

Emergency Food Network statement on Lewes District Council's £250,000 cost of living fund



Lewes District Emergency Food Network are a coalition of eight community organisations, supporting people in poverty to access food.

Earlier this year we put out a statement on the cost of living crisis, which called on Lewes District Council to take action. We set out a number of changes that we wanted to see, including:

- Vouchers for food, fuel and other essential living costs distributed at a district and borough level
- A simple application process that does not exclude those people who do not have internet access
- An information leaflet letting people know what financial support is available, to be distributed eg. via emergency food providers, schools, health visitors and CAB
- Further funding for projects that build community resilience, such as affordable food schemes, social eating programmes and community growing projects
- The development of a food poverty action plan to prioritise actions that will lift people out of poverty and reduce demand on foodbanks

We are therefore delighted to hear that as of Monday 11th July, 2022 Lewes District Council have agreed a new £250,000 cost of living fund, with the first £50,000 immediately being awarded to foodbanks to help meet the unprecedentedly high levels of need in the district now.

The remaining £200,000 will be distributed through a grants programme in the autumn and fund the creation of a dedicated officer to coordinate the funding. A portion of the fund will also be ring fenced to support residents who may be digitally excluded.

The new dedicated officer will design and coordinate a strategic action plan that will detail steps and timelines around sustainable approaches to fuel and food poverty. This action plan will seek to address need with a view to supporting longer term solutions.

Councillor Matthew Bird, Cabinet Member for Sustainability, said:

“The agreement to appoint a council officer whose sole focus is to coordinate and deliver actions that tackle the cost of living crisis, is especially welcome. I know in conversations with the Emergency Food Network and others how important this will be.”

Lewes District Emergency Food Network applaud the steps that Lewes District Council are taking to tackle head on the cost of living crisis, including a commitment to improving accessibility for residents who are digitally excluded.

None of us want to see more or better foodbanks, we want to see long term solutions that tackle the root causes of poverty and we look forward to working with the new council officer to develop a strategic action plan with a view to ending food poverty in Lewes District.

Lewes District Emergency Food Network

Fitzjohns Foodbank, Lewes

Havens Food Coop, Denton

Landport Foodbank, Lewes

Malling Foodbank, Lewes

Newhaven Baptist Church, Newhaven

Ringmer Foodbank, Ringmer

**Seahaven Community Food (SCDA),
Newhaven & Peacehaven**

Seahaven Storehouse, Seaford

