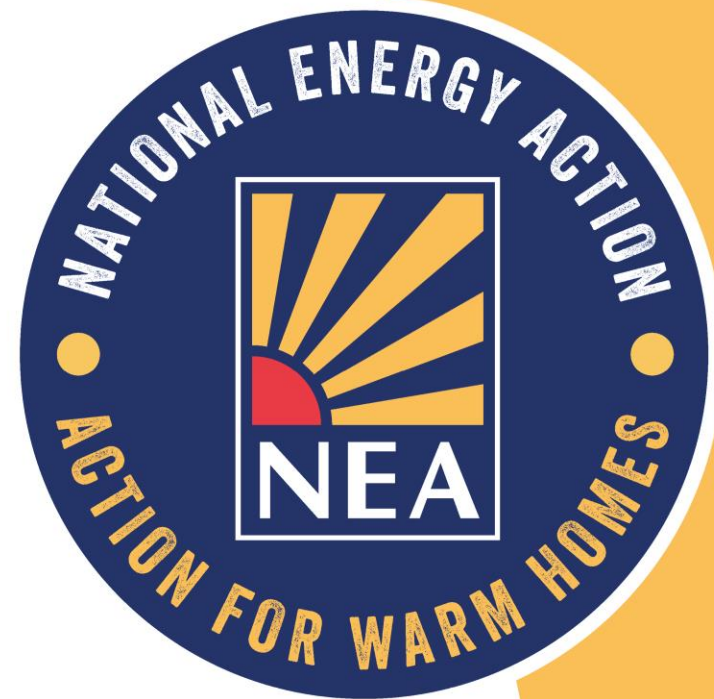


# NORTH WEST FUEL POVERTY FORUM

24 April 2024



# ABOUT NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION

National Energy Action (NEA) is the national fuel poverty and energy efficiency charity that has worked across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for over 40 years, to ensure that everyone in the UK can afford to live in a warm, safe and healthy home.

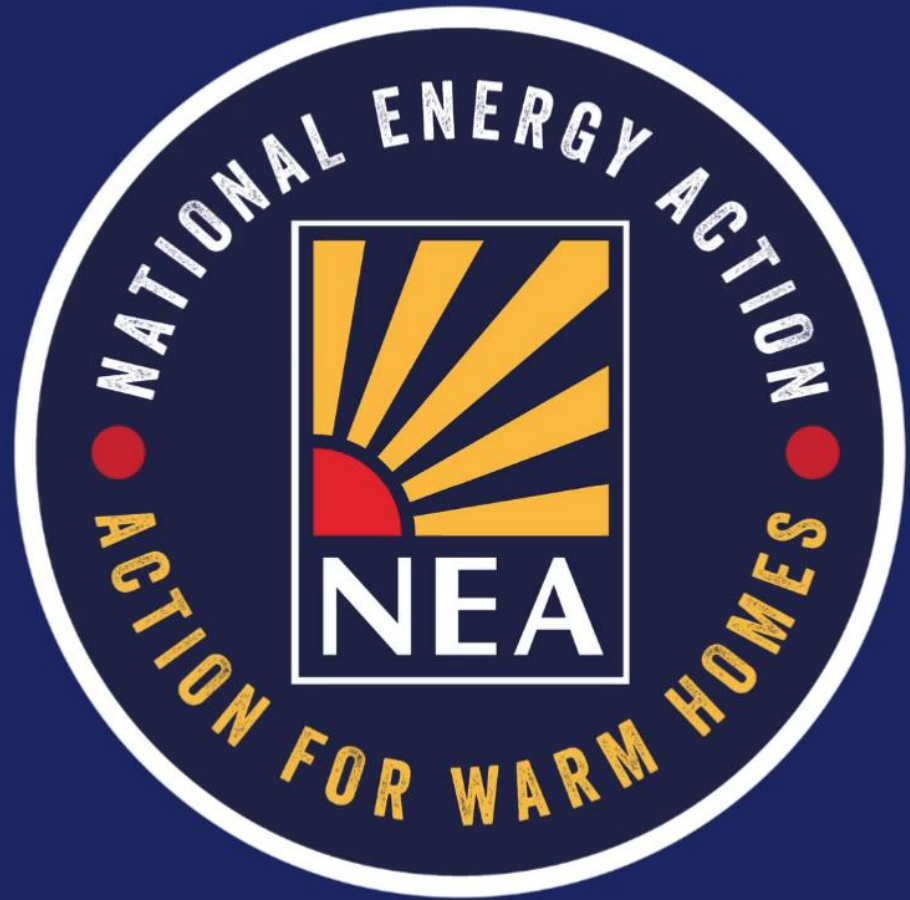
We work with frontline practitioners, companies, regulators and the government, to make positive changes for customers in vulnerable circumstances.



<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
9.30am	<b>Welcome</b> Jimmy Pugh, Project Development Coordinator, NEA
9.45am	<b>Policy update</b> Maya Fitchett, Policy Analyst, NEA
10.15am	<b>Housing &amp; Health: Fuel poverty pilot projects in Cheshire &amp; Merseyside</b> NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Energy Projects Plus
10.35am	<b>Warrington Disability Partnership</b> Dave Thompson, Chief Executive
10.55am	<b>Refreshments and networking</b>
11.15am	<b>Introduction to the Energy Ombudsman</b> Sonia Facchini, Group Product Senior Leader
11.35am	<b>Update from Ofgem</b> Patrick Gould, Senior Policy Manager, Ofgem
11.55am	<b>Discussion groups</b> Facilitated by NEA
12.25pm	<b>Forum concludes</b> Lunch and networking to follow at 12:30pm

National Energy Action is grateful to National Grid for supporting this round of Fuel Poverty Forums







# WARM HOMES HEALTHY FUTURES



Nationally coordinated, locally delivered programme

Fully-funded and flexible to local need

Delivering energy advice and support to tens of thousands of people

Bringing together the health sector and trusted local partners

Keeping people **warm, safe, and healthy** at home

Contact [danielle.butler@nea.org.uk](mailto:danielle.butler@nea.org.uk) or scan to find out how you can be involved:



# WARM HOME PRESCRIPTION

- In partnership with GMCA and NHS Greater Manchester we are launching a small scale pilot in 3 areas
- Supporting individuals identified as requiring end of life care
- Bespoke energy advice
- Financial contribution towards the cost of their heating
- Signpost to income maximisation and energy efficiency interventions
- Capture impacts/insights/learnings



GMCA  
GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

NHS  
Greater Manchester

In partnership with  
WARM HOME  
PRESCRIPTION



# UNDERSTANDING SMART METERS

National Energy Action (NEA) has just launched a new smart meter community engagement programme across England and Wales.

We want to ensure vulnerable consumers are not left behind and that they can access the benefits afforded by the rollout.

NEA's regional team are keen to support your organisation through this project.

We're seeking to organise or join you at householder events between now and the end of September. NEA can provide:

- Practical energy and smart meter advice
- Tailored information
- Helpful resources for householders

Please get in touch with me today if you'd like to discuss this further. Or you can email [smartgrants@nea.org.uk](mailto:smartgrants@nea.org.uk)

# The Challenge for future energy systems transitions:

**Customers in vulnerable situations and community resilience: A cross-utility study**

- Ensuring access to safe and efficient utility supplies
- Consistently and comprehensively enabling community resilience
- Safeguarding customers in vulnerable situations (CVS)

## What we did:

- Map current understandings of vulnerability
- Forecast energy justice implications of the low carbon transition
- Identify learnings from recent crisis events
- Identify current network best practice in supporting CVS ('vulnerability first' approach)
- Develop best practice guidelines





# Best Practice Guidelines:

- 1) **Understanding vulnerability:** When identifying and assessing whether a customer may be in vulnerable circumstances, utility-related companies should take into account individual and personal factors, structural factors, and intersectionality
- 2) **Taking a ‘vulnerability-first’ approach** when identifying and understanding vulnerability, in strategic and practical planning, and in working in partnership and collaboration with various stakeholders
- 3) **Debt and affordability**



