



## **Cost-of-Living Support | #HelpsAtHand**

### **VCSE Communications Toolkit**

This toolkit has been developed by VAST to help voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to highlight the cost-of-living and summer food support available for people in communities across Stoke-on-Trent.

This toolkit also supports the Food partnership's summer food campaign.

### **Summer Food Support | #FeedingStoke24**



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## Contact Information

For enquiries about this toolkit, please contact Faye Angus,  
Communications and Content Manager, by email: [faye.angus@vast.org.uk](mailto:faye.angus@vast.org.uk).

For information on Welcoming Spaces, please contact Kezia Liddle, Project  
Officer via [kezia.liddle@vast.org.uk](mailto:kezia.liddle@vast.org.uk).

For help and support with the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory, please  
contact Monienne Stone, Projects Administrator via  
[monienne.stone@vast.org.uk](mailto:monienne.stone@vast.org.uk).

## Introduction and Purpose

This VCSE communications toolkit has been developed to compliment Stoke-on-Trent City Council's 'Help is at Hand' campaign, supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis.

The focus of this toolkit is bringing attention to support and services organisations like yours deliver within the VCSE sector for all members of society. This includes support for harder to reach communities and especially for those who aren't necessarily able to access means-tested support.

This toolkit also includes information on where residents can find free and/or affordable food across Stoke-on-Trent and to highlight the numerous activities taking place over the summer holidays where children (and often adults too) will be fed, and where food is available to those without a foodbank voucher. This is where '**#FeedingStoke24**' comes into play. Using this hashtag will ensure that the food information is easily accessible on social media.

This toolkit has also been developed in consultation with representatives from the voluntary sector in Stoke-on-Trent, members of VAST's Communications and Events Engagement Network, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and the Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership.

For more information on #HelpIsAtHand and the support available from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, please visit:

<https://www.stoke.gov.uk/helpisathand>

## Audience(s) and Key Messages

### Local voluntary sector organisations

- a. Lots of vulnerable residents are dreading the upcoming six-week school holidays. We need to make sure that they know where they can access free and/or affordable food.
- b. Cost of living pressures are biting hard on Stoke-on-Trent residents, and we need to let people know where they can get help.
- c. Help your neighbours, residents, staff, volunteers, and service users cope with the cost-of-living crisis.
- d. The Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory is a one-stop-shop where everyone can find the support and services they need; make sure your organisation and the support you offer is listed.
- e. Welcoming Spaces provide a safe and friendly environment for people who might be struggling. Welcoming spaces are somewhere people can go to have a hot drink and maybe something to eat, charge their phones and other devices, and get some much-needed social interaction. Some even help with information and advice on money, saving energy, access to food, and more. If you're not already registered as a welcoming space, why not think about setting one up.
- f. The cost-of-living crisis is affecting people in communities; people from various backgrounds, cultures, socio-economic status, and walks of life. Regardless of circumstances, help can come in many forms and from all sorts of places.

## Residents and communities.

- a. The Summer school holidays are the longest school break of the year. Six weeks is a long time and for some families it feels even longer, especially when it's already difficult to access free or affordable food. We want to make sure that EVERYONE knows where they can easily access food for themselves and their families.
- b. There are lots of ways to access free and affordable food all over the city. Residents shouldn't have to travel far to find somewhere to get food.
- c. The Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory is a one-stop-shop where everyone can find the support and services they need, this includes cost-of-living support that isn't necessarily means-tested.
- d. It's important for people to seek help before crisis sets in. Just because you're working and earning a wage, it doesn't mean you aren't able to get some help.
- e. Don't stick your head in the sand – support is out there and it's important to get it when you need it.
- f. There are lots of Welcoming Spaces across the city where people can go for a free cuppa and a biscuit, charge their phones or tablets, access online services, or simply to have a chat with others. Some places also offer financial, energy and other helpful advice around the cost of living.

