

Anti Poverty Annual Report 2022



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Foreword

We have a great history of partnership working in Calderdale and this year we've seen some really focused work take place with the creation of the Money & Debt Forum and the Affordable Warmth Partnership, alongside the existing Food Poverty Forum. There is now more collaboration than ever before, which puts us in a stronger position to tackle the cost of living crisis over the winter months.

The statistics about poverty on our Calderdale Anti-Poverty dashboard are concerning and show that for many people making ends meet can often be a real struggle.

14% of jobs in Calderdale are classed as 'low paid'. A quarter of our children live in households that experience poverty on a daily basis. Employment rates for disabled people were 59.3% in June 2022 compared to 52.6% in June 2021. 14% of people over 60 are living in poverty here in Calderdale.

With the increased household costs and colder weather on the way, this is a worrying time for many people already living on a tight budget.

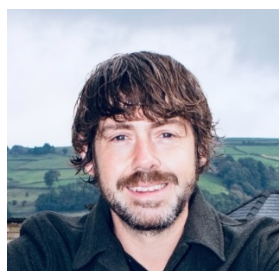
This report recognises the real challenges that we face in trying to tackle the many problems caused by poverty and the increased cost of living, whilst showcasing some of the really great work being undertaken by local partners. It is making a real difference to so many people's lives.



Councillor Jenny Lynn

Cabinet Member

Public Services & Communities



Councillor Scott Patient

Cabinet Member

Climate Change & Resilience /

Voluntary Sector & Housing

Key Priorities

The Anti-Poverty Action Plan has three key priorities:

Key Priority	Outcome
(1) Prevention	Preventing local residents from falling into poverty
(2) Intervention	Providing support to local residents who have fallen into poverty
(3) Resilience	Keeping residents out of poverty

The Anti-Poverty Steering Group ensures that the key priorities of the plan are delivered by strong governance and effective coordination and collaboration, meeting on a quarterly basis. The group is made up of a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners and meetings are chaired by Calderdale Council. The group's work is complex and complements other strategic priorities and plans.

There is a significant amount of activity by partners which can be viewed in more detail in the action plan on the [Money and Wellbeing webpages](#). Our collective activities are wide ranging and cut across housing, welfare and debt, food and fuel, education, employment and training, health and wellbeing and early intervention and signposting. Key resources including a cost of living factsheet and an affordable warmth guide have been widely disseminated to staff to support early intervention and signposting.

The action plan is reviewed and updated annually. As a result of the national cost of living crisis, it has been subject to much more intensive and rigorous review to ensure that all opportunities to support Calderdale residents have been optimised. It remains a live document so that it can respond to changes at national, regional, local and neighbourhood levels. Due to COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis, flexibility in the work around tackling poverty is even more important so it continues to be responsive to existing needs and any significant emerging needs of the borough's most vulnerable households and families. Changes within the partnership structure have been made this year and two new partnership groups have been established to tackle financial inclusion (Money & Debt Forum) and affordable warmth (Affordable Warmth Forum). Along with the Food Poverty Forum, these groups feed into the Anti-Poverty Steering Group.

Members of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group provide information and data relevant to their organisation and subgroup, thereby enhancing the anti-poverty indicator framework. This helps to develop a narrative (a story behind the data) to assess progress and inform future priorities and planning.

Work has also taken place to further develop the anti-poverty dashboards which can be viewed on [Dataworks](#).

This report features a small number of case studies providing a snapshot into some of the important work that is being delivered, and it is acknowledged that there are many other organisations not directly mentioned in this report who are working extremely hard to reduce poverty in Calderdale.

To find out more visit the [Money and Wellbeing webpages](#) and the [Anti-Poverty dashboard](#).

Key Issues

Deprivation

- Calderdale is ranked 66th most deprived local authority out of 317 in England.
- 10 areas in the Borough are within the 10% most deprived in the country.

Children

- 12,242 (24.4%) children in Calderdale live in poverty.
- Rates vary between wards from 11% to 56%.

Jobs

- Calderdale job density was 0.79 per resident in 2020, the same as for the Yorkshire and the Humber region.
- Average wage per hour of people who work in Calderdale is £14.22, compared with £14.28 for the Yorkshire & Humber region.

Fuel Poverty

- In 2020 17.3% of households in Calderdale were "fuel-poor" compared with 13.2% in England. At 1st October 2022 this had increased to 29.23%, with numbers estimated to increase further by April 2023 to 32.42%

Debt

- There were 670 individual insolvencies in Calderdale in 2021, compared with 550 in 2020.

Housing

- 19,306 households claiming housing benefit or universal credit in Calderdale in August 2022, compared with 19,588 in August 2021. Town, Ovenden, Park and Illingworth and Mixenden wards are the highest with 1,500 or more claimants.

Food Poverty

- 8,841 pupils are eligible for free school meals in Calderdale (May 2022), which represents 24.1% of all school aged children.
- 75% of food banks saw weekly increase in food parcels in September 22 compared to August 22.

Digital poverty

- Limited users are 4 x more likely from low income households.
- 36% of workers lack essential digital skills for work.
- 3% of households on Universal Credit are on a social tariff.

