

# Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022

## Tackling the cost-of-living crisis



Barnsley – the place  
of possibilities.



**BARNSLEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

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## **1. Foreword by Julia Burrows, Director of Public Health, Barnsley Council**

News and information about the cost-of-living crisis are inescapable, it's been the main topic of many news channels for some time now. Tackling poverty and addressing the related inequalities is not new for us as a council, and it's at the heart of our public health practice. However, the scale of the current crisis is extraordinary, so it is timely that we have chosen to set out focus on it in our 2022 Director of Public Health Annual Report.



People are struggling to provide daily essentials such as food and keeping themselves warm. This is affecting all types of households across our borough with those most affected needing a staggering 17% or more increase in their income to enable them to provide for these basics. We have seen the cost of food nearly doubling with the cost of gas/electricity and fuel not far behind.

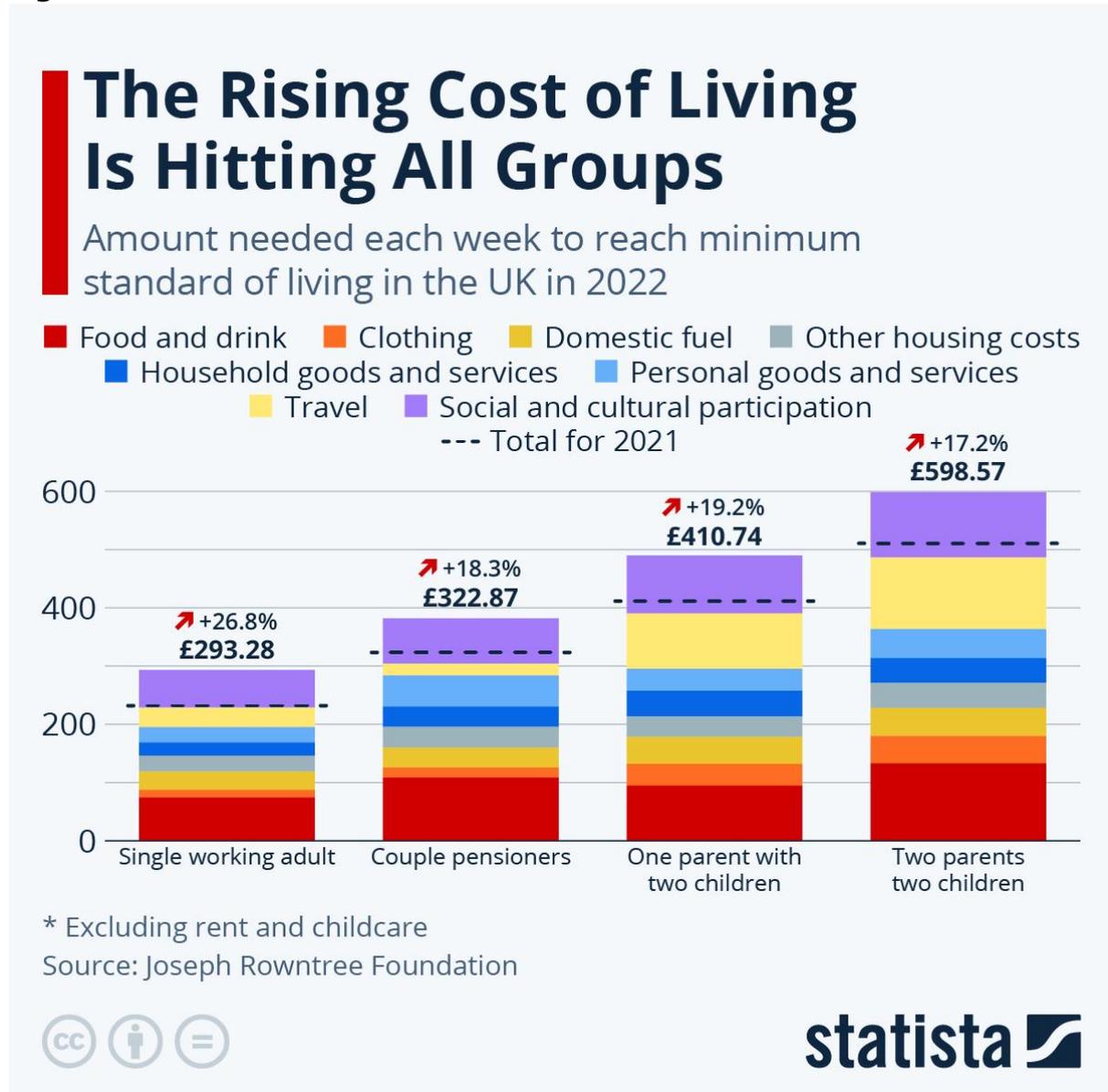
Poverty was already on the increase in Barnsley before COVID. Now with the significant gap between inflation and wage rises, we are seeing the inequality gap in our communities growing bigger. Families now need over £100 a month more to sustain normal levels of living.

This report provides evidence of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and how it is affecting households in our community. We show how we have responded using grants creatively and working with the community and voluntary sector to help us respond to the crisis.

## **2. Introduction**

The cost of living has increased both nationally and locally. The cost of living is the average amount of money that individuals need to be able to cover basic expenses such as food and housing. Everyone will be affected by the increases (see Figure 1); however, the impact will be greatest for those who are already under financial pressure. The costs, particularly energy, water and fuel prices, council tax and other key areas of household expenditure are also set to rise further in 2023.

Figure 1



Source: [Statista – Cost of living crisis impacts in UK](#)

Whilst the cost-of-living crisis is having a significant impact across the country, it is disproportionately affecting boroughs like Barnsley where poverty was already increasing before the COVID-19 pandemic, worsening inequalities, and making life even harder for our poorest communities. The uncertainty of future cost increases is set to amplify these challenges further.

As inflation (the rate of increase in prices) exceeds increases in wages, many individuals are seeing their household income reducing. In October 2022, Barnsley's inflation rate was 11.9%, however wages increased by only 0.8% between January and July 2022. This means that workers living in Barnsley are on average £101 a month poorer compared to the previous year, whilst spending on essentials has increased (Figure 2).



**Figure 2**

In addition, the 'poverty premium' which is the extra cost people on low incomes need to pay for essential goods and services; makes it even harder for some households to weather the storm of price increases. Examples of poverty premium include using prepayment meters to pay for gas and electricity, paying to access money and using higher-cost credit.

