
Cost of Living Crisis

Leicester update



Leicester
City Council

Our initial approach

- Anti-Poverty strategy
- Coordinating whole-council approach
- Website, and no wrong door approach

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IMT

- Emergency Food Cell
- Revenues and Welfare Advice Cell
- Adult Social Care and Education Cell
- Voluntary Sector and Communities Cell
- Public Health Cell
- LCC Housing
- Partners

IMT

- **Emergency Food Cell**

- Revenues and Welfare Advice Cell
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- Monitoring the health of foodbanks
 - Supporting providers
 - Facilitating advice within foodbanks
 - Working with Leicester Food Partnership
 - Addressing broader issues such as uptake of Free School Meals (FSM)

IMT

- Emergency Food Cell

- ## Revenues and Welfare Advice Cell

- Adult Social Care and Education Cell
- Voluntary Sector and Communities Cell
- Public Health Cell
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- Successful administration of Household Support Fund (HSF) (7335 applications)
- Focus on income maximisation
- Grants to foodbanks and other providers
- Two waves of Anti-poverty grants
- Managing and supporting advice provision
- Addressing broader issues such as volunteer shortages, retention and recruitment
- HSF4

IMT

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- Monitoring Social Care Worker Welfare
- Exploring implementation of Energy Rebate Scheme within care homes
- Monitoring decisions around the Hardship Fund
- Looking to support provider of food bank for carers
- Managing and supporting advice provision
- Supporting SEND schools
- Administering Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)

IMT

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- Public Health Cell
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- Partners
 - Regular Cost of Living drop in sessions
 - Taking schemes and programmes into the heart of communities
 - Listening to the issues facing communities
 - Breaking down barriers and tackling inequities
 - Bringing first-hand issues to IMT

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- ## Public Health Cell

- LCC Housing
- Partners

- Advice provision – Foodbank Plus
- Mental Health First Aid Training – Foodbanks and other frontline staff
- Working to embed mental health conversations into financial advice and support conversations
- Infant Nutrition
- Advice and support programmes within Warm Spaces
- Fuel Poverty Programme

IMT

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- ## LCC Housing

- Partners

- Continuing to Support tenants with a focus on advice, support, income maximisation and sustaining tenancies
- Very low eviction rate thanks to focus on engaging with tenants in difficulty
- Engaging strongly with the broader cost of living support programmes
- Case studies looking at those in most difficulty
- Establishing pathways to remedy emergency situations related to cost of living

IMT

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- **Partners**

- Not working alone
- Universities
- NHS
- Citizen's Advice Leicester (CITAL)
- Community Advice and Law Services (CALs)
- Leicester Food Partnership
- Community Organisations
- Mental Health Partnership Board
- Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Challenges on the horizon

- **Likely increase in council tax**



Leaflet -feeling the squeeze. Back of the leaflet points to Connect to us. Pointing customers online for various services, including BetterOff.



Signing up to Stop the knock recommendations. Clear commitment to reduce the use of collection agents.



Training for front line officers around cost-of-living advice



New module for SMS messaging for customers. Alerts customers prior to formal letters.



£25 reduction on all bills with CT Support fund as of 1st April.

Challenges on the horizon

- Advice services under pressure

- Advice services under pressure. People applying for benefits to increase their income. Lots of support needed around digital. Children's centres under pressure. Debt building.
- Increase in specialist referrals – CALS checking validity of eviction notices etc.
- Retention and recruitment of advisors within advice sector.
- We're providing extended contracts to give reassurance and longer-term stability
- Funding Foodbank Plus, and extending other areas of advice provision



Challenges on the horizon

- **Commissioned services under pressure**

- Costs building for commissioned services
- Monitoring and engaging
- Supporting and accommodating changes
- Managing the risk to service users



Support

- Website
- No wrong door – signposting support
- Administering the Household Support Fund
- BetterOff (C/Tax, H/benefits, Healthy Start)
- Broader advice offer through CITAL/CALS/Foodbank Plus etc
- Warm Welcome
- Wellbeing Champions
- LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker)
- Longer term solutions

Fuel Poverty and Health Programme

Leicester Energy Action

Funded by LLR Integrated Care Board

Delivered by NEA and Leicester City Council – Public Health Division



Leicester, Leicestershire
and Rutland



Impact on Fuel Poor Households

The number of fuel poor households, in England, are measured as those living on a low income and in an energy inefficient home.