# Best Practice Guidelines:

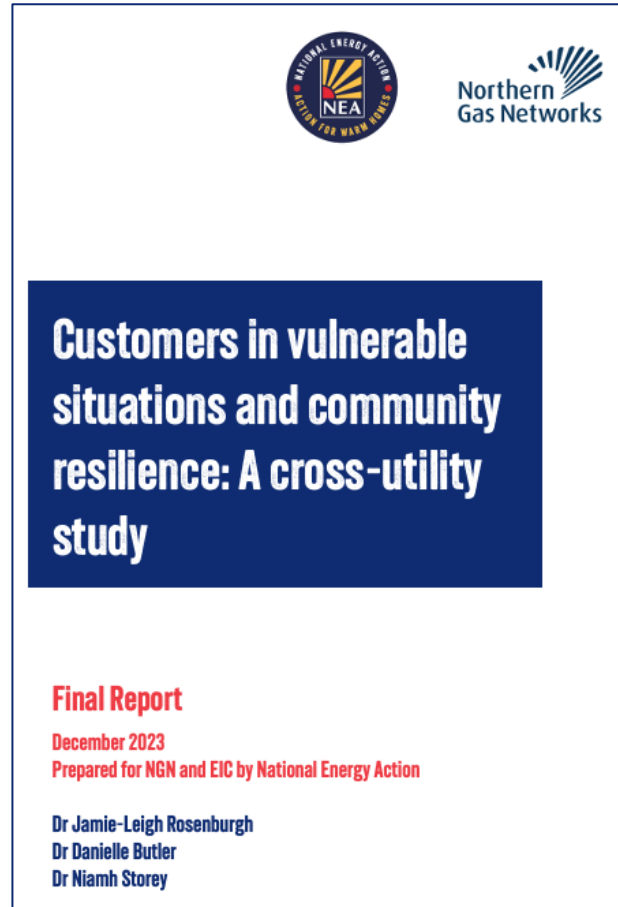
**4) Communications and accessibility:** Meeting diverse needs, being accessible to all, and customer service

**5) Support for all:** through the Priority Services Register (PSR) and beyond the PSR

**6) Personal safety:** during service outages and in ensuring a safe and just transition to net zero



The full report and executive summary, can be found on NEA's website  
[www.nea.org.uk](http://www.nea.org.uk)



Further questions:

[Jamie.Rosenburgh@nea.org.uk](mailto:Jamie.Rosenburgh@nea.org.uk)

(Insights and Impact Manager, NEA)



# TRAINING WITH NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION



# INTERACTIVE WEBINARS/FACE-TO-FACE

- Living with the Energy Crisis
- Introduction to Domestic Energy Efficiency
- Understanding Fuel Poverty and Health: Impacts on Mental Health
- Level 2 Award in Fuel Debt Advice in the Community
- Level 2 award in Introduction to Domestic Renewable Low Carbon Technologies
- Changing Energy Related Behaviour
- Paying for Fuel
- Vulnerability in the Energy Market
- Tackling the Cold
- Getting the Most Out of the In-Home Display



# SUPPORTED E-LEARNING

- Delivering High Quality Domestic Energy Advice: A Practical Guide
- Level 4 Award in Decarbonising Homes: Technologies, Impacts and Solutions
- Level 3 Award in Energy Awareness (FTF available)
- Fuel Poverty and Health
- Introduction to Domestic Energy Efficiency
- Overview of the Smart Meter Rollout
- A range of bitesize courses designed for the on the go learning

Fully funded places may be available.  
Bespoke courses also welcome, please contact the training team.  
Visit [www.nea.org.uk/training](http://www.nea.org.uk/training)



# MEMBERSHIP

Everything National Energy Action does, we do in partnership and our members are the heart of those partnerships.

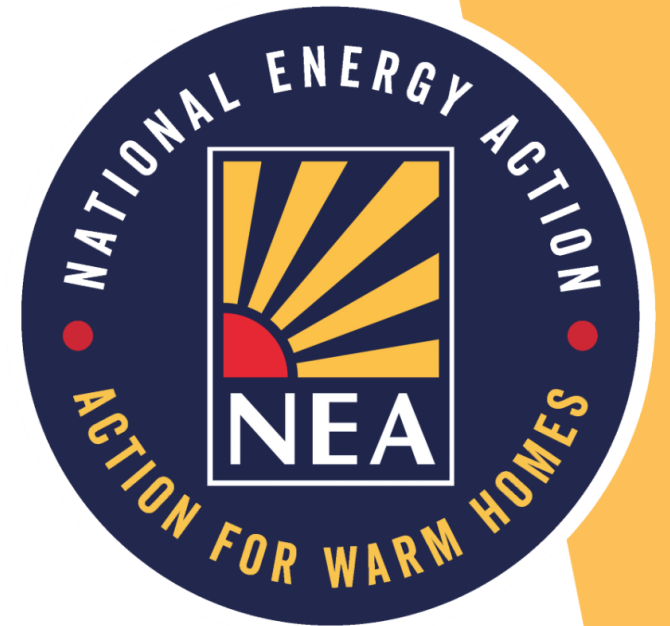
- The **Business Supporters Group** has been in existence for over 20 years. A strong relationship with the business community is vital to ensure the fuel poor can benefit from current schemes and technological developments. NEA's campaigning activities would not be so effective without industry support.
- Our **Supporting and Enhanced Membership** include local authorities, housing associations, health agencies, charities, community groups and contracted installers through energy provider schemes. **Supporting membership is FREE!**

National Energy Action relies on its members, both as a source of income and for support in achieving the charity's aims and objectives. More information about benefits and costs can be found on our website.



# POLICY UPDATE

MAYA FITCHETT  
POLICY ANALYST, NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION





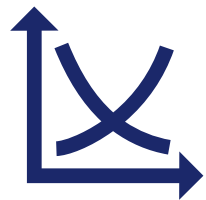
# National Energy Action's three advocacy priorities



People - Supporting fuel poor households through the energy crisis



Homes - Achieving a fair and affordable transition to net zero



Market Frameworks - Ensuring overarching market, policy and regulatory frameworks work in the interest of fuel poor households



# People - Supporting fuel poor households through the energy crisis

## Recent developments

- Price cap down to £1,690 for the typical household using electricity and gas and paying by direct debit. However, this is still 50% higher than pre-crisis prices.
- There are still 6 million households in fuel poverty, compared to 4.5 million in October 2021.
- While the Household Support Fund will continue for a further six months, there will be nothing in place to plug this gap come September.
- The Budget did not include any further provision for households to alleviate fuel poverty.
- The Government has removed the £90 fee for Debt Relief Orders and will increase the maximum repayment period on Universal Credit loans to 24 months.

## Coming up

- Continuing to push for a social tariff to provide sustained price support for fuel poor households.
- Ensuring that fuel poverty is an unignorable topic in upcoming elections/manifestos.



# Homes - Achieving a fair and affordable transition to net zero

## Recent developments

- In September, the government rolled back on its key climate commitments, which included abandoning increased minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector.
- Labour also U-turned on its £28bn per year green investment pledge.
- In January, we released our Fuel Poverty Monitor 2023, showing that households across the UK stand to save a combined total of £7bn (equivalent to nearly £500 per household per year) on energy bills if fuel poverty targets are met.
- ECO4 delivery has recently picked up, after a relatively slow start – largely delivering a smaller number of upgrades than predicted, but much larger energy savings.

## Coming up

- Pushing for extension of ECO4 past 2026.
- Manifesto influencing, including using evidence from our membership to create a detailed delivery plan for energy efficiency in the next parliament.
- Pushing for commitments for rented accommodation from each party ahead of the election.



# Market frameworks - Ensuring overarching market, policy and regulatory frameworks work in the interest of fuel poor households

## Recent developments

- Ofgem has now made the decision to make prepayment the cheapest payment type in the price cap – a campaign success for National Energy Action and our partners.
- Forced installations of prepayment meters have restarted for a number of energy suppliers. National Energy Action is monitoring how this is being approached.
- Standing charges are continuing to rise and are having a disproportionate impact on low-income households.

## Coming up

- Ofgem has launched a call for input on debt and affordability. We have published our initial thoughts on our website.
- Ofgem and DESNZ are considering the future of the price cap. National Energy Action is focused on maintaining two aspects of the cap in particular – transparency and trust.




## What else is happening?

- **The DESNZ Select Committee** is undertaking several enquiries that are relevant. This includes the ‘heating our homes’ enquiry, which National Energy Action gave oral evidence to last year.
- **Party conferences** – National Energy Action will be at the Conservative, Labour, and Lib Dem party conferences, advocating for the needs of fuel poor households.



# Our pre-election one pager

- We will be using this document to engage with politicians ahead of the election.
- Look out for a National Energy Action manifesto, building on this, to be released closer to the election.



## WARM, SAFE AND HEALTHY

**National Energy Action (NEA)**, the fuel poverty charity, campaigns so everyone can afford to live in a warm, safe and healthy home. This is something denied to millions because of poor housing, low incomes, and high bills.

Two years into the energy crisis, energy bills remain hundreds of pounds a year higher than at the start of the crisis and are likely to stay high until the end of the decade. In this context, millions of households are:

**COLD**

Households cannot afford to heat their homes to a reasonable standard of warmth, and are living in cold, damp homes. Beyond the money needed to afford heating, people are not able to cook a hot meal or use hot water for washing.

