

**Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
13th September 2023**

Community Pantries Proof of Concept

Recommendation

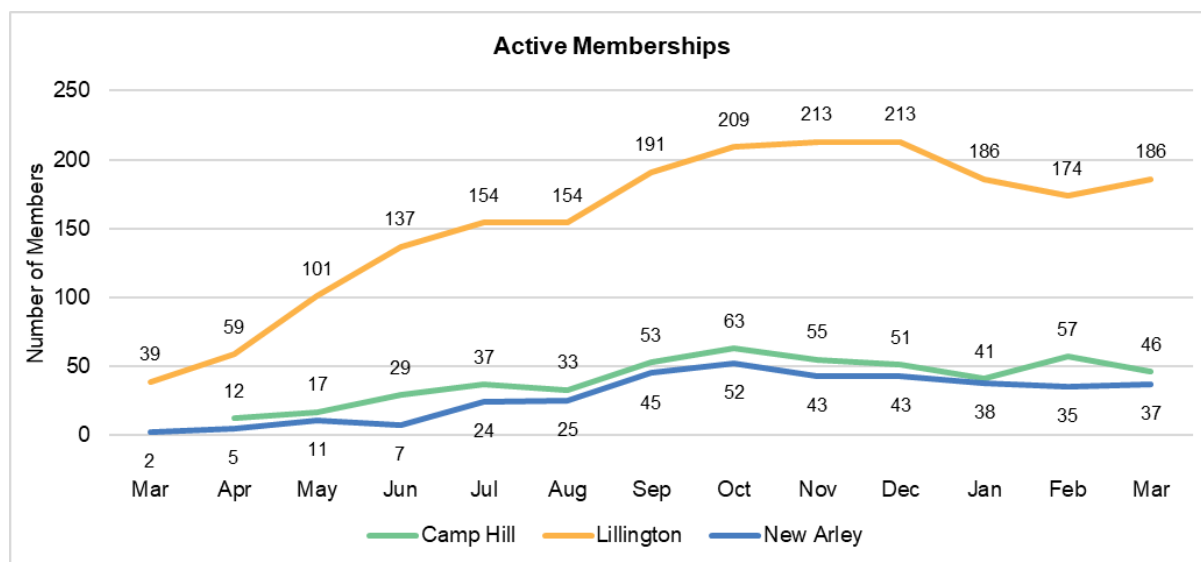
That the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the progress made on the Community Pantries Proof of Concept that has taken place between March 2022 and March 2023 so as to help shape the future options to be brought to Cabinet before the end of this calendar year

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. In March 2022, Warwickshire County Council commissioned Feed the Hungry to undertake a proof-of-concept project around community pantries which met the needs of rural and urban communities. The pantries were intended to help people move beyond immediate food crises (which the the Food Bank model addresses) in an empowering and community-led way. The Feed the Hungry team have extensive experience of setting up static provision, but as part of the proof of concept wanted to also trial a mobile offer in more rural areas where a static provision would be more challenging to provide.
- 1.2. The pantries provide access to food based on a membership fee (currently £5 per visit). This provides a dignified shopping experience of quality food for people who live in crisis, backed up by a 'wrap-around' family support offer by Citizens Advice and Warwickshire County Council's Family Information Service. The pantries provide access to other essential items such as toiletries, clothing, and cleaning products. Memberships are for a duration of six months but can be renewed for an additional six months if further support is needed.
- 1.3. There are three community pantry sites: Lillington, Camp Hill and New Arley, which went live during March/ April 2022:
 - Lillington Community Pantry: based in the Adult Education Centre, Pound Lane Lillington (Thursdays and Fridays 11am – 3pm)
 - New Arley Mobile Pantry: based in the Arley & St. Michael's Community Centre (Thursdays 11am – 3pm)
 - Camp Hill Mobile Pantry based in the church hall associated with St Mary and St John Church (Fridays 11am – 3pm)
- 1.4. The community pantries at Lillington, New Arley and Camp Hill have now been open for a year and have seen a steady increase in membership applications

and usage. Figure 1 shows the active membership per month, the number of active memberships is calculated as the distinct count of members that have attended the pantry they are registered with per month. For Lillington, the number of active members peaked at 213 during November and December 2022, while for Camp Hill and New Arley, active memberships reached their peak during October, with 63 and 52 members.