Unemployment

- 5,065 (3.9%) working age people claiming benefits are seeking work.
- Calderdale's total claimant count reduced by over a quarter between September 2021 and September 2022 from 6,905 to 5,065.
- 190 young people aged 16 and 17 were not in education, employment or training in 2021.

Education

- The percentage of young children achieving a good level of development in their first year of school in 2022 was 65.4% in Calderdale and 65.2% in England.
- The attainment gap in achievement at Level 2 at age 19 between young people previously eligible for free school meals and those not eligible was 18.7 in 2021.

Crime

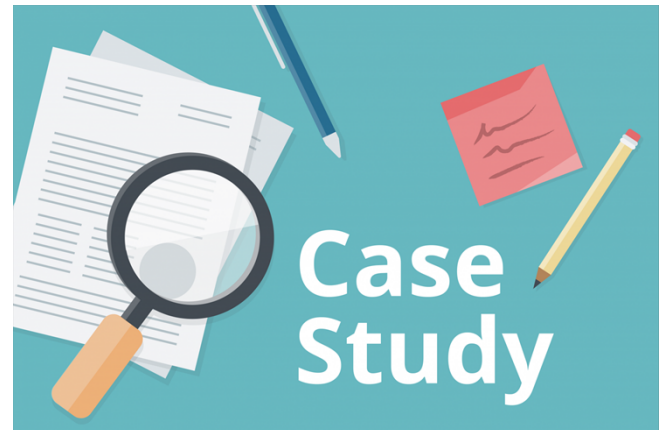
- There were 57 first time entrants to the criminal justice system in 2021, with 55 in 2020.
- There were 4,207 domestic violence crimes (Oct 2021 to Sept 2022), compared to 3,765 in the same period the previous year.

Vulnerable Groups

Working families and households	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•63% of people in poverty live in a family where someone works at least part time.•In 2020 89.7% of households had at least one person in work compared with 86.5% in 2019.•Average income in the borough was £25,000 in 2020 and £24,000 in 2019
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•4,474 older people claimed Pension Credit in February 2022, compared to 4,703 in February 2021.
Unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Unemployment in June 2022 was 5.4% for males and 3.8% for females.•The proportion of people claiming work related benefits reduced from 5.3% in September 2021 to 3.9% in September 2022.
Economically inactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The proportion of males who were economically inactive and wanted a job increased from 14.0% in June 2021 to 14.4% in June 2022.•The proportion of females who were economically inactive and wanted a job reduced from 19.2% in June 2021 to 13.7% in June 2022.
People with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•18,787 people in Calderdale claimed disability benefits in May 2022, compared to 17,588 in May 2021.•Employment rates for disabled people were 59.3% in June 2022 compared to 52.6% in June 2021.
People with mental health conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•2,754 adults claiming Employment and Support Allowance have mental and behavioural disorders.
Homeless people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•In 2021/22 Calderdale Council completed 759 assessments for homelessness. Of these, 755 were assessed as eligible for support in terms of prevention (510) or relief from homelessness (245).
Young carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•In 2021 48% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were in education, employment or training, compared to 66% in 2020.
Ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•People from black and minority backgrounds are more likely to live in deprived areas and be employed in low-paid jobs where they cannot work from home.
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•44% of children living in lone-parent families in the UK are in poverty.•Children in large families and children from black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to be in poverty.

Case Studies

The seven case studies below show a range of partnership activities and highlight some of the work that has been undertaken in the last 12 months.



Short videos have been provided to support some of the case studies. These can be viewed by clicking the relevant icon.

Case Study 1 – Family Support

Halifax Academy Food & Fuel Support Project

Project Description

The school has been proactive in responding to the hardship faced by the families of children attending the school. The following measures are in place:

- Providing food parcels for families in need
- Providing food vouchers for high risk / crisis hit families
- Uniform swap
- Household items provided for families in crisis
- 2 cooking clubs per week
- Cooking classes on curriculum for year 7,8 and 9, on rotation basis
- Fuel vouchers for pre-payment meters (provided by Newground Together)
- Fruit & veg vouchers for local shops (Makkah, Al Nawaz, Outback and Halifax Market on board). Pay £1.50 & get £5 worth of fresh fruit & vegetables. Halifax Market providing a van at Primary for re-launch in November 2022
- Parents/grandparents invited in for school dinner on Fridays
- Hot food given out to the community on Tuesdays (Outback) and Thursdays (school)
- Advice & guidance drop in provided from school by Halifax Opportunities Trust Advisor, to ensure specialist interventions are provided
- Budgeting courses through Noah's Ark
- Pupil assemblies in conjunction with Citizen's Advice on how to reduce energy bills



Project Aims

- To provide food and fuel support to those families who are in need
- To promote healthy eating and affordable food
- To reduce poverty by signposting to organisations who can provide advice and support on welfare benefits, debt and employment

Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halifax Academy • Halifax Opportunities Trust/The Outback • Halifax Borough Market • Re-Think • Suma • Calderdale Food Network • The Food Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen's Advice Calderdale • Community Foundation for Calderdale • Newground Together • St. Augustine's Centre • Halifax Community Fridge • Calderdale Food Poverty Forum