**UNSAFE**

Households are routinely turning to unsafe practices to stay warm at home, using portable gas stoves or barbeques for cooking, candles as the main source of lighting and even burning furniture for warmth or regularly using unserviced heating appliances at home.

**UNHEALTHY**

Households underheating their homes can be dangerous to their physical and mental health, or even fatal. People can't afford to refrigerate their food or medicines. Others who are prioritising their heating and other energy use are falling further into energy debt, which is now at record levels. Half (46%) of people in problem debt also have a mental health problem.

This situation will worsen unless three key steps are taken to keep the most vulnerable people warm, safe and healthy at home.

**VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS URGENTLY NEED MORE SUPPORT TO PAY UNAFFORDABLE ENERGY BILLS.**

Along with well over a hundred other organisations, National Energy Action is calling on all political parties to commit to the introduction of an energy social tariff, providing lower bills or deeper discounts for the most vulnerable households.

**RECORD LEVELS OF ENERGY DEBT ARE CRUSHING HOUSEHOLDS, PUTTING UP PRICES AND REDUCING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.**


Alongside debt charities, National Energy Action is calling for the new Government to introduce a new 'help to repay' scheme to accelerate the re-payment of energy debt to put extra money back into people's pockets and support local economies.

**IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY CUTS BILLS, CARBON AND IMPROVES LIVES.**

Early progress next parliament to improve the energy efficiency of fuel-poor homes is essential if statutory fuel poverty and carbon targets are to be met. Early investment to reduce the deepest levels of fuel poverty in homes and communities, alongside new regulatory drivers will generate the greatest societal, economic, and environmental benefits.

**PLEASE COMMIT TO THESE VITAL AREAS AND KEEP THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE WARM, SAFE AND HEALTHY AT HOME.**

[www.nea.org.uk](http://www.nea.org.uk)



# Indicative policy timeline

## Summer 24

- Working with Ofgem to improve the situation with debt/affordability/standing charges
- Making the case to political parties to increase action on energy efficiency in the next parliament

## Summer 25

- Preparing for the next phase in the smart meter rollout
- Working on shaping the next phases of WHD and ECO, both schemes currently sunset in March 2026

## Winter 24-25

- Party conferences
- Post election work with the eventual GE winners (election could be as late as January 2025). Includes first budget, which we will push to include spending for energy efficiency
- Pushing for a new fuel poverty strategy at the beginning of the next parliament



# Housing & Health: Fuel poverty pilot projects in Cheshire & Merseyside





# Targeting Fuel Poverty Interventions in Cheshire and Merseyside

Lucy Malcolm – Senior Digital Transformation and Clinical Improvement Manager,

NHS Cheshire & Merseyside

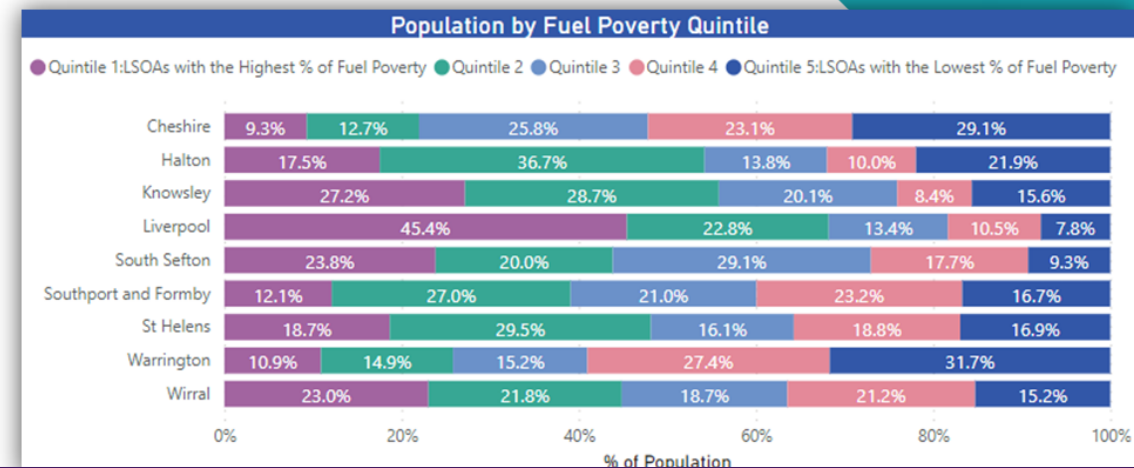
Rhiannon Clarke – Programme Manager (Patient safety & Care Improvement Team), Health Innovation North West Coast

Dominic Griffiths – Business Relationship Manager, Energy Projects Plus

# Fuel Poverty in Cheshire and Merseyside

## Why Fuel poverty interventions?

- Work commissioned in 2022 to develop a fuel poverty dashboard in CIPHA (Combined intelligence for population health action)
- Funding was allocated through the Innovation for Health Inequalities programme (InHip)
- Multi stakeholder steering group established to lead the project
- Collaboration with Optum to support translating data into action



# Aims and Objectives

Aims	Long term	<p>Positive impact on the wellbeing of those most at risk of poor health as a result of fuel poverty including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in hospital admissions</li> <li>• Reduction in attendances (A&amp;E, GP, other)</li> <li>• Reduction in exacerbations</li> <li>• Patients experience reduced anxiety related to fuel poverty</li> </ul>
	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify people most at risk of poor health as a result of fuel poverty.</li> <li>• Highlight people to relevant/available services/projects</li> <li>• A number of people receive an intervention</li> <li>• Identify the range of services/organisations/assets in each Place across all sectors to support people experiencing fuel poverty and raise the knowledge of services/professionals about these services.</li> </ul>
Objectives		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop fuel poverty dashboard to help identify the population in scope.</li> <li>• Identify and test targeted clinical and non-clinical interventions within the at risk groups to develop learning on what works to inform future projects/scaling up interventions. Interventions to include patients being medicines optimised including being put on NICE approved medications.</li> <li>• Engage broad range of stakeholders in design and delivery of the project.</li> </ul>
Principles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data driven via a population health management approach.</li> <li>• Bring together health, care, housing, community and voluntary sector.</li> <li>• Build on what is already happening at Place.</li> <li>• Test and learn from small pilot projects to support scaling up of work going forward i.e. some work will be done in small geographical areas or at targeted populations</li> </ul>
Workstream		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel Poverty Dashboard</li> <li>• Cohort 1: high risk COPD patients</li> <li>• Cohort 2: children with asthma</li> <li>• Cohort 3: PCN/local projects</li> <li>• Asset mapping</li> </ul>

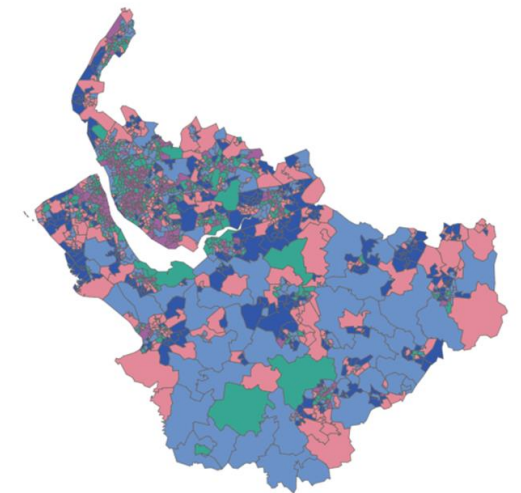
# COPD Cohort selection

## Data points used to segment:-

- IMD most deprived quintile
- COPD diagnoses in primary Care
- Not in a care home
- 50% or higher risk of emergency admission
- 20% most Fuel Poor quintile neighbourhood