The prices quoted for the price cap of £2500 is for the average user – fuel poor households have an above average demand to stay warm.

For a household living in an EPC F rated property, their annual bill will rise by an estimated £1000 more than the average (£2500) set to increase in April 2023 to (£3000)

National Energy Action's figures show that the number of households in fuel poverty will increase from 4.5 million UK households last October to **8.4 million**. This will bring increased demand for our support as well as food bank support, and debt advice.



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Struggling to pay

- General affordability of essentials food and fuel
- Self-disconnection / emergency top up support
- Medical equipment dependency
- Unmanageable / excessive / overestimated direct debits

Energy debt

- Excessive / quick penalties
- Unaffordable repayment plans / repayment periods
- Hardship support / debt relief
- Quick to default to PPM with recent reports of people on Smart credit meters been switches to SMART Pre Pay to pay off debt, or Pre Pay meters been installed under warrant sooner as debt amounts increase more rapidly due to cost.

Main client issues

(as of October 2022)



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Health impacts of fuel poverty

- Cold homes can cause or worsen a range of serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, bronchitis, and asthma.
- Each year, around 10,000 people die as a result of living in a cold home.
- Fuel poverty can also have a significant impact on mental health and is a known risk factor for suicide.



Worsening existing conditions

- Pre-existing chronic medical conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Asthma and heart disease are particularly badly affected by a cold home.



Excess winter deaths

- Estimates suggest that some 10 per cent of excess winter deaths are directly attributable to fuel poverty and 21.5 per cent are attributable to cold homes.



Fuel poverty in Leicester



Fuel poor households

● Leicester South	19.8%
● East Midlands	14.2%
● National average	13.23%



Fuel poor households

● Leicester East	17.2%
● East Midlands	14.2%
● National average	13.23%



Fuel poor households

● Leicester West	20.1%
● East Midlands	14.2%
● National average	13.23%

National Energy Action



Action for Warm Homes

Education
Training
Advice



National Energy Action



Action for Warm Homes

Education

Training
Advice



National Energy Action



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Coping strategies



Going to bed early to stay warm



Using unsafe, unserviced heating appliances or inappropriate devices like ovens to stay warm



"Marking" the bath to reduce the amount of water used each time



Only heating one room, or avoiding using central heating at all



Cutting back on electricity and using candles instead of lights



Showering away from the home in workplaces or leisure centres



Spending the day in heated spaces such as a library, café or even A&E



Leaving curtains closed all day or putting newspaper over windows



Cutting back on personal hygiene products



Cooking using alternative sources such as a barbecue or portable stove



Cutting back on buying essential personal items, food, eating only cold meals or reliance on food banks



Bathing less often, or resorting to a "sink wash"



Not inviting friends or family in to the home



Formal borrowing (credit cards and loans) or informal borrowing from friends and family



Deciding not to pay the water bill in order to pay a higher priority bill (such as energy or council tax)

Response to the cost-of-living crisis

Council tax rebate

• £150 rebate

Universal Grant

• £400 rebate

Household support fund

• Targeted

Cost of living payment

• People on

Pensioner cost of living payment

• 8 million

One-off disability payment

• 6 million in

Energy Efficiency Retrofit Schemes

Warmer Homes Greener Homes

Energy Company Obligation 4 (ECO)

Green Home Grants Local Authority Delivery (LAD)

Home Upgrade Grants (HUG)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY RETROFIT SCHEMES



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Phase One Advice Service rollout

Soft launch - Underway



Professional Services Referral via
Housing and Income Management
Teams across the City



Leicester-based team handling
referrals



Second phase rollout to be
confirmed following advisory board
meeting



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Training Programme

Increase

Increase the skills of professionals and volunteers

Extend

Extend the reach of the service

Ensure

Ensure a legacy of increased capacity to respond to fuel poverty and ill health in Leicester

Training Programme

C&G Level 3 Energy Awareness 6281 – 01

Dealing with the Energy crisis

Changing Energy Related Behavior

Understanding Fuel Poverty and the Impacts on Mental Health

Course details and further training opportunities are outlined on our website

Education Programme

Raising awareness of energy efficiency at home and at school

Tailored to needs & learning styles of children

Collaborative approach including discussion and role play

Enable children to educate others and influence their energy related behaviour

Initially targeting years 5-11

Thank you! Any Questions?



Action for Warm Homes



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