Reduced household income also impacts on people's ability to save. The Money and Pensions Service have undertaken research which shows that a quarter of UK adults have less than £100 set aside in savings, leaving them vulnerable to rising and unexpected bills.<sup>1</sup>

ONS research also indicates that adults living in the most deprived areas of England were more likely to report not being able to save in the next 12 months, than adults living in the least deprived areas of England.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. Evidence**

This section looks at some of the key local and national data available in order to provide an overview of the current cost of living, as of December 2022. It is noted that the data and intelligence around this area is moving at pace, and this report doesn't encompass every variable that impacts the cost of living in Barnsley.

The Resolution Foundation predicts an extra 1.3 million people, including 500,000 children, nationally will be forced into absolute poverty (i.e., not be able to feed themselves, keep warm and clean) in 22/23 due to a combination of falling income and rising inflation.<sup>4</sup> In 22/23:

- The typical working age household will experience a 4% fall in income (£1,100).
- An unemployed single person will see a 15% drop in income.
- Inflation is set to rise above 8%.

Sir Michael Marmot has led on health inequalities research for over 40 years. His work and key publications focus on the relationship between social conditions and inequalities in health. In the UK, a decade of austerity has impacted on public health and made health inequality worse. The cost-of-living crisis is unprecedented, with its threats to the health and wellbeing of the nation as <sup>1</sup>Marmot outlines for people living on the edge a small decrease in income can literally be a matter of life and death.

The latest data from ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey<sup>3</sup> published in October 2022 shows that around 89% of adults in Great Britain continue to report that their cost of living has increased. This is an increase from around 62% in November 2021. The most common reasons reported for the increased cost of living were:

- An increase in the price of their food shop (94%).
- An increase in gas or electricity bills (82%).
- An increase in the price of fuel (77%).

The most common actions reported by all adults because of the rising cost of living were spending less on non-essentials (67%) and using less fuel such as gas or electricity in their home (63%). Around 1 in 50 (2%) adults reported that they are using support from charities including foodbanks because of the increase in the cost of living.

### **3.1. Local impact of rising cost of living**

Over a third (36%) of the Barnsley population live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country (IMD, 2019), and around 1 in 5 children in Barnsley live in absolute low-income families. Census 2021 data suggests that almost two-thirds of the Barnsley population can be considered 'deprived' according to four dimensions of deprivation which include employment, education, health, and housing.

Across South Yorkshire, there are 620,000 homes with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) below C (60% of all stock); requiring c.£4bn of retrofit investment to address thermal efficiency and increase SAP ratings. There are also almost 20%

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Marmot, Jessica Allen, Tammy Boyce, Peter Goldblatt, Joana Morrison (2020) Health equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on. London: Institute of Health Equity <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on/the-marmot-review-10-years-on-full-report.pdf>

of our households living in fuel poverty and we believe that this figure may well double this winter given the current energy and wider cost-of-living crisis. In Barnsley, the latest available fuel poverty statistics<sup>2</sup> (from 2020) showed that 19.2% of households were in fuel poverty, some 20,798 homes. Recent media reports suggest that this figure has now risen to 37%, meaning a third of all households are now struggling to meet the cost of their energy and keep their homes warm.

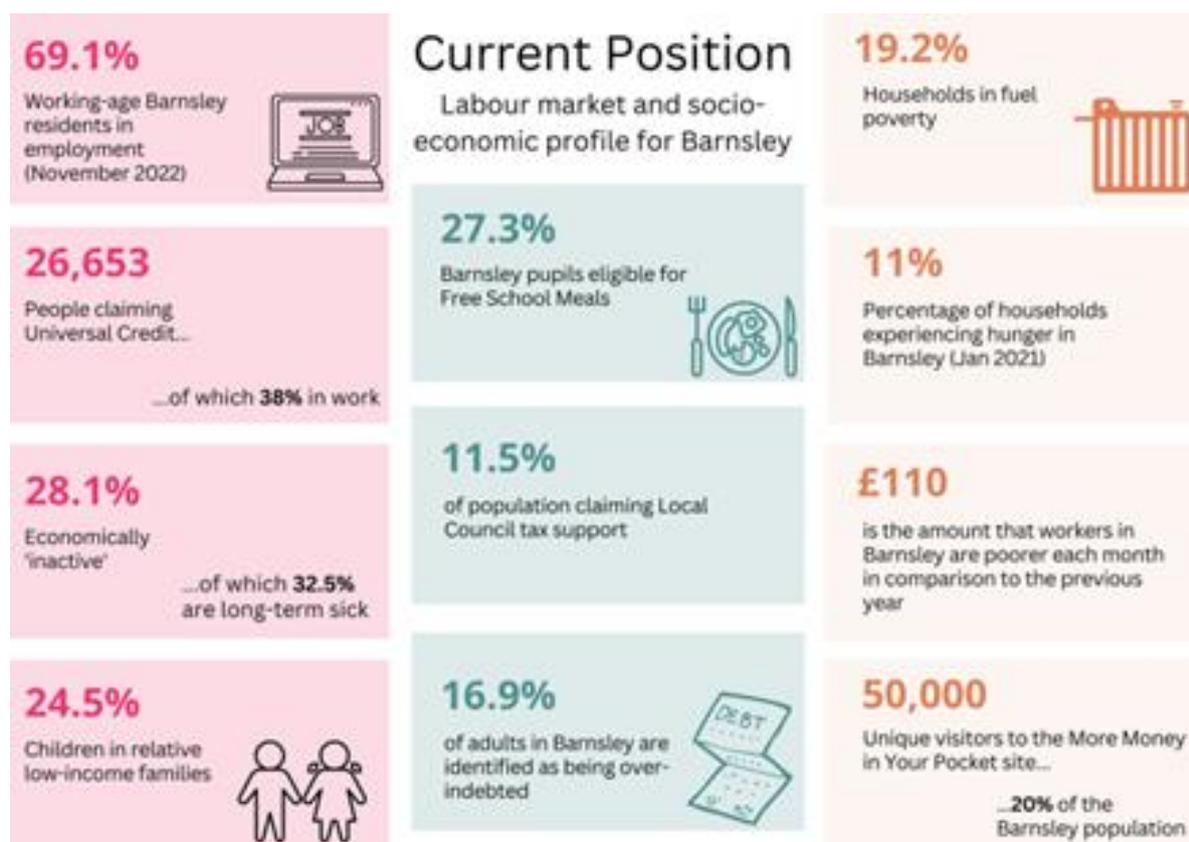
The South Yorkshire Authorities have already taken advantage of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy retrofit programmes, with over £50m<sup>3</sup> secured via Local Authority Delivery scheme (LAD2) across our local Net Zero Hub, £6m via LAD3 (across Barnsley and Sheffield) and c.£6m via Social Housing Decarbonisation fund. However, this funding is not sufficient to address the scale of the problems with stock condition and low incomes. The cost of retrofit measures continues to rise across the industry meaning a £1M investment would be able to provide external wall insulation to just 56 homes. There are also delivery issues within these programmes nationally (as well as locally), and authorities and other providers have been unable to maximise the opportunities of this investment. Regionally, we are working closely to understand how we can overcome supply chain issues and lack of national investment in the retrofit sector and there is an urgent need for market development to provide a supplier base in South Yorkshire.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2022>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/home-energy-performance-retrofit-funding-for-local-authorities-and-housing-associations-to-help-improve-the-energy-performance-of-homes>