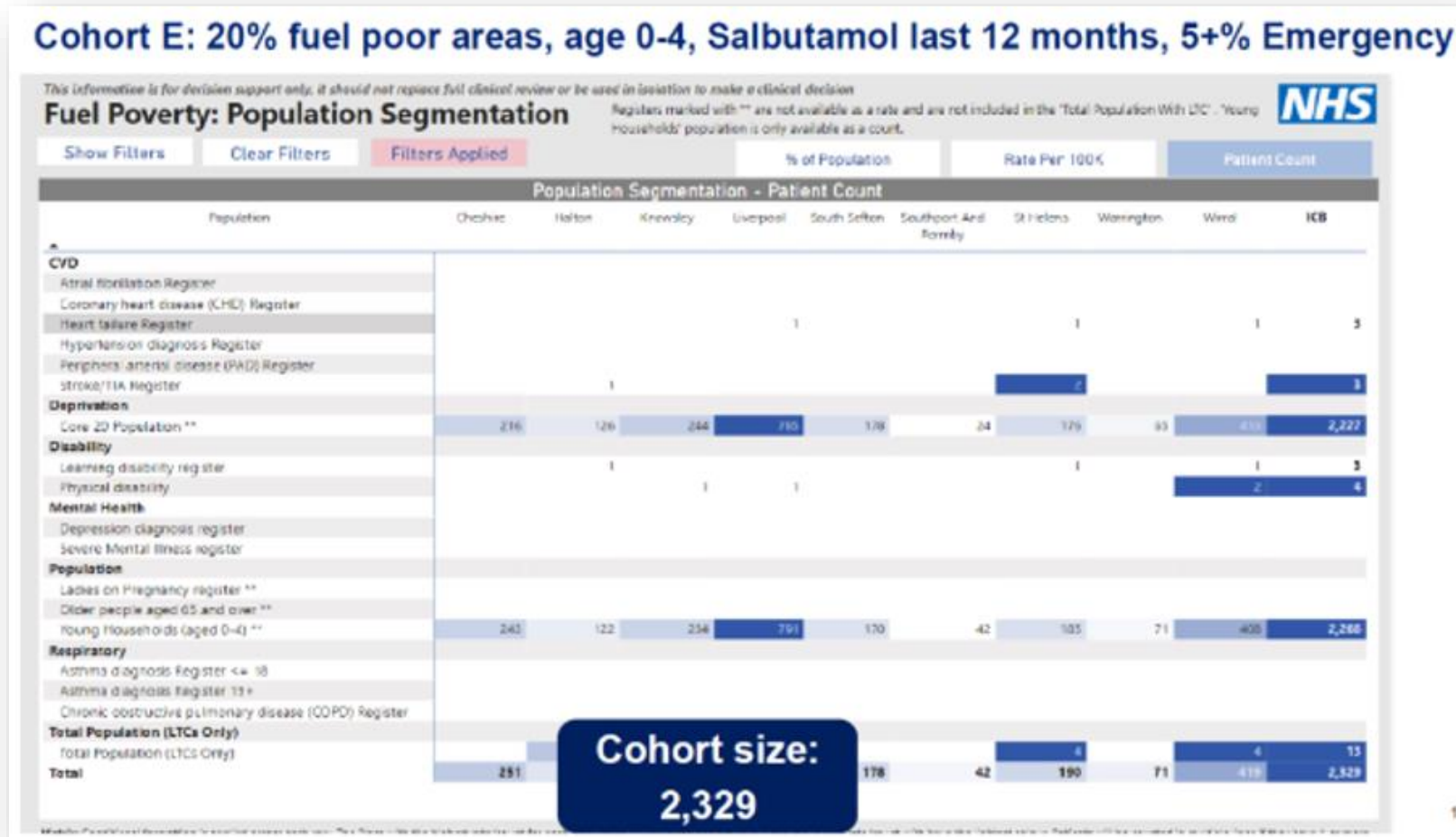


Population Segmentation - Patient Count										
Population	Cheshire	Halton	Knowsley	Liverpool	South Sefton	Southport And Formby	St Helens	Warrington	Wirral	ICB
<b>CVD</b>										
Atrial fibrillation Register	23	27	32	132	22	0	13	10	40	303
Coronary heart disease (CHD) Register	36	43	45	243	44	5	30	16	65	527
Heart failure Register	22	23	25	137	30	0	8	9	42	297
Hypertension diagnosis Register	40	48	63	301	51	6	24	25	75	633
Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) Register	10	17	13	94	19	0	10	10	25	200
Stroke/TIA Register	21	22	26	134	21	0	13	11	34	285
<b>Deprivation</b>										
Core 20 Population **	70	75	100	532	97	17	58	45	143	1,137
<b>Disability</b>										
Learning disability register	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Physical disability	13	29	20	101	24	0	9	19	30	247
<b>Mental Health</b>										
Depression diagnosis register	41	20	37	225	33	12	23	25	67	483
Severe Mental Illness register	7	0	5	50	9	0	6	0	10	105
<b>Population</b>										
Ladies on Pregnancy register **	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Older people aged 65 and over **	49	60	78	369	68	9	36	31	101	801
Young Households (aged 0-4) **		1					1			2
<b>Respiratory</b>										
Asthma diagnosis Register <= 18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asthma diagnosis Register 19+	11	10	13	112	19	8	19	11	30	234
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) Register	70	75	100	532	97	17	58	45	143	1,137
<b>Total Population (LTCs Only)</b>										
Total Population (LTCs Only)	70	75	100	532	97	17	58	45	143	1,137
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>1,137</b>



## Cohort 2 – Pre-school respiratory wheeze

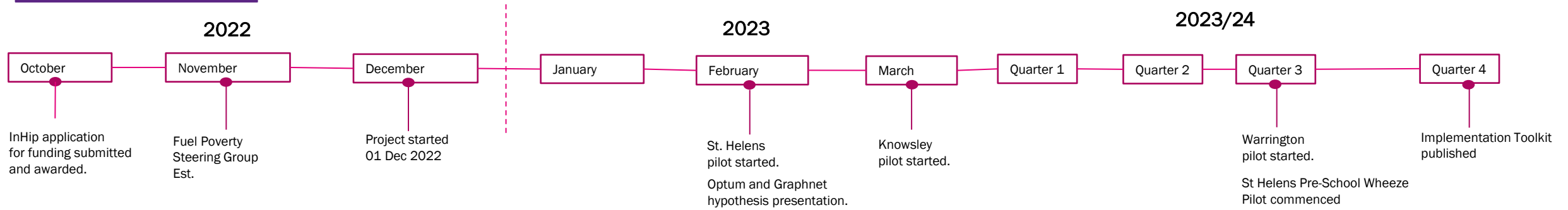
Cohort identification: Age 0-4, 5% of greater risk of emergency admission, 20% most fuel poor quintile neighbourhood, Salbutamol prescription within 12 months



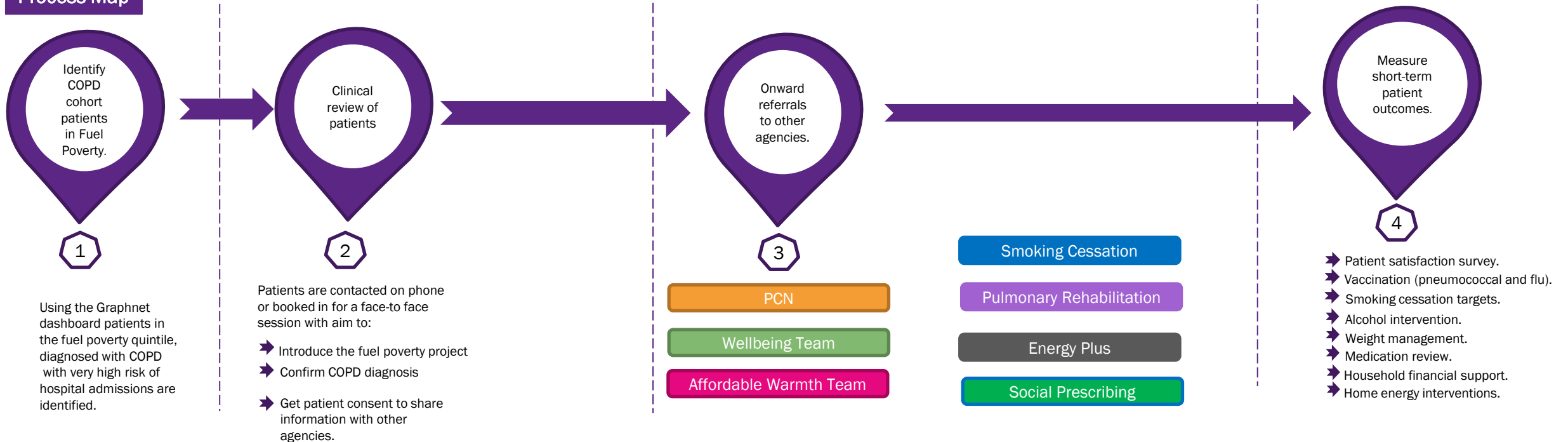
# Trailblazer Project



## Project Timeline



## Process Map





# Project Outputs

The direct impact on patients supported through the St Helens and Knowsley Projects.



## St Helens

**327** patients identified by CIPHA and contacted

- **75% (245)** referrals to Affordable Warmth Team (local authority)
- **60% (146)** of the patients referred to the affordable warmth team were added to Priority Register (47 were already on the register)
- **64% (209)** have had their medication optimised
- **6% (20)** referrals to Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) Team
- **6% (21)** patients were onboarded to COPD Telehealth Service
- **11% (35)** new patients referred to the COPD team
- **62% (202)** provided with volumatic spacers
- **65% (211)** patients received a pulse oximeter
- **37% (121)** provided with Type 2 alert oxygen packs
- **52% (169)** patients received a £500 payment from local authority household support funds, **43** patients have also received a second payment of £500.

