



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

## COMMUNITY



## Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

### The Knowsley Offer and Hardship Support

**While taking steps to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis, partners in Knowsley are working together to develop the Knowsley Offer – where information, advice, services, support, facilities and much more are accessible in one place to help residents to thrive and not just survive. The Offer sees Knowsley Better Together partners, residents and businesses working together to identify ways to achieve the Knowsley 2030 Strategy ambitions and to support residents to thrive.**

The Knowsley Better Together Partnership has recognised that whilst it already delivers a comprehensive offer of support to residents and businesses, the prolonged challenges arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis show that we can still do more to promote and connect with the needs of our local communities. The Knowsley Offer has been developed following consultation with residents to address the challenges they face and to meet the needs of our local communities.

Building on the aspirations of the Borough's Knowsley 2030 Strategy, the key purpose of the Knowsley Offer is to work with residents and businesses to identify what needs to be in place to enable them to thrive and to enable the Borough to achieve its 2030 ambitions. This has been translated into a public-facing Knowsley Offer, articulating what the Offer is, where we are working together to strengthen this Offer and, in return, encouraging residents and businesses to consider what they can be doing to also enable themselves and the Borough to thrive.



The Knowsley Offer - residents' top five priorities

A programme of engagement with residents, community groups and businesses took place in 2022, achieving significant levels of participation with over 800 surveys completed, 65 engagement sessions held, and 1,450 residents engaged with in person. Residents gave positive feedback on the progress made since previous 'Let's Talk 2030' engagement undertaken in 2019. They also told us that they are proud to live in the Borough and are particularly proud of the community spirit. Overwhelmingly, people are facing significant challenges as the impact of COVID 19 and the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis are felt.

Using feedback from this engagement, the Council and the Knowsley Better Together partners have developed The Knowsley Offer – a package of support, information, and services available to residents right now. From money matters and living independently through to access to childcare and getting involved in their local area, the Knowsley Offer outlines what is available across the Borough. It sets out the plans in place to strengthen services and facilities for residents and businesses over the coming months and years.

The Knowsley Offer builds on the Knowsley's Better Together Partnership's long-standing ambition that more can be achieved when organisations, groups and individuals work together. This previously led partners to collaborate on the Borough's Knowsley 2030 Strategy, which sets out a long-term ambition for the future of the Borough, delivered via the Knowsley Better Together principles:

- Be a strong community leader and always champion Knowsley;
- Build better partnerships and work with others co-operatively to improve Knowsley;
- Spend locally, invest locally and recruit locally to build social value;
- Help people to be independent, doing more for themselves and each other;
- Prevent problems occurring or stop them getting worse;
- Listen to the community when making decisions; and,
- Use the best way of delivering services that leads to improved outcomes for Knowsley.

These principles have underpinned the approach taken by the Knowsley Better Together Partnership to tackle hardship during the cost-of-living crisis and is reflected within The Knowsley Offer. A key component of the 'Your Money' offer is the range of emergency support enabled through the Knowsley Better Together Hardship Fund; a fund developed by Knowsley Council to invest in projects and services that address and tackle hardship, delivered across the Knowsley Better Together Partnership.

Some examples of funded support include:

- Free school meals for eligible children during school holidays.
- Support for community organisations to provide community-based food and essentials to residents in need.
- Support for community organisations to deliver 'Warm Hubs' during the Winter months.
- Enabling community organisations to provide fuel vouchers for pre-payment meters, working with Energy Projects Plus to deliver advice and guidance to residents on all aspects of heating, and funding for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to provide appropriate heating sources (such as oil-filled radiators).
- Funding for local community and voluntary sector organisations to provide advice to residents on finances. This includes a bespoke advice offer for people who are engaged with local health services and debt management support.
- Housing support offered to residents in both social and private sector rented housing. A Registered Social Landlord Social Impact Fund supports social housing providers to extend existing support, such as fuel, access to food, and hygiene packs.
- Funding direct to front line social works, family case workers and schools to address hardship issues quickly and effectively as and when they arise.

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