**Figure 3: local statistics**



Recent research by the Centre for Progressive Policy<sup>6</sup> found South Yorkshire to be particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, with Barnsley ranked the 30<sup>th</sup> most vulnerable LA nationally, as outlined below in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Cost of Living Vulnerability Index, Centre for Progressive Policy**

IGN member	Local Authority name	Local Authority Ranking (1= most vulnerable)	Food Insecurity (% of all adults)	Fuel Poverty (% of households)	Child Poverty (% of children)	Universal Credit Claimant Count (% of working age)	Economic Inactivity (% of working age)	Low Pay (% of jobs)
South Yorkshire	Barnsley	30	15%	19%	33%	4%	27%	17%
Combined Authority	Doncaster	12	14%	18%	35%	5%	25%	25%
	Rotherham	17	14%	17%	34%	5%	26%	20%
	Sheffield	47	8%	17%	36%	5%	24%	21%

So as the cost-of-living crisis deepens, many more children, young people and adults in Barnsley will be living in poverty.

- Communities that were previously outside of the most deprived 20% nationally may now face the same levels of financial hardship as previously experienced by communities in deciles one and two.
- Many are at risk of becoming destitute. This means regularly going without the absolute essentials – not being able to eat, heat their homes or keep clean.<sup>7</sup>

Local intelligence tells us that since April 2022, Barnsley Citizens Advice Bureau has seen:

- 134% increase in unique clients compared to the same period last year.
- 176% increase in problems dealt with compared to the same period last year.

Data shows that over the last two years, enquiries to CAB about energy related issues have steadily increased. These are expected to rise further over the coming months. The number of individuals approaching CAB for 'crisis support' including referrals to food banks or other charitable support (covers any emergency financial support or support in kind people need to make ends meet) has risen month-on-month throughout 2022 to over 250 clients.

### **3.2. Potential health impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on Barnsley residents**

Not only will the rising cost of living impact on people's immediate health and ability to access health care but also their longer-term health. By having to focus on their immediate needs and threats, people living in poverty may make decisions that are damaging for their health in the longer term.<sup>4</sup>

Regionally, 7% of households were estimated to have experienced food insecurity (2020/21), that equates to 96,000 households in South Yorkshire. Tooth decay, obesity rates and diabetes prevalence are already challenges for Barnsley and set to get worse if food poverty is not addressed.

As noted previously, Barnsley already has lower average earnings and lower employment; if it is likely that this declines further, we can expect to see an increase in the levels of stress and anxiety linked to financial pressures. Levels of common mental health disorders, suicide and domestic abuse are currently a concern across Barnsley.

Living in a warm, safe home is essential for staying healthy and well. There is strong evidence that living in cold, damp, and unsafe homes can affect people's physical and mental health and can increase the risk of ill health, injury or dying<sup>5</sup>. Cold weather increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, respiratory conditions, flu, and falls. We also know that there are excess deaths in winter months due to housing and economic factors, circulating infectious diseases (particularly flu and COVID-19) and individual vulnerability to the health effects of being cold. The combination of low incomes, high energy costs and poor heating and insulation could leave many more individuals in conditions which are unfit to help them survive the cold weather.

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<sup>4</sup> How poverty affects people's decision-making processes Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington and Jessica Rea 2017

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

Pressures from the cost of transport and fuel may prevent people from using key prevention services like attending for antenatal visits, vaccination and child immunisations or accessing screening. There are currently uptake challenges in several prevention services such as MMR vaccination, Chlamydia detection, and health check uptakes. 11% of Barnsley residents don't have access to a GP or walk-in health clinic/centre within a 15-minute walk.

While we can expect worsening health outcomes for our population, the reality is that the cost-of-living crisis won't affect us all equally. There is compound effect whereby those already living in the most deprived areas will feel the impact disproportionately more than others. It is the combined pressures of energy prices on top of falling wages on top of poor-quality housing that will mean the worsening health outcomes noted previously will be felt within certain communities, which will widen inequalities.

As well as the compound effects noted above, there is a further challenge that the worsening health outcomes will prevent some from engaging in economic activity as they may be too ill to work – this creates a cycle of poor health, to lack of income, which leads to further ill health and so on. As well as impacted families and whole generations, this will impact the productivity and economic prosperity.

Poverty will negatively impact on the life chances of children; not only will the cost-of-living crisis cause disproportionate impacts, it will also fall harder on low-income households who will experience a higher level of inflation than richer households and builds on the uneven impact of the pandemic in terms of less resilience (richer people saved, poorer people had to spend savings).

#### **4. Our response to helping people through the cost-of-living crisis**

News and information about the cost-of-living crisis are inescapable, it's been the main topic of many news channels for some time now. Tackling poverty and addressing the related inequalities is not new for us as a council; however, the scale of the current crisis is extraordinary. We have a borough-wide commitment with our partners to support people and businesses through this period of uncertainty and to continue to provide help to people who need it most. We've really seen Barnsley pull together over the last two years, and we hope that this will continue. As a council, we have our own financial challenges with increases in fuel bills, goods, and services. We know people need support, but the council hasn't got the money to fund all the things that people need. What we can do is maximise the impact of the help we can provide, helping people to get the financial support, information and advice and supporting community initiatives into action.

## 4.1. Our information hub - More Money In Your Pocket

Our More Money In Your Pocket webpage provides a whole host of information on getting help with the rising cost of living. People can find information and advice about free or discounted support which is funded by the Council and other organisations. We have included links to many other websites, so people can find out how they can save money or get help.



### How we communicate

We have made no assumptions that people will automatically find the webpage nor that they will fully understand what it can offer. We have therefore reached out to our staff, agencies both in the private and public sector and residents through a range of communication methods. This includes cascade training to teams, workshops, health, and well-being events and much more. We have taken time to talk to people and explain what is on offer and have translated the messages in different languages and in easy read.

Nearly a quarter of our population has visited our website as of December 2022.

