



THE COMPASS



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Christ Church, Grange Farm Avenue
Felixstowe IP11 2XD



26 Colneis Road, Felixstowe IP11 9HF

26th March 2026

Report to Felixstowe Town Council re: Grant award of £1000 to support families in food and fuel poverty

The Compass engages with many families in the Felixstowe postcode, giving support in any and all aspects of life, helping them to move forward with greater independence.

Food and fuel poverty are 2 issues that come up regularly. We always try to help resolve the underlying issues by:

- Working on budgeting skills – many people have little experience of planning and managing their money in an organised way.
- Teaching the importance of paying bills regularly.
- Talking to energy suppliers to negotiate the best rates and methods of payment for those on low income.

Food poverty requires a different approach. We help by:

- Giving information about local Pop Up Shops and Food Banks
- Helping to set up practical and sustainable budgets for food shopping, prioritising this over some of their ‘wants.’
- Discussing menu planning and batch cooking – signposting to classes and courses if necessary.

However, in the early days of meeting, people often need immediate help. It is not appropriate to start discussing money management when the cupboards are bare and there are several children going hungry.

This is where your generous support really makes a difference.

We are able to buy gift vouchers - £20 denominations - from local supermarkets to provide immediate relief where necessary. We are very mindful of how these are distributed, as we do not want to encourage a dependence on us, or have a queue at the door expecting vouchers.

We are also able to connect online with all the major fuel companies to make third party payments on behalf of our clients. This becomes much more of an issue during the colder months. We try to limit payments to a maximum of £50.

As you may imagine, your donation was fully utilised very quickly, and very much appreciated by the families we were able to support.

Please find attached a Case Study from one of our recent clients, whose circumstances have been radically changed with ongoing help from The Compass

Jill Mayes, Lead Outreach Worker.



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Case Study March 2026

C is a long term on-and-off client. She has learning difficulties and her mental health was particularly poor when we first met her in 2021– at her worst she would remain in her home, windows blacked out, practically catatonic on the sofa.

She is a mother of 5, all of whom were having significant issues, and C was struggling to cope. She had a lot of support from statutory groups and social care. By July 2022 her 3 youngest children were in separate foster placements and her older children (now adult) had moved out. She was supported with issues involving the children and to deal with debt and withdrew in late 2022.

In December 2024, C returned, asking for support. Her teenage daughter had been returned to the home after a breakdown in the foster placement. At this point C was in a panic – she didn't have enough money to support E (daughter) and felt unequipped to parent a teenager.

Some points from the long term action plan we followed:

Accessed funds from a local charity to provide food over the Christmas and New Year Period, and contacted others responsible for Christmas Food Hampers.

Contacted the local Council to inform them of daughter's return and to adjust 'bedroom' tax.

Applied for child benefit to be redirected to C, from foster carer.

Arranged for Universal Credit to be reviewed to take E into account and talked her through how to properly read her UC statements.

Arranged for local Parish Nurse mental health specialist to visit as C experienced some suicidal thoughts.

Supported C to meet her social worker and look at counselling for her and E.

Many discussions – over months – about managing finances, parenting, boundaries, taking responsibility, sticking at it etc.

Working out a manageable and sustainable budget for C so she didn't slip back into debt.

We continued to support C throughout 2025, with all the things above and additional issues like diagnosis with fibromyalgia, other children cutting contact, and E's teenage behaviours.

We met last week to review progress and the transformation in C is amazing. She and E are getting along brilliantly and E is hoping to apply for college. C does have occasional spells of low mood but feels better equipped to deal with them and to ask for help. C continues to manage her budget and live within her means.

It has been a long term project, supporting C, but a very worthwhile one. Her life has changed for the better in so many ways. Grant funding, from yourselves and other agencies, allows us to work long term with clients, to go at their pace, and to be a stable presence in otherwise chaotic or difficult lives.

We appreciate your ongoing support.

Jill Mayes, Compass Lead Outreach Worker