

Guidance on Winter Fuel Campaigns for Local Giving Schemes

Cold kills-the facts

According to a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation one in six pensioners are now living in poverty. Primarily driven by falling home ownership, increased costs of renting and the benefits freeze has resulted in 36% of pensioners living in privately rented accommodation are struggling to make ends meet.

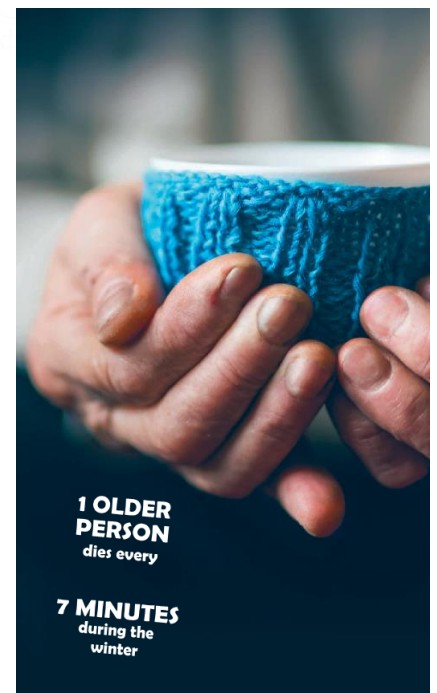
- Trust for London found that of the regions London has the highest rates of pensioner poverty in the UK with 19% of older people over 65 living in poverty.
- The UK as a whole has the highest poverty rates in Western Europe resulting from relatively low basic pensions combined with means tested benefits.
- Winter death rates for older people are shocking with one older person dying every seven minutes during the coldest months.

Fuel poverty – eating or heating?

Remarkably, there is no specific data on fuel poverty amongst older people. It's a fair assumption that when older people are struggling to make ends meet or falling into debt, cutting down on energy consumption and coping with ever-increasing bills puts them severely at risk. For older people, disabled people and for the housebound it is particularly dangerous.

Winter fuel payment

If you were born on or before 5 April 1954 you are likely to be eligible for a £300 winter fuel payment from the government. You usually get this payment automatically if you receive state pension or another social security benefit (not housing benefit, council tax reduction or child benefit). This non-means tested benefit is paid automatically into your nominated account between November and January. This means that there are millions of people receiving the allowance whether they need it or not. Some people are uncomfortable about this but there is no obvious way of paying it back easily.



Winter Warmth Campaign

In 2012 the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation set up its ground-breaking Winter Warmth Campaign. It originated in conversations the trustees were having about living in the Royal Borough where there were a high proportion of high net worth individuals but also a significant number of their neighbours living in dire need.

How does it work?

A campaign evolved with the simple but very effective messaging:

'You can make a big difference to those who face real hardship during the winter months by giving to our appeal. Here's how:

If you receive a winter fuel payment you can donate all or part of it to a neighbour in need. If you are an individual and business or school you can donate a variety of ways, we would be happy to help you with your suggestions.'

<https://thekandcfoundation.com/latest/winter-warmth-2018-19-campaign-launch/>

How was the campaign launched and publicised?

The Winter Warmth Campaign was promoted through communications with existing supporters and through local press and Council publications. More recently support from Cadogan Estates included advertising in Sloane Square Magazine targeted at affluent areas. Effectively, free advertising enabled the message to reach thousands of households and businesses which were most in a position to give.

The messaging also included information about who was running the campaign and the history of the K&C Foundation to help establish its credentials as a responsible grant making and fundraising resource widely respected in the borough.

Working in partnership

Essential to the campaign's success was building partnerships with well-established brands within the borough. These include

- [Age UK K&C](#)
- [Nucleus Legal Advice](#)
- [Citizens Advice K&C](#)

These organisations are well positioned to reach older people most in need or in-debt and to do the due diligence and full assessment on people who most needed help. This meant that the Winter Warmth Campaign needed relatively 'light touch' administration so important when you are a small giving initiative. The 'heavy lifting' was done by those closest to the residents most in need.

Results

In 2018 - 2019 £30,000 was raised which went to support 69 residents. The Foundation assured donors that every penny donated went to the residents in need directly. The partner organisations received a grant towards administration costs from another grants program.

What is less tangible is measuring how the awareness about the K&C Foundation's work as a result of running the Winter Warmth Campaign has increased its profile and credibility.

Warmer Together Winter Giving Campaign

UNITED in Hammersmith and Fulham's newly launched Warmer Together Winter Giving Campaign 2019 - 2020 is at the start of its journey. Its campaign message is easy to understand and has been based on local consultation. Some residents told UNITED that they didn't need their winter fuel allowance. In response UNITED created a fund to direct the money to local older people who were struggling in winter.

Hard data about the borough is critical:

- Of the 19,000 residents aged over 65 in Hammersmith and Fulham over half have a long-term health problem or disability;
- 25% live in poverty;
- 43% live alone.

People are invited to:

- donate all or some of their winter fuel allowance via a donate button on [UNITED'S](#) website;
- a gift can be sent by cheque;
- local business can make a company gift to the campaign;
- others are welcome to organise a fundraising event with friends and colleagues.

Donors are reassured that all donations are held in a restricted fund and the trustees of UNITED will oversee the distribution of funds. 100% of the money goes towards projects that help older people between October and March.

Role of The Council

The Council is critical in promoting the campaign as it has extensive reach and authority and is United's communications partner covering the key print element. The Council's logo and with the support of council leadership adds credibility to the campaign.

Top Tips

Do

- keep your campaign message simple
- explain a bit about the background to your giving scheme and its leadership
- make it easy for residents to donate
- research and compile data about older people in your borough, AgeUK and the Council will have relevant material
- target affluent wards
- if possible, develop local media partnership about your work and the campaign
- if working with delivery partners, identify good local agents who are already working with older people
- reassure the donors that every penny raised will go directly to help individuals in need
- ensure that you have separate funds available for your partners' administration costs

- feedback results of the campaign through the media partnership, council communications, the wider voluntary sector and social media
- use stories from the older people who have benefited
- allow at least a six-month lead-in time before launching in the Autumn.

Don't

- spray your campaign too widely resulting in residents in poorer wards feeling that they must give even though they be in poverty themselves
- disperse money raised single handed unless you have capacity, grants to individuals can be extremely time consuming
- forget to communicate what's been achieved and thank the donors through your favoured media partner
- launch a campaign in borough where there are a high proportion of people in poverty.
- duplicate and divert from an existing campaign in your borough.

Other sources of help

The [UK Community Foundation Network](#) has 46 member foundations. Its **Surviving Winter Appeal** launched in 2011 has raised a total of **£4.7 million** and has helped **65,000 people**.

The principles behind the campaign are broadly the same but some have widened their eligibility criteria to include practical help to get to Doctor's appointments and assistance with the costs of shopping and social activities in Winter.

Warm Heart Camden Campaign

[AgeUK Camden](#) runs its own campaign with an incredible response from the community. Famous names like Alan Bennett, their patron Sir Derek Jacobi and Georgia Gould, Leader of Camden Council have all donated their fuel payments to the campaign. Involving high profile residents in your borough can help publicise the campaign and provide content for an interesting press release and photo opportunity in your local press.