### More Money In Your Pocket Weekly Summary

Visitors Per Page		
Page	Visitors Last Week	Visitors YTD
MMIYP Homepage	1083	21645
Housing Support	208	4844
Utility Bills	326	8190
Food Support	519	11049
Budgeting Support	30	1773
Wellbeing Support	113	2043
Pocket Friendly Recipes	5	390
Employment and skills support	21	290
HSG and other support	1154	9307
Barneslai Homes	122	985
Freebies and Money Saving Ideas	184	1920
<b>Total</b>	<b>3765</b>	<b>62436</b>

### Visitor Breakdown

	Last Week	YTD
Unique Visitors	3765	62436
Page Views	5300	93769

### Visitors Per Page



We have delivered 97 training sessions. Some have been large such as the health and wellbeing event at GXO global logistics that employs 4000 staff and our Brights Nights event which is three nights of arts and entertainment in Barnsley town centre. Others have been smaller through staff and partnership meetings.

### More Money In Your Pocket Weekly Summary

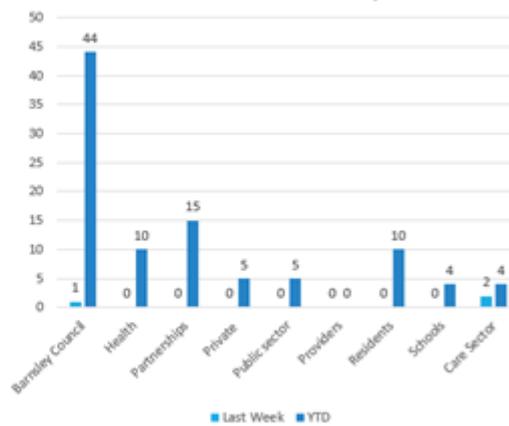
#### Cascade Training Sessions Summary

Area	Last Week	YTD
Barnsley Council	1	44
Health	0	10
Partnerships	0	15
Private	0	5
Public sector	0	5
Providers	0	0
Residents	0	10
Schools	0	4
Care Sector	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>97</b>

Above is total number of cascade training sessions and events that have been delivered by area.

There are currently 21 more events booked awaiting delivery.

Sessions Delivered So Far – By Area



The leader of the Council and senior management has strengthened the key messages about how we can help people, lending their support to promote the website.



We will continue to update the website and promote it with partners and organisations funded to support people with the cost-of-living crisis (see section 4b below).



#### 4.2. Using grants creatively

Local authorities have been provided with grants that should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for the other support that the government has made available. We have thought carefully about how we can target those households. Some of the funds have been used to target people on benefits such as pension credit and housing benefit. However, we have taken steps to work alongside our community-based organisations to hand the grant to them to distribute to those in need. We believe this type of approach is the best way to get to those who may not be on benefits. We have seen in Section 3 how the cost-of-living crisis is impacting on low-income households. Local authorities do not have details about those households, whereas community groups can find this out by working closely with local people.

#### Types of grants:

##### Household Support Grant

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a sum of £4.6 million was allocated to Barnsley Council to help people with the cost-of-living crisis. A significant proportion of that was given to people on benefits in the form of post office credit. However, a sum of £816,000 in total has been used to allocated to community organisations.

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund

There are 3 themes associated with this funding with a purpose of building pride in place and increasing life chances. Under the communities and place theme we have allocated £500,000 to support people with the cost-of-living crisis and have used this funding to support community organisations.

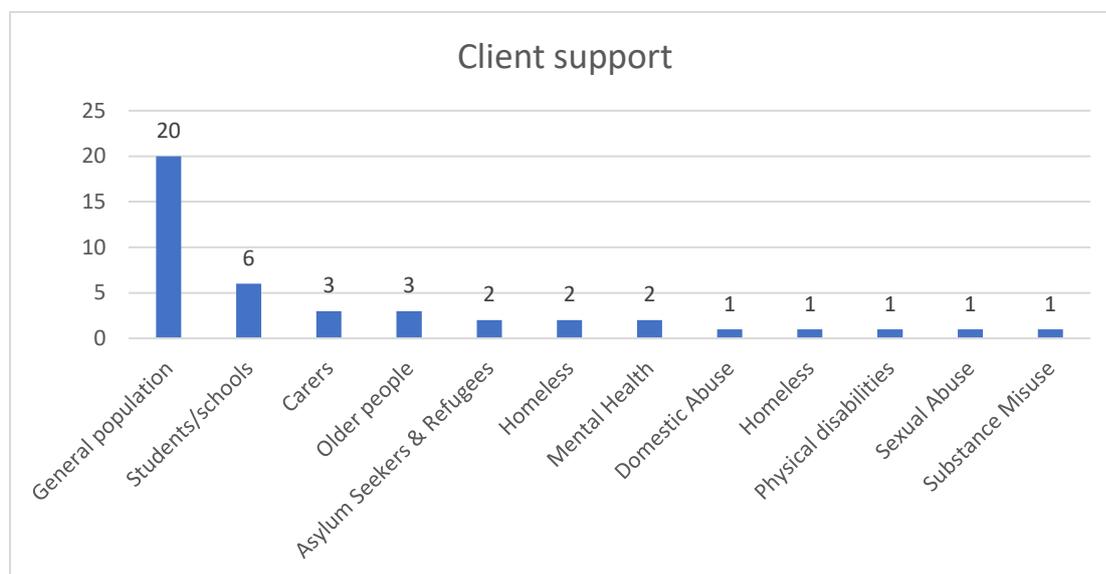
## South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Led by the current Mayor of South Yorkshire Oliver Coppard, they bring together the local authorities of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield and the private sector through their Local Enterprise Partnership. They have a shared purpose to create a stronger, greener, fairer South Yorkshire. Their Board has agreed to commit up to £700k of windfall budget surplus to a food-security package as part of a wider regional response to the cost-of-living crisis. In Barnsley we have been allocated £150,000 to support our Good Food Partnership initiatives as set out in section 5.

### 4.3. Our partner community-based organisations

We have worked with over 40 different community-based organisations to allocate funds from the grants set out above. With their support and dedication, we have been able to target those in need including low-income households.

20 of the organisations offer support to the general population with 23 targeted specialist groups such as students and older people.