Identified needs / outline of problem
<p>We identified needs through a food and fuel questionnaire before the summer break. Results from 60 families mostly living within Park and Warley.</p> <p>Key themes that came out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anxiety levels around cost of living are high - Cost of fuel for travel a major worry - High number of requests for budgeting support - High number of requests for food vouchers - Only 23% of respondents are from a jobless household (rise of 'working poor' group)

Project outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop a more robust picture of the hardship areas facing the (school) community - To ensure joint working and effective signposting - Better offers of support available that are tailored to the direct results of the survey/needs of community - Involvement through a multi-agency approach to ensure that all age ranges are supported in actioning their impact on household bills (from year 7/age 11+) - Correlation of data to feed into free school meal campaign/cost of living crisis information for Calderdale, West Yorkshire and nationally - Introduction of questionnaire in other wards

Client feedback
<p>The food and fuel survey has been ongoing from July 22 looking to map how the cost of living crisis is affecting families involved with The Halifax Academy. With support from Citizen's Advice and then the involvement of Halifax Opportunities Trust has meant this data was collected and used to inform more than just the school's response.</p> <p>It has been reflected that the information should be viewed alongside the data presented in the electronic health and needs assessment formulated by Calderdale council.</p> <p>As a school, the services that are being provided go far beyond that of classroom-based education for the 1444 pupils that attend. The intention will be to ensure that parent voice and involvement is intrinsic to the work we do. The information gleamed from this survey gives us a deeper insight into our families' lives and enable us to develop a robust response as a school and community focused network of partners.</p>

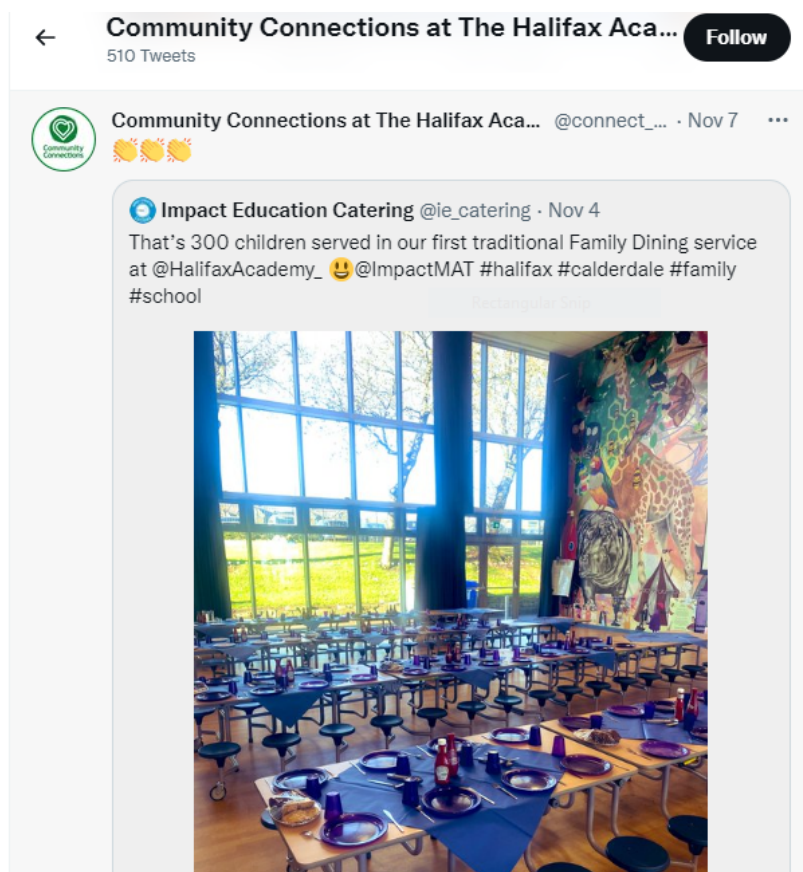
Plans for the future

The future will always be to respond and adapt to our school community. We want to re-run the survey early in the New Year to see what impact the increase in energy bills has had. By this time, we will have worked on developing more ways for families to access support through school and in the community.

These will include a greater reach with the fruit and veg voucher scheme, continuing work with the community kitchen and inviting parents in for a school lunch. All aspects will have support around them from our staff and partner agencies. We will also be directing people to new services, such as the additional Jilani kitchen operated by the mosque.

Our work is always updated via Twitter: @HalifaxAcademy_ @connect_tha

To watch this case study,
click the film icons below:



Case Study 2 – Affordable Warmth

Power Calderdale Partnership: Stronger Together

Project Description

Power Calderdale is a partnership, born out of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group. A subgroup of partners came together focused on supporting households struggling to heat their homes in Calderdale. Partners include Together Housing Group (including Newground Together), Calderdale Council, Citizens Advice Calderdale and Halifax Opportunities Trust.

All the partners involved are delivering a variety of interventions aimed at supporting people in poverty. Individuals and households are adapting their lifestyles to reduce their energy consumption. Some are choosing between heating and eating, rationing their use of hot water, getting their supply cut off, or not heating their homes properly leading to conditions like damp and mould. Some households were unable to afford changes to the fabric of their homes, others have no control as they do not own their home.

The group wanted to ensure a coordinated approach to the fair distribution of any financial support, and ensure it was not a 'sticking plaster' for households who may be spiralling into increased debt. Coordinating the schemes ensured the best outcome for as many households as possible.

