SURVIVING WINTER: DAME HELEN MIRREN AND SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON BACK FUEL POVERTY APPEAL

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The fuel poverty campaign Surviving Winter has received a welcome boost from celebrities including Dame Helen Mirren, Sir Michael Parkinson and Sir Terry Wogan. The appeal, run by UK Community Foundations (UKCF), and by community foundations across the UK, raises funds for older and vulnerable people, helping them stay warm and well in the colder months. It's already hit the half million mark, but UKCF aims to raise more as temperatures drop across the UK.

Surviving Winter exists to help those living in fuel poverty – estimated by the Department for Energy & Climate Change (DECC) to be around 2.28m in England alone. It relies wholly on donations, many of which are unwanted Winter Fuel Payments.

Dame Helen Mirren said**:"It's hard to think of the millions of people struggling to keep even one room warm as the cold weather sets in. Surviving Winter is a simple yet effective campaign which helps many people in fuel poverty - 23,000 last year - and provides everything from hot water bottles to hot dinners and help with fuel bills. I know that any donation goes straight to those in need, no matter what size or amount. If you are worried about the elderly and the vulnerable this winter, and can afford to donate, please visit** www.survivingwinter.org.uk**."**

Sir Michael Parkinson said: **"I fully support the "Surviving Winter Campaign" to assist the elderly and the vulnerable to keep warm and healthy during our cold winters. If you are in a position to do so please help by donating all or part of your winter fuel payment to this very worthwhile cause."**

UKCF Interim Chief Executive Kate Stewart said**: "We are so grateful for the support lent to Surviving Winter by Dame Helen Mirren, Sir Michael Parkinson and so many others. Surviving Winter works well because it's simple, quick and practical. It's also incredibly versatile: this year we've funded everything from Zumba Gold classes in Oxfordshire – aimed at keeping older people active and fit, to renovating a Winter Night Shelter in Milton Keynes for homeless people and paying to ensure isolated young people had heating over Christmas.**

"We have already raised half a million since we launched this year's appeal two months ago, but we need to raise more. Please support us by donating: www.survivingwinter.org.uk**. Every penny received is spent on a person in fuel poverty."**

UKCF is the umbrella organisation for the UK's 48 community foundations, and is backing all local Surviving Winter campaigns with a UK-wide appeal.

In the four years Surviving Winter has been running a total of £5.2 million has been raised, and **70,000** people helped. Central donations can be made to www.survivingwinter.org.uk, or, to donate to specifically help people in your local community, find your nearest community foundation: ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

ENDS

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Interviews with Kate Stewart, interim UKCF Chief Executive, and community foundations spokespeople are available. Images and case studies are also available.

Notes to Editors

About Surviving Winter

- Surviving Winter began in 2010, and has run as a UK-wide campaign since 2011.
- Celebrities supporting the campaign include Dame Helen Mirren, Sir Michael Parkinson, Sir Terry Wogan, Anne Widdecombe and Bernard Cribbins.
- The definition of fuel poverty in England changed last year. The government now defines a family

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in fuel poverty as one which a) has fuel costs which are above average, and b) if paying those bills would push it over the poverty line.
- Under this definition, using DECC statistics, 2.28m people in England are in fuel poverty. Sticking to the old definition – still used elsewhere in the UK – figures produced by the campaign group Energy Bill Revolution indicate it could be closer to 4.82m.

About UKCF

UKCF is the membership organisation for community foundations that work across the UK to raise then distribute money directly to local causes. Community foundations operate to ensure any form of philanthropy, whether from an individual or an organisation, is effective and brings greatest benefit to those in need in our local communities. Last year, community foundations made over 20,000 grants, distributing over £65 million to local causes.

We represent 48 quality accredited community foundation members. Our Quality Accreditation process is endorsed by the Charity Commission and uses standards consistent with the Charity Commission's Hallmarks of an Effective Charity, with robust, transparent and fair assessment processes. Achieving Quality Accreditation demonstrates that community foundations are serious about quality and accountability.

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