**£106,000** of payments facilitated, in total.

## Knowsley

**116** patients were identified by the CIPHA dashboard.

- **58** Patients received a review appointment (the team are still delivering reviews for this cohort)
- **36% (21)** changes to inhalers
- **64% (37)** received vaccination advice
- **29% (17)** referred for Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- **12% (7)** referred to smoking cessation service
- **12% (7)** referred to social prescribing
- **9% (5)** referred for community mental health support
- **10% (6)** given Knowsley Access Team phone number
- **78% (45)** referred to Energy Projects Plus.

### Energy Project Plus (fuel poverty support commissioned by Knowsley local authority)

- **45** clients were referred by the clinical team to Energy Project Plus,
- **21** were provided with energy efficiency advice, either by phone, or in their homes. This represents a successful conversion rate of **46.7%**.
- The total lifetime energy bill saving for these clients was **£2,602**.
- The total cost saving for these clients was **£691**.
- The total combined financial benefit was therefore **£3,293**.
- This equates to **£156** per client advised, or **£73** per client referred.

How can Energy Projects Plus help?

**Dominic Griffiths**

Business Relationship Manager

[dominic.Griffiths@epplus.org](mailto:dominic.Griffiths@epplus.org)



## WHO IS ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS?

We're a Wirral-based, award-winning environmental charity. We've been providing free advice and support to the residents of Merseyside & Cheshire since 1996, helping them reduce household energy demand.

A typical year provides these headlines:

- **9,000 residents supported**
- **2,000 home visits completed**
- **£1m benefit in energy bill savings & cost reductions**
- **10,000 lifetime tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e saved**

## WHO IS ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS?

Our support enables residents to:

- a) Reduce fuel bills**
- b) Reduce carbon emissions**
- c) Reduce hospital admissions**

We're therefore keen to engage with Local Authority Housing Officers, Public Health, and Climate Change/Net Zero.

## HOW CAN ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS HELP?

### Save Energy Advice Line

Freephone advice line, available 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday (apart from Bank Holidays and the 3 working days between Christmas & New Year).

- 0800 043 0151
- [advice@epplus.org](mailto:advice@epplus.org)
- [www.epplus.org.uk/contact](http://www.epplus.org.uk/contact)



Save  
Energy  
Advice  
Line

## HOW CAN ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS HELP?

### LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership)

Home visits of up to 2 hours, fitting “easy measures” such as

- LED bulbs
- Draught proofing
- Radiator reflector panels.

Can potentially assist with replacement of:

- White goods
- Broken, gas central heating boilers



## HOW CAN ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS HELP?

### Warm & Well

Funded by Energy Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme, to provide added capacity to our teams, due to rising need caused by the Cost of Living Crises.

Support includes:

- Telephone advice & home visits
- Access to Household Support Fund
- Fuel debt support

The logo for 'Warm & Well' is displayed in a rounded rectangular frame with a double red border. The text 'Warm & Well' is written in a bold, rounded, yellow font with a red outline, set against a white background.

## HOW CAN ENERGY PROJECTS PLUS HELP?

### Warmth 4 Health

Funded by Cadent Foundation, as a 2-year pilot, focusing on supporting vulnerable residents living in properties with damp & mould.

Support includes:

- Telephone advice & home visits
- Observation reports
- Small capital measures budget

warmth4health

## How can Energy Projects Plus help?

### Retrofit Buddies

Our “buddy” will be on-hand to help clients navigate their way through the process of improving the energy efficiency of their properties, e.g.

- Assistance completing application forms
- Gathering evidence required by a contractor
- Being present during survey
- Explaining new technologies

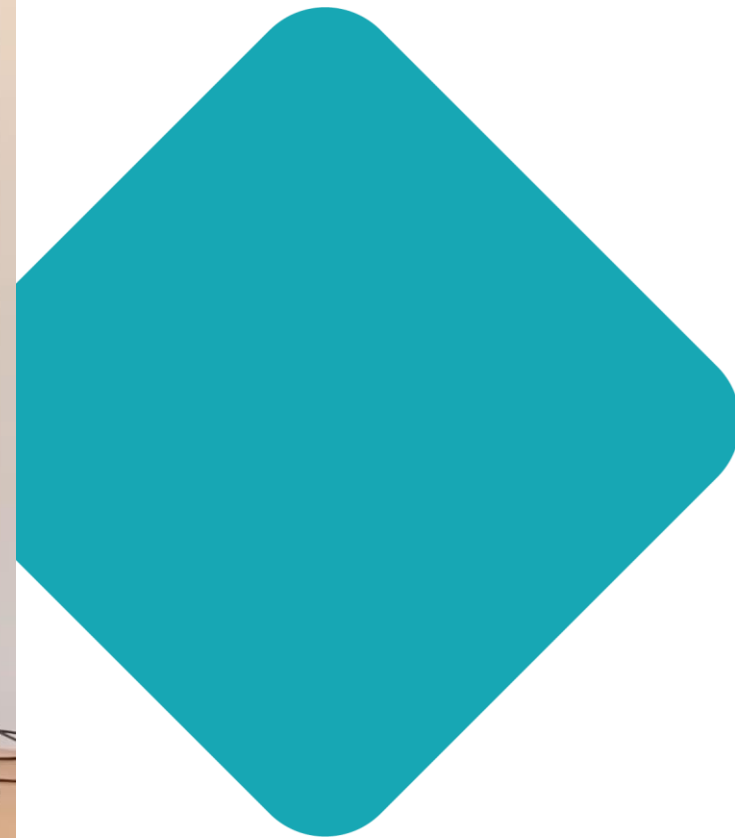




**Diane Green - Lead COPD Nurse / Service Manager, St Helens  
Community COPD Rapid Response**



to the Affordable Warmth Team  
and the Wellbeing Service. We've had





# Outcomes

## Clinical improvement

### CAT Scores in Knowsley Patients

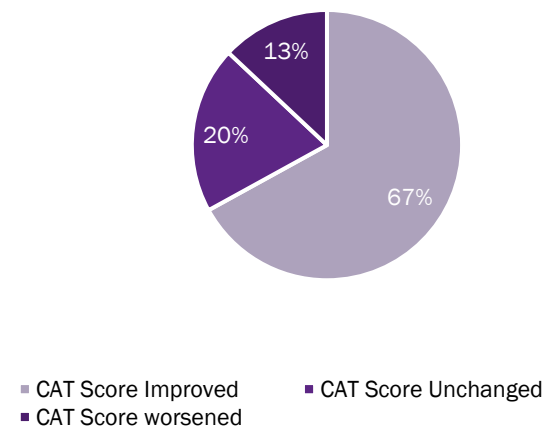
The COPD Assessment Test (CAT) is a questionnaire for people with COPD. It is designed to measure the impact of COPD on a person's life, and how this changes over time. The CAT is simple to administer, and aims to help clinicians, with their patients, better manage COPD.

17 patients had a COPD Assessment Test (CAT) figure recorded at the first appointment (as a baseline) and had a repeat score recorded at the follow up appointment; 67% showed an improvement.

The average CAT score fell from 22 to 18, which represents a move from the high impact level group to the medium level group.

While the numbers are still very small this is starting to signal positive clinical impact.

### Breathlessness Outcomes for Knowsley Patients



### Exacerbations in Knowsley Patients

Numbers of courses of prednisolone and antibiotics were recorded for the 6 months pre-review (as a baseline) and for 6 months post initial review for **33 patients**.

There was an 11% reduction in the number of courses of antibiotics (43 to 37) and there was no difference in the number of courses of prednisolone. This could partly be due to prednisolone being prescribed to patients as “rescue packs” rather than for a current, acute, need.

