

Coventry
Cost of Living
Front Line Workers
Training Resource &
Better Conversations
Guide

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Background and aim



- In October, we brought organisations across the city together to share best practice and identify opportunities to collaborate to best support residents with the cost of living
- A group of organisations have come together to develop a frontline training resource to help support all of our frontline workers and volunteers across the city
- These organisations include Central England Law Centre, Coventry Building Society, Coventry Citizens Advice, Coventry City Council, Grapevine
- We have taken a one Coventry partnership approach
- The resource sets out ways for you to start these conversations in a sensitive but effective way
- Summarises some key practical actions you can take to support residents with the cost of living
- It has been tested out with several frontline organisations across the city and piloted on a small scale
- Due to the changing landscape with the cost of living, we hope with your help to improve and build on this work

Agenda for the session



Some of things we will cover today:

- Why it's tough out there and some myth busting
- How to start these conversations and what to spot
- What the training resource covers and how to access it
- Case Studies - some examples of how we can use it
- Key messages and Q&A

Why is it so tough right now ?



- Pre Covid, during Covid and now – lots of people were too close to the edge...
- Rent is high/Mortgage rates have increased
- Benefits uplift retracted
- Food up at least 25%
- EU settlement
- Energy costs have spiraled
- Zero hours contracts
- Complexity of welfare benefits system
- Bereavement
- Debts, Substance Misuse
- Poor Mental Health
- The vulnerable and isolated are even more so as a result of digitalisation
- Increasing poor health – long covid, lowered immunity, NHS waiting lists

Can these things make a difference?

11 Ways of Working Based on Respect and Kindness

-  Unconditional positive regard for the resident
-  End on a good note - no grudges
-  Separate the behaviour from the person
-  Build goodwill on good days
-  Remember there is always more than one perspective
-  Be really clear what good looks like
-  Be interested in them as a person, let them know something about you
-  Catch them at their best
-  Listen with intent to understand rather than intent to reply
-  Earn respect rather than expect it
-  Be kind

Powered by Ignite, a five-year programme led by Central England Law Centre and Grapevine
Find out more at: centralenglandlc.org.uk/ignite

Being Alongside

Conversation starters



Keep it simple - don't be afraid to ask how are you today? Do you mind if I ask how you came to need help today



It's tough for everyone Right Now- life is messy and complicated



What would help you most right now?



Don't worry we will try to help



Tell me more about what is going on - I'm here to help



Do you know what you need to do next and what to do if that doesn't work?



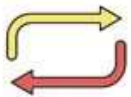
How should we follow this up?

Getting Started

Spotting vulnerability



Lots of unrelated questions/ comments.



Tendency to repeat things.



Saying Yes to everything.



Not talking very much and unable to answer questions.



Sounding easily flustered.



Suggesting someone else normally handles things for them.

Supporting people with vulnerabilities



Don't start with your own thoughts - listen to their opinions and ideas.



Ask what they want help with.



Think about the language you use - not 'you should...', 'you must...', but 'I will help you...', 'it's important...', 'we need to... let's...'



Talk clearly and slowly.



Summarise the key points.



Agree how and when is best to follow up.

The Resource



The training resource currently covers the **following areas**:

- **Emergency Support** - Essential items, food, fuel and energy, and internet connection
- **Financial Help** - Maximising income and help with benefits, managing money and managing debt
- **Housing Support** - Help with homelessness, landlords, rent arrears and council tax
- **Connectivity** - Help with digital inclusion
- **Employment Support** - Pay and entitlements, terms and conditions, and jobs
- **Clothing and Footwear**
- **Childcare Costs**
- **Specialist Support for Additional Vulnerabilities**
- **Mental and Physical Health** - Key contacts for those in crisis
- **Contact Numbers – Local Organisations**
- **National Trusted Sources of Advice**

Accessing the Resource



- The training resource can be **accessed** on the following **webpage**;

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/coltrainingresources>

- The website is compatible with **ReachDeck** for accessibility purposes, instructions can be found at;

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/translate>

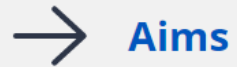
- Following feedback from organisations, the training resource is currently set out as **scenario-based FAQs**
- We have tried to make it as **accessible as possible** for all frontline workers and volunteers to use as quickly as possible, so the information is broken down into **two possible ways of using**
- This includes **web content with icons** and a **downloadable version (both formats have exactly the same information but we wanted to give both options following feedback)**

Navigating the Resource



Web content with icons option Interactive training resources

Just select the appropriate icon and it will take you to that FAQ section outlining all relevant information and next steps of how you can help. All websites are hyperlinked for your convenience.



[Aims](#)



[Emergency support](#)



[Financial help](#)



[Housing support](#)



[Connectivity](#)



[Employment support](#)



[Clothing and footwear](#)



[Childcare costs](#)



[Specialist support for additional vulnerabilities](#)



[Mental and physical health](#)



[Contact numbers](#)



[National trusted sources of advice](#)

[Download a printable copy of the training resources](#)

Case Study Examples



- We have based the FAQs on scenario-based FAQs for ease of reference
- We acknowledge some organisations have direct and indirect contact with residents
- We understand that areas of help and support can be interlinked
- Residents may not specifically use the term 'cost of living' when they are talking to you

Case Study 1



Daniel, 34, Coventry

Daniel is trying not to turn the heating on at the moment, as he has fallen behind with his rent. He is cold and needs to stay warm.

How can we help Daniel?



Fiaz, 46, Coventry

Fiaz works in a low paid job and once he's paid all his bills he's worried he doesn't have much money left over to feed himself, his wife and two school aged children.

Fiaz is only eating once a day so his wife and children can eat.

His children are having a growth spurt and need some new clothes.

How can we help Fiaz and his family?



Harmony, 22, Coventry

Harmony doesn't have any internet access at home.

She is trying to find a new job to help her Mum pay the bills but is not having much luck.

How can we help Harmony?

Key Messages



- We hope you feel more confident to have these conversations in a sensitive but effective way
- The content provided is to give non specialist advisors the confidence to provide advice and support. If you're unsure, please seek further advice from specialist team
- Use the resource to start a conversation to offer practical solutions and building hope that there are solutions to some of the problems our residents are facing
- We will be completing an evaluation survey to ensure we are continuing to improve the training resource
- We want to ensure we are continuing to meet the needs of our frontline workers and volunteers and the residents of Coventry, so we are here to listen and learn
- There will be further phases of the project and continued partnership work
- If you would like to contact us to provide any comments, please email onecoventry@coventry.gov.uk

Frontline Training Resource



Any Questions?