As well as immediate financial support for those who are in need. The partnership is focused on working together towards solutions, considering fabric first approaches and behaviour change that will support people to reduce their energy consumption and in turn reduce their future bills, with the added bonus of being green. Particular consideration was given on how we engaged the more vulnerable residents in Calderdale who might have long term health conditions or people living with a disability in the household.

Newground Together is the charitable team within Together Housing Group who manage 10,000 properties in Calderdale and has a variety of services, such as welfare benefits, sustainable tenancies, green advice, youth work and employment & skills programmes. Health and wellbeing is at the heart of all of them. As part of the holistic service Newground Together have facilitated 7 different fuel voucher schemes funded through the Energy Saving Trust and the charity itself.

A gap was identified by the Affordable Warmth Forum, that there was no support for people who paid for their fuel directly, had coin meters or had it included as part of their service charge. When the Household Support Fund was launched in October 2021, the Affordable Warmth Forum wanted to ensure the money could be fairly distributed across Calderdale and the benefits to residents maximised. The Forum has a full overview of who was accessing the support through Power Calderdale. Together Housing Group agreed to provide match funding through its social value strategy, to facilitate the distribution of the Household Support Fund, which covered the centralised cost of administering the grant and improving the system. Building on the success of previous grant schemes, the process has been further improved as follows:

- Question added on benefits and the type of benefit, to signpost people to any support being provided by other agencies that they might be eligible for.

- Question added about the type of tenure, to support the identification of problems that might exist in the private housing sector.
- Question added about long term health conditions and disability within the household.

Power Calderdale provides one door for referrals from multiple services operating in Calderdale, who are already embedded in the community supporting the most vulnerable people. When the referral comes through the door, administration checks are done against the referral:

- ✓ Has the household already received a grant in the last 3 months?
- ✓ Is the household in fuel poverty?

A follow up assessment and call is made and within 2 working days financial support can be in place.

Project Aims

- To engage and support vulnerable people struggling to pay their fuel bills due to loss of income, increased fuel use or other vulnerabilities linked to fuel poverty.
- To work in partnership across all sectors in order to reduce fuel poverty across Calderdale, maximising referrals to energy efficiency schemes linked to Calderdale's shared mission for Carbon Zero.
- To centrally administer fuel voucher scheme to ensure fair and equal distribution.
- To help people out of fuel poverty through referrals for onward support to partner agencies.
- To run Power Calderdale alongside Energy Saving Trust scheme to ensure the maximum support for households in Calderdale.

Partners

Registered Partners	Referrals 2022
Together Housing (inc Newground Together)	511
Calderdale Council	451
Horton Housing inc. YPASS	56
Halifax Opportunity Trust	28
Smartmove	25
Citizens Advice Calderdale	24
DWP	24
North Halifax Partnership	14
WomenCentre	12
Focus4Hope	10
Disability Support Calderdale C.I.C.	9
Light Up Black & African Heritage Calderdale	9
The Halifax Academy	3
Todmorden Food Drop In	3
Project Colt	3
Family Intervention Team	1
GP	1
School	1
NHS	1
Total Referrals	1186

All partners need to be a registered organisation supporting people in the community. Power Calderdale recognises there are many organisations providing amazing support in Calderdale, and they are the best placed to identify those in need. Organisations can be, voluntary, public, or private. Organisations are registered so if further vulnerabilities or safeguarding issues are identified there is an organisation in place to support.

Some services did not have the capacity to make the required checks to refer people for fuel support. For example, foodbanks predominantly staffed by volunteers, with limited capacity at drop in's to offer fuel support. To address this problem, we developed partner drop in's where Newground Together staff partner with services such as food banks, Libraries, JCP and Maximus to provide fuel support. 40 partners drop-in sessions Jan – September 22 so far.

Identified needs / outline of problem

People

- People choosing between food and fuel.
- People choosing to isolate themselves / cut themselves off from networks, family, friends and support in order to pay for fuel.
- Increase in damp and mould in properties as a result of no heating.
- People with respiratory health conditions at risk, as not fully heating their homes.
- Cost of living crisis and people living in poverty.
- Lack of information about what you can do, to make a difference and focus on negative, doom and gloom, which was leading people to take more risks – e.g., not putting the heating on at all where they have a health issue.

Grants available in Calderdale

- Fuel Bank Foundation – Working with Halifax Opportunities Trust & Citizens Advice Calderdale.
- Energy Saving Trust funding – households can only receive support from one grant. More than one provider in the area, with the same funding.
- Some partners had funding for interventions but not financial grants and support.

Qualifying Criteria: Power Calderdale #mark2 - July 22

- Referral must be made by partner agency registered with the Power Calderdale Partnership. No self-referrals from customers will be accepted.
- People who have benefited previously and are currently in fuel poverty can be referred again.
- Referral partner must be able to verify the applicant's identity, address, household circumstances. Confirming the household is in fuel poverty.
- Pre-payment meter customers require a clear picture of the meter showing the current balance.
- Current photo of pre-payment meter included on the referral form showing credit of less than £20.
- Bill paying households can be supported - whether that is a coin meter/ bill payment/ element of a service charge (this is to aid the targeting of pensioners) or help managing their energy debt. We will complete an assessment to establish the need.
- Need is clearly identified by the partner agency on the form, adding a short narrative on their current situation.