Figure 1: The number of active memberships per month for each of the three pantries.



NB for those viewing in black & white
 Top line = Lillington,
 Middle line = Camp Hill,
 Bottom line = New Arley

- 1.5 All three pantries are regularly supporting a higher number of families than was originally budgeted for (100 per week for Lillington and 20 per week for each of Camp Hill and New Arley).
- 1.6 Table 1 below highlights the number of activities undertaken by pantry members over the 12 months, and clearly shows the increase in demand over each quarter.
- 1.7 As well as food parcels members can purchase toiletries and cleaning products. To help members budget and ensure they have access to food over time, they can build up credit and purchase vouchers in advance.
- 1.8 Since the opening of the pantries the current data includes the following:
 - Number of members = 733
 - Number of members no longer needing support = 341
 - Number of food parcels bought = 6,484
 - Number of members who have become volunteers at the pantries = 18

- Number of members engaged with Citizens Advice = 207
- Amount of debt members have received advice on = £152,296
- Amount of debt members have been supported to have written off = £20,645
- Amount members have been supported to gain in income maximisation = £172,039

Table 1: Membership Metrics for the three Community Pantries 2022/2023

	New Arley				Camp Hill				Lillington			
	Q1	Q1-Q2	Q1-Q3	Q1-Q4	Q1	Q1-Q2	Q1-Q3	Q1-Q4	Q1	Q1-Q2	Q1-Q3	Q1-Q4
Number of members (and new members joined during the quarter)	14	55 (+41)	74 (+19)	83 (+9)	52	96 (+44)	134 (+38)	153 (+19)	202	340 (+138)	434 (+94)	497 (+48)
Number of food parcels bought	26	268 (+242)	632 (+364)	965 (+333)	95	365 (+270)	765 (+400)	1127 (+362)	594	1,702 (+1,108)	3,129 (+1,427)	4,392 (+1,263)
Number of toiletries bought	0	21 (+21)	53 (+32)	53 (±0)	100	166 (+66)	189 (+23)	189 (±0)	54	162 (+108)	269 (+107)	371 (+102)
Number of cleaning products bought	0	18 (+18)	52 (+34)	52 (±0)	14	23 (+9)	39 (+16)	40 (+1)	53	163 (+110)	265 (+102)	378 (+113)
Number of vouchers bought¹	5	12 (+7)	29 (+17)	31 (+2)	7	17 (+10)	52 (+35)	65 (+13)	0	0	0	0
Number of special purchases²	25	119 (+94)	244 (+125)	369 (+125)	25	93 (+68)	138 (+45)	262 (+124)	271	509 (+238)	737 (+228)	804 (+67)
Number of members who no longer need support	0	3 (+3)	13 (+10)	37 (+24)	0	12 (+12)	42 (+30)	88 (+46)	0	57 (+57)	122 (+65)	216 (+94)
Number of members who become volunteers	0	0	1 (+1)	2 (+1)	0	3 (+3)	5 (+2)	5 (±0)	0	7 (+7)	7 (±0)	11 (+4)

¹ Vouchers are a form of credit a member can buy in advance, which can help members budget and ensure they have access to food over time.

² Special purchases usually refer to bundles of toiletries, with individual items priced at £0.50 each. This measure shows the number of items that were bought.

- 1.8 Supporting members to move forward with their lives is key to the pantry model. Originally the time frame for this was 6 months but this has been extended to 12 – 18 months due to the complexity of issues members presented with and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis challenges. Reasons why members no longer need support include the following:

Lillington Pantry

- A large number of Ukrainian families joined for a short period when they first arrived in the local area. They were linked up with English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) lessons and checked whether they have applied for Universal Credit (UC). As these members rarely have the same housing and utility costs as other members, they needed support for a shorter period. Some have returned once they have moved on from their sponsors' house and into their own accommodation.
- Member's situation has improved, through finding work or another change in circumstances and that they no longer need to access the food provision.
- Member has passed away.

Camp Hill and New Arley Pantries

- The membership lapsed
- The member experienced an improvement in circumstances, such as:
 - The member has found employment
 - The member's benefits were maximised
 - The member's debt was addressed
- The member has moved out of the area covered by the pantry
- The member failed to engage with wrap-around services
- The membership was terminated by the pantry (continued poor behaviour and rudeness to staff and volunteers)
- The member passed away.

