

# A Helping Hand: a toolkit resource for Diocese of Leeds churches responding to the cost of living crisis.

## Introduction & Contents

This free toolkit has been compiled by Wellsprings Together for churches across the Diocese of Leeds who are looking to support their parish with the upcoming cost of living crisis. As much as possible local advice has been given alongside national support.

This crisis is bigger than any individual church and so our strong recommendation is that you look where possible to work in partnership with others including other churches, faith groups, local authorities, businesses, charities and other community organisations. This is a good opportunity for you make to new relationships with others in your area and work alongside others for the common good.

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## 1. Supporting Individuals

The reality for many individuals within our congregations and wider communities is that this winter will be a particularly difficult time financially. This section has links for providers of support both locally and nationally around food, benefit support, debt and money management.

If you are aware of or are providing support not in here please contact us at [team@wellspringstogether.org.uk](mailto:team@wellspringstogether.org.uk)

### MONEY MANAGEMENT

#### NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

[Turn2Us- Benefits Calculator](#): use to check if the individual is receiving all the benefits they are entitled to

[The Money Course](#)

[CAP- Money Course](#)

[Money Helper](#)

#### LOCAL SUPPORT

[Bradford Council Cost of Living Page](#)

[Leeds- Detailed leaflet outlining local support](#)

[Leeds Council Cost of Living Support Page](#)

[Craven- Detailed leaflet outlining local support](#)

[Barnsley Council Support](#)

Calderdale- [Detailed leaflet outlining local support.](#)

[Calderdale Council page for cost of living](#)

[North Yorkshire- Warm & Well](#)

[Wakefield Fuel Poverty Support:](#)

[Kirklees Council Cost of Living Support page](#)

## **DEBT SUPPORT**

[Money Helper- Debt Advice Locator](#)

[Christians against Poverty- Get Help](#)

[Christians Against Poverty- Debt Advice](#)

We are hearing increased reports of loan shark activity and there is concern that they will be looking to target Warm Spaces. This [introduction video](#) from Stop Loan Sharks UK gives an initial explainer to spotting a loan shark.

## **HEATING SUPPORT**

[Very useful Citizens Advice directory of support](#)

[Fuel Poverty: What is it? West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership](#)

[Fuel Poverty Support Options: West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership](#)

Some foodbanks across the area are also able to provide Fuel vouchers to those in need. Enquiry locally to see if your local one does.

## **FOOD AID**

### **Ripon EA**

[Richmond Storehouse](#)

[Hambleton Foodshare](#)

[Skipton Foodbank](#)

[Harrogate District Foodbank](#)

[Ripon Community House](#)

### **Huddersfield EA**

[Batley Food Bank](#)

[The Welcome Centre- Huddersfield](#)

[Fusion Foodbank- Dewsbury](#)

### **Bradford EA**

[Feeding Bradford & Keighley- Food provision Website](#)

### **Wakefield EA**

[List of Wakefield & District Foodbanks](#)

### **Leeds EA**

[Leeds Food Aid Network](#)

[Leeds Food Provision Map](#)

[Leeds- Building Food Resilience Leaflet](#)

### **National Networks**

[Your Local Pantry](#)

[Find a Trussell Trust Foodbank](#)

## 2. Reducing your church's energy use this winter

*This Section has been kindly produced by the Diocesan buildings team and is replicated with permission.*

### 1. When is the church in use? Can we move out this winter?

- Some parishes may consider reducing the number of services so that the church needs to be heated less often. In a multi-parish benefice, there are [Canonical requirements](#) (link at the end of the document) on the minimum frequency of holding services across the benefice, but in a single-parish benefice, it is normally expected there will be at least one service each Sunday in the parish church.
- The minister and PCC can agree occasional variations to this, and changes to the regular pattern can be authorised by the Area Bishop, as long as this does not lead to a church ceasing to be used for worship permanently. (see Canon B.14A)
- To count as an 'open' church, for insurance and grants purposes, there needs to be 6 services per year. If you have received a Lottery or NCT grant in the last ten years there may be an additional requirement to open it to the public regularly (but not necessarily heated).
- Another possibility might be to use the church hall for worship during the colder months, if this is already well-used and therefore pre-warmed for a Sunday. If you wish to move all your services into another building, you will need to apply to the Area Bishop for a Temporary Licence for Worship. But please remember to at least keep a frost setting on the church heating to prevent damage. It's also important to discuss any such proposal with your insurer to see what requirements they may have.
- If permission is given to cease use of the church building during the winter, the PCC should continue to make regular (ideally weekly) checks for any issues such as leaks, vandalism or animal infestation, and continue to undertake regular maintenance.
- If you have midweek meetings, can they all be rearranged towards the start of the week to make the most of residual heat after the Sunday services?

