

# Warm Hubs Surrey

Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance

08 November 2022

SGN



**SGN**

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# 1 Description

Funding GDN(s)	SGN
For Collaborative VCMA Projects:	N/A
Date of PEA submission:	08/11/2022
Project contact name:	Kerry Potter
Project contact number/email:	<a href="mailto:Kerry.potter@sgn.co.uk">Kerry.potter@sgn.co.uk</a> 07427 031 200
Total cost (£k)	£400k (£100k from energy networks)
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£70,000

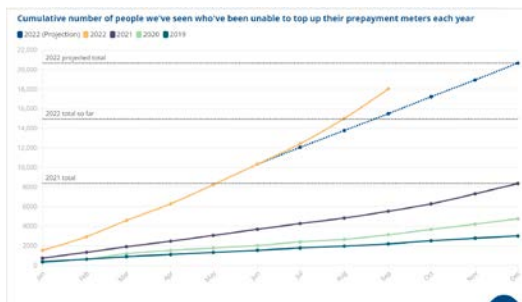
# 2 Problem statement

The energy price cap rise in October 2022 will double the cost of energy for customers and is projected to put millions of British households into fuel poverty. Lower income households are more likely to respond to higher energy prices by cutting energy use below safe levels. Some will find themselves in the situation where energy will become unaffordable, resulting in self-disconnection or unmanageable energy debt. Surrey has 20 areas of high need as identified by the Surrey Deprivation Index ([Key Neighbourhoods – Surrey-i \(surreyi.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/key-Neighbourhoods))

**Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**  
How LSOAs in Surrey rank in England  
(out of 32,844 where rank 1 is most deprived)

Rank	LSOA name	Ward	CCG
4900	Reigate and Banstead 008A	Hooley, Merstham & Neth...	East Surrey
5986	Woking 004F	Canside	North West Surrey
6441	Guildford 012D	Westborough	Guildford and Waverley
6539	Guildford 007C	Stoke	Guildford and Waverley
6666	Spellthorne 001B	Stanwell North	North West Surrey
6562	Mole Valley 011D	Holmwoods	Surrey Downs
7138	Reigate and Banstead 005A	Tattenham Corner & Prest...	Surrey Downs
7437	Epsom and Ewell 007A	Court	Surrey Downs
7818	Spellthorne 002C	Ashford North and Stanw...	North West Surrey
7871	Woking 005B	Goldsworth Park	North West Surrey
7886	Runnymede 002F	Englefield Green West	Windsor, Ascot and Mal...
8212	Elmbridge 004B	Walton South	North West Surrey
8231	Reigate and Banstead 018D	Horley Central & South	East Surrey
9080	Waverley 002E	Farnham Upper Hale	North East Hampshire ...
9197	Spellthorne 001C	Stanwell North	North West Surrey
9226	Waverley 010A	Godalming Central and O...	Guildford and Waverley
9605	Runnymede 006D	Chertsey St. Ann's	North West Surrey
9930	Reigate and Banstead 010E	Redhill West & Wray Com...	East Surrey
9840	Guildford 010C	Ash Wharf	Surrey Heath

Tens of thousands of residents who live in these areas will experience fuel poverty this winter, many of whom will already be vulnerable residents, and at risk of exacerbated ill health or death due to the inability to keep their homes properly heated because of rising energy costs. Data from Citizens Advice shows already that numbers of residents turning to them for help because they are unable to top up their prepayment meter is more than the previous three years combined:



A significant proportion of these residents live in hard to heat homes. Factors such as insufficient insulation and draught-proofing, lack of central heating systems, and defective or non-existent double glazing, not only result in increased energy use and costs for residents struggling to pay bills, but also make it extremely difficult to keep homes heated to levels which avoid the health issues associated with living in a cold and damp environment.