1.9 Wrap-around services

Citizens Advice has supported pantry members with over 700 appointments over the first year of operation, through a variety of pre- booked and drop- in appointments

- Lillington Community Pantry works alongside Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW), and CASW support pantry members on two days a week, engaging with 84 members
- New Arley Community Pantry works alongside North Warwickshire Citizens Advice (NWCA), with NWCA supporting pantry members one day a week engaging with 45 members

- Camp Hill Community Pantry works alongside Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice (BRANCAB), with BRANCAB supporting pantry members two days a week, engaging with 78 members

Across the three pantries, Citizens Advice has engaged with 207 members. Members have received advice on debt totalling £152,296, members have been supported to have £20,645 of debt written off and members have been given support and advice to gain a total of £172,039 in income maximisation.

The Family Information Service has engaged with 62 members. The Service has supported them on a wide range of support including housing, childcare, special educational needs and disabilities.

Table 2: Wrap-Around Services provided at the Community Pantries

Cumulative Numbers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/Total
No of Clients Engaged				
Lillington	28	45	64	84
New Arley	17	19	39	45
Camp Hill	19	49	60	78
Debt Addressed (1)				
Lillington	£8,281	£15,248	£29,443	£96,246
New Arley	£0	£3,800	£19,161	£28,595
Camp Hill	£3,599	£14,817	£16,500	£27,455
Debt Written off (2)				
Lillington	£6,920	£4,892	£16,345	£20,000
New Arley	£0	£1,400	£15,860	£0
Camp Hill	£1,300	£915	£12,000	£645
Income Maximisation (3)				
Lillington	£37,065	£64,379	£48,866	£77,167
New Arley	£8,705	£39,866	£8,573	£24,595
Camp Hill	£3,473	£51,957	£83,003	£70,277
Top Issues				
Lillington	Benefits, Charity Goods, Health, Housing	Benefits, Charity Goods, Health, Housing	Benefits, Housing, Charity Goods, Health	Benefits, Charity Goods, Housing, Health
New Arley	Benefits, Relationships, Financial Capability	Benefits,	Benefits, Universal Credit,	Benefits, Financial Capability,

Cumulative Numbers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/Total
Camp Hill	Energy costs, Debt, Universal Credit	Financial Capability, Utilities Council Tax Arrears, Energy price hike, Correct benefits not received	Charitable Support Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Universal Credit, Housing Issues	Utilities Applications and appeals (for PIP, Universal Credit, Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Attendance Allowance), Foodbank & Fuel Vouchers, Universal Queries

¹ Debt Addressed refers to a plan or debt solution being put in place to help the client manage their debt.

² Debt Written Off includes all debt that the service supports someone to write off such that they are no longer liable for the debt. E.g., DRO

³ Income Maximisation refers to any financial gain recorded within the period, either projected or confirmed. A financial gain can include (but is not limited to) benefits and tax credits (including back payments), compensation, rent rebates, insurance pay-outs, court/ tribunal awards, grants and redundancy pay awards. It can include one-off payments and regular income. Income gains are annualised in accordance with National CA methodology

1.10 Members are also signposted to a wide range of agencies for advice and support including:

- Housing advice
- Family Information Service for brokerage support
- Bereavement counselling
- Support with gardening upkeep and garden clearances
- Advocacy with utility companies
- Advocacy on housing issues
- Support for furniture and white goods
- Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme
- Act on Energy
- Debt Team Specialists

As well as the above data, the case studies in the appendices (Appendix 1: Case Studies of Pantry Members, Appendix 2: Citizens Advice Case Studies, Appendix 3: Family Information Service Case Study, Appendix 4: Community Pantries Member Feedback) detail how the community pantries have impacted members' lives, including improvements to mental health, energy and/or food security and support with ongoing issues with children and finances.