### 2. Efficient use of the heating system

- Heating church buildings typically accounts for around 70-80% of overall energy use. The remainder is lighting and other electrical appliances.
- If a church is only used once a week, it is often acceptable not to heat it on the other days beyond a minimum background temperature ('frost setting'). Take advice from a heating engineer or your architect on an appropriate setting. If a building is used most days, then a higher background temperature will be more appropriate.
- Look at your heating controls. If there are different heating circuits for different parts of the building, make sure they are not heating empty rooms, otherwise consider thermostatic valves on radiators.
- The heating should come on just in time to get the building to a comfortable temperature as people arrive, and can go off before the end of worship or other activity as it will take time to cool down. A modern control system should be able to cope with a different pattern each day, and may even be controlled remotely from a mobile phone app. Smart meters can provide detailed data for analysis.

- What is a 'comfortable temperature'? 18C should be sufficient for a church, rather than the 20C+ that you might want at home, but further savings can be made by only heating it to say 15C in colder weather, as it will still feel relatively warm compared with outside.
- Heating systems also need regular maintenance to remain at maximum efficiency: e.g. bleed radiators, remove dust from fins, occasionally flush out the pipework.
- Some types of gas heater have a pilot light that can be turned off if it is not being used for an extended period, but check the manual.

### 3. Basic building maintenance

- Draughts are a major source of heat loss, so make sure doors and windows can be shut tightly, use products from a DIY store to block gaps around opening doors or window frames. Repair window breakages (however minor) as soon as possible. This work can usually be done under List A of the faculty rules (i.e. no permission required), provided it does not affect the overall appearance or operation of windows and doors.
- There always needs to be a certain level of ventilation, especially if the building is damp, so don't block air bricks, and windows may need to be open during a service to let out the condensation from people's breath. A dehumidifier may be a better way of dealing with damp than keeping the heating on, especially for smaller spaces. Your architect can advise.
- Any water getting into the building not only risks causing damage but also makes the air damp, 'feeling' colder, and absorbs more heat. Water running down outside walls can percolate into the building. Attending to minor roof leaks, blocked downpipes, etc. as soon as possible will make the building drier and therefore cost less to heat. Your most recent Quinquennial report will point out specific needs for your building. General maintenance does not require permission and some repairs (for example, like-for-like roof works to unlisted churches) can also be done without permission under List A; other works may require List B permission from your Archdeacon. Contact the DAC office if in doubt.

### 4. Make people comfortable

- If operating temperatures are reduced, people may need to wear warm clothing and be encouraged to sit nearer to sources of heat and away from draughts. Simple measures such as pew runners or cushions, lap blankets and breathable mats beneath feet, can make a surprising difference to perceived comfort as they reduce heat loss from the body. Most introduction of soft furnishings can be done under List A of the faculty rules (i.e. no permission required) but contact the DAC office if in doubt.
- If the main entrance door is draughty or has to be left open as people arrive for a meeting, consider fitting a curtain. Contact the DAC office for advice about permissions.
- If heating the whole church space still appears unaffordable after taking other measures, the short-term answer might be to encourage the congregation to sit close together and use a few portable electric heaters (preferably of the infra-red variety that heat bodies rather than air), or heated pew runners, in the area they use. These just need List B permission from the Archdeacon.
- Another short-term solution to concentrating the heat in a reduced area could be to introduce a temporary marquee. You should prepare a risk assessment for this and notify your insurers,

especially if you intend to use heating devices within the space. A temporary installation such as this could be eligible for an interim faculty, which can be requested from the Chancellor by an email to the Registry Assistant (contact details at end of document).

