

Cost of Living Solutions Collaboration

20 & 21 of September 2022





Hello,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to our two-day public Cost of Living event, which over 70 participants attended.

The main aim of the event was to bring about a collaboration led by our sector and supported by our statutory partners; ensuring our most vulnerable residents have a clear and straightforward route to accessing the support they need.

We will be working with all partners and stakeholders to ensure our community places and spaces can provide much needed activities, supports and services to combat all aspects of the cost of living crisis.

The following pages contain a brief update of the information and ideas shared over the four sessions.



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Food dignity and sustainability

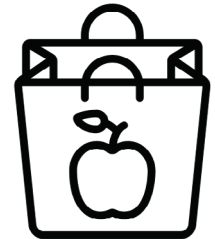
In these unprecedented times, conversations around food affordability, sustainability, poverty and foremost dignity are crucial, now more than ever. Much discussion was had around the area of Food, with many ideas and suggestions shared.

Points and ideas shared included:

- Food Pantries
- Community Fridges
- Allotments – grow your own
- Bulk food buying
- Non-referral Food source
- Basic cooking courses/ Cooking on a budget
- Lunch style clubs/ linking of food to current clubs
- Signposting
- Provision of hot drinks and meals in “Warm Spaces”

Next steps:

Based on the conversations, ideas and suggestions shared so far, our next steps will be to pull together a Food Dignity Collaborative to develop our ideas further.



We will work together to build a Food Collaborative based on equity, fairness and sustainability; focused not only on low-cost food access but an approach based on reuse, repurpose and recycling to support our communities to make smarter choices around purchasing.

If you would like to be involved in either of these themes, please contact:

Karen.mclaughlin@va-er.org.uk

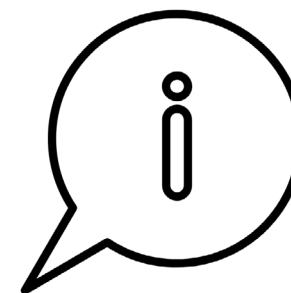
Information Sharing, Training and Data Exchange

Many conversations at this event revolved around information sharing. It continues to be important that we can share and access quality and relevant information to ensure residents affected by the rising cost of living can easily find the support they need.

Sharing data and knowledge has also been an area of huge discussion. Local groups and organisations are keen to come together to share their collective data and knowledge about the services, activities and frequently asked questions to ensure future developments align with the changing needs of our communities.

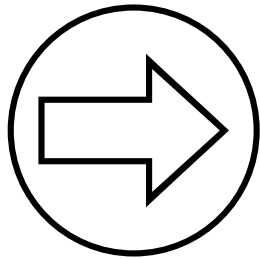
The main suggestions included:

- Online directory to improve awareness of resources and services and to support signposting
- Postcards and information boards for those who are not online; use of existing services to distribute information, e.g., housebound library service, CAB office
- CRIB sheets for staff, e.g., processing Scottish Welfare Fund, how to deal with someone in distress
- A central point (e.g., Main Street) for projects to provide info and advice, so people know where to go for help
- Communications Forum



Our next steps:

Our team has begun developing an **Online Directory of Cost of Living Supports**, hosted on the Community Hub website. The directory will cover Money Advice, Energy Supports, Places & Spaces, as well as local tips and life hacks. This is in addition to our already established **Community Activities Directory**. Those offering Cost of Living support or running community activities are encouraged to add their information to the directories by completing an online form.



www.eastrencommunityhub.org.uk

We are also redesigning our **Email Newsletters** to better respond to the information needs of local community organisations and partners.

We will also pull together a collaborative to further develop our ideas and needs around data, information sharing and future planning. If you are interested in joining this, please get in touch with paulina@va-er.org.uk

Networking and Outreach Opportunities

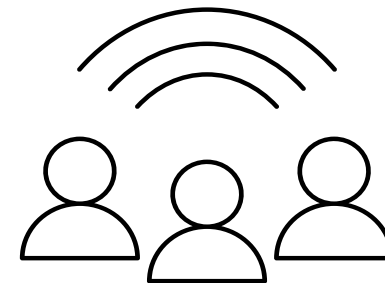
Some suggestions were that we should have regular opportunities for organisations and groups to get together on a formal and informal basis depending on the topic of discussion. People felt that all events did not need to be themed; providing opportunities to network and share current information would be beneficial. Other collaborations could be centred around similar challenges that our organisations and groups face daily.

Along with regular networking opportunities, our discussions centred around increased opportunities for community engagement and outreach sessions focused on practical help and advice.

Our next steps:

- Host and facilitate regular and informal networking opportunities
- Support further discussions focused on outreach sessions and community engagement opportunities
- Facilitate further discussion focused on sharing resources, venues, equipment, time and/or experience

If you are interested in networking and outreach opportunities, please contact:
maria.hendry@va-er.org.uk



Places & Spaces

It is essential to acknowledge that there has already been widespread discussion about the need for spaces where people can be warm, often referred to as “Warm Banks”. However, it is clear from our discussions to date that these spaces need to be developed with Dignity. Over the course of the two-day event, we have been able to gather initial information that begins to map out the spaces and places already used by our communities; spaces where we come together to socialise, learn new skills, participate in hobby activities and access support services.



Our discussions so far have highlighted some key action points that require further development:

- Map to show what is available across East Ren
- Wraparound activities in school buildings
- Activities to encourage the use of spaces

Spaces also map across the other workshop themes of Information, Funding, Food Dignity and Networking.

These conversations lead to our next steps: to get together a Places and Spaces Collaborative to discuss the ideas further and turn them into actions.

If you would like to be involved in the Collaborative, please get in touch with:
claire.ramsay@va-er.org.uk

Sustainable Funding Collaborative

Thank you for your contribution and participation in the cost-of-living collaboration. It will come as no great surprise that access to funding was a hot topic across all our discussions. Please see below some of the key points we will be exploring further as part of the Sustainable Funding Collaborative:

- Allocation of funds to grassroots organisations
- Carers to have a discretionary budget
- Travel support for the elderly
- More group activities

Next Steps:

Our next steps will be to host a **Sustainable Funding Collaborative** to further explore and develop the key points above as well as share ideas and actions around future collaborative bids.

As part of this collaborative approach, Voluntary Action will share information about existing National and local funds, including two local funds administered by Voluntary Action: The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund and East Renfrewshire Humanitarian Participatory Budgeting Fund. Both these funds will focus on supporting grassroots organisations and community groups.

If you have any questions about these funds or are interested to hear about any other funding opportunities, then email: funding@va-er.org.uk