2. Financial Implications:

2.1. Funding for the proof-of-concept 2022 – 2023 was allocated from Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) (£306,749). This funding was allocated as follows:

- £199,949 for Lillington Community Pantry and £55,000 for the Mobile Pantries in New Arley and Camp Hill. Out of this £25,000 was allocated to capital costs of setting up the project, with the remaining funding being used for the running of the three sites
- £41,800 was allocated to the Citizens Advice for provision of wrap around services
- £10,000 was allocated for rental of the community centres in Camp Hill and New Arley

2.2 The funding for the second year (March 2023 – 31st March 2024) has been identified from the Cost-of-Living one-off budget and is £262,000 (£45,000 for Citizens Advice, £10,000 for two community centres rental). Funding for Citizens Advice is administered through a grant agreement.

2.3 Continuation of the pantries would create a further financial pressure for the MTFs, although this is anticipated to be phased out over a period of time, potentially 3 years.

3. Environmental Implications

None

4. Supporting Information

4.1 The Community Pantries proof of concept has been a successful project. Demand for services at all three locations have surpassed the capacity stated in the grant agreement and continue to increase, intensified by the ongoing cost-of-living challenges.

4.2 The wrap-around services have engaged with people who they would not normally have come into contact with. Members are presenting with more complex issues and need longer and/or multiple appointments to address their issues.

4.3 The case studies in the appendices show the positive impact the service is having on pantry members, including improvements to mental health, energy and/or food security and support with ongoing issues with children or finances.

4.4 As the project is a proof of concept, it allowed those involved the flexibility to test out different services and options, all have provided refreshments and an informal meeting area with visits from the mobile library service and the Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) mobile barista van. The largest pantry is Lillington, situated at Pound Lane and has access to both inside and outside space, various activities were trialled, including summer fetes, affordable credit options with CitySave, budgeting and money management courses and a Breakfast with Santa event.

4.5 The pantry managers have fed back that the project has been well received and supported at the three sites. They regularly receive referrals from outside of the locations of the pantries and signpost to other services for support. All sites have introduced waiting lists because of the high demand, currently only Camp Hill has an active waiting list.

5. Next Steps and Timescales

5.1. The Council has extended the funding for the Community Pantries Project for a further 12 months, up until 31st March 2024. Feed the Hungry, commissioned to deliver the services are currently working with Council officers on a Community Pantries Sustainable Options paper, which will be submitted to Cabinet on 12th October 2023.

5.2. Options will include a three-year transitional plan to transfer the pantries into local, community ownership, with tapering costs over a period of three years.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Case Studies of Pantry Members

Appendix 2: Citizens Advice Case Studies

Appendix 3: Family Information Service Case Study

Appendix 4: Community Pantries Member Feedback

Appendices: All Names in the Appendices have been changed to ensure anonymity

Appendix 1: Case Studies of Pantry Members

1. Pantry One

Candy first visited us in September 2022. Candy is a single mother to young child. When she first visited us, Candy was facing low income due to working shifts whilst also looking after her young child. This meant that due to her zero hours contract she had inconsistent incomes, making it difficult to know what was coming in and going out.

In the period of us knowing Candy, she has faced some challenges. In February, Candy had an injury which meant she was unable to work. She spoke to Citizens Advice as she was not receiving sick pay from her employer. With her unable to return to work, due to her injury, she found herself applying for Universal Credit. We were able to refer her to speak to Citizens Advice and work with her to speak to her employer but also do a benefit entitlement check.

During this period of time, Candy experienced a lot of anxiety and stress, and therefore spent time with the team in the cafe area at the Pantry but also volunteered with the Pantry. This gave Candy an opportunity to spend time with the rest of the team and take her mind off the circumstances she was facing. This was essential for Candy at this time.

Sadly, for Candy, the chaos didn't stop there. In this time, she split up from her partner, found herself needing to sell her house and move out, all whilst being on little to no income and waiting for Universal Credit to come through. She had outgoings she was unable to pay, an injury which required surgery and a child who needed taking care of.

This led to a further referral to Citizens Advice to register for home choice and start the process of finding a council property for herself and her child. Obviously with physical, financial and emotional stress taking its toll, we again provided as much emotional support as possible. Although this is ongoing, Candy knows that the pantry is a safe place for her to come to for professional advice from Citizens Advice but also a place where she can feel supported whilst she deals with the upheaval of these significant life changes.

