



Cost-of-living crisis: Example of practice

Response to the cost-of-living crisis

University of St Andrews

As part of our work on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students, we have published some examples of practice, provided by institutions, that have been implemented to support learners survive and thrive through the ongoing crisis. You can find more examples on our [web page](#).

The University of St Andrews, in partnership with the Students' Association, established a Cost-of-Living Taskforce, comprised of staff and students. This initiative reflected the University's commitment to student welfare, ensuring that academic success is not impeded by financial constraints. The Taskforce's remit was to identify and bring to fruition activities that would mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Over the course of the academic year 2022-23, the Taskforce initiated or contributed to a number of activities, including campus food discounts, launching a University-wide bus discount for students and staff, distribution of unsold catering stock, improved communications about the range of support available (financial or otherwise) including a [Cost of Living](#) page on our website, and disbursement of an employability bursary to aid access to developmental opportunities.

Building on this work, and with the aid of philanthropic funds, in the first semester of academic year 2023-24, the University of St Andrews launched a [Campus Larder](#), in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis' disproportionate impact on students and young people. The Larder is located in town, in the heart of the Students' Association. It provides a crucial lifeline for our students and staff, struggling to afford food and essential items. The Larder stocks a range of items from cereal to milk, toiletries and more, and is set up to be able to provide a visitor with everything they could need. Stocked by a team of student volunteers, the Larder also operates as a community hub for those visiting, fostering a spirit of support amongst our students where they can chat about their day and find out more about support services in a friendly and welcoming environment.

The University of St Andrews Community Fund provides financial support to community groups and activities from across the Kingdom of Fife. In response to the cost-of-living and energy crises, it funded local projects including 'Heat and Eat', a clothes-washing initiative, two repair cafes, food growing programmes as well as money and energy advice projects.

What has been the impact?

The Larder has been positively received for the practical support it is providing for our diverse community. Usage has been steady since its launch, with the Larder increasingly been seen as a place of community and support, rather than stigma.

The distribution of the Community Fund monies recognises the role the University plays in the town and region in which it is situated, and its civic responsibility in being part of the broader economic and social health of the region that supports our students and colleagues.

What next?

To further sustain the Campus Larder and other related initiatives, the University is working with the Development team to launch a focused Cost of Living giving campaign in spring 2024. The University has also endorsed a more strategic approach to lowering barriers to inclusion, initiating a suite of projects of varying levels of complexity to ensure that all students, irrespective of financial means or background, have the opportunity to thrive whilst studying at St Andrews.

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