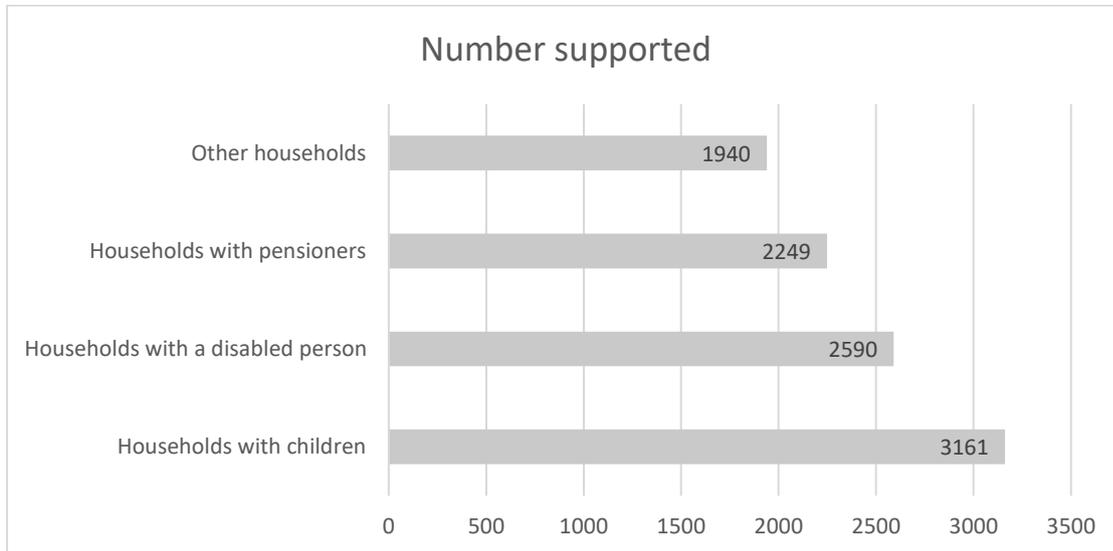


We have also funded in-house services such as adult and community social care teams, our family centres and area teams to offer support to their most vulnerable households.

#### 4.4. Reaching those most in need

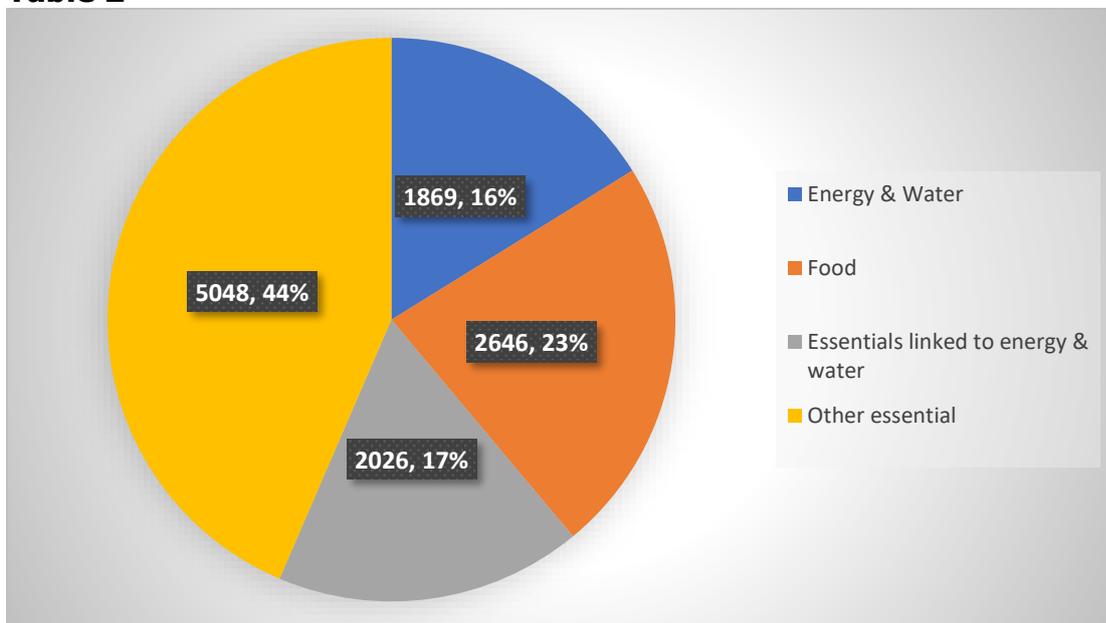
**Household Support Grant:** Between October 2022 and March 2023 and by working with our community-based organisations we have spent £500k and reached 9,940 households in need. This can be shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**



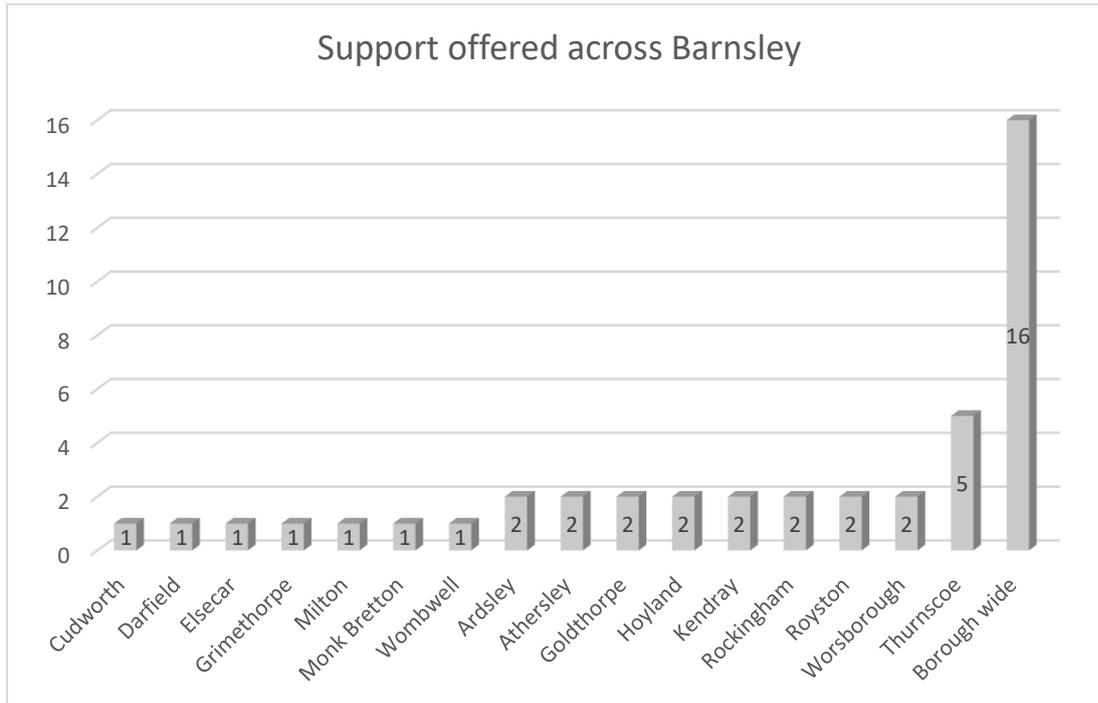
The funding was limited to supporting people with food, fuel, and essential household goods. Table 2 below shows how the funding was distributed.