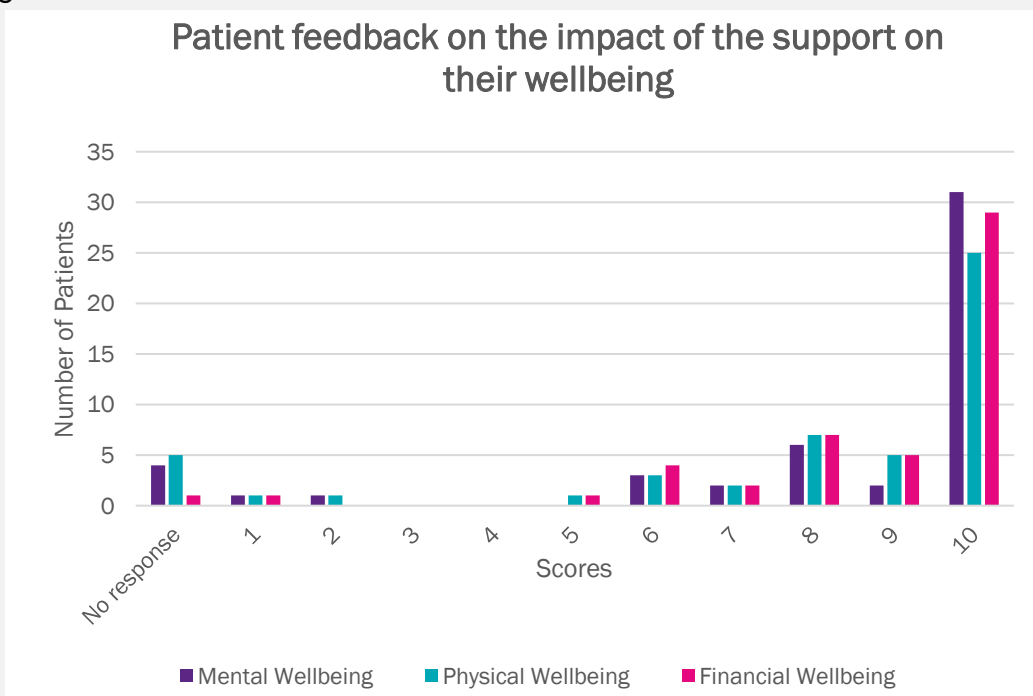
# Outcomes

## Patient and staff experience

### St Helens Warm Homes for Lungs Project

135 feedback forms have been sent out to date, 50 have been returned (35%) with the following results:

- When asked if the support received had helped their mental wellbeing on a scale of 1-10, 78% (39 people) gave a score of 8 or above with 62% giving the highest score of 10 (31 people).
- When asked if the support had helped their physical wellbeing on a scale of 1-10, 74% (37 people) gave a score of 8 or above, 50% (25 people) scored this as 10.
- Regarding help for financial wellbeing on a scale of 1-10, 62% (31 people) scored this 8 or above and 58% (29 people) scored 10.
- Only 4% of people that responded gave a score of 3 or below for each of these three categories.



### Knowsley

13 patients out of 58 provided feedback on the service (23%), 100% of the feedback received was positive.

### Embedding a holistic care approach

One of the key benefits of the project is that it has raised awareness and upskilled professionals in tackling fuel poverty and having conversations about broader problems they might be experiencing. The impact is that some clinicians are now asking all their respiratory patients routinely whether they have any damp/mould and if they are struggling to warm their home. This is because they now know how to support people and where to signpost them.

*"I've understood for a long time about why the determinants of health were important, and that health care is only a very small part of that. But that feels like a very big issue to tackle. The fuel poverty project has really brought to light what you can do in a medical consultation to think about wider determinants of health. So now, I do ask patients during my standard consultations, you know, what's your home like? Is it cold?". Sarah Sibley, Respiratory Lead for Cheshire & Merseyside ICB.*

The following are the areas of learning and top tips for developing a Fuel Poverty Project.

## ● Access to Fuel Poverty Dashboard

Use the dashboard to define and identify the people that are most in need to ensure support is targeted. Training videos are available to support users.

## ● Focus on small numbers to start

Use the dashboard to define a realistic number of people to support. Starting small helps to get work underway and use the learning from this to grow the project and number of people to support. The dashboard filters enable the cohort to be refined.

## ● Allocate adequate time for engagement

It takes time to gather all the relevant stakeholders needed and then to build interest, relationships, common goals and refine a delivery plan. Planning for the support needed in winter should start in the summertime.

## ● Build on existing services

Connecting with existing services and projects that provide a broad range of health, wellbeing and financial support for people will create a holistic offer which makes best use of the resources available.

## ● Provide appropriate pre appointment information

Information leaflets to be shared with people before they have their appointment for the clinical review are now used to explain the background to the project, what will happen at the appointment and what the onwards referrals might include. It is hoped this will help to manage expectations and provide assurance that the service offers and stakeholders are genuine and connected.

## ● Build trust through consistent communication

We have learnt that maintaining a single point of contact for the project has helped to build the relationship and trust between the care-co-ordinator and patient. This means that patients have been more willing to open up and share information about the other issues or problems they are experiencing that may be affecting their physical and mental health, including housing and financial issues.

# Next Steps

- Continue delivery of the existing projects: St Helens, Knowsley and Warrington.
- Spread and adoption of the approach
  - Fuel Poverty Toolkit
- Evaluation
  - Medium term: small number of patients, pre-post intervention.
  - Long term: Real World Intervention Causal Evaluation (RICE) tool using a control group.



<https://www.healthinnovationnw.nhs.uk/tackling-fuel-poverty-toolkit>



# Warrington Disability Partnership

Dave Thompson, Chief Executive



# Cost of Living Crisis Disabled People

Dave Thompson MBE DL  
Co-Founder & Chief Executive



# Facts & Figures (North West)

- 14.1 million disabled adults in the UK
- North West - 1.5 million disabled adults and 50,000 carers
- Over 8% of residents state their day to day lives are “limited a lot”
- Over 10% stated their day to day lives are “limited a little”
- Residents aged 50 to 54 years of age make up the largest age group accounting for over 8% of the total population
- 83% disabled people acquire their impairment during their working life

# Cost of Living Crisis – Disabled People

- The cost-of-living crisis is impacting everyone now, but it has a disproportional impact on Disabled people.
- More people are reporting a long-term health condition or disability than did so eight years ago.
- Nearly half of people living in poverty are disabled people.
- Nearly half of disabled households have struggled to keep their home warm, compared to 30% of non-disabled households.



# Cost of Living Crisis – Disproportionate Impact<sup>t</sup>

- More disabled households are:
  - without savings (38% vs 22%)
  - struggle to pay bills (30% vs 13%)
  - holding more credit card debt (11% vs 7%)
  - eat lower quality food compared with (43% vs 25%)
  - have had to cut back the number of meals eaten (31% vs 12%)
  - not going out compared with (35% vs 17%)

# Cost of Living Crisis – Disproportionate Impact

- Reducing electricity usage is not an option for people who rely on mobility aids and medical equipment as part of their basic daily needs.
- Turning these off results in reduced independence and poorer physical and mental health, as well as being life threatening.
- Due to the increase in the cost of living some disabled people are currently facing the decision of whether to charge their equipment or eat. *(Direct Payments Personal Assistant)*

# Cost of Living Crisis – Disproportionate Impact

- In addition to standard household appliances such as washing machines and tumble driers, disabled people have the running costs of necessary equipment, resulting in higher monthly and annual costs than those of non-disabled people.
- These electricity costs soon spiral with other electrically-charged items as individuals often rely on multiple aids as a basic daily human need, including powered wheelchairs, mobility scooters, rise and recline chairs, adjustable beds, hoists, through floor and stair lifts, suction and feed pumps, CPAP machines and ventilators.

# Cost of Living Crisis – Disproportionate Impact

- *“It's hard because I used to donate to food banks and now I need to go to them.”*
- *“I have an assistance dog, his food has gone up, which is so unfair as he is not a pet, he supports my independence.”*
- *“I sit in the dark for long periods. I limit heating. I don't wash as often despite having a greater need to wash clothing due to incontinence.*
- *“I struggle to afford to charge batteries for my scooter. I'm not eating as much. No spare money for hobbies or socialising.”*
- *“I need to put money in my electric meter and pay for my home care, but it leaves me short before my next benefits payments.”*

# Cost of Living Crisis – Disproportionate Impact

- Turning down the heating isn't an option for many disabled people. Many conditions require a warm environment because cold causes pain, or a reduction in temperature could be clinically dangerous.
- *“I’m struggling to find ways to keep my non-mobile disabled daughter warm without having the heating on.”*
- *“I have medical condition that requires I stay warm or risk losing toes, fingers, heart attack.”*
- *“I rely on oxygen and my energy costs have increased massively, this has resulted in missing hospital appointments due to lack of money to buy petrol for my Motability car.”*

# Cost of Living Crisis – Disproportionate Impact

- The cost of living is causing stress, anxiety and depression resulting in difficulties in going out and do the extra little things that cause happiness. Like having a coffee with a friend, going for a haircut or buying makeup... it's money for the bare essentials only.  
*(WDP Lunch Clubs)*
- *“It is impacting my life because I have Motor Neurone Disease and have been told to do things while I still can. With everything costing more it is difficult.”*
- *We have no money spare to visit places to make memories, which is so sad as my wife has Alzheimer's, and we have limited time to do things together.”*

# Cost of Living Crisis – Employment

The disability employment gap is the difference between the employment rate of disabled people and non-disabled people.

The gap has remained persistently at around 30% for over a decade.

In 2020, the employment rate for disabled people was 53.7%, compared to 82.0% for non-disabled people, resulting in an employment gap of 28.4 percentage points.