## Resources

### List of Useful Resources

- Website: Stoke-on-Trent [Community Directory](#).
- Website: Directory [Cost-of-Living Support](#).
- Website: Community Directory [Registration](#).
- Guide: [Getting your organisation on the Directory](#).
- Website: #StokeonTrentTogether [Welcoming Spaces](#).
- Website: [Stoke-on-Trent City Council Help is at Hand](#).
- Guide: Welcoming Spaces – [Getting Started](#).
- Social Media Images: Available to download [here](#).

### Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory

As part of the cost-of-living support, we highly recommend adding your organisation, services, welcoming spaces, and any support groups to the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory. This will help local people to find you and your services easily. If you need help with adding your listing, please email [Monienne.stone@vast.org.uk](mailto:Monienne.stone@vast.org.uk).

If you do offer services and support with the cost-of-living or you are a 'Welcoming Space', please list your services on the [Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory here](#). The Community Directory is a one-stop-shop for support and services across Stoke-on-Trent and includes lots of information and listings that is split into a number of categories:

- Things to do, including community spaces, cafes, and clubs.
- Health, mental health, and wellbeing support.
- Education, training, and skills.
- Food, money, and energy support – especially useful for cost-of-living support.
- General information and advice including advocacy, legal support, and more.
- Support and advice for carers.

- Safety information and advice including around domestic and sexual violence, safeguarding and more.
- Family support.
- SEN and disability support, and
- Help with housing and home support.

Find out more about the Directory here:

<https://stokecommunitydirectory.co.uk/about-us/>

You can find a step-by-step guide for adding your listing(s) to the directory [here](#).

## Welcoming Spaces

A Welcoming Space is a place of connection already established in the community (such as a community centre, library or place of faith), where people can meet up, socialise, and access support, relating to the cost of living. Services available at each Welcoming Space will vary but may include:

- access to support about money, welfare, and mental wellbeing
- community activities
- access to computers, free Wi-Fi and charging points
- heated space

If your premises is a Welcoming Space, please [list your details on the directory](#) as this will be the best way for people to find you online.

If you would like to turn your premises into a Welcoming Space, please contact Kezia Liddle by email [kezia.liddle@vast.org.uk](mailto:kezia.liddle@vast.org.uk) for support. You can also use our [Welcoming Spaces Guide](#) to find out how you can open your own Welcoming Space.

# Social Media Content

## Images

Social media images for this toolkit are available to download [here](#).

## Social Media Content Overview

The content linked below includes general cost of living support as well as more tailored content around the themes of the #HelpIsAtHand campaign and the Food Partnership's summer food support campaign, #FeedingStoke24.

1. **Food:** [Click here to download the food social media content](#). This includes templates for your own social media posts.
2. **Money:** [Click here to download the money social media content](#).
3. **Energy:** [Click here to download the energy social media content](#).
4. **General CoL:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/General-CoL-Content.docx>
5. **Social media Images:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Help-is-at-Hand-Social-Images.zip>

Schools closed recently and last for around six weeks. Six weeks is a long time, and for some families it feels even longer, especially when it's already difficult enough to access free or affordable food. We want to make sure that everyone who needs help with finding and accessing food, knows where to go and when.

If your organisation is hosting some summer activities that include food, please share them on Facebook using the hashtag #FeedingStoke24. Please also include the dates, times, and locations for these events, and if there is a cost to them, please make sure you share that too.

Using #FeedingStoke24 will make this content much more accessible and will group all tagged content together for easy navigation.

Please share the posts in the theme links (also below) through your social media channels to help your communities access the support they need.



This content also includes some template posts that you can use for your own activities and events.

All content can be changed and adapted to meet your needs and to match your organisation's support, services, availability, and/or brand voice.

Where possible tag VAST in your posts. Our social media handles are:

- **Facebook:** [@VASTstaffordshire](#)
- **X (formerly Twitter):** [@VASTstaffs](#)
- **LinkedIn:** [VAST Services \(1920\)](#)

## Download Social Media Content

**General Cost of Living Content:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/General-CoL-Content.docx>

**Food Content:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Food-Content-FeedingStoke24.docx>

**Money Content:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Money-Content-HelpsAtHand.docx>

**Energy Content:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Energy-Content-HelpsAtHand.docx>

**Social Media Images:** <https://vast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Help-is-at-Hand-Social-Images.zip>