**Table 2**



Support has been offered across 44 areas in Barnsley. 16 schemes have been made available to households across the borough (Table 3).

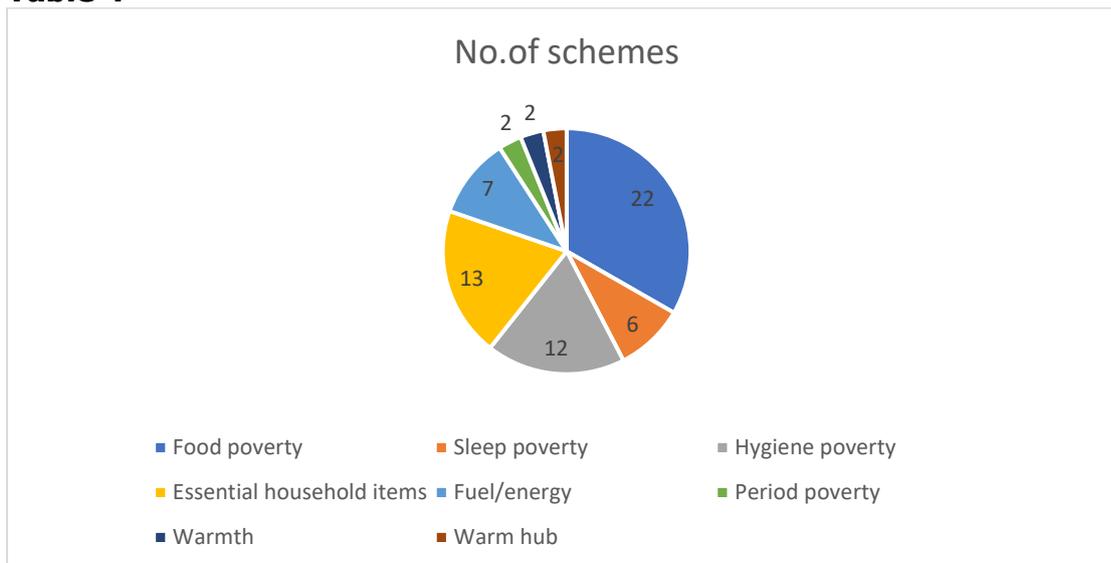
**Table 3**



**UK Shared Prosperity Fund:** 66 schemes have been put in place to help people in a number of ways such as food and fuel costs. Since January 2023 we have seen organisations asking for funding to help people with hygiene and sleep products with some households being without adequate personal and house cleaning products, bedding, and mattresses.

Type of support and number of schemes (Table 4).

**Table 4**



## 5. Feeding Barnsley

Food is one of the basic necessities of life. Food contains nutrients, substances essential for the growth, repair, and maintenance of body tissues and for the regulation of vital processes. We aim to tackle food insecurity through the work of Good Food Barnsley to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on those who are struggling to afford good quality, nutritional food.

Good Food Barnsley is a broad coalition between the private, public and 3rd sectors. It is a joined-up movement and partnership of fantastic minds and resources that work towards a shared vision of building a better Barnsley where everyone has the right to the food they need to thrive.



It is a genuine partnership to promote healthy sustainable food, tackle food insecurity and diet-related ill health, educate, and build community food knowledge, skills, and resources and to demonstrate the positive impact this is having on increasing citizen independence in our communities.

We believe that the people of Barnsley and the possibilities of and around food are good and we have achieved a lot to strengthen provision. Our aim is to offer a range of services that move people towards citizen control. We recognise the role of crisis food supply such as foodbanks, but we have an ambition to move people up the food ladder offering a range of options that enables them to take control and have choice.



Here are some of the schemes we have in place.

**Community Shops** – ‘Despite everything that the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown at us, Community Shop has remained true to its mission of building stronger individuals and more confident communities’. Barnsley has two Community Shops and is planning a further two with an ambition to have one in each of the 6 key areas in the borough. The Shops are not just about food. They prepare members for work, offer volunteering and work placements, education through training and personal development and connect people to their communities.

**Community Shop On The Go** – This is a brand-new scheme for 2023. Start-up funds have been granted from the **South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority**. Community Shop On The Go will bring the high quality, affordable food associated with the existing Community Shops to sites across the borough. An initial pilot phase will test sites and operating models to determine the most appropriate approach in each area, with an intention to have sites in all Area Council localities. The scheme will provide affordable food from partner Ocado, along with cooking demonstrations, recipes, and advice.

**Storehouse & Field** is one of Good Food Barnsley’s newer responses to gaps in the supported food access pathway. It seeks to support those experiencing moderate food insecurity. Storehouse & Field puts food at the centre of a more holistic approach to food insecurity that supports the whole individual and looks to reinvigorate members’ relationship with food.

Storehouse & Field is a member only scheme whereby members pay a low weekly fee (under £10) and in return receive £30-40 worth of food. In addition to this, members can access food-related events such as community lunches, cooking

demonstrations, (potentially) courses, wraparound support offered as pop ups and also through referrals.

**Rose Voucher Scheme** – The Council committed £56,000 to the scheme with match funding from the Alexandra Rose Charity. On average, families reliably collect £3,500 worth of vouchers per month and spend £3,100 per month with local retailers using the Rose Vouchers. Through the Council’s family centres over thirty staff have been trained in how to deliver the project and use the Rose Vouchers family registration and voucher distribution database. 11 traders now use the vouchers. 296 families with 331 children under 5 are currently actively redeeming Rose Vouchers in Barnsley. The project aims to grow to at least 300 families collecting monthly by the end of March 2023. So far in 2021 Barnsley families have received and spent an impressive £20,905 in vouchers with local traders. This total spend, along with the 83% redemption rate, indicates how successfully partners are engaging with families to support them to regularly access the project.

**Healthy Holidays** – The Partnership has been involved in Healthy Holidays, now Healthy Activities and Food programme (HAF), activity coordination since 2018. Initially supporting in the delivery of the six-week summer holiday provision in 2018, the Partnership was awarded £30k of funding, which was distributed across various 3rd sector and public groups and organisations to provide enriching activities and food to children and families across the borough of Barnsley.

The HAF programme is now funded by the Department for Education and throughout the Easter, summer, and Christmas school holiday periods we run a range of Healthy Holidays clubs. Healthy Holidays is about supporting families especially if they need extra help to access food and things to do to keep their children healthy through the school holidays.