## 5. Cutting your utility bills

- When is your energy contract due for renewal? Switching to a renewable energy tariff should be the long-term aim but in the current crisis, switching tariffs mid-contract is not advisable.
- The applicable VAT rate for church energy supplies is 5%. Check that you are not being charged a higher 'domestic' rate of VAT, and that you are not paying the Climate Change Levy (CCL) on your bills. If you have solar panels, check any Feed in Tariff (FIT) charge on your bills is correct.
- A dual rate electricity tariff can be an advantage for churches, but check your meter shows the correct time and date.
- Insulate hot water tanks and any heating pipes that are not running through the space you actually want to heat – this can be done under List A of the faculty rules (i.e. no permission required).
- Keep track of other energy use more closely. Don't forget to turn off any heaters, lights, and other appliances that aren't in use. If you have a smart meter it can help identify if a device is left on when it isn't needed. If any lights (including security lights outside) are on timers, ensure the time they come on keeps step with changing hours of daylight, using timing devices if appropriate. As with heating, just light the areas being used if switches allow it, and turn off floodlighting if it isn't needed for security.
- Invest in the most efficient white goods when they need replacing. Use a microwave rather than the cooker, where possible. Only boil the amount of water needed. Does the dishwasher really need running every day if it isn't full?
- Water companies often provide free water saving gadgets which reduce waste and therefore bills. Is the domestic hot water set to a sensible temperature (c.55C)?
- What arrangements do you have with external hirers? Are they aware of how to use heating controls efficiently? Do they pay for the energy they use directly (an incentive to use less energy themselves), or as a percentage share of the bill, or is the hire rate 'all inclusive'? Does the hire rate need adjusting to reflect recent increases in bills?

## Looking ahead

- If you haven't already used it, the [Energy Footprint Tool](#) (EFT) helps to record energy use year-on-year and calculate the church's current carbon footprint against which to measure savings. This is part of the same system used by PCC treasurers to report on parish finances.
- The next steps in reducing heat loss, perhaps before the following winter, might be some form of roof insulation, secondary or double glazing, and a glazed internal door or draught-lobby. These steps will cost more, would usually need some form of permission, and insulation and double glazing in particular are not suitable for all buildings. Please consult your inspecting architect/surveyor and the DAC team if considering any of these.
- The DAC's 'heating checklist' (link below) is intended for longer-term thinking but you may find it useful to guide you through some of these initial stages.

## Further information sources

### Contacts

Stephen Craven, Church Buildings Support Officer  
[stephen.craven@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:stephen.craven@leeds.anglican.org) 0113 3530 274

Rob Andrews, Church Buildings Team Co-Ordinator  
[rob.andrews@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:rob.andrews@leeds.anglican.org) 0113 3530 278

Heather Ford, Ecclesiastical Insurance  
[heather.ford@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:heather.ford@ecclesiastical.com) 07765 246720

Beverley Mightly, Registry Assistant  
[beverley.mightly@luptonfawcett.law](mailto:beverley.mightly@luptonfawcett.law) 0113 280 2241

### Quick wins

[Energy Saving Trust](#)

[LED lighting webinar](#) (YouTube)

[ChurchCare maintenance guidance](#)

### Longer term planning

[Energy Footprinting Tool](#) – to help calculate the building's carbon footprint.

A Rocha UK [Eco Church resources](#)

[C of E Environment Programme](#), with searchable [Case Studies](#), and [Net Zero Carbon Church](#)

Diocesan guidance on [sustainability](#) including downloadable heating toolkit and checklist

### 3. Warm Spaces

One of the ways that many churches are choosing to respond is by setting up their venue as a warm space for people who are struggling to afford to heat their homes. There are a range of national initiatives, county/local authority-led city, town and neighbourhood or local area/village campaign – whatever comes naturally from geographical or cultural identities, or from established relationships. Some of the local authority campaigns are not currently up and running but will be shortly - we will update this guide as and when they are public.