We first met **Madeleine** in August 2022. Madeleine discovered the pantry whilst searching for local support online. When we first met Madeleine, we could see she was financially stressed and anxious about the future. Madeleine is a full-time carer for her parents. This means that Madeleine is providing around the clock care and support for her parents. Although her parents were taking on some financial responsibility, their savings were also rapidly depleting.

Madeleine has always been very independent, especially since the passing of her husband some years ago, therefore Madeleine struggled with the idea of being on Universal Credit, let alone asking for support for food. Although she reached out for support, with her seeking advice from the team about low level support such as discounts on water bills through 'The Big Difference Scheme' and also the Broadband discount, she did not purely want to use the pantry as a member but also wanted to give back.

Since Madeleine joined as a member, she has also become a regular part of our team. She volunteers on a weekly basis, and has also helped with events. She has explained that this is her time to escape from the caring responsibilities and give something back. In December, she spoke with one of the team to return her card, explaining that the pantry was a "lifesaver in an extremely sticky patch", and although she still has periods of financial instability, she is no longer in a crisis point, and therefore decided she no longer needs to use the service. However, we are grateful that she is still a key volunteer and wants to continue to support the pantry as and when she can.

2. Pantry Two

John is a single man in his fifties. He lives alone with no dependants. He is claiming Universal Credit. John used to work, but in recent years, his health has prevented him from working. As he does not drive and is reliant on public transport, which is limited, he feels isolated.

When John joined the pantry, he was quite reserved. As the weeks passed by, he began to open up. Citizens Advice were able to help him sort out his benefits and deal with a few other issues. John then started volunteering, making teas and coffees for the members. He would chat with the members whilst they waited or just sat in the hall enjoying a brew and a natter. With the Pantry, it provided John with a social setting where he felt of use once again, and part of a community

Outcomes delivered:

- Improved Mental Health and improved self-esteem
- Energy security
- Food security
- Citizens Advice assistance with resolving money issues

3. Pantry Three

Coco was originally referred to the pantry via the Foodbank. Recently widowed, Coco lives in a privately rented house, and her financial circumstances had taken a nosedive. During her initial visits, she was working closely with the advisor from Citizens Advice, who was able to help Coco navigate through and resolve her benefit issues. Coco very quickly utilized our facility of paying credit on her account, when her Universal Credit was paid, thus ensuring access to food during the following month. Visit after visit she would stay and started to help out at the Pantry.

Coco then became one of our first volunteers at Pantry Three. Volunteering at the pantry has given Coco some purpose after the loss of her husband. Coco enjoys interacting with the members, making a brew, and assisting the members with their shopping. Coco has now managed to get her benefits in order, and has successfully applied for PIP with the invaluable help from Citizens Advice.

As a long-term resident of the local area, Coco used to be a member of the church when it was opened. Coco has joined one of the groups now run in the church hall and is a regular at one of the Church's clubs.

Outcomes:

- Improved Mental Health
- Improved Social activities
- Energy Security
- Food security
- Citizens Advice has helped in improving her financial circumstances, and assistance with ongoing issues.
- Now volunteering within the community

1. Appendix 2: Citizens Advice Case Studies

1. Lillington Pantry

The service provided by Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW) at the Lillington Community Pantry fulfils a community need, assisting Pantry customers with a wide range of issues and improving their wellbeing.

CASW supports the Community Pantry with two advisers, who both enjoy working here. There is always an exciting buzz about the place, and it is always busy. The Pantry staff refer their customers where they think we might be able to help, mostly via a shared spreadsheet of appointments. CASW also accepts “drop-in” customers where time allows and there are a few ‘frequent flyers’ who they have seen several times.

The issues Citizens Advice assist with are quite varied - in addition to the usual Personal Independence Payments (PIP) / Attendance Allowance (AA) / Universal Credit queries. It has advised on issues as diverse as divorce, helping clients with European Union Settlement Scheme, Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) entitlement and housing disrepair issues involving the Housing Ombudsman. It also offers budgeting advice and “managing your money” chats, where appropriate. It is probable that many clients assisted at the Pantry CASW service would not otherwise have sought assistance from a centralised CASW service.

Jasmine was referred to CASW at the Lillington Community Pantry.

Jasmine lives with her retired husband and adult child in their owner-occupied property. Jasmine is aged below state pension age, husband receives the new state pension. Jasmine’s child is in their twenties, has a low income and receives Universal Credit. Jasmine says that the household is struggling financially, and this is affecting mental health.

