

KEEP WARM, KEEP WELL IN PEMBROKESHIRE

A report on the multi-agency
partnership approach in response to
the cost of living crisis during
Autumn/Winter 2022-2023



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Introduction

Keep Warm Keep Well (KWKW) in Pembrokeshire is a programme of support established in October 2022 for residents of Pembrokeshire during the cost of living crisis. The cost of living crisis affects everyone and is a worrying and uncertain time for so many people. Therefore, work took place to connect people to local information, support and services to help them throughout the coldest months of the year. Across Pembrokeshire we saw communities and organisations responding to the crisis offering a range of local solutions including Warm Welcome Community Spaces, hot meals, community activities, plus energy, money, and debt advice.

The County Voluntary Council for Pembrokeshire, PAVS, has a successful track record of leading on collaborative multi-agency and cross-sector programmes. The Association has established and positive working relationships in place to mobilise activity and investment within the tight timescales that we were working to for the Keep Warm, Keep Well programme.

The campaign was led by the Pembrokeshire Community Hub in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) and a variety of agencies including Hywel Dda Health Board, Emergency Services, and the Voluntary Sector.

PAVS is the lead partner for the Pembrokeshire Community Hub, the Community Connectors, and the Connect Pembrokeshire platform. The Hub was nominated as the single point of contact for people wanting to access support from or contribute resources to the Keep Warm, Keep Well (KWKW) programme. As the County Voluntary Council for Pembrokeshire, PAVS also provides direct support for voluntary and community groups and facilitates several thematic networks supporting people who are most likely to be impacted by the rising costs of living. PAVS used these channels to ensure that information was passed quickly to those people who needed help most.

Over recent years, PAVS has been called upon to distribute grants to voluntary and community groups and social enterprises, and to act as fundholder for collaborative programmes of work. Over the past two financial years, PAVS has overseen the management and distribution of around £2million in grants and funds on behalf of local, regional, and national funders and partners. PAVS was therefore ideally placed to lead on the distribution of the Warm Welcome Community Spaces grant scheme.

As the County Voluntary Council for Pembrokeshire, PAVS sits on a wide range of strategic and operational planning groups at local and regional level and has ensured that KWKW in Pembrokeshire is known to professional practitioners and embedded in supportive structures.



The Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire Steering Group

PAVS’s Third Sector Health & Wellbeing Facilitator took a lead developing the programme and facilitating fortnightly steering group meetings, which brought together representatives from a wide range of partner organisations. The steering group reported to the Poverty Working Group led by Pembrokeshire County Council.

The Steering Group decided to adopt a two-phase approach to the delivery of a coordinated package of information, advice, and practical support for people in Pembrokeshire experiencing financial hardship as a result of rising energy and living costs. The programme was kept under review by the Keep Warm, Keep Well Steering Group and adapted in light of service demand and available resources.

Pembrokeshire Community Hub

The Pembrokeshire Community Hub, based at PAVS and originally established in March 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic, was made the single point of contact for anyone experiencing financial hardship or who would like information about what support is available in their area as part of the Keep Warm, Keep Well programme of support.

Sharing good practice

PAVS's Third Sector Health & Wellbeing Facilitator presented on the KWKW programme at a number of events including the West Wales Financial Wellbeing Forum and Hywel Dda Cost of Living Crisis workshop. PAVS, along with a representative from Pembrokeshire County Council, also shared our partnership approach to this work at a national online workshop hosted by Social Care Wales and The Resourceful Communities Partnership – Helping people live well: Community-based support during the cost of living crisis.

Brief Overview of Funded projects

The following was funded as part of the KWKW in Pembrokeshire programme:

Warm Welcome Community Spaces Grant scheme

Constituted voluntary and community groups, and Town and Community Councils, in Pembrokeshire were invited to apply for a Warm Welcome grant of up to £3,500 per project for community venues to offer community warm spaces and activities enabling people to connect in their community and stay warm during winter.

Winter Warm Packs

Each pack contained a range of items to help people living in cold conditions in Pembrokeshire to keep warm, including a fleece blanket, hat, scarf, gloves, microwaveable heat pack, flask, and thermal mug.

Energy Poverty Energy vouchers to support those in hardship with a utility debt. Wraparound support also provided for people accessing the energy voucher scheme.

Debt support Fees for Debt Relief Orders to help expand the current debt support provision to more people.

Discretionary Assistance Fund There are a lot of people who are off-grid and rely on oil. The Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) provides a £250 contribution but the minimum spend for people to get their tanks filled is £500. There would be a small demographic of people who would benefit from a pot of funding to top up the DAF so that people can get their tanks filled up.

Warm Room at Home scheme Small repairs, equipment, and adaptations to ensure older people can have at least one warm room in their home.

Energy efficient cooking equipment Distribution of free air fryers to households who would benefit from them the most.

Hot meals in warm spaces Additional funding available for recipients of the Local Authority administered Food Poverty Support Grant towards running costs, heating, and lighting.

Pet food bank donations The price of pet care has risen by more than 12% in the past year on top of bills and the 18.2% rise in food costs. An animal welfare charity has

urged people in need to use their pet food bank as the cost of living crisis has seen more pets being given up as families struggle to afford the cost of food and medication.



Support our older population To maximise their income to help them better meet their needs, and assist older people affected by fuel poverty.