Solution:

Offer a range of interventions for people living in fuel poverty, including a full energy assessment and emergency vouchers for people who cannot afford to pay energy bills and ensure referrals to relevant advice agencies for wrap around support.

Project outcomes (across all schemes including Winter Redress & Power Calderdale)

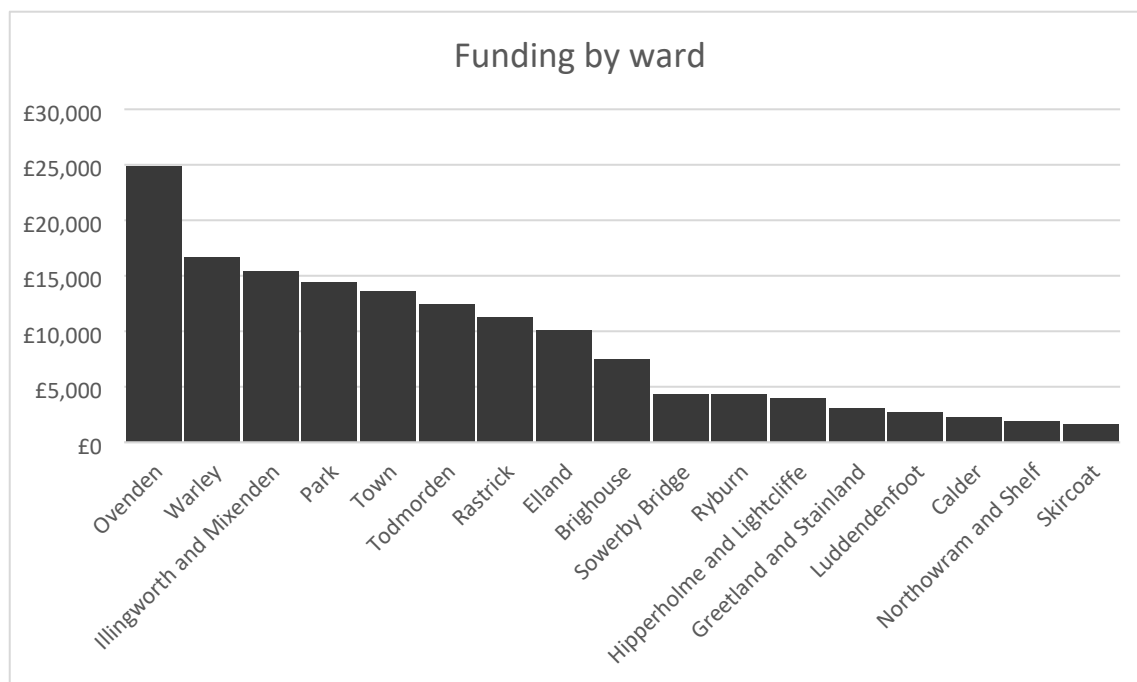
The project has supported 2996 people across 1186 households in 2022.

The project has distributed 3008 vouchers in 2022.

The project has distributed £151,496 to vulnerable households in 2022.

The project has made 197 Employment & Skills referrals.

The project has made 73 Specialist Debt - Finance referrals.

**Client feedback**

Young mum fleeing domestic violence referred by the WomenCentre; 1 child under 3. Cannot work until child turns 2. Struggling with no money to top up, felt desperate as was going to need to decide between heating and eating. Offered 4 vouchers, based on her financial situation. You could hear the relief of stress over the phone and instantly sounded more positive about what was now in her control and the decision to go and get in some food for her and the children.

Single Dad of a 5-month, 18 months, 5 year old, who is on Universal Credit but his partner stopped paying maintenance. Left without enough money to cover the bills, supported with full grant to ensure food could be bought for the family the following week and signposted for support with school uniform.

Referral from DWP, for 24-year-old male

He had been out of work since being laid off in December 2021 and was struggling to get back into work. As a result, his finances were suffering and his mental health was suffering from being at home all the time and losing his purpose. He was referred to Power Calderdale through his Supporting Families Employment Adviser from DWP.

Initial financial support was provided through Power Calderdale which removed his initial crisis allowing him to start considering his next steps. With his finances more in order, he decided to take up the offer of intensive employment support. There had been a lack of responses to his applications for work and it was getting him down. He was keen for feedback and guidance on how to strengthen his CV and get shortlisted for an interview.

Employment advisor supported him to update his CV and write a cover letter. Doing intensive daily job matching him with vacancies he was interested in. Newground staff completed applications alongside him which kept him focused on his pursuit for work. His new CV and cover letter started to pay off and he was offered several interviews. We completed interview prep and supported him to attend these interviews. Providing a small personal grant to fund interview clothes.

As part of our job search, Newground reached out to local employers for him and he was invited to interview for a role. He was successful and was able to start the following week. Since he started work, we have continued to provide advice and support and help him access more support before his first wage.

Comment from Advisor: "He is loving his new job, he has a new lease of life and is very happy to be out of the house every day. Aside from the financial benefits of the new role he is mostly enjoying the social benefits. He plans to stay in this role a long time as he is very happy here and really enjoys his job".

