiltshirecf.org.uk/SurvivingWinter2019>).

Warm and Safe has been a referral partner for some years, however, this year Wiltshire Community Foundation has reduced the number of referral partners to just two: Warm and Safe and Age UK. The referral partners help clients complete the application form process and compile the necessary evidence for Wiltshire Community Foundation to make their decision.

Although there are now only two official referral partners, it does not preclude any individual, relative, family friend, professional or organisation helping someone gather the relevant information required and provide it to Warm and Safe or Age UK to complete the application process.

Please could you as Members make your constituents are aware of the grant, and help identify anyone in your community who you think would benefit.

Criteria for the surviving winter fund

The grant is administered on a first-come-first-served basis and it is in two rounds this winter. Funds are limited.

- Round 1 opened 21 October and is open until 13 December 2019 (**Please note Warm and Safe have allocated all grants in this round but are adding clients to a waiting list for round 2**)
- Round 2 open 13 January to 20 March 2020

Eligibility

Means tested benefit (includes Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit) and ONE of the following:

1. State pension age
2. Working age and need either:
 - a. Disability Living Allowance / Personal Impendence Payment
 - b. Fuel poverty (10%)
 - c. Health condition affected by the cold (in this instance must name the condition(s) and how it affects them). This does not include mental health conditions.

To help someone apply through Warm and Safe

1. Ask the applicant to call Warm and Safe Wiltshire on 0800 038 5722 or
2. Fill in this application www.cse.org.uk/wiltshire-swg with the applicant. **Please note this application form is for advice agencies and council staff to use rather than members of the public.**
3. Upload their evidence to the web form application
 - a. **IF PENSION AGE**
 - i. BENEFITS: Benefit award letter or recent bank statement showing benefit payment
 - ii. Bank statement showing name, address, account number and sort code
 - b. **IF WORKING AGE**
 - i. BENEFITS: Benefit award letter or recent bank statement showing benefit payment
 - ii. HEALTH CONDITION: benefit award letter or recent bank statement showing benefit payment or prescription
 - iii. FUEL POVERTY: annual gas and electricity statement
 - iv. Bank statement showing name, address, account number and sort code

If successful Wiltshire Community Foundation will pay the applicant within three to four weeks.

Warm and Safe Service information

Warm and Safe Wiltshire is a single point of contact cold homes and energy saving advice service set up specifically to assist the health service in Wiltshire. The service is run by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), an independent charity, on behalf of Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council.

The service provides a range of support both over the phone and through home visits. The telephone advice line is available to all residents and provides support which includes information about insulation and heating, guidance on heating systems, advice on understanding energy bills, help with ensuring a client is on the best energy deal, signing residents up to the Priority Services Register and fuel debt support.

Home visits are provided on a case-by-case basis and are especially useful where issues are challenging or difficult to discuss and support over the phone. As a guide, householders should have a vulnerability, such as an older occupant, low-income or health condition(s), to receive a home visit. These households will benefit from an advisor attending the property to assess heating and energy problems and discuss options with the householder. This includes contacting the client's energy supplier on their behalf, undertaking price comparisons to find the most affordable energy deal, carrying out fire safety checks, providing energy efficiency advice and assessing damp and mould problems.

We are doing a month-long campaign this month with the Community Pharmacy in Swindon and Wiltshire promoting the Priority Service Register.

The Priority Services Register is held by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), who are responsible for maintaining the electricity infrastructure in Wiltshire. They are separate from the energy suppliers. The register is for anyone who might need extra support in the event of a power cut. It provides a direct phone number to call, advanced warning of planned interruptions, and if needed, support from the Red Cross or similar.

The 113 pharmacies will distribute a leaflet in prescription bags as well as provide leaflets and display posters in their Healthy Living Pharmacy promotion areas.

Work with discharge teams at Great Western Hospital and Salisbury Foundation Hospital

Hospital admissions for some health conditions are related to cold temperatures and increase dramatically in the winter. In cold weather there is an increase in the number of admissions for

influenza, pneumonia and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

In conjunction with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Swindon Borough Council, Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and Wessex Water, Warm and Safe trialled placing an energy advisor into the Great Western Hospital over the winter of 2018/19 to work with the integrated discharge team. Due to the success of the trial, Warm and Safe has an energy advisor in both Salisbury Foundation Hospital and Great Western Hospital this winter (2019/20).

Warm and Safe Wiltshire ensures that after their stay in hospital, patients return to a warm and healthy home. This improves their ability to recuperate, reduces the likelihood of re-admittance and cuts repeat visits to their GP¹. The advisors do this by ensuring patient's heating is working and the controls are set correctly, that they are claiming the benefits they are entitled to, help them clear fuel debt, sign them up for power cut advice and help them claim the Warm Home Discount. If we find that the patient's heating isn't working, we can provide funding to get it fixed as well as provide emergency temporary heating whilst they wait, enabling the nurse to prepare the patient for discharge.

Further Information

- Warm and Safe Service: <https://www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk/> or call Freephone 0800 038 5722.
- Wiltshire Community Foundation: <https://www.wiltshirecf.org.uk/SurvivingWinter2019>
- Priority Services Registers (Water and Electricity):
<https://www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk/priority-support>
- Integrated Discharge Nurse from GWH talking about experience last winter:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5D9wEAY2w0&feature=youtu.be>
<https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2336>
- Case Studies: <https://www.warmandsafewiltshire.org.uk/how-weve-helped>
- NICE Guidance Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>
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