Community Energy Advice To provide additional capacity for Fuel Poverty Helpline, recruiting Fuel Poverty Champions and hold community drop-ins, including at Warm Welcome Community Spaces.

Essential items for families with newborns and young children Equipment and clothing for families/children, including Winter and newborn baby bundles helping to support new parents experiencing hardship, regardless of their circumstances.

Communications & marketing of “Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire” campaign Development of interactive map of warm spaces; household leaflet maildrop; newspaper and social media marketing; repository of information on Connect Pembrokeshire platform, to ensure people know how to reach out for support.

Deliverables

	<p>Warm Welcome Community Spaces</p>	<p>107 Warm Welcome Community Spaces registered on the interactive map</p> <p>73 Warm Welcome Community Spaces provided with grant funding</p> <p>1455 Warm Welcome Community Space sessions were delivered.</p> <p>14,989 people benefited from Warm Welcome Community Spaces.</p> <p>581 volunteers were involved in the coordination and delivery of Warm Welcome Community Spaces.</p> <p>14,655 hours of volunteering were recorded.</p> <p>28 of the 73 funded warm spaces have made some level of commitment to continue the projects which were supported by this fund up to 31st March.</p>
	<p>Energy & Fuel</p>	<p>734 energy vouchers issued</p> <p>594 Warm Packs delivered</p> <p>260 air fryers distributed</p> <p>25 £250 DAF fuel top-ups for oil issued</p> <p>1 Fuel Poverty Champion recruited (volunteer)</p> <p>521 people provided with fuel poverty advice/support</p> <p>An estimated £12,000 in reduced bills or funding accessed for clients</p>

	<p>Money management</p>	<p>242 families and 74 individuals in crisis received holistic financial support</p> <p>9 families and 6 individuals assisted with Debt Relief Orders/bankruptcy fees</p> <p>40 older people supported with income maximization</p> <p>Additional income secured for older people Grants £1800 Welfare benefits £9464</p>
	<p>Food</p>	<p>12772 hot meals were provided in Warm Welcome Community Spaces.</p>
	<p>Pet food</p>	<p>337 pet food donations made</p> <p>282 individuals and families supported</p> <p>24,471 meals provided for pets</p>
	<p>Essential items</p>	<p>184 people supported by the PAVS Data Bank</p> <p>141 families supported by Baby Bank 160 babies/children supported by Baby Bank 355 items/clothing bundles distributed by Baby Bank</p>
	<p>Communication & information</p>	<p>2072 calls received by the Pembrokeshire Community Hub</p> <p>6259 views of the Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire webpage</p> <p>3063 views of the interactive Warm Welcome Community Spaces map</p> <p>140,692 leaflets delivered to households</p> <p>33 KWKW campaign posts/ads on social media received a total of 6188 interactions. 7 Pembrokeshire Community Support Network (PCSN) meetings hosted by PAVS</p>

Projects in detail

Warm Welcome Community Spaces Grant scheme

It was decided by the Keep Warm, Keep Well Steering Group that a substantial amount of funding would be allocated to the development of a network of Warm Welcome Community Spaces in Pembrokeshire. This decision was based on advice from national and local organisations, and Welsh Government, that people would be seeking shelter in 'warm rooms' around the country as the cost of living crisis means many would struggle to keep their homes at a healthy temperature through the winter. Warm Welcome Community Spaces offered a safe, accessible, and warm environment during the day, with a few in the evening, to help those facing extreme fuel poverty.



The Supporting Community Action Fund (SCAF) is a fund distribution mechanism developed and managed by Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) to enable a range of funding sources to be distributed to the sector in Pembrokeshire. Through SCAF PAVS has works in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council, West Wales Care Partnership and Welsh Government to support groups to address local need.

The KWKW Steering Group decided that SCAF would be used to distribute funding for Warm Welcome Community Spaces.

Round 6 of SCAF offered funds of up to £3,500 to provide a warm welcome under the following priorities.

1) Warm Rooms Running Costs

Funds for running costs to keep the spaces open and heated, providing additional opening hours to those already provided i.e., new, or additional opening hours.

2) Warm Room Activities

Funds for activities to happen in the centres, volunteer expenses, funding to buy games, films, refreshments etc.

The grant scheme was promoted via PAVS' Funding Advice Service Padlet, the Funding Wales funding search facility, PAVS' website, social media presence, newsletters, and various networks such as the Community Buildings Forum.

PAVS administered the grant and were overwhelmed with the response from the community. The level of submissions represented an incredible amount of work and commitment from the sector as well as demonstrating the need for this funding. A significant number of those applying were entirely volunteer run organisations, thus representing a significant volunteer input from inception.

Applications were assessed by a multi-agency panel, with representatives from Pembrokeshire County Council's Commissioning Team, Hywel Dda Health Board and PAVS pooling a range of valuable community knowledge. Panels were held in September and November 2022 giving projects six and four-month windows respectively from application to project spend completion by the 31st of March 2023.