The gap recently increased to a new high between July to September 2022, and continues to see no change.

With over 2.5 million unemployed people having a disability or health condition, the Government have prioritised Employment for Disabled People

Targeted information, advice and guidance on:

- Energy efficiencies
- Support services (Inc. Priority Services)
- Income maximisation (benefits, concessions and care contributions)
- Appropriate employment support

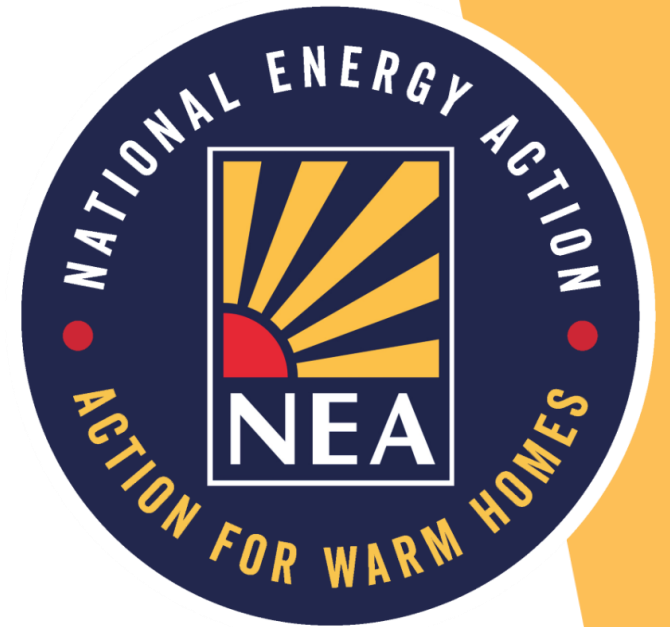


# Thank You

Warrington Disability Partnership  
 Centre for Independent Living  
 Warrington  
 WA5 1BA  
 Tel: 01925 240064  
[www.disabilitypartnership.org.uk](http://www.disabilitypartnership.org.uk)



# REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING



# Introduction to the Energy Ombudsman

Sonia Facchini, Group Product Senior Leader



# Who are we?



- We run ombudsman schemes for the energy and communications sectors
- 20 years' experience in dispute resolution
- Close working with the relevant regulators



# Why are we here?

- Ensure more people can access the support they need to resolve disputes
- Break down barriers for people who may feel it isn't for them
- Enables us to appropriately investigate and resolve disputes
- Help you help the people you work with

# What do we do?

- Provide an impartial service with a balanced approach
- We're an independent authority, a credible and believable voice, simply to do the right thing

Most common types of energy disputes are about:

- Gas and electricity bills
  - Smart meters and Feed-in-Tariffs
  - Customer service
  - Problems that arise because of switching energy supplier
  - The way an energy product or service has been sold, including doorstep sales
  - The supply of energy to a home
- 
- In 2022 we accepted over 105,000 disputes about suppliers in the energy sector



# How we help consumers

- Our service is free to consumers and easy to use
- We guide consumers through the process
- One consistent case handler throughout to understand the case and consumer
- Online, postal and phone



Case resolutions include apologies, corrective action and financial awards

We communicate with consumers according to their preferences and offer flexibility and reasonable adjustments

# Raising a dispute

We have a 6-stage process:

1. Raise the issue with the supplier
2. Register the dispute with us (if 8 weeks passes or a deadlock letter is issued)
3. Send us supporting information
4. Review the dispute
5. Reach a decision
6. Deliver accepted remedies in 28 days



# Getting in touch

You can contact us via:

## Website

[www.energyombudsman.org](http://www.energyombudsman.org)

## Phone

0330 440 1624

## Email

[enquiry@energyombudsman.org](mailto:enquiry@energyombudsman.org)

## Postal

Energy Ombudsman  
P.O. Box 966  
Warrington WA4 9DF



# Update from Ofgem

Patrick Gould, Senior Policy Manager, Ofgem



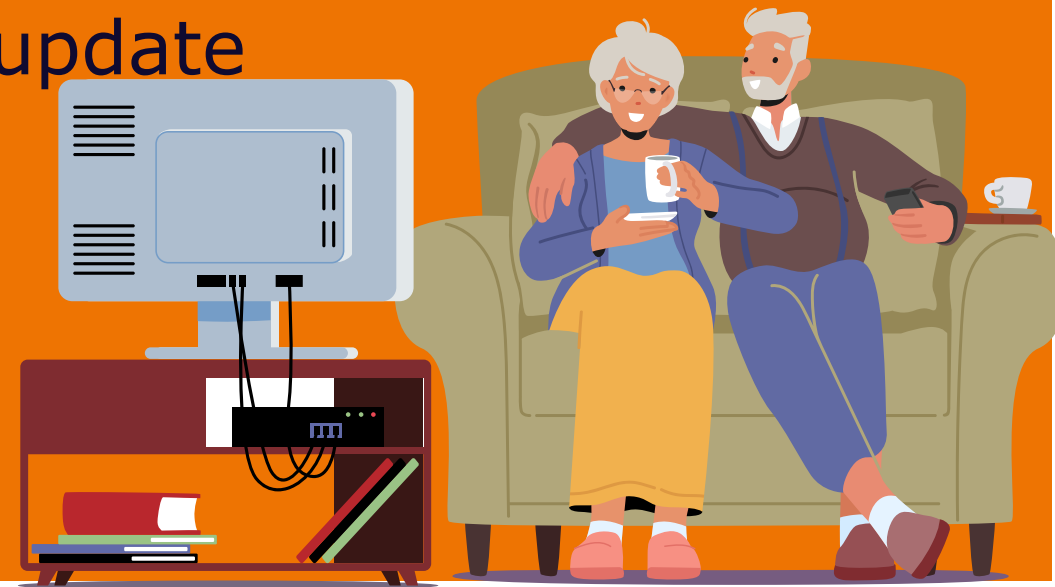
# Protections for vulnerable consumers

NEA Fuel Poverty Forum | April  
2024



# Agenda

- Debt and affordability call for input
- Price protections
- Priority Services Register update
- Involuntary pre-payment meter update
- Warm Home Discount/ECO
- Consumer Vulnerability Strategy

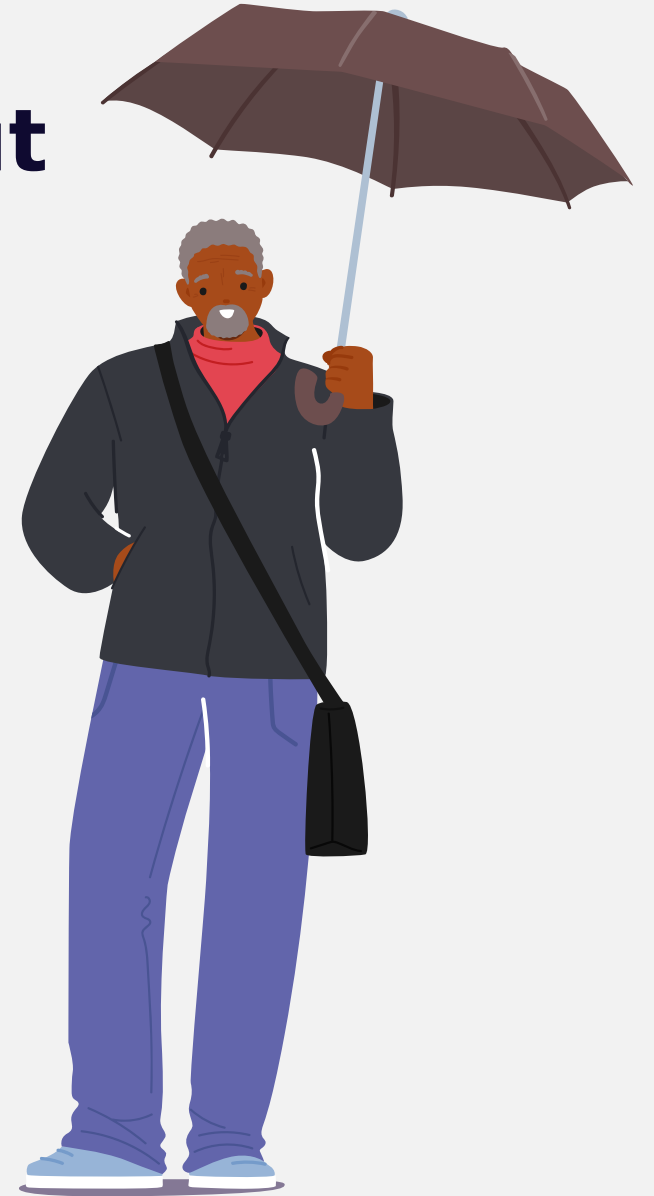


# Debt and affordability call for input

The call for input is based on three challenges:

1. Whether current affordability challenges will continue to impact debt levels and therefore, **whether the challenge is temporary or more enduring and systemic.**
2. If there is a way to get more money into the energy system and allocate costs between groups of consumers that will **minimise future debt and support those most in need.**
3. How we can **ensure debt is managed efficiently, and appropriately**, by all market participants including government and Ofgem.

