

## Support with heating costs, for families facing Winter hardship due to COVID-19

### Information for Parents and Carers

As part of our connect4communities programme, and in addition to the food vouchers distributed to families through childcare providers, schools and colleges, we have provided the Citizens Advice Service with £100,000 of funding to help families and individuals with energy costs over the Winter period – gas, electric and water.

Contact details for the local branch of the Citizens Advice Service can be found on this website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/.../contact-us/contact-us/>

Please note that the local branch will complete a quick eligibility check and refer parents and carers to the distributors of the grant and financial support will be provided to the family or individual seeking help.

The eligibility criteria for this support - to heat homes - is wide-ranging to ensure the money is as accessible as possible and is as follows:

#### ***Families with children:***

- Families in receipt of benefits related free school meals
- Families including 16-18-year olds previously eligible for Free School Meals
- All children with a social worker
- All children open to Early Help
- All households with 2 - 4year olds accessing childcare and eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium
- Households with a young carer
- Those who it is believed will struggle to afford to heat their home adequately and/or maintain a reasonable standard of living this winter

#### ***Households without children:***

- Care leavers
- Households that have been identified as going into debt for the first time
- Households or individuals with no other way of obtaining funds, e.g. those who face choosing to pay either rent or bills (considered unmanageable debt)
- Those who it is believed will struggle to afford to heat their home adequately and/or maintain a reasonable standard of living this winter

**Support from this fund, distributed by the Citizens Advice Service, can take the form of:**

- Pre-paid energy cards or the payment of a fuel bill on behalf of an eligible household

### **Other sources of welfare support**

Local sources of other welfare support can be found through:

- The connect4communities online directory:  
<https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/home.page>
- Connect to Support Telephone Helpline:  
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/volunteer-welfare>
- Connect to Support Online Resources:  
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/volunteer-welfare>

### **About connect4communities**

‘connect4communities’ is a programme of support provided by Hampshire County Council, in collaboration with other agency, voluntary and charitable partners. It is funded by the Authority’s £2.89 million Covid Winter Grant from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).