

APPENDIX 1: UPDATE ON THE DELIVERY OF THE WINTER OFFER TO FAMILIES AND VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

This update applies specifically to activity, services, help and support which has been provided through the Winter Grant Scheme, Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies, as well as through the Winter Wellbeing & Recovery Fund initiated by SMBC.

Winter Grant Scheme and Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant

Through the two grants, the council has undertaken and delivered the following:

- Worked with several voluntary and community sector partners, such as Helping Hands and Around Again Social Supermarket to establish a mutual aid food network, which is providing food and meals to between 250 and 450 people per week during the winter period.
- Provided funding and support to the Jubilee Children's Storehouse, which at the time of writing had provided winter clothing and shoes for 24 children and young people since the end of January. This is with the intention of providing assistance to approximately 150 children and young people by the end of March.
- Set up a Winter Warmer Fuel Voucher Scheme with Act On Energy, which at the time of writing and since starting up in January 2021 has provided assistance to 196 low income households with fuel debt, top-ups and supplies, as well as boiler repairs/replacements, insulation and advice on energy efficiency and schemes. This is far exceeding the initial estimate and target of 140 households which would be provided with help through the scheme by the end of March.
- Worked with Age UK Solihull to extend the reach of its Winter Warmth Scheme, which since January has been able to provide assistance to 49 households, particularly families with children with disabilities and vulnerable adults with mental health conditions. This support includes help with food, clothing, white goods and other electrical items, with 360 households to be provided with this help by the end of March.
- Offered supermarket gift cards with to families to help pay for food and household essentials during the Christmas holidays. Over 90% of cards, with a total value of over £222,000 were redeemed benefitting 7,420 children and young people who receive free school meals during term-time.
- Offered nearly 8,400 supermarket gift cards with a value of £20 to families for February half-term. This included all children and young people in receipt of free school meals and some children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium. In addition, approximately 280 care experienced young people have also received a supermarket card with a value of £75 to pay for food and household essentials during February and March.

Winter Wellbeing & Recovery Fund

In addition to these activities, through Public Health related COVID funding made available by the government, support has also been provided directly to voluntary and community sector groups and organisations to enhance the help and support they can provide to families and vulnerable households. Working in partnership with the Heart of England Community Foundation, a Solihull Winter Wellbeing & Recovery Fund was created and launched in December. At the time of writing the fund has so far invested £77,540 in 18 different groups and organisations, supporting a range of activities from starting up of

mother and toddler groups, to providing mental health support to communities, and family activity packs for February half-term.