- **57 Warm Welcome Community Spaces were funded in SCAF Round 6.**
- **16 community projects were also funded to develop warm spaces in SCAF Round 5 through the Living Well this Winter fund.**
- **73 Warm Welcome Community Spaces in total were funded.**
- **107 Warm Welcome Community Spaces registered with the Pembrokeshire Community Hub and were added to the interactive map developed by PAVS. These also included Local Authority run facilities, 11 Pembrokeshire Libraries and 7 Leisure Centres.**
- **1455 Warm Welcome Community Space sessions were delivered.**
- **14,989 people benefited from Warm Welcome Community Spaces.**
- **12772 hot meals were provided in Warm Welcome Community Spaces.**
- **581 volunteers were involved in the coordination and delivery of Warm Welcome Community Spaces.**
- **14,655 hours of volunteering were recorded.**
- **28 of the 73 funded warm spaces have made some level of commitment to continue the projects which were supported by this fund up to 31st March.**



Warm Welcome Community Spaces provided a wide range of activities and support, with visits from local support organisations such as the Pembrokeshire Community Hub & Community Connectors, FRAME’s Community Fuel Champions, Age Cymru Dyfed, PACTO, Hywel Dda Community Outreach Team, and many others.



PAVS Community Connectors also worked with Pembrokeshire County Council to distribute Red Boxes to Warm Welcome Community Spaces. Pembrokeshire County Council receives an annual allocation of the ‘Period Dignity Grant’ from Welsh Government. A ‘Red Box’ is simply a marked red box containing a variety of free period products that people can access on a take what you need basis. Several Warm Spaces took up the offer to host a Red Box.

Pembrokeshire Community Support Network (PCSN)

Grant recipients were invited to join the PCSN network so PAVS could support them and their volunteers with information, support, and training, as required. PAVS also notified them of additional funding opportunities, such as the most recent round of the Pembrokeshire Food Poverty Grant, so they could apply to provide hot meals in their warm space.

There is a full report available on the impact of Round 5 & 6 of the Supporting Community Action Fund, but here is some feedback from people attending and coordinating Warm Welcome Community Spaces:

"Amazing to get out of the house and have people to talk to. I am a single, disabled mum of three children and even though my youngest son comes with me I can relax and be me."

"One stand out moment was our 94-year-old beneficiary who told us that we were a lifeline for her as many evenings she did not eat because she could not be bothered to make something for herself and often went to bed because there was nowhere to go and nothing to do. Us being open twice a week in the evenings gave her not only something to do & have some companionship but alleviate any fears she had about having to feed herself for a few days as she often took extra portions home with her for the next day."

"It has made a difference to me this winter, everyone is so friendly."

"A lot of younger people just wanted to escape cold homes and escalating poverty. They saw warm rooms as a potent symbol of the cost of living crisis in Wales."

"Some of our elderly residents commented on an unforeseen benefit. The warm rooms challenged the social blight of loneliness! It was getting away from an empty house that many found most gratifying about our warm space."

"A 97-year-old local resident came along for a few weeks with his daughter. He had recently lost his wife of 70 years and needed to be with other people and enjoy some social interaction in a warm space away from his own home. He stayed with us until the end of the sessions and now has become a regular attender of our OAP Monthly lunches."

"Simple things can be a great help – during conversations at the warm rooms it was found that several people were having difficulty getting new bus passes, and Sharon from TTC was able to help them to do just that."

"Two of the elderly participants that attended the meals frequently and were given lifts to do so had not been at a social gathering since before the pandemic, and they shared their joy at having a free hot meal and company for a day in the week."

Hot meals in warm spaces

Additional Welsh Government funding was made available for recipients of the Local Authority administered Food Poverty Support Grant towards running costs, heating, and lighting. This encouraged several Warm Welcome Community Spaces to expand their offer from refreshments to hot meals. **12772 hot meals were provided** at either no or very low cost across the Warm Welcome Community Spaces network during Winter 22-23, with many continuing to offer meals as a way to provide continuing support to those who need a meal as the cost of living crisis continues to have an impact.

Winter Warm Packs

Working with colleagues in Ateb and volunteers, West Wales Care & Repair agreed to coordinate the distribution of Winter Warm Packs. Each pack contained a range of items to help people keep warm during the cold winter months - including a fleece blanket, hat, scarf, gloves, microwaveable heat pack, flask, and thermal mug.



A total of 594 Warm Packs were distributed to people living in Pembrokeshire.

- Most requests for warm packs were received from people over the age of 66 with 64% of referrals recorded in this age category.
- Around two thirds of the people requesting warm packs were women.
- Referrals were received from a wide range of agencies across Pembrokeshire, including 3rd sector, Health, and Local Authority staff.
- The Pembrokeshire Community Hub were the main referrers for Warm Packs following calls to the Hub for advice and support. The Hywel Dda Community Outreach team delivered 15 Warm Packs to members of the Gypsy Traveller community who were struggling to heat their homes.
- ateb distributed 14 Warm Packs at a community event.

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- Carew Wesley Warm Hub distributed 10 Warm Packs to people in need who attended the Warm Welcome Community Space sessions funded by the KWKW grant administered by PAVS.
 - Tenants from ateb's independent living scheme volunteered to prepare some of the Warm Packs.

What worked well?

Positive feedback received about the contents of the Warm Packs. The items were of good quality and value for money and can be re-used in subsequent periods of cold weather. We ordered from the Winter Warm Packs website who provide the packs to other 3rd sector and statutory agencies. They were easy to deal with and provided regular updates as needed. We used Mr Shift It for delivery. We considered Royal Mail initially but given the scale of the packages being delivered, we ruled this out as an option. We were able to communicate directly with Mr Shift It about any delays or delivery updates as well as supporting a local business.