The Department for Health & Social Care advise that lower income households are more likely to respond to higher energy prices by cutting energy use below safe levels. As well as the direct health implications, it is anticipated this will be further compounded by flu and covid risks. The Marmot Review Team estimate that 21.5% of all excess winter deaths can be attributed to homes being cold. NICE recommended actions relating to cold home & health risks include raising awareness among NHS practitioners and the public on how to keep warm, and training for social and care workers, faith and voluntary sectors to help those living in cold homes (Overview | Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes | Guidance | NICE).

Additionally, residents who experience fuel poverty are more likely to be exposed to dangerous carbon monoxide exposure. Due to financial vulnerability, they may be unable to safely maintain their gas appliances, resulting in a lack of regular servicing, which coupled with the likely absence of working carbon monoxide alarms, puts fuel poor at greater risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. There are further risks associated with unsafe cooking practices, particularly as residents turn to different cooking methods in an effort to save money.

Accessing assistance in relation to increasing costs of energy bills is particularly complex. Access to crisis support and home energy efficiency improvements are dependent on different factors relating to personal financial circumstances, the type and tenure of property, type of fuel used to heat the home, the district or borough of the household and health conditions and age of residents. This leads to confusion for residents and barriers to effectively accessing support, especially for those with limited digital skills and/or access.

### 3 Scope and objectives

Working in partnership with Surrey County Council we will be creating a new support framework that proactively offers information to all Surrey residents on how to stay safe and warm this winter. This will be achieved by providing useful and clear information to all residents as well as building the capacity to facilitate the use of warm, welcoming spaces across the county to support residents in energy crisis this winter. Warm Hubs will be established in and around areas of high need as identified by the deprivation index. These spaces will provide vulnerable residents living in hard-to-heat homes, and those experiencing fuel poverty, with a welcoming location at which they can warm up and have a free hot drink or a hot meal, whilst receiving energy and financial support advice.

Through the Warm Hubs we aim to support a minimum of 4,000 vulnerable households finding it difficult to keep warm this winter, providing tailored advice and support provisions to improve the health, wellbeing, and financial outcomes for those households.

The hubs will be delivered through a mix of volunteers, Surrey County Council staff, and charity partners. The Warm Hub sessions will take place in a mix of venues, including libraries, church halls, and community centres, and will all offer as standard:

- A place for a hot drink, hot meal and social interaction and wellbeing activities
- Energy advice and debt support from trained advisors
- Winter “grab bags” including items to help vulnerable residents stay warm such as hot water bottles, socks, gloves and a flask which can be refilled at the hub and taken home
- Carbon monoxide alarms and advice on carbon monoxide safety
- Leaflets which will summarise financial support available in each local area

- A voucher exchange scheme for a free slow cooker or electric blanket (which are significantly more energy efficient to run than a conventional cooker or microwave)
- Emergency support for those in food and fuel crisis

## 4 Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

This project will provide support to residents in energy crisis, providing access to key services including the PSR, interventions that address fuel and water poverty and broader safeguarding and wellbeing services, whilst delivering a positive Social Return on Investment. The project will provide holistic utility efficiency advice and CO safety interventions, empowering each householder to use energy safely, efficiently, and affordably. The project will work collaboratively with expert agencies to maximise positive impacts beyond energy, increasing the health and wellbeing of the individuals supported and delivering defined outcomes.

## 5 Evidence of stakeholder/customer support

### 5.1 SGN RIIO-GD2 Business Plan

In the process of shaping our RIIO GD2 Business Plan we engaged stakeholders and customers about our plan to support 50,000 customers each year through a three-tiered approach, and what services/initiatives should be included within each of those tiers. During our Positive Impact round table event our stakeholders emphasised the importance of partnerships to increase the value of our allowance in generating positive outcomes for customers. Feedback from our Customer Service & Supporting Vulnerable Customer – Shaping the Business Plan Qualitative Workshops suggested potential tier two initiatives should include supporting those most vulnerable to living in a cold and unhealthy home

### 5.2 SGN Vulnerable Steering Group

Our Vulnerable Steering Group has helped us shape our vulnerability strategy and our priorities for GD2. With their guidance we intend to prioritise key initiatives to support our most vulnerable customers. It is with guidance and support from our dedicated Vulnerable Steering Group that SGN should use data to prioritise and target communities most likely to be living in a cold and unhealthy home whilst working alongside other go to support networks to ensure support is holistic and customer centric and is flexible to deliver the required support to those in need this winter.