Plans for the future

Financial support will continue to be provided to Calderdale residents on prepayment meters through the Fuel Voucher 2 Scheme over the 2022/23 winter.

£93,000 has been secured to enhance the Greener Together project funded through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to double the Energy Advice for the most vulnerable households, where people have a health condition, which could be exacerbated by cold conditions.

The Greener Together project plans to support customers in fuel poverty who are struggling to maintain a healthy warm home environment for themselves and their families. The energy advice service will be promoted through our partners, community events and people accessing the fuel voucher scheme who express an interest.

The team will initially do an assessment over the phone to assess need and what support can be put in place. Taking into consideration their present situation, understand their fuel consumption habits and ensure they are accessing support and claiming what they are entitled to.

Simple, green measures that will reduce their energy consumption are shared. The team will offer the option of home visits to those customers in most need. The team will be able to provide and fit energy saving devices as required for the most vulnerable customers.

The energy team will follow up with customers at two further points to offer additional support where required and to monitor impact of changes undertaken.

Newground Together plans to work with Green Doctor who has secured similar funding in September through the Energy Saving Trust. Using the Power Calderdale Partnership principles we are utilising the one door to ensure the maximum uptake of the energy advice and to minimise duplication. Green Doctor will take referrals in Central and Lower Valley areas with the exception of Noah's Ark customers who they have a partnership with. Newground Together will take referrals in North Halifax and the Upper Valley area.



Case Study 3 – Food Support

Building Bridges Food Hub (Brighouse)

Project Description

Building Bridges Food Hub is a registered charity which aims to provide support to local residents who have fallen on hard times so that they may receive subsidised shopping, providing them with dignity and choice. The clients make a small but notable contribution to the shopping and the remainder is paid for by the charity. Clients who are eligible to join pay an annual membership fee. They can then choose up to 20 items from a weekly updated list online and can choose to pay online or with cash. Families can order up to two baskets weekly. Clients then book a collection slot and pick up their shopping each Saturday.

Project Aims

The service provided by Building Bridges Food Hub hopes to promote three values at the heart of our client centred approach:

1. Support
2. Dignity
3. Choice

Our ethos is embedded in reducing inequality and providing support to local people. We plan to do this by providing opportunity for fair food provision within the toughest financial climate our area has seen in our generation. We want to work alongside other local food poverty projects e.g. we are referred clients from local food banks, and we have also contributed surplus food to the lunch box appeal by Good Karma Coffee House.

Identified needs / outline of problem

Our community within Brighouse, Rastrick and Lightcliffe has been particularly adversely affected by the Covid19 Pandemic and current social and economic conditions. The impact of Covid19 has seen rises in incidences of domestic abuse and changes in employment which impact on deprivation and homelessness with mental health being negatively affected for many people. In addition, recent fuel price increases and inflation is spiralling the cost of living. The subsequent impact on their ability to self care takes its toll on those vulnerable people in terms of their physical and emotional wellbeing. The assurance to struggling families and individuals that for £3-£6 they can have a reliable supply of food each week is a huge burden lifted. The fact that they are able to choose the items according to their and their children's needs is also providing an emotional and mental wellbeing boost.

Project outcomes

The expected outcomes for clients receiving subsidised shopping for themselves and their families is that they will eat more healthily (as we purposefully count healthy items as a lower number of points than unhealthy ones e.g., a person is encouraged to order more fruit and vegetables as they are worth 1 point rather than 2 points on the online system). Clients will receive more substantial quantities of food for a fixed price. This will relieve

some of the burden of the cost of living crisis and release funds for them to spend on other essentials such as gas/electric.

The knock on benefit from this is the alleviation of mental stress due to less financial pressure. There is also an emotional wellbeing benefit through the dignity of providing for oneself due to their contribution and being able to choose one's own shopping.

Client feedback

- With the current climate of living crisis underlying their personal life issues, it's harder than ever to put healthy, sustainable and cost-effective meals on the table for young children and families. So having something like this and too locally is fantastic! I hope there are more initiatives like this to support women and vulnerable adults!
- This service helps me maintain my autonomy which is important to me because of my allergy, dignity and mental health. Without this service I'd struggle financially to make ends meet. Then that would severely limit my already limited social life causing me to become depressed and suicidal.
- I know for a fact that the support given by the team and the items they have donated, has given them ease, mothers in the domestic abuse refuge are bearing the brunt of the current climate, whilst facing hardships to end in personal life's whilst also finding it hard for ends to meet. finding a sustainable way to spend less and ensure that their children are fed gives them so much happiness, and being local, reachable and bilingual has offered them support within the community that they didn't know existed! Thank you to the whole teams who make it approachable with kindness and compassion. Offering women of all ages suffering through all ranges of abuse a hub of support and financially supporting the burden of buying food and supporting their families whilst starting over in life.

Plans for the future

We opened in August 2022 and plan to grow our client and volunteer base over the next 12 months. We have plans to expand our ambient products to offer regular fresh items to clients too as we are building relationships with local greengrocers and food providers.

For further information visit:

[Building Bridges Food Hub – Reducing Food Poverty & Reducing Food Waste](#)



Case Study 4 – Employment Support

Halifax Opportunities Trust – Employment Services

Project Description

Our Employment Services Team is based at Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre. Helping people to find employment is an important part of the Trust's commitment to the local community. Our team of experienced Employment Advisors work with job seekers to help them move forward, overcome their barriers and get good quality jobs.