Jasmine wanted some advice on what benefits as a household they could claim.

What did CASW do:

Provided bespoke advice to Jasmine about the benefits that as a household they would be eligible for.

What was the impact on the client:

Jasmine was pleased with the explanation and the possibility of their eligibility as a household.

Jasmine had not been aware of some of the benefits they were entitled to and was able to take action as a result.

Outcomes achieved for the client:

Jasmine’s household will receive additional benefit payments and reduced income tax in tax year 23/24 amounting to a maximum of over £3000:

Feedback from Citizens Advice Worker:

In Addition to the General Comments above, here are some keynotes:

1. Most Pantry customers who receive advice from CASW in situ there have multiple issues, with some complex cases involving various agencies.
2. The CASW service comprises a drop-in facility and an appointment booking process, administered

by Pantry staff. The no-show count for appointments in Q4 was 5%.

3. CASW include “managing your money” discussions with Pantry customers who seek advice about Benefits, with an Income/Expenditure check when permitted.

4. The Health issues include completing Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) forms with clients.

5. The Housing issues include assisting customers with DHP claims.

6. The Charity issues include issuing Food Bank and/or Fuel Bank vouchers.

7. Debt write-off excludes unknown outcomes from Debt Relief Order applications administered by a specialist Debt Team after a MECC referral

2. New Arley Pantry:

Client was referred via Community Pantry. They are 75 years old and live alone in a property that they own outright. Client receives State Pension and Pension Credit. Client also receives a small amount from their late spouse’s private pension. Client has no savings and is not in any debt. Client came to the Pantry as they wanted advice regarding their energy bills doubling in cost and also not being able to cook meals properly due to their cooker being broken, client was unable to repair/replace it due to her low income.

The adviser completed a benefit check to ensure the client was in receipt of entitled benefits. Adviser also identified the client had a number of health issues and was not claiming any disability benefits.

The client was referred to an Energy Advisor who looked into the client's energy bills and provided them with a Carbon Monoxide Monitor. Adviser made a charity application on behalf of the client for a cooker. Client was awarded a £300 cooker from a local grant

Impact on client:

Client was extremely happy, as they are able to cook proper meals. The adviser also advised the client about Attendance Allowance and a follow up appointment was made to complete the form. The client was awarded Attendance Allowance.

Client stated that they were grateful for help and increase in monthly income due to Attendance Allowance, they felt less anxious about increasing costs to keep warm

Feedback from CA worker:

- This quarter the issues raised have demonstrated clients’ concern about energy costs - help with utilities is now in the top three of issues clients are helped and supported with.
- Three clients were provided with free fuel vouchers and supported with budgeting and income maximisation.
- Local clients are accessing advice and support from Citizens Advice via referrals from Community Pantry and from other agencies using St Michaels on a Thursday afternoon (CAVA and Warm Hub

3. Camp Hill Pantry:

It is common in many relationships that one partner is found responsible for handling the household finances and administration, i.e. paying of bills, organising household maintenance, liaising with banks, Building Societies, Local Councils etc. The problem is that when that partner is no longer there it can leave the remaining partner in a very vulnerable position with not knowing what to deal with or what the situation is regarding prioritising issues etc.

We had such a situation at Camp Hill where a client walked in and reservedly walked up to my table. When asked if we could help them, they became very negative in their approach. They were very emotional and tearful.

What did BRANCAB do:

I asked the client to sit down which they reluctantly did, and we slowly but surely engaged in conversation. The client said that their partner of many years passed away in November 2022 and they organised everything to do with the house and finances, the client said that they were struggling with issues such as Rent, Council tax etc. Their partner's funeral had been sorted but the client said that they need to come to terms with the daily issues. The client lives in a private rented building and is in receipt of State pension with no other income.

I felt at that stage that they client had had enough, and I suggested that we meet next week to go through a Benefit check to establish whether they are entitled to any further income. The client wasn't sure about this but after I explained the ethos of the benefits check they were fine with it.

Impact on the client:

We met the following week and the client was far more relaxed, we went through the Benefits check and established that they were eligible for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. I explained the ethos of the Severn Trent Big Difference Scheme (BDS) and they expressed a wish to apply.