After a few initial issues, the referrals email inbox worked well. Partnership working with the PAVS Pembrokeshire Community Hub team also worked well. Involving volunteers from independent living schemes was a highlight, they were delighted to be involved and had a fun afternoon chatting to each other and helping pack the jiffy bags.

What could we improve?

A dedicated part-time administrator would be of benefit to order equipment, answer queries, liaise with referring agencies and recipients, process referrals, coordinate deliveries and volunteer activities. Planning the project in advance will help things run more smoothly next time, and what we've learned from this first project will be of benefit. There were concerns about the direct referrals to the Community Hub and whether the packs were being requested by people who weren't really in need. This might be something to explore further before the next warm packs project.

Energy Poverty

Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire (CAP) provides energy vouchers through a national scheme using a platform called Charis which is designed to support those in hardship with a utility debt. The national scheme provides £30 per household up to 3 times for

people on a pre-payment meter. It was identified by the KWKW Steering Group that the national scheme is insufficient, particularly for families with children. CAP was commissioned to design and deliver a local scheme based on the concept of a scalable offer tailored to meet identified needs, together with the provision of wraparound support and advice on energy/debt to alleviate financial hardship for individuals/families.

Between December and March 2023, 734 energy vouchers were issued by Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire to people in need which included 242 families and 74 individuals, all of whom were in crisis.

Feedback from Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire (CAP)

People who rely on pre-payment meters (PPMs) are at particular risk of going without energy to meet their essential needs. Following steep increases since April 2022 the number of people we've helped who are unable to top up their PPM is at record levels. In Wales, our records show that in January 2021 we saw only 31 clients who said that they could not afford to top up their PPM. In January 2023 the same data shows that we saw 718 clients who said they could not afford to top up their meters. This is a staggering difference when you also consider that during the 2021 period, more people were forced to remain at home and were working their way through extraordinary financial issues as a result of the pandemic.

In many cases, clients seeking emergency fuel support have not only been facing financial hardship, but were also struggling to cope with debt, physical health conditions, caring responsibilities, poor mental health, and housing related issues. Whilst giving the client that much needed emergency payment to keep their Gas and electricity running, Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire (CAP) were also able to take a more holistic approach to the clients situation and offer support with debt advice, energy saving information, income maximisation support, housing advice and referrals on to other support agencies for support around Mental health (Mind), Gambling (Ara), Emergency food provision (PATCH) and Specialist housing (Shelter).

Taking a multi-agency approach means that these clients are given the tools to improve their situation from the ground up and that they do not simply become reliant on emergency provisions to sustain an unsustainable, problematic lifestyle.

Debt support

Insolvency cases are highly regulated, and the Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire Debt team have to spend a significant amount of time processing these cases on behalf of individuals. There are often multiple creditors to consider, and it is essential that every fact and figure is correct. Keep Warm, Keep Well funding was used to expand the current debt support service so that more clients can benefit and to cover fees for Debt Relief Orders.

Between January and March 2023, the project will have assisted 12 clients with DRO fees and 3 with bankruptcy fees, including 9 families and 6 individuals.

Feedback from Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire

During this “cost of living crisis” it has been increasingly difficult for clients to be able to access the most suitable option to deal with their debts because of the costs involved when the most suitable option is insolvency. It has also been more difficult to access charitable support to pay the costs of insolvency.

Debt relief orders and bankruptcy offer a fresh start to people who simply can't repay their debts. But upfront application fees mean that some people are priced out of these options and with nowhere else to turn.

Recent Citizens Advice data shows 50% of the people we help with debt have a negative budget - meaning their income doesn't even cover essential bills and spending. This rises to nearly 6 in 10 (59%) for people who fit the main qualifying criteria for a DRO. Saving up for fees can mean going without basics or falling further into debt. Our data shows that 9 in 10 people (89%) who had been in DRO or bankruptcy struggled to pay the fee.

In other cases, fees mean enduring the negative effects of problem debt for very long periods of time. For the minority of debt clients with spare income, saving for a DRO takes nearly six months, while saving for bankruptcy could take 1 year and 10 months. The availability of funds from KWKW has ensured that clients are able to access the most suitable options for them to deal with their debts to be able to make a fresh start and are not excluded due to costs.

Fuel Assistance

There are a lot of people who are off-grid and rely on oil, particularly in a rural County like Pembrokeshire. For those eligible, the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) provides a £250 contribution but the minimum spend for people to get their tanks filled is £500. We identified that there would be a small demographic of people who would benefit from a pot of funding to top up the DAF from £250 to £500 so that people can get their tanks filled up.

In total, 25 x £250 payments for fuel were processed.

To qualify for a DAF award for Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) you must

- be in extreme financial hardship, for example you've lost your job, applied for benefits, and waiting for your first payment or have no money to buy food, gas and electricity.
- be in a crisis and in need of immediate financial support.
- live in Wales.
- be over 16.
- have no other money, for example savings, and considered all other legal and responsible lenders such as credit unions.

Once evidence of EAP payment was provided, the Housing Support Team in Pembrokeshire County Council arranged for an extra £250 worth of fuel to be ordered directly from the oil company on their behalf.

Most referrals came from Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire with a few self-referrals via the Pembrokeshire Community Hub also.