## **6. Warm homes, health, and cost of living**

Our Collaborative Cold Weather group wanted to understand more about how cold homes are impacting on the lives of people living in different types of housing across Barnsley. In the summer 2021, we commissioned community engagement work to hear about peoples lived experience of the impacts of cold temperatures on their health and wellbeing and what we can do together to make a difference. This work involved:

- A literature review of key evidence.
- One-to-one detailed interviews with providers and local people.
- An online survey to gather views from Barnsley residents.

## What people said

We found that people had significant worries and fears about the winter months affecting their physical and mental wellbeing, much of this was related to their ability to be able to pay for energy efficiency and heating. Many groups had difficulties each winter, particularly people on low incomes or homeless/rough sleepers. It became clear through the work that the ongoing impact of the pandemic was affecting a wider group of people following job losses, changes to benefits and increases in energy and food prices.

*"I worry about the weather being too cold and I will have to have my heating on longer, I know that I can wrap up with extra layers of clothing and blankets, but I worry about heating and pipes freezing up. The more I must pay for heating the less money I can spend on food."*

*"I lost my job twice due in the pandemic... also had time off unpaid to look after my son whose school bubble closed.... It has been a rough time money wise and forever working out bills and spends for shopping and to top up the gas and electricity on the meters."*

One professional described a recent case where an older person had lived all their life without central heating. Whilst they were in hospital, central heating was installed in their home, making a huge difference to their quality of life: *"this winter gone, is the first time I have not been scared of winter."*

Some respondents spoke about juggling money and choosing between eating and heating.

*"Choosing between heating or food as I have a disabled child and when it's cold our heating needs to be on 24hrs a day."*

*"I only eat breakfast and dinner. This is due to struggling to pay fuel bills during winter and trying to save money in the summer."*

The findings from this community engagement work resulted in key recommendations:

- A system wide approach focused on prevention, with partnership at the centre.
- Strategies to find people who are not in touch with services.
- Focusing our efforts on working with communities and vulnerable people.
- Communications strategy including non-digital options.
- Delivering practical support.

We're continuing to use this insight to inform our Collaborative Cold Weather plan this winter.

### **Collaborative Cold Weather plan**

Our Collaborative Cold weather group is supported by key agencies working across the borough to help reduce the impact of cold-related ill health and excess winter deaths. Together we have developed a plan which focuses on the main contributory factors including:

- Energy efficiency and cold homes.
- Falls & frailty prevention.
- Flu and COVID-19 prevention and vaccination uptake.
- Managing health conditions linked to the cold.

### [Barnsley's cold weather plan 2022-23](#)



Cost of living and energy costs have been factored into the Collaborative Cold Weather plan this year. The following key actions are being taken forward by partners this winter:

- Deliver property-related support for residents in energy inefficient homes or living in fuel poverty.
- Provide the Affordable Warmth Grant for private sector housing – funded boilers and first-time heating.
- Develop and promote the Affordable Warmth Charter amongst businesses.
- Ensure longer term investment of retrofit housing solutions for people living with cold-related ill health.

Our plan this year has brought together local and national information and evidence to make sure we are doing all we can to support Barnsley residents over the winter. Alongside promotion of the support available to our communities, Barnsley partners have been encouraged and supported to develop their own plans for winter 2022/23. These plans should include self-care support for residents and when to seek treatment for colds/seasonal flu.

The Area Councils and ward alliances continue to provide community support in winter months through a range of interventions including winter warmer packs, falls prevention and social isolation initiatives.

We have created some key sources of information for Barnsley residents, as well as those who are working with communities, to keep them safe over the cold weather.

The [keep warm and well leaflet](#) provides supportive information and tips for staying well in winter, with phone numbers and website details to find further information. We have also updated our centralised [stay well this winter](#) pages and created a key messages toolkit for frontline staff.

### **Warm Homes Team**

The Council has a Warm Homes Service<sup>6</sup> which has been established to provide advice and assistance relating to warm homes, energy debt, home improvements and retrofit. The Council has been successful in its bids to the BEIS Local Authority Delivery (LAD) housing retrofit programmes and has, to date, secured over £7m to offer housing retrofit measures to improve the thermal and energy efficiency of homes in the private sector. This funding is targeted at households in fuel poverty (using BRE and other business intelligence data), taking a fabric first approach to adequately insulating homes and reducing energy usage and carbon emissions. All works must meet PAS2035 standards which ensures that the whole house is considered when installing retrofit measures. This ensures that there are no unintended consequences in under/over-insulation which could cause/contribute to damp, mould, and condensation issues which we know can significantly impact/exacerbate health conditions.

### **Affordable Warm Programme**

As part of the Council's wider commitment to assisting the residents of our borough through the current cost-of-living crisis, the Council has committed £3m

via the Affordable Warmth Programme (and Household Support Grant) to assist households in need of first time or replacement boilers and property insulation. This funding, again targeted at those experiencing fuel poverty in the private sector, provides a permanent solution to increasing property standards and seeks

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/housing/energy-at-home/make-your-home-warmer-and-cheaper-to-run/>

to improve the financial circumstances of those disproportionately impacted by the increased costs of living. A proportion of this funding will also be used to help clear energy debt to those receiving heating upgrades, with the aim of “resetting” the household so that residents feel confident to turn on their heating.

### **Affordable Warm Charter**

The Affordable Warmth Charter brings together partners across the borough to share knowledge, expertise, and resources to tackle the health inequalities and cost of living caused by living in cold homes. The Charter requires partners to make a commitment/pledge using one or more of the 5 key priorities in the Charter:

- Energy efficiency.
- Affordable energy.
- Employment, education & skills.
- Partnership working.
- Low carbon commitments.

Partners who make this commitment will be awarded the Affordable Warmth Charter Mark which can be displayed on websites and literature.

This will help partners to demonstrate their commitment to helping residents make their homes more energy efficient and manage their energy costs.



## **7. Welcoming Spaces**

We are developing a network of Welcoming Spaces which will be available to people wishing to use them over the winter months, until 31 March 2023. We are using our own buildings, such as libraries, museums, family centres, and Berneslai Homes buildings to provide welcoming, warm, and inviting spaces for anyone who's feeling the cold. People can go there to get warm, stay warm and join in any of the regular activities or events which are being provided. It's also an opportunity to find out about other free resources, such as the Library Service's free e-books, e-magazines, online newspapers, and free internet and Wi-Fi, which will support families during the cost-of-living crisis.

Libraries are also partnering with Camarados to create Public Living Rooms within Barnsley's libraries, where you can meet and chat with others in a warm, safe, and friendly place, play games, do a jigsaw, and stay as long as you would like.