### 5.3 Northumberland Community Action

Warm Hubs are an initiative that first started in Northumberland. Northumberland Community Action Network (CAN) in partnership with Northern Gas Networks have successfully established a model that supports local community groups to enhance their offering to residents and encourages and supports new locations and venues to establish a warm and safe environment for local residents to receive energy support and social interaction. They have won numerous national and regional awards, and now support two thirds of the fuel poor population in Northumberland every year. In addition to the services provided to residents, CAN supports the hosting community buildings to become as energy efficient as possible, thus also improving the financial safety and security of these vital community assets.

### 5.4 Surrey County Council – Cost of Living Survey

In a recent cost of living survey, SCC identified that over 25% of participating residents were not accessing support due to reasons including not knowing what exists, what is meant for them, or how to access. This is set against other results such as 50% running out of energy in the last 3 months before having money to top up their prepayment meter, and 6% remaining without energy for 1 day or more because they couldn't afford it. As part of the Local Government Associations Cost of Living network, we have also been sharing experiences with other local authorities and have noted the rise in those intending to launch a similar warm hub response this winter, including Buckinghamshire. We have also taken feedback from Oxfordshire to develop an interactive digital map where residents will be able to identify warm hubs, as well as other

community support venues such as foodbanks as this has proved successful in Oxfordshire to increase access to support.

## 6 Outcomes, associated actions and success criteria

### 6.1 Outcomes

The collaborative funding of the Surrey partnership will enable the community engagement of all residents within Surrey on keeping safe and warm this winter as well as providing a community resource that supports those in energy crisis. The in-community resources including Warm Hubs will be established in communities identified as most in need as identified by deprivation data. The partnership will be embedded within the community working closely and collaboratively alongside Citizens Advice, Surrey Fire and Rescue, health care workers, consumer advocates, and utility company representatives to address the barriers clients face to maintaining a safe and warm home.

The Warm Hubs project provides the following outcomes for Surrey residents.

- Be provided with current information on the help available in Surrey this winter and offered access to support should they need help to maintain a safe and warm home
- Be offered a safe and warm place with access to a hot meal and advisory services designed to increase household income and keep safe and warm this winter
- Be supported with critical primary needs, energy and food poverty and debt support where needed
- Be provided with resources that help reduce the cost to cook warm and healthy food and keep warm
- Be supported to join the Priority Services Register where eligible - providing them with the security and support they would need in the event of an unplanned outage from all their regional utility companies
- Be more aware of the risks of Carbon Monoxide and how to mitigate these
- Have reduced stress, and improved health and wellbeing as a direct result of coming together in a community setting to access help and enjoy activities in a warm environment

### 6.2 Success Criteria

We are working together to provide trusted information to all residents in Surrey and to provide in-community support to those most likely to be living in fuel poverty and energy crisis this winter. We are aiming to support the following customer outcomes, which has formed the basis of our social return on investment modelling.

To monitor our impact of our programme we will monitor outcomes including attendance to the Warm Hubs, the services valued by those who use the Warm Hubs as well as capturing data on who is using the service including demographics, vulnerabilities and needs.