We stand out because we pride ourselves on our friendly and innovative approach and our ability to understand what local people need to achieve success – putting the job seeker at the centre of our focus. Partnership working is a key part of our support and the Trust is proud to work with local specialist organisations to enable us to deliver a holistic service to our customers.

Project Aims

- To alleviate poverty
- To relieve unemployment
- To offer good quality advice & guidance
- To offer opportunities for work, training and wellbeing
- To work in partnership to achieve goals

Identified needs / outline of problem

Our weekly hot food takeaway service provides a nutritional meal for people living in our communities who need it. The lunch is a lifeline for people and families to receive much needed supplies and nutrition, which utilises the charity FareShare for its ingredients therefore also reducing food waste in the process. The project is delivered from our Outback kitchen & garden in the heart of Park Ward. As part of our approach we are dedicated to supporting our community to become self-sustaining and to underpin this we have positioned our Employment Services team on hand to talk with people about their circumstances and reasons for visiting the project, discussing the further support we have available that can help with any issues they may be facing, which can be for a multitude of reasons.

Sarah* is a young woman who visits the project for a meal and was approached by one of our Employment Services Mentors. She says: 'I felt really shy about having to come to the food takeaway service, but I was struggling financially & with being able to budget. I'm going to college to gain a qualification in the hope that I can move into work eventually and when Covid hit most of my classes moved online. I don't have access to internet or a laptop but I was determined to not have to give up my course due to lack of funds. The College said that I could attend Covid secure sessions on their site so I decided to walk to college every week which is around 3 miles. The hot food really helps me because at home I don't have any heating and struggle to cook for myself, and the food is really lovely!' 'Michelle started talking to me and was really lovely, helping me to feel more comfortable & confident. She said that Employment Services could help with some of my immediate barriers and that they can help support me along my learning journey and look

for work when I'm ready. Michelle helped me to build an action plan and she immediately got started on helping me. I already feel better. Through Employment Services I have had support for my debt & budgeting at the Noah's Ark charity, been offered support to access the internet at home & provided a laptop so I can complete my studies, help to top up my meter for my heating & regular intervention for my confidence & mental health'.

Lisa Connelly, Employment Services Coordinator says: 'It is really important to us that while we are meeting the needs of our community. We are also supporting households to address the underlying issues that create that need. By linking people with an Employment Services Mentor, they are supported in a variety of ways to be able to work towards their life goals and into a self-sustaining way of life. We are proud to work with likeminded specialist partners such as Noah's Ark to deliver our service and provide a truly holistic approach. And we're also really friendly!'

Project outcomes

The case study illustrates how the Employment Services team uses a holistic approach to improve people's emotional and financial health and wellbeing.

Client feedback

'I can't believe the positive difference it has made to me already – if I hadn't have met with Michelle I wouldn't have known about all this support and probably wouldn't have had the confidence to take it up. I would have continued to be a face in the crowd. I feel like I can move forward now towards my goals and have hope for my future'.

Plans for the future

In the weeks since, Sarah has found a job in the care sector which she loves. She is managing her household effectively and no longer needs intervention from our projects.

For further information visit:

[Hopeful Families - Halifax Opportunities Trust \(regen.org.uk\)](https://regen.org.uk)



Case Study 5 – Employment Support

Employment Hub

Project Description

The Employment Hub is an employability programme that offers support to people in Calderdale to find work, secure development opportunities, self-employment, training or apprenticeships. Our approach is tailored to each client's needs and with a close network of local collaborators ensure that they get the support they need to remove any barriers preventing them from securing quality paid work.

In addition, we have advisors who work with pre-start and established businesses to support with advice and knowledge around skills, apprenticeships and workforce development. They are ambassadors who promote the benefits of paying the living wage, the value that employing an apprentice can bring to an organisation, encouraging companies to offer work experience opportunities and provide advice on recruitment and addressing skills gaps. We also support with recruitment by promoting vacancies on online job portals and our social media channels.

Project Aims

- To build confidence and empower
- To build skill levels
- To improve financial circumstances
- To offer quality bespoke advice and guidance
- Retain talent and skills in Calderdale
- To respond to skills shortages with targeted recruitment campaigns
- Support businesses with recruitment and skills and promote the Good Employer Charter.
- Promote apprenticeships
- To improve the economy of Calderdale

Identified needs / outline of problem

- Short, sharp tailored Information Advice and Guidance given to help people who find themselves recently out of work, to access new skills and or new employment ensuring that they do not fall into long term unemployment.
- Provide robust support to 16-19 year olds to consider their career pathways including apprenticeships, traineeships and further/higher education.
- Provide in-depth support for those customers who are longer term unemployed and may have more complex barriers preventing them from accessing work.
- Help provide alternative support for local GP practices to support customers with non medical mental health issues.
- Referrals into good quality debt advice and support with household financial management.

- Help to understand what the future skills shortages are with our local employers and to give them links to local skills provision and work force development support.
- To provide pre start up advice to individuals wanting to start their own small businesses, giving people an opportunity to discuss their business plans and the mechanics of becoming self employed.