We know that many of our partners across Barnsley already provide this type of facility, so we are asking them to consider registering their facilities and/or services to let our residents know how to access the Welcoming Spaces near them.

All of Barnsley's Welcoming Spaces will be registered on an external site (not managed by the council): [www.warmwelcome.uk/](http://www.warmwelcome.uk/).

All Welcoming Spaces will operate within the following principles, which is intended to help local people who want to use them know what to expect when they step across the threshold of a Welcoming Space building: a guarantee of respect, dignity, and warmth.

### **You'll get a warm welcome**

Every time you come to a Welcoming Space, you'll be given a warm welcome from the staff and volunteers there.

### **Everyone is treated equally, with dignity and respect**

Everyone has a right to be warm, so everyone in a Welcoming Space treats people, and is treated by people, with dignity and respect.

### **Your Welcoming Space will be a safe space**

Your Welcoming Space will stick to the safeguarding policies that it always uses, and it will stick to food hygiene rules too.

### **We'll not tell anyone about you needing a Welcoming Space**

If you want to share the reasons you need a Welcoming Space, someone will listen, but they won't tell anyone else unless you give them permission, or they must because of their safeguarding policies.

### **It doesn't matter why you need a Welcoming Space**

Every Welcoming Space is a non-judgemental space; whatever the reason you have for needing to come in, you'll be treated the same and never judged.

Welcoming Space participants will be expected to adhere to their own safeguarding policies and ensure that all staff and volunteers are briefed on these procedures. Participants are also responsible for making sure their entry on the website is kept up to date and any changes are communicated through their own usual channels.

# We're a welcoming space



MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET



## 8. Impact – the difference support means to people

The cost-of-living crisis for some cannot be underestimated. Here are some real stories that bring to life the impact of the support they have received.

*"We are one of the families that benefitted from your kind donation to **Station House** a couple of weeks ago and wanted to write to you to express our thanks. Like many families, we are feeling the impact of the cost-of-living price rises. We decided to use part of the voucher to purchase an air fryer; we have considered one before as a means of reducing the cost of cooking for a family but have struggled to find room in the budget for the initial outlay. Your gift has enabled us to reduce our ongoing energy costs, which is considerably helpful in the current climate. It is really nice to be reminded that there are people out there who want to help to do good; and it is our hope that one day we will be in a position to pay that forward in much the same way."*



*"I'm very happy for help a lot and received today from **Oakwell Rise Academy** and over the school holiday. I was very happy for the help and support it helped my family a lot and there was very easy to use at the shop."*



*"Deneka has been full of stories to tell and made lots of new friends. She would love to do more holiday clubs."*

*"Neekas really enjoyed this week!"*

*"Great time! Fantastic, guided walk."*

*"It was great. I love it so much."*

*"My son (age 5) took part in the nature detective activity at Worsborough Mill. He enjoyed all the activities which were varied, appropriate and well supervised. The activities included arts and crafts, stories, games, and outdoor activities. The summer scheme was very helpful in keeping him occupied during the long holiday. The food was also fresh and nutritious. Many thanks."*

*"This Healthy Holidays club has been the favourite part of my son Liam's summer holiday and it will be hard to beat. Everyday he's woken up excited to come and speaks of the activities with so much happiness. He would come back again and again! Thank you to the lovely staff who've run it, Liam has loved you all. Thank you also for the lovely lunches provided, and the activities you've arranged. I'll highly recommend to anyone and would love to come back again."*

### **What the children said**

*"Today I enjoyed making pictures, new friends and collages."*

*"Today I enjoyed painting, and I enjoyed bird watching."*

*"This club was amazing - I want to stay."*

*"Today I enjoyed painting my bug house and making my rubbings."*



### **Keeping homes warm**

Gillian, a homeowner in Barnsley in her 80s, lived with a number of health conditions including skin cancer and a broken back. Gillian and her husband, who recently moved into a care home, had lived with solid fuel heating for many years. As the couple's health had declined, they found it harder and harder to manage solid fuel heating: *"I broke my back and what not", Gillian said, "and we couldn't*

*get down to [the fire]. We couldn't even get the ashes out, so I had to stop the coal being delivered because it was piling up." As a result, "the house was freezing... I was freezing, and I got pneumonia." Gillian was admitted to hospital in early 2020 with severe pneumonia. While in hospital, Barnsley Council's Warm Homes team began working with Gillian and supported her to apply for a replacement gas central heating system which was installed after she was discharged from hospital. The central heating system has greatly benefitted Gillian. "It's been the best thing, that gas central heating; it's lovely". Her bills have reduced too and being able to be warm at home has had a significant impact on how she copes with her illnesses. She is still unwell, but she now finds it much easier to manage. In her own words: "My health's not good, but it is better, it is better, you know. I've got skin cancer and I've got a broken back, and I can't walk very long and all that, but it is better because I'm warm, I'm warm in the house." "I'm not frightened of the winter now because I've got a warm house".*

## **9. Final thoughts**

This year my Director of Public Health Annual Report outlines how the cost-of-living crisis is impacting all our communities. It looks at some of the key local and national intelligence available in order to provide an overview of the current cost of living, as of January 2023. It is noted that the data and insight around this area is moving at pace, and this report doesn't encompass every variable that impacts the cost of living in Barnsley.

It is clear that everyone is being affected by this, however the impact will be greatest for those who are already under financial pressure. There is more to be done in terms of preventing people falling into crisis due to increasing costs.

My report outlines our call to action demonstrating why we all need to step up to support those most affected in the borough. This includes employers looking at how they can support their staff and the government considering its response to key issues such as childcare.

We are optimistic though. We are proud of our partnerships in Barnsley, built on trusted relationships and honest conversations. We have worked hard to offer grants to community groups who have raised to the challenge. We could not have done this without the partnerships we have in place, and we thank each and every one of the community groups and organisations that have worked and continue to work tirelessly to support those who need it most.

I also want to recognise our officers in Barnsley Council who have coordinated this work and give a special mention to Jayne Hellowell who has been the driving force behind our response and the production of this report.

The excellent work of the council, its partners and the community and voluntary sector described in this report has been impressively responsive to the acute need we are seeing, but we want our borough to be a place where we minimise the need for such extraordinary efforts because our residents already have decent incomes, good jobs, and warm homes. Our Barnsley 2030<sup>7</sup> ambitions bring partners working across Barnsley together in recognising Barnsley as a place of possibilities where we can achieve this.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/barnsley-2030-strategy/#:~:text=Barnsley%202030%20seeks%20to%20strengthen,achieve%20our%20ambitions%20for%20Barnsley.>