#### National “Warm Welcome” Campaign

Some national Christian charities have partnered together to form a coalition entitled "Warm Welcome" where you can register your venue – it has over 1000 pledges of spaces already. You can see other spaces in your area and find information and guidance for starting out.

[Warm Welcome- National Initiative](#)

They have also prepared a useful [Step- by- Step Guide](#)

#### Bradford Warm Spaces

Bradford Council has [a warm spaces directory](#). All organisations offering a warm space in the district are encouraged to register to be included on the site. There is the offer of small grants of £500 or £1,000 available if you want to expand your current warm space offer or create a new one. **The closing date for applications is the 30<sup>th</sup> October.** They also have a [Warm Spaces Communications Toolkit](#) including brand logo, plus posters, flyers and other items to support you in advertising your warm space.

#### Wakefield Warm Spaces

Wakefield Council have partnered with Nova to deliver Warm Spaces. The website is not currently live but we will update this guide as soon as it is.

#### Leeds City Council Warm Spaces

Leeds City Council will be launching a directory of Warm Spaces from the 18<sup>th</sup> October. There will be a directory and map onto which you can upload you space. Liaising with your [Local Community Anchor](#) would be a good place to start. The directory and map will be live [here](#) from the 18<sup>th</sup> October.

#### North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire County Council (changing to North Yorkshire Council in April 2023)

A directory of Warm Spaces is due to be published by December, with Community Support Organisations tasked with the mapping and inclusion of relevant organisations. For this winter there is support from Craven District Council with ward grants and a warm spaces directory for the Craven area. We will update you on any support from Harrogate and Richmondshire Councils in due course.

#### Calderdale

The local authority are working the Community Foundation to offer small grants. We will update in due course.

## PLACES OF WELCOME / WARM WELCOME SPACES – ILLUSTRATIVE WEEKLY DIARY

VENUE: E.g. St Barnabas Church and (other venues)

Week commencing: \_\_\_\_\_

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
9.00 - 10.30	Hub drop-in signposting and support: legal, debt, housing, cost of living etc	Digital support session  Online courses	Community college: in-person learning	Health Clinic  Drop-in and health education sessions	Debt advice - e.g. CAP  Credit Union
----- Mid-morning break -----					
11.00 - 12.30	Hub drop-in signposting and support: legal, debt, housing, cost of living etc	Fitness for all  Health and nutrition support groups	Community college: in-person learning	Wellbeing/wellness  Mental health support groups	Employment support: drop-in / online access  Job Club
----- Community Lunch -----					
2.00 - 3.30	Art and crafts 1  Knit and Natter	Library - book swap  Book Club	Cinema Club 1	Art and crafts 1  Photography Club	Fun and Games 1  Board games / table tennis
----- Mid-afternoon break -----					
4.00 - 5.30	Art and crafts 2  Homework Club	ESOL - Beginner  ESOL - Intermediate	Cinema Club 2	Art and crafts 2  Homework Club	Homework Club  Board games / table tennis

- Programme might run from several venues to allow for existing bookings, cover more areas, attract more attenders/volunteers and spread operating costs
- **Drop-in cafe (e.g. Places of Welcome) open for most / all of the weekly sessions, depending on volunteer resourcing and overheads**
- Separate, discreet spaces for specific groups might also be desirable: e.g. deaf group, parent and toddlers, mental health support
- Morning and afternoon breaks optional; lunch-time food provision support from other community/church groups on a rota basis?



## Wellsprings Together Warm Space Top Tips

### 01 THE VALUE OF WELCOME

When people come into your warm space it's vital that they are treated with respect, dignity and a listening ear. It is important to remember that a Warm Space is an inclusive, non-judgemental space where people's confidentiality and privacy is to be respected. We recommend you have your warm spaces ethos on display - existing [Places of Welcome](#) already have the 5 P's – contact us if you need support in this area.

### 02 PARTNERSHIP

If possible, work in partnership with others. It may be that other venues are opening near you, so talk to them and perhaps you can offer to share the load. Perhaps your church is not the best venue for a warm space but you may have some willing volunteers, or work with some other local organisation to see if you can work together.