Feedback from the Housing Support Team at Pembrokeshire County Council

The process was smooth, and most referrals were completed very quickly after receiving the application, with the client ordering the fuel and the payment being made directly by PCC. Clients were advised to order £500 worth of fuel, so they would get extra literage, as most would normally order 500 litres, this meant that odd amounts of fuel were being ordered, and the fuel companies didn't really like this very much, so this meant that some payments for clients were short of £250 to round up the load. Of the 25 payments awarded, several were for members of the Gypsy Traveller community. Often families would group together and order the fuel oil in bulk from one account but receive smaller quantities of fuel and used this to top up

their tanks further. This means that the client would not necessarily have their own account with the fuel company, and this would add to a delay if they wanted to order outside of their normal method. However, this was worked around to ensure the successful processing and delivery of the oil. The fuel companies were helpful, once they got used to our process, mainly K P Thomas and J E Lawrence, with a couple from Certas and Oil 4 Wales. Citizens Advice Pembrokeshire were excellent at identifying eligible clients that they were supporting quickly, helping them to complete the form with a copy of the supporting DAF award. This added to a smooth process and quick result for the client, vital in the colder months of the year.

Recommendation – For the above reason, if this initiative is offered again in the future, professional referrals would be preferred based on the experience of this pilot.

Feedback

All the clients have been very thankful, delighted, and relieved with the fuel assistance provided. One customer was looking forward to having the heating on over Easter and a couple of the clients had been buying fuel oil in drums so pleased that this assistance was there.

“Over the moon and was in tears when informed that this was even possible!”

Warm Room at Home scheme

West Wales Care and Repair helps older people in Pembrokeshire live independently in their own homes, delivering practical help to create safe, warm, and accessible homes. This help can range from delivering major modifications for people most in need, to offering advice and recommendations to people who need reliable professionals to carry out work.

Funding has been awarded under Phase 2 of the Keep Warm, Keep Well programme for adaptations, minor repairs, and distribution of equipment to ensure older people can have at least one warm room in their home. This includes the distribution and installation (if appropriate) of items such as draft excluders, letter box covers, door seals, radiator foils, warm curtains and pole, door brushes, heaters, remote control socket, light bulbs, electric blankets, and oil filled radiators, to people referred to the delivery partner’s current project which aims to improve the warmth, comfort, and quality of life for older people in Pembrokeshire.

The Craftsperson Team Leader held a briefing session for caseworkers in May 2023 explaining what items are available and how they should be fitted. Some of the items will be fitted by the craftsmen team and others can be provided by the caseworkers.



Energy efficient cooking

Air fryers can be up to three times cheaper to run than traditional ovens, according to research by consumer group Which? New analysis suggests the fryers, as well as microwaves, pressure cookers and slow cookers, have cheaper running costs than conventional ovens. We know that energy bills are a real concern for people in Pembrokeshire especially when many are already feeling the pressure of the cost of living crisis. Cooking is one of the everyday costs that really mount up over time.

We decided to make funding available for the purchase and distribution of around 600 free air fryers available for Pembrokeshire households who:

- Are struggling to afford utility bills, and
- Do not currently have an air fryer in the home, and
- Could not afford to purchase one themselves



The air fryers are being distributed by Norman Industries, Pembrokeshire County Council's Supported Employment scheme, on behalf of the Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire Steering Group.

To ensure these air fryers reach those who would benefit from them the most, they are available by Referral Only from a professional.

So far, 260 air fryers have been distributed

Pet food bank donations

Cariad Pet Therapy acts as a pet food bank, purchasing and collecting donations of pet food for distribution to individuals and families who are struggling to buy food for their pets. The distribution of pet food to individuals/families in need enables them to pay energy bills and buy food for themselves and their dependents and cared for. Cariad Pet Therapy have a well-established Pet Food Bank in Pembrokeshire and work with Food Banks.



From December 2022 to March 2023:

- **337 pet food donations were made.**
- **282 individuals/families were supported.**
- **This equates to 24,471 meals for dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pig, ferrets, and parrots.**

Cariad Pet Therapy have shared the following feedback from beneficiaries who were provided with pet food funded by Keep Warm, Keep Well.

Colin is a man with one dog said the Pet Food Bank “really helped me out due to the quality and quantity of the food, it really gets me through the week”. He explained the quantity and quality both really helped him to care for his pet where he would not be able to otherwise. Without any prompt he was keen to tell us how we are a “massive help, especially compared to the other places (other human food banks), I am really thankful” he said, “without his place I would be pretty screwed to be honest, I really appreciate it”.

He has tried other (human) food banks which he has been lucky to get one or two tins of food, usually not meeting his dog's grain free requirements, where the Pet Food Bank is "perfect" and really helps him get through every week financially. Colin was initially introduced to us through his support worker as they could see he was struggling mentally due to the costs of living, being on a low income and how that was ultimately impacting his care of his dog.

Melanie has 3 dogs, one of them as old as seventeen and two cats. Melanie has been coming to the Pet Food Bank since we opened in January 2021. She loved talking about her eldest dog, how much he meant to her and how he is a part of the family, she even had a tattoo of his paw on her wrist that her son had paid for as her birthday present. It was abundantly clear Melanie saw her pets as permanent fixtures to the family and her life.

Shockingly she opened with telling us how she reached a point she "had to consider getting rid of her animals as money is so tight" due to the cost of living. She said how people immediately suggest "oh you have your dogs and your cats, just get rid, that will save you money" after this she paused and nervously laughed, highlighting how she is not even comfortable saying that out loud it is so absurd to her, for her to think of that as a serious solution was a drastic action that she could not comprehend. I asked Melanie if she had to seriously consider getting rid of her pets, how this could affect her, and she got very emotional and shed some tears. It could not have been clearer how the Pet Food Bank was supporting her and her pets and how much it meant. She was still happy to continue to talk to us and said how "the price of everything going up is just ridiculous".