\*Call for input closes on 13<sup>th</sup> May



# Price protections

- The introduction of half hourly settlement from 2025 means customers will have **more flexibility in how they use and pay for electricity**, and is expected to lead to a growth in smarter time of use tariffs that reward customers for being more flexible in their energy usage.
- We have an increasingly renewables-dominated electricity sector, with increasing numbers of consumers using electric vehicles, heat pumps, and solar panels. **This should reduce costs for all.**
- We are now considering the **future of the price cap** and how it needs to adjust to ensure customers are protected, they continue to pay a fair price for their energy, and they get to realise all the benefits of net zero

\*Call for evidence closes on 6<sup>th</sup> May



# Priority Services Register



"Is the system we have in place to manage, track and store information on vulnerable customers really fit for the 21st Century?"

My view is that we should aim to try to do much better.

We should all consider building towards a joint register, not just between water and energy, but including wider sectors and potentially local and national government"

Jonathan Brearley, CEO Ofgem



# Involuntary PPM

- In 2023, Ofgem developed a code of practice and subsequent **licence changes** to protect those at risk of involuntary PPM.
- In January, we announced the first of the suppliers to have met our strict restart criteria
- We have been **monitoring** the suppliers closely as they have restarted, with some still to action any installations at all.





# Warm Home Discount and ECO

In 2022-23, almost £443.8 million in WHD was delivered to customers (£395.2 million in England & Wales and £48.5 million in Scotland). Rebates of £150 were provided to over 2.66 million customers in or at risk of fuel poverty. The scheme has been extended to March 2026.



As of 7 March 2024 over 355,000 measures had been submitted under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4), consisting of over 40,000 boiler upgrades (just under 11,000 of which are to a renewable heating system), nearly 45,000 loft insulation and 25,000 solid wall insulation measures.

# Consumer Vulnerability Strategy

- In 2019 we published our Consumer Vulnerability strategy 2025 with themes and outcomes we hoped to achieve. The five themes are:
  1. Improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data
  2. Supporting those struggling with their bills
  3. Driving significant improvements in customer service for vulnerable groups
  4. Encouraging positive and inclusive innovation
  5. Working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors
- We are working towards publishing a new strategy at the beginning of 2025.



# Energy Aware: advising and empowering consumers around their energy rights, use and available support

1. Advise and empower consumers to make the best possible choices in making their energy use more affordable, more accessible, and more efficient.
2. Through our campaign content strands, engage with trusted third parties, and build our capacity to communicate with consumers through them as well as via Ofgem owned channels.

Debt

Energy Saving Advice

Supplier Relations

Consumer Understanding

Financial Support

Non-Domestic

Supply Disruption

Helping you be #EnergyAware

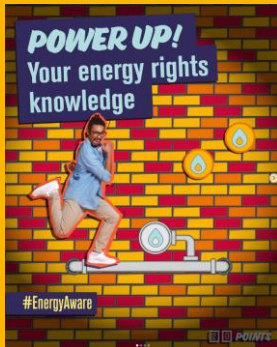
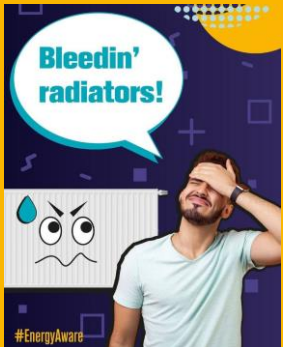
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# Our ask...

## 1. Follow our socials (and ask others to do the same)



## 2. Use our toolkits and information

- We will send these out following the call
- Created based on consumer research and insights
- Over 200 assets in total
- You can lift directly on to your social platforms, or use the info to create your own versions
- Includes posters that can be printed and displayed at important community locations

We would love to know what you use and how you use them – please feed back to us with photos if you can.

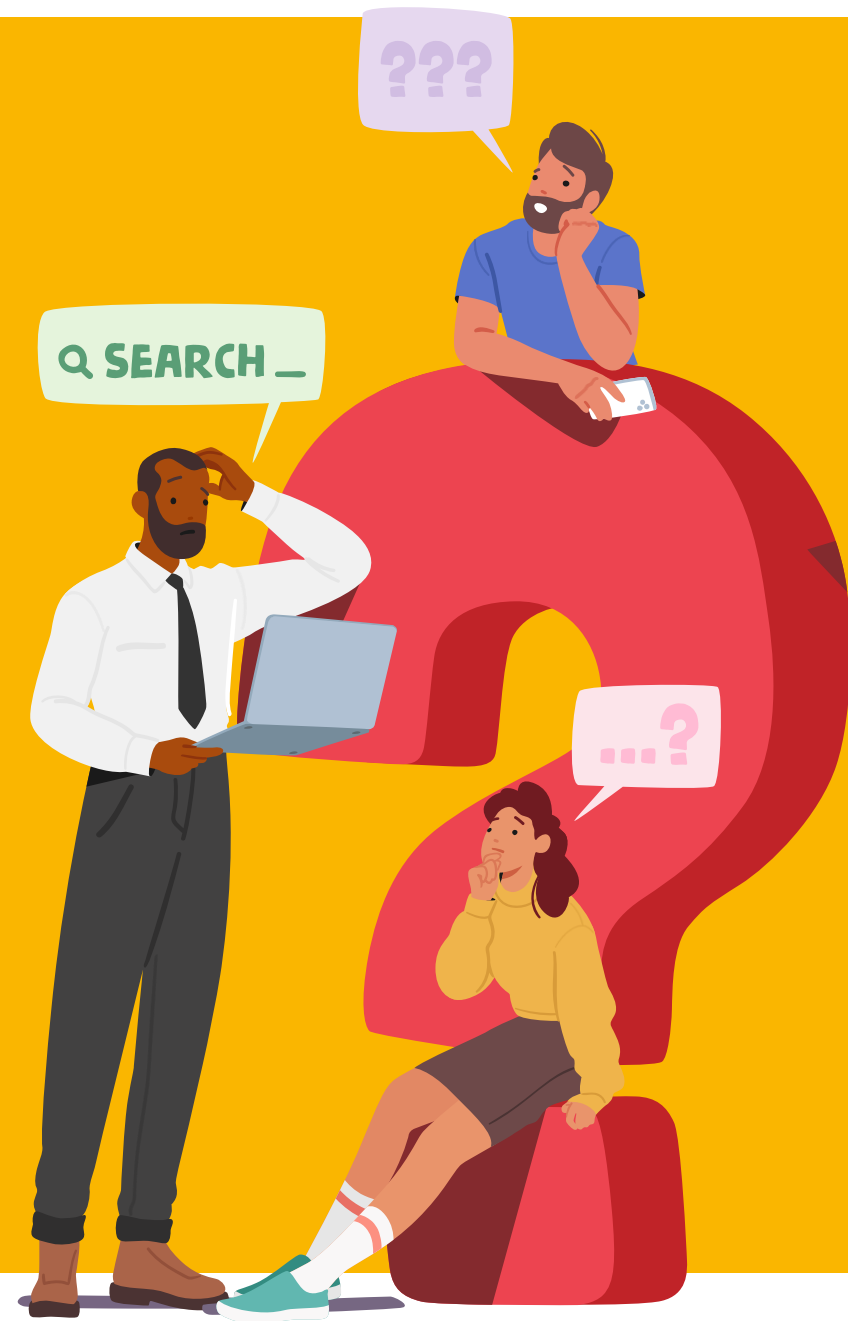
## 3. Let us know what else you need

Is there more that we can do to give you the tools you need to communicate with and help vulnerable people you interact with?

If so, get in touch and we will look at what we can do.



# Questions?



Helping you be #EnergyAware

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# GROUP DISCUSSIONS



# In small groups please discuss:

- 1. Affordability and debt** – what steps need to be taken to tackle energy affordability and reduce the impact of high levels of debt in the energy sector?
- 2. Energy consumers and the private rented sector** – how can we ensure that private landlords upgrade their homes to a reasonable level of energy efficiency (EPC C)?



# THANK YOU!

Thank you for attending and for your contributions.

We'd be grateful if you can complete an evaluation form and hand this back to a member of National Energy Action staff or scan this QR code to complete online.



Please stay for lunch and further networking.



National Energy Action is an independent charity. Registration No. 290511