### 03 SIGNPOSTING

Often people coming to your Warm Space may need further support, such as dealing with energy bills, debt, benefits advice, mental health, employment or addiction issues. Use the links in this document but also find out what other local support might be available.

### 04 THINK ABOUT WHEN TO OPEN

We realise that heating your building this winter may be incredibly costly. Think about times you are already planning on opening and perhaps think about how you could extend that time or keep the building open for people to use after another activity has finished (see the tips above on how to manage your heating costs). Opening around lunchtime may be invaluable for those who are struggling to afford a meal, so options of free and low-cost food are encouraged if you have the staff and resources.

### 05 ACTIVITIES

Think creatively about what you might offer while the space is open, arts and crafts, board games, book library, fitness sessions, ESOL classes, online learning or even co-working spaces and charging points. To maintain the dignity of someone needing a Warm Space you may prefer to publicise with the activity rather than focusing on the Warm Space element. Why not get other groups to come in and run sessions for you? You'll be surprised who might come in and offer this for free. Often local community services and groups will be looking for places to run drop-ins and provide signposting and referral support. You could also ask people joining your warm spaces community what type of activities they would like and, even better, for them to bring an activity or teach a skill to others.

### 06 VOLUNTEERS

Your volunteer's don't just have to come from the church; use local networks, Facebook groups etc to advertise. We would recommend that you follow a basic volunteering recruitment process (please ask us about volunteer forms etc) together with DBS checks and an informal chat around expectations etc. You should also include some safeguarding training, advice around their role and the ethos you have determined for your Warm Space. Finally, think about how those who are coming to your warm space not simply as 'guests' but also those who can participate and bring their gifts. This could be as simple as "can you help put out the chairs?" or "can you teach this person how to play chess?"

### 07 SAFETY

We would recommend that you conduct a risk assessment for the warm space and that safeguarding policies are adhered to, including posters and information on how people can contact the Safeguarding Officer if they have concerns. Some local authorities and other partners will look for this as a minimum for partnership. If you are providing food then ensure you have your Food Hygiene Certificate. Just a

word of caution: warm spaces are, by their very nature, places where those who are vulnerable may come. We recommend that you become familiar with spotting the signs of modern slavery – go to [The Clewer Initiative](#) for more information and support.

#### 08 FUNDING

There are some small pots of money out there, so get in touch if you have a specific request and we can help signpost you to appropriate ones. One way of covering the costs might be to ask members of the church and community (who perhaps don't need all of their energy rebate) to contribute to the pot to heat your warm space – it's worth a try.

#### 09 REFRESHMENTS

This can be as basic as tea, coffee, other hot and cold drinks, biscuits and cakes – free to all (but having a donations bowl is helpful as people may like the option of making a contribution). If you want to offer warm food then things like soup, jacket potatoes and toasties are popular and simple to prepare. In most settings you can charge a modest amount such as £1.00/£1.50 (or again, suggest a donation level) or perhaps you might give a free hot meal item the first time someone attends.

#### 10 KEEP IT SIMPLE

Start small and simple and see how it goes. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good! Even a few hours a week is valuable for the people who attend.

## 4. Advocacy

There are various campaigns currently running that you may want to support. Longer term there is the need for increased structural support to help those in need. "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute [...] defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8-9). This may be through talking to your local MP or Councillor or through supporting one of these campaigns.

[Christians Against Poverty Campaign](#)

Jubilee Plus: The final page of [this document](#) has some helpful tips around speaking up

## 5. Further Support

If you want more support from Wellsprings Together or if you have feedback on the toolkit then you can contact the team at [team@wellspringstogether.org.uk](mailto:team@wellspringstogether.org.uk)

*Wellsprings Together, a charity in partnership with the Diocese of Leeds, exists as a free additional resource to support churches to make a difference in their communities. Our team members are specialists in parish-based community engagement and are experienced in helping churches to take the next steps in their social action.*

*Whether that is enabling you to identify the key needs in your area, running workshops around a vision for your community engagement, helping you develop partnerships with others around you or helping you secure funding for your project, we are here to help provide capacity and expertise for you.*

*We work to your timescales and support your local and regional initiatives to help you see transformed communities where God has placed you.*