Georgia has been using the Pet Food Bank for at least ten months now, coming to us every week for support for her two cats and one rabbit. She said the Pet Food Bank is a "God send" she told us she is on "only Universal Credit, but by the time I have paid for my bills, insurance, rent and my two teenagers, by the time I have done all of that I have hardly anything left for me, let alone anything else and pet food is so expensive at the moment, especially the supermarkets, it's ridiculous and some people may have the money but I am sorry, I haven't, I am on a very low income and it's very difficult" she said. "I know others have got rid of their pets due to the cost of living, but I don't want to lose my pets". "As the supermarkets are going up and down, it's people like me that are on low income that are struggling the most I think but I am not one of them, I am a single parent with two teenagers" She repeatedly said how the pet food bank means she doesn't "panic" over feeding her pets, losing her pets. This clearly was a great relief for her to not have that feeling of "panic".

Amy has a dog who has recently had puppies, she is a single mother to 4 children. She told us “It really does help me, especially with the cost of living. Just feeding my kids, it makes it impossible to feed my dogs too, my dogs would be suffering and neglected” she told us how great the dogs are for her kids mentally as “they have already lost their father, they can’t lose their dogs too. Without the food bank I don’t think I could survive, it helps so much, it’s unreal”. “My kids I can just about cover and the bills but without the food bank I would be going without for myself. I could never let them starve so it would be affecting my health that I would be starving and mentally worrying me I can’t cover everything”. She even told us that “as soon as I am stable, I will be the first person to come back and donate to you”.

While we are assisting the dogs, we are ultimately feeding her by freeing that small amount of funds, simply allowing her to feed herself.

James has two large dogs and has recently started coming to the Pet Food Bank over the last month. He has now become someone who comes to us for support every approx. 3 weeks. “a lot of people after lockdown and the cost of living are struggling” he starts by telling us. “Even though I am working, a series of things have happened for me such as my car breaking down and these things accumulate and make it difficult. We have an adopted son, and our dogs are also like therapy dogs for him, which is amazing. Things really add up so to have just a small help with the food makes a huge difference.”

“Everything is going up gas and electricity etc. We had a few things go wrong with the house; in winter our heating broke entirely at one point” He explained “you try to have that buffer (financially) but once that has gone you are in a horrible position if something else happens”.

Fred and Sammy come in; they have recently come to the Pet Food Bank over the last few months. Unfortunately, the cost of living and Sammy’s health conditions affects them a lot financially, they have two dogs. “It makes life a lot easier for us. Especially when I am in and out of hospital. It’s amazing what you do it gives us peace of mind.” Sammy tells us.

“The variety is great; this is the first Pet Food Bank I have ever seen” says Fred. They tell us how they have been to other food banks before but not been able to get support for their pets. “It saves us a lot of money. We would never get rid of our pets so would go without if it wasn’t for you” They also said they have a “lovely service, we felt so concerned coming in. Now we don’t feel like that at all”.

Support for our older population

Older people have been facing unprecedented challenges during the cost of living crisis as they struggle with spiralling fuel and food costs on relatively low fixed incomes and the situation can be worse still for those with disabilities or ill-health who have higher energy needs. Equally challenging is the need to remove the stigma of applying for support which some older people feel. An estimated £175m worth of pension credit goes unclaimed each year in Wales – a benefit that can act as a passport to many other benefits and entitlements.

Age Cymru Dyfed (ACD) is a trusted provider of information, advice, and assistance for older people in Pembrokeshire, including the provision of energy advice and addressing fuel poverty. Age Cymru Dyfed was commissioned as a Keep Warm, Keep Well delivery partner to mobilise and expand its staff resource to deal with the increasing demand for support from older people in Pembrokeshire experiencing financial hardship and struggling to pay energy and food bills.



**2 additional staff members secured
40 older people supported
Additional income secured for older
people**

- **Grants £1800**
- **Welfare benefits £9464**

Some of the activity delivered during Autumn/Winter 2022-23 included:

- Visited Warm Welcome Community Spaces leaving literature and raising awareness of the support ACD can provide. Bethesda Baptist Church Food Bank requested an additional visit to their pensioners' lunch to provide further information.
- ACD staff identified many issues with the Government Energy Support Scheme, often it requires numerous conversations with the supplier on behalf of the client. ACD have been able to successfully obtain that money for clients which has a significant impact on their wellbeing and ability to keep warm. For

example, Mr C received £400 of missing claim monies that had not been paid due to issues in registration at his address.

