



Surviving Winter 2014/15

Donor Report

Registered Charity No. 1094446

Registered Company No. 04530979

www.somersetcf.org.uk

Introduction

The first Surviving Winter appeal was launched in 2010 after a Somerset Community Foundation donor offered to give the equivalent of his Winter Fuel Payment to help local pensioners struggling with the cost of staying warm and healthy through small payment for everyday essentials most of us take for granted, such as heating, warm clothing and food.

This simple idea has since gone on to become a national award winning programme that has raised over £362,000 in Somerset and £5.2 million across the UK as a whole.

During the 2014/15 winter £68,232 was raised in donations and a further £15,000 was delivered through our partners' match funding, helping Somerset's most vulnerable older people. Every penny donated made a difference.

Why we needed your support

In Somerset on average there 300 deaths attributed to cold weather each winter; around 90% of these deaths are people aged over 65.

Older people are particularly vulnerable as the cold lowers resistance to respiratory infections, increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes, and negatively affects strength, dexterity and mobility which in turn increases the risks of falls and other injuries. Living in cold conditions can also negatively affect mental health and leave people socially isolated and stressed.

We estimate that over 4,000 households in Somerset with at least one person over 65 are in fuel poverty. These households need, on average, £450 more to have sufficient energy to maintain a reasonable standard of living.¹

Your donation helped people keep their heating on for longer, buy warm clothes, keep their cupboards stocked, and stay more active. Your gift reduced the risk of ill-health, stress and loneliness. You improved the quality of life of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

"An elderly female client had been living in her kitchen for the past 2 winters as she had become too frail to empty the ash from her solid fuel central heating system twice a day.

She had purchased an electric heater and the Surviving Winter grant helped pay her hefty electricity bill."

¹ UK Government Fuel Poverty Report 2015

How you made a difference

Last year donations to the Surviving Winter appeal helped over 530 pensioner households offset the financial burden of winter, an increase of 17% on the previous year.

The grants make a genuine difference to hundreds of people who are able to stay warmer, eat better, and remain more active and healthier.

Donations are channelled through a highly effective partnership of local organisations to reach the most vulnerable older people across Somerset.

Our partners add considerable value to donations by providing specialist advice on energy efficiency, benefits, home improvements and health.

It is a partnership between donors, the Somerset Community Foundation and frontline charities that delivers change effectively and efficiently.

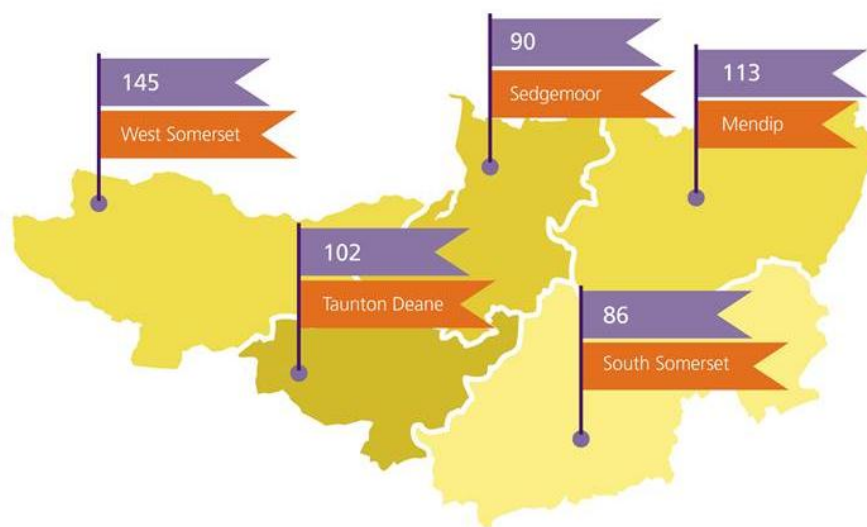
Every pound donated directly to the appeal makes a difference and we continue to cover our administrative costs from gift aid received from the Government on top of the donations.

“The rented cottage that I visited was bitterly cold, no double glazing, poorly fitted doors and no central heating.

The client had several serious chronic illnesses which were adversely affected by the cold and there were also mental health issues.

The grant enabled the client to buy wood for the woodburner. I also persuaded the landlord to do some remedial work on the property and visited a local foodbank to ensure that there were some basic staples in their larder”.

The map below shows the number of grants awarded in each district in 2014/15



Thank you to our partners in 2014/15

- Age UK Somerset
- Bridgwater and District Credit Union
- Community Council for Somerset
- Forum 21
- Knightstone Charitable Housing
- Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau
- Mendip Community Credit Union
- Rotary Club of Frome Selwood
- Rotary Club of Langport
- Taunton Citizens Advice Bureau
- Taunton Deane Borough Council
- Wincanton Live at Home
- Yarlinton Housing

...and to all of our media partners that help us promote the appeal throughout Somerset.

Thank you to our supporters

The Surviving Winter appeal would not be possible without the generous support and compassion of hundreds of donors across Somerset. Here is some feedback directly from people who were helped by the programme last winter which illustrates how your donations have made a difference.

"It will make a big difference to me. I will be using the money to put the bedroom heater on an hour before I go to bed. I pass on my dearest thanks to the people who made this possible"

"I have tried to keep my bungalow warm as I suffer with arthritis badly. I am very thankful as it will help me pay my electricity bill"

"I will purchase a blanket to have over my legs in the wheelchair, which I am confined to. It will also go towards heating which I have to have on, otherwise I get extremely cold. Thank you for your help"

"We would like to say thank you for your cheque, it was very welcome. We will use it to pay for our heating bills. Also, to get some warm clothes and some soups in the store cupboard."

"We would like to thank you so much for the monetary help you arranged in January for us. It helped us get over two difficult months. You were efficient and understanding as well kind in giving us a sympathetic ear. We hope we will be in the position to help someone in return someday."