

# NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## READY TO MAKE IT A WARMER WINTER

Air fryers, slow cookers and other energy efficient items are on offer to residents for free if they are struggling this winter.

The Warmer Winter project has been launched by [Hardship Alliance](#) members First Days Children's Charity and Wokingham Borough Council, alongside community project SHARE Wokingham.

Residents can switch to these items to ensure they are warm but also lower their energy consumption, and their bills at home.

Hundreds of items are ready to distribute thanks to a Government grant and donations from the public to the two organisations. This was money provided via the council as part of its Household Support Fund. Items available include:

- Slow cookers
- Air fryers
- Heated clothes dryers
- Heated blankets
- Thermal socks
- Blankets
- Shower timers
- Dehumidifiers
- Other items which can help

Families in need of support for the first time should [contact First Days Family Support Team on the online referral form](#). Anyone familiar with another local charity can ask someone they know to get in touch with First Days.

**- MORE -**

Items have already been provided to Woodley Lunch Bunch and The Link Visiting Scheme to support their clients. Now other organisations are being asked to come forward if they can help. Other community organisations wishing to access items for their Wokingham Borough clients need to apply by emailing [winterwarmer@firstdays.net](mailto:winterwarmer@firstdays.net) and the First Days team will respond.

Emma Cantrell, chief executive officer at First Days, said: “Demand for help is higher than ever as many families across the borough feel the rising costs of food and energy. Switching to these items which use less electricity and having access to ways of keeping warm will make a difference.”

Claire Revie, who runs SHARE Wokingham, said: “More people are being put into financial hardship by the rising cost of living and this project will help those who may be struggling for the first time. These items will help lower your bills, as well as support you to stay warm and well looked after this winter.”

Cllr Rachel Bishop-Firth, executive member for equalities, inclusion and fighting poverty, who is leading the council’s response to the cost of living crisis, said: “Running schemes in partnership like this are the best way for us to reach the people who need help, through local organisations that know our communities best.

“This winter will be hard for many families. A large number may be coming forward for help for the first time. We will be there to support them alongside our borough’s fantastic voluntary and community sector.”

The Hardship Alliance is leading the borough’s response to the cost of living crisis. It was formed in January 2022 to tackle poverty in the borough. Members of the Hardship Alliance are Age UK Berkshire, Citizens Advice Wokingham, Wokingham Foodbank, Wokingham United Charities First Days and Wokingham Borough Council. All the latest cost of living help and advice for the borough can be found on the [cost of living help hub](#).

- ENDS -

**Further information:**

1. For more information, contact [CEM@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:CEM@wokingham.gov.uk)