- ACD have assisted people who have basic digital skills to access their accounts online and review their bill and support payments.
- ACD have sent out brochures including Winter Wrapped Up and Save Money, Pay Less to multiple organisations.
- ACD reached out to a Warm Space at the Pembrokeshire Food Bank in Narberth who invited staff to become Food Bank Referrers.
- ACD have continued to make contacts and attend networking events with PAVS, promoting the ACD warm space and learning of other warm spaces in the area.
- The Fuel Bank Foundation has also been a great resource and has allowed ACD to issue fuel vouchers and has enabled them to send these to individuals on prepayment meters to restore their gas service. This has been a great source of relief for clients and a much-needed service for keeping warm and well at home.
- ACD have continued to support individuals with their suppliers and have resolved a multitude of issues. As an example, one client needed support with changing their tariff. ACD arranged for an engineer to go out and support this, resulting in a money saving. Being able to advocate for clients has offered reassurance and confidence for older people who are not confident in sorting out issues like this themselves.
- Information on warm home discounts has been given as well as ensuring eligible people are on the Priority Service. People who are off grid have also been advised on the upcoming £200 payment they are eligible for. ACD continue to advise on the grants and cost of living payments that are available this year as well as the disability and pensioner payment.
- ACD created an additional warm space for information and advice at Prendergast School which is accessible for older people in that area of Haverfordwest.
- Advice has been given and referrals have been made to NEST's Warm Home scheme. Many individuals are seeking advice on how to better insulate their properties and literature has been sent out to support.
- ACD have been promoting the KWKW free Air Fryer initiative as a more economical way of cooking. The Air Fryer project has proved beneficial to the people ACD have supported. During March ACD applied for 2 people in need of lowering their monthly utility bills and they have received their free Air Fryer. Not only will this save them money, but they also commented that they will

find it easier to cook for themselves and they were very pleased that ACD had brought this initiative to their attention.

- ACD supported many individuals with their energy bills and had a vast number of different queries. As an example Mr X on a prepayment meter, contacted us as he was running out and had not long had a fuel bank voucher arranged through us and had no means of paying for heating. ACD called his supplier and as per the Gentleman's wishes they granted discretionary credit of £50 until he was able to top up. Mr X was so grateful as he felt without our help he would not have got to this point and would have been without heating. Information was also given on the Discretionary Assistance Fund.
- ACD have also had a lot of debt queries directly relating to Heating and Fuel. We have made referrals to Citizens Advice and signposted to Step change.
- ACD also supported a lady who needs a new boiler and helped to escalate her case with them as she has been cold living without heating. ACD applied for a 'warm pack' and oil heaters through West Wales Care and Repair whilst she waits for NEST.
- Key dates for cost of living payments has been communicated widely and ACD have provided additional benefit checks to ensure clients are getting the money they are entitled to. As an example a client who initially contacted ACD with an energy query needing support with his gas bill, is now being supported with an Attendance Allowance claim that will have a significant impact on his finances and ensure heating, lighting and food are more affordable to him.

Fuel Poverty Advice

Pembrokeshire FRAME's Community Fuel Advice Champions support the local community with friendly community support and advice about fuel poverty, energy efficiency, climate change, and sustainability as part of the Fuel Poverty Project funded by Wales and West Utilities. Additional funding was provided to support this project to keep up with the increased demand and to deliver additional outreach work at Warm Welcome Community Spaces established through the KWKW grant. The Champions attended events, clubs, and groups to offer advice and to share information on the Priority Services register, Carbon Monoxide safety, information on keeping the home warm and identifying energy savings.

- **62 people supported with direct fuel poverty advice**
- **40 fuel voucher applications supported**
- **39 DAF applications supported**
- **56 Warm Packs handed out**
- **429 information leaflets/packs issued**
- **An estimated £12,000 in reduced bills or funding accessed for clients**
- **A total of 521 people supported**



Referrals into the project came from the PAVS Pembrokeshire Community Hub, Health Board and third sector organisations such as Versus Arthritis and Eco Dewi. The Community Fuel Advice Coordinator became an accredited partner for the Discretionary Assistance Fund making the Champions only one of 4 groups in Pembrokeshire able to make referrals to NEC who run the scheme for Welsh Government. The Coordinator visited many people in their homes, including the Gypsy Traveller community.

Essential items for families with newborn and young children

Pembrokeshire Baby Bank are a trusted voluntary sector organisation who have been helping to support new parents experiencing hardship in Pembrokeshire since 2019. Although Pembrokeshire Baby Bank receive donations from the community of equipment and clothing for babies and children, there are many items that they can only purchase and provide as new, such as mattresses, toiletries, nappies, wipes and changing mats. Referrals to the Pembrokeshire Baby Bank were up by 68.3% in 2022 compared to 2021.



Funding was awarded under the second phase of the Keep Warm, Keep Well programme to purchase and distribute such items to families referred to the service by the Pembrokeshire Community Hub, PAVS Community Connector for Children &

Families, social workers, health staff, and other professionals. Referrals have been made for winter and newborn baby bundles helping to support new and existing parents experiencing hardship, regardless of their circumstances.

- **141 families supported**
- **160 babies/children supported**
- **355 items/clothing bundles distributed**

Pembrokeshire Baby Bank have found a rise in the number of requests for cots & mattresses, and bedding. They are also receiving requests for stairgates which they are able to provide.

The feedback from health and social care professionals gives an indication of the impact the Baby Bank is having.