The following week the client had obtained a local Council Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support form, which they had completed on their own and brought it in to be checked over; it was fine. They also brought in the information for the BDS application which was passed on to the relevant Team.

Client then took the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support form to the Council Offices for processing, and they are awaiting the result.

Client now shows more confidence and although all of their emotional problems haven't gone away they are able to sort their daily issues out. The client was very grateful for the assistance.

Feedback from the CA worker:

The Community Pantry at Camp Hill is now well established and serving the Community well with many people returning to take advantage when the need arises. Generally when talking to the members they do try to manage without it but with the continuing worry of the unpredictable energy increases and other rising costs they feel that they are needing to use the Pantry. I am still heartened by the "Community Spirit" encompassed within the Pantry and people sit around having a "Cuppa" and sharing their "good bits" and their woes; it is a good atmosphere there.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) were recently distributing free basic Insulation Kits which we were handing out at the Pantry. These consisted of two Energy Saving lightbulbs, insulating foil for placing behind radiators and some Draughtproofing strip to seal gaps around doors and windows. The kit also included a leaflet providing instructions on how to fit the items and also giving some good energy saving tips.

The response to this was really encouraging because no one refused the kits and the people I spoke to showed a genuine interest in how to save money and stay warm.

It was a good initiative that worked as does the Pantry

Appendix 3: Family Information Service Case Study

The Family Information Service (FIS) Team are developing relationships at the three community pantries and working towards our aim of attending each pantry monthly. Although Q4 has been challenging for us in terms of staffing (we need to prioritise staffing our helpline and we have been carrying vacancies, which we have now recruited to), we have been able to attend multiple sessions across the three pantries. At each session, we speak to many individuals, which resulted in seven FIS referrals for Lillington, three FIS referrals for Camp Hill members, and two FIS referrals for New Arley pantry members. This means that the parent was contacted by a member of the FIS team to offer ongoing support, which can relate to a large range of subjects, such as Housing, Finance, Childcare, Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and many more.

In addition to the parents we have spoken with directly at the pantries, the FIS team ensure that they network with the professionals at the events to ensure that they understand the role of FIS so that they can make appropriate referrals to the team when we are not there.

Sherry is a regular at one of the Pantries and the team suggested to her to speak with the Family Information Service to see what support could be offered to her.

Sherry is on a low income and not currently working as her pregnancy is complicated. Her ex partner is also currently going through the Courts process for Domestic Violence offences. She is worried about finance and asked for support to get baby essentials.

The FIS Officer made a Baby Basics referral and a Citizens Advice referral for benefit and Child Support Agency (CSA) support. The FIS Officer also gained consent for a Brokerage referral to get some baby essentials and also some mental health support. She is already in contact with other support agencies.

Appendix 4: Community Pantries Member Feedback

“The place is amazing
I’ve made loads of friends.”

“This place is a great life line of help for
people in Camp Hill and loads of support. It
helped me a lot.”

“All Community Pantry workers [are]
pleasant.
Food variety [is] very good.
Nothing negative to say.
Even [name of volunteer] is ok :) “

“It helped [me] massively through
[a] hard time and [a] time of need.
[I’ve] been help[ed] [by] many
professional[s] within the
community centre and always
[have] been pointed in the right
direction by [the] lead of the pantry.
I can’t thank everyone for all the
support. “

“This pantry hub is the thing that has
kept me and the many people who
I’ve met going through this very cold
snap. The people who run it are all
very friendly and so helpful. I look
forward to Thursdays because I know
I’m going to see people and have a
good natter and hot drinks [and]
biscuits. The CAB have even sorted
me a brand new cooker. It’s lovely to
be able to cook a roast dinner for my
grandkids. I couldn’t believe it when it
arrived. I will always be thankful for
the support that I have had. The most
friendliest people ever.“

Background Papers

None.

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Louise Richards	louiserichards@warwickshire.gov.uk
Director	Kushal Birla	kushalbirla@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Executive Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Heather Timms	heathertimms@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s):

Cllr Boad - Lillington

Cllr Humphreys - New Arley

Cllr Beetham - Camp Hill

Other members:

Cllr Warwick,

Cllr Birdi,

Cllr Roberts,

Cllr Feeney