- 482,000 households provided with winter resilience, PSR, CO safety and energy advice information via a direct mailer
- 4,000 customers provided with access to personalised energy advice in person at the Warm Hub
- 4,000 customers provided with a safe and warm place during winter
- 4,000 customers provided with 'winter grab bags'
- 4,000 customers provided with CO safety discussions
- 250 customers provided with CO alarms
- 500 customers provided sign up to the Priority Services Register
- 1,000 customers provided with energy crisis support – fuel voucher
- 1,000 customers provided with access to crisis food / meal support and clothes banks
- 1,000 customers supported with debt advice
- 500 customers provided with a slow cooker and advice on affordably healthy cooking on a budget
- 100 customers provided with access to an electric blanket for those in crisis and unable to afford heating



## 7 Project partners and third parties involved

SGN – regional gas network providing programme funding and support to the delivery team, including training, access to broader referral partners, and direct services for customers including but not limited to Locking Cooker Valves and CO alarms.

**Surrey County Council and 11 districts and Boroughs** which are as follows:

- Elmbridge Borough Council
- Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
- Guildford Borough Council
- Mole Valley District Council
- Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
- Runnymede Borough Council
- Spelthorne Borough Council
- Surrey Heath Borough Council
- Tandridge District Council
- Waverley Borough Council
- Woking Borough Council

**Citizens Advice** – Warm Hub delivery partner providing the dedicated team to support customers who attend the Warm Hubs from crisis into a safe and warm home.

**Regional DNOs and Water providers** – both UK Power Networks and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, Surrey and Sutton Water, and SES Water providing access to respective network PSR and providing access to support services for electricity and water efficiency.

**Surrey Community Action** – A local charity providing energy advice to residents through their “warmth matters” programme.

**Foodbank and Clothes Banks** - On the Digital tool that is being made for residents to get information around where their nearest warm hub is and energy advice, there will be information regarding where the nearest Foodbank and clothes bank is to their local town. Support will also be provided within foodbanks to educate residents on safe and energy efficient cooking methods, incentivised by recipes, demos/samples/lessons, and a voucher scheme for a slow cooker for those who require one. Our hope is that this will also encourage healthier cooking choices and increase the uptake of fresh food items from foodbanks.

**Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)** - Will be providing flyers around winter safety with information on how to stay fire safe this winter with the rising costs of living. They will also be advertising their safe and well visits at warm hubs via the digital tool and a physical Presence at some hubs. SFRS will be leading on the installation of CO alarms and CO safety conversations.

## 8 Potential for new learning

### Monitoring and evaluation

The following activities will be in place to monitor and evaluate project progress and impacts:

- Quantitative and qualitative service user outcomes and demographics/vulnerabilities recorded/monitored
- Service user before-and-after-support surveys
- In-bound and out-bound referrals from/to partners and other services recorded/monitored
- Feedback, indicators, outputs and outcomes reported on quarterly
- Project progress management: these include monthly and quarterly partner meetings to share ideas and challenges through individual and organisational partnership case studies.

## Learning

We are keen to build in additional learning from this project and other Warm Hub projects being delivered across the UK to see how successes could be incorporated into future delivery. We intend to share an annual report across electricity, gas and water networks in addition to sharing project impacts and case studies during our annual showcase event. Once complete, we will review data and community feedback to assess how the project can be improved for winter 2023, including the energy efficiency of host buildings, and how support of local business, community volunteers and broader funding sources can play a part in ensuring the service is financially sustainable.

## 9 Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations

### Social Value Measurement

We worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIA Partners to carry out an assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership. Carrying out an in-depth assessment of the predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net social return of £5.81.

<b>Total cost*</b>	£400,000.00
<b>Total gross present value</b>	£2,724,301.87
<b>NPV</b>	£2,324,301.87
<b>SROI</b>	£5.81

<b>PV of customer financial benefits</b>	£1,144,236
<b>PV of societal benefits</b>	£1,580,066
<b>% Customer financial benefits</b>	42%
<b>% Societal benefits</b>	58%

## 10 VCMA Project start and end date

The project will run from November 2022 to March 2023.

## 11 Geographic area

Surrey

## 12 Approval

Rob Gray - Director of Stakeholder Relations and Communications