Hi Sonya,
I just wanted to take this opportunity to say a massive THANK YOU for the superb items that you provided for the above expectant lady. She is so happy and feeling far more confident heading towards the birth of her daughter. This service that you provide is second to none in so many ways. Your dedication and kindness provides Mum's and baby's the perfect start which reduces all sorts of anxieties, concerns and feelings of inadequacy due to their difficult circumstances. Your service gives them back some pride, self-worth and control. You have assisted me before, and every time you produce a service which does not overlook any single essential item that any Mum or baby would require. In fact, you add so many extras which makes this a totally bespoke and worthy service for families that really have no-where to turn because they fall through so many nets and benefit tests.
Thank you again,

The “Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire” campaign

The campaign plan included promotion of KWKW on social media, local radio, newspapers, and a leaflet was delivered to every household in Pembrokeshire, twice. People living in Pembrokeshire were told that for support during the cost of living crisis they can contact the Pembrokeshire Community Hub on 01437 723660 or email enquiries@pembrokeshirecommunityhub.org

The Pembrokeshire Community Hub also created an online repository of information on the Connect Pembrokeshire website <https://connectpembrokeshire.org.uk> which has lots of useful information and an interactive map of Warm Welcome Community Spaces across the county.

- **2072 calls received by the Pembrokeshire Community Hub at PAVS**
- **6259 views of the Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire webpage**
- **3063 views of the interactive Warm Welcome Community Spaces map**
- **2 leaflets promoting KWKW in Pembrokeshire were delivered to every household in Pembrokeshire – 1 in December and 1 in March - a total of 140,692 leaflets delivered.**

Pembrokeshire Community Hub (PAVS) staff also attended Warm Welcome Community Space events in order to promote the activities and support available to the wider community. On St Patrick's Day, Pembrokeshire Community Hub was lucky enough to get an invitation to the Pater Hall where, with the help of Trisha, Sheila, Cathy, and Claire, introduced us to the fabulous Pater Hall Warrior Welcome Room, which welcomes everyone on Fridays 11am-2pm. <https://fb.watch/lhcl4YNIUa/>



The PAVS Pembrokeshire Community Hub are a registered Data Bank in were able to support 184 people with data in the last financial year.

What is a Data Bank?

Good Things Foundation developed the National Databank to help people experiencing data poverty to access the internet. The National Databank distributes free data to people through community organisations, like PAVS.

What is data poverty?

If you are unable to afford an internet connection to meet essential needs, you may be experiencing data poverty. Data poverty means that you can't do things like apply for a job online, bank online or access essential services, due to having no internet connectivity.

The image is a promotional flyer for the Digital Data Bank. It features a blue background with a white speech bubble containing the text 'Digital Data Bank: How to Make Digital Work for You'. Below this, it states 'A member of the Online Centres Network' with a fingerprint icon. At the bottom left, there is a QR code and the logo for 'Hwb Cymunedol Sir Benfro Pembrokeshire Community Hub'. At the bottom right, there is a smartphone graphic displaying the text 'Find out more: You may be eligible for FREE data' and the contact information 'enquires@pembrokeshirecommunityhub.org' and '01437 723660'.

Volunteer involvement in the Keep Warm, Keep Well programme

Projects provided work opportunities for volunteers to get involved and make a difference.

Cariad Pet Therapy reported the following:

“There is also a benefit to our volunteers who view their role as their ‘job’ and provides them with structure and a sense of worth on a weekly basis.”

West Wales Care & Repair organized a volunteering session with ateb's independent living schemes tenants in January 2023 to prepare Warm Packs for distribution. 10 tenants volunteered to help with ateb's Independent Living Coordinators and West Wales Care and Repair staff. 200 Warm Packs were prepared during the afternoon. The tenants commented on how much they had enjoyed being part of the project and would like to be involved again.



Volunteers were an integral part of the delivery of the network **Warm Welcome Community Spaces** across Pembrokeshire, often benefiting from their involvement in these projects.

"One of our volunteers was a young man completing his Welsh Baccalaureate and asked if he could help out at the warm room. It was lovely to see how the young mixed with the old."



Hwb Cymunedol
Sir Benfro
Pembrokeshire
Community Hub

Keep Warm, Keep Well in Pembrokeshire

The cost of living affects everyone.
Support is available via Pembrokeshire Community Hub.

Call **01437 723660** or email
enquiries@pembrokeshirecommunityhub.org



Support available:

- Map of warm welcome spaces available via www.connectpembrokeshire.org.uk or call the Hub to find your nearest.
- Information on a wide range of cost-of-living support.
- Connecting you with local support and services who can help when finances are stretched.
- Access to mobile data to stay connected.

One call, that's all

We're recruiting community volunteers to ensure no-one
goes cold or hungry this winter –
if you have a spare hour or two, please call us.



Hwb Cymunedol
Sir Benfro
Pembrokeshire
Community Hub

Cadw'n Gynnes, Cadw'n Iach yn Sir Benfro

Mae costau byw yn effeithio ar bawb.
Mae cymorth ar gael trwy Hwb Cymunedol Sir Benfro.

Ffoniwch **01437 723660** neu e-bostiwch
enquiries@pembrokeshirecommunityhub.org



Mae cymorth ar gael:

- Map o fannau croeso cynnes trwy www.cysylltusirbenfro.cymru neu ffoniwch yr Hwb i ddod o hyd i'ch un agosaf.
- Gwybodaeth am ystod eang o gymorth costau byw.
- Eich cysylltu â chymorth a gwasanaethau lleol a all eich helpu pan fydd arian yn brin.
- Mynediad i ddata symudol i gadw mewn cysylltiad.

Un alwad dyna i gyd

Rydym yn recriwtio gwirfoddolwyr cymunedol, i sicrhau na fydd unrhyw un yn oer na'n newynog y gaeaf hwn – os oes gennych awr neu ddwy yn sbâr, yna ffoniwch ni, os gwelwch yn dda.