Project outcomes

The Hub has supported over 950 customers so far with a focus on the following outcomes:

- Support into work
- Support with reskilling and upskilling
- Improved Labour Market Status
- Business start ups

Client feedback

Below are a few comments from people the Hub has helped.

To find work;

"I can totally recommend The Employment Hub. I'd have been lost without their support. The Employment Hub helped me with writing my CV and gaining confidence in how my skills as a hairdresser could be utilised in different roles. I received weekly vacancies and they matched my skills to a vacancy from an education company which led to an interview and starting work as an Apprentice Customer Service Assistant. I love my new role."

To change career;

"Can I just start by saying a huge thank you for all the support you have given me over the past few months. Your guidance and feedback really helped me to get more focus and have a clear vision of what I need to do to land my next job.

Your help with my CV and the questions you ask helped to write my CV in a much better way so that people, not just systems understand my skills and abilities.

I am starting on March 28th working at Titus learning full time in the role of an Implementation consultant. I am really looking forward to the new challenge. This role is based in Bradford, but will then be mainly remote from August when we are based in Salisbury.

I will have completed my Instructional design qualification in April 2022 and then hope to bring those skills to my new role.

I can't thank you enough for your time and help with job hunting."

To recruit the right skills:

"The team at the employment hub are a great asset to the local area.

As a business it's always hard to find the right people. The service that is offered by the Employment Hub is second to none.

They will advise on the suitable applicants for the role, let you know if they have had recent contact with suitable candidates face to face and really consider if the role would be a good fit before they offer up any candidates.

This in turn saves time in your business and lets you work on what you need to, instead of what you don't have an understanding of or time to deal with.

A great partnership via the local council, which for me, says thumbs up to business"

To start their own business;

One of the knock on effects of Covid was that people found it difficult to juggle family commitments around work. This resulted in an upturn of people considering self employment as a more viable option for them.

An example of this is from customer who was employed as an accountant and was due to return to work in January 2021 following the birth of her third child. She sought advice from our enterprise advisor who supported her with getting her business plan together. 10 months on she is running a growing business and has the flexibility to manage her work around her family. She has plans to grow the business and create apprenticeship opportunities for young people in the next 5 years. This is an example of how enterprise advice can feed back into the economy creating wealth and employment opportunities

To manage their health and wellbeing;

Other customers come to us having fallen out of work because of issues in the work place. In these cases customers are feeling vulnerable and low in self esteem and need help building their confidence back up. One customer we worked with had left a career in teaching due to stress, she had been a teacher for a long number of years and found it difficult to imagine what else she would be able to do.

With the support of an advisor she was encouraged to consider jobs she would have otherwise discounted and was encouraged to go on a course to build her confidence and add new skills to her portfolio. She provided the following feedback following a successful application to a local housing authority -

"I wanted to let you know that I have completed the IAG Level 2 course with DIP and I have got an Employment Mentor job at Together Housing.

Thank you so much for all your support. It has been invaluable."

The devastating impact that the Covid 19 epidemic has had on the mental health and confidence levels of people was seen no more clearly than with the caseload of our social prescriber who is embedded in the Whitehill GP surgery in Illingworth. This function was the first to be trialled in Calderdale and has subsequently been rolled out in a number of surgeries. The purpose of the role is to triage those who are in work but are at risk of falling out of work due to mental ill health and to support those who are work ready, but are suffering non clinical mental health issues. An example of how this work is invaluable to help people manage their mental health and take positive steps:

A client was referred by the GP because he was displaying significant mental health issues and consequently had isolated himself. Because he did not have a clinical need his GP could not support him. Though he lived at home he did not have any support from his family who denied his mental health struggles. He had dropped out of University due to a police allegation against him. He felt he had let his family down and brought shame on them, he therefore began to isolate himself at home. The social prescribing practitioner supported him to reinstate himself on his University course and access one to one support with his work. She supported him through the police system resulting in the allegation being dropped with no charge. The customer is now back at University in his 3rd year of studies. He is living at home whilst commuting to save financially. He works part time at a supermarket to support his studies and has good social networks. His confidence is back and he is happy in life.

The customer is extremely grateful for the 'life changing' Wellness support he gained and states he would not be back at University or gained work without her intervention at that critical time. He has offered to speak to anyone in a similar situation who is struggling at University with their mental health and feels alone.

Plans for the future

Employment Hub has been given a third round of funding and will continue delivering this support until March 2025.



Connect with Calderdale Employment Hub on Facebook

For further information visit:

[Employment Hub](#)

[Meet the team](#)

Case Study 6 – Money & Debt

Money and Debt Forum & Cash First Approach

Project Description

In 2022 the Anti-Poverty Steering Group decided to form a specialist group to focus on money and debt. The forum met in May, July, September and November and is chaired by the Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Calderdale.

Early on, the group identified a need to develop a single resource to support frontline workers and volunteers from a range of sectors to talk about money with their clients. The Forum decided to adopt the Cash First approach and worked with the Independent Food Aid Network to develop a Calderdale leaflet. The step-by-step leaflet identifies which local agencies are best placed to help people maximise income and access any existing financial entitlements. The leaflet has been distributed to libraries, schools, local charities, housing associations, food banks