

Impact Summary: UKSPF Cost of Living & Warm Space Projects (Sep 2024 – Mar 2025)

The Folkestone Nepalese Community (FNC) Centre successfully delivered UKSPF-funded projects from September 2024 to March 2025, following the award of an £8,000 grant from Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC). This funding enabled the Centre to provide cost-of-living support and warm space services, primarily benefiting elderly British Gurkha veterans and their families, many of whom face language barriers, digital exclusion, and limited awareness of UK support systems.

Project Delivery & Budget Use

- £6,000 was used to provide supermarket food vouchers, which were highly preferred by beneficiaries seeking immediate food assistance.
- £2,000 covered Centre heating costs and refreshments (tea, coffee, fruit, and biscuits), allowing the Centre to run a Warm Space Hub every Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, from September 2024.

Reach and Outputs

- A total of 115 households and 197 individuals received direct voucher support.
- The Warm Space recorded approximately 450 visits, offering warmth, nutrition, and a welcoming space for social connection.
- Winter clothing items (e.g., coats and hats) were distributed during the colder months, particularly in December and January.

Referral Support and Signposting

Given the high number of elderly beneficiaries with limited English and literacy skills, the FNC Centre provided hands-on, bilingual support, including:

- Form-filling assistance for benefits, housing, Pension Credit, and Universal Credit applications
- Translation and interpreting at key appointments
- Booking and accompanying clients to GP, hospital, and welfare-related appointments

Service signposting included:

- 76 people referred to the F&HDC Welfare Team, including help completing Household Support Fund forms
- 65 individuals referred to Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and SSAFA
- 74 individuals supported with accessing GP and hospital services

Volunteer Involvement

- The project was supported by 2–3 volunteers each month, contributing a total of 208 hours.
- Volunteers were vital in delivering bilingual support, companionship, and digital help to those most isolated.

Folkestone Nepalese Community (FNC)

Additional Support from SGN Safe and Warm Project

The FNC Centre also benefited from the SGN Safe and Warm Project, which:

- Provided additional vouchers for the most vulnerable
- Delivered training sessions to volunteers on energy awareness and how to support priority service users
- Shared effective, low-cost strategies for staying warm during winter, improving both knowledge and wellbeing in the community
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Overall Impact

This project had a tangible and lasting impact on the Folkestone Nepalese community. Key outcomes included:

- Improved health and wellbeing, and a significant reduction in loneliness among isolated elders
- Greater access to essential services (health, housing, welfare) through bilingual, community-based advocacy
- Stronger volunteer capacity and increased community resilience through training and partnership work

The FNC Centre became a trusted, culturally safe hub, providing not only material aid but also dignified support, connection, and empowerment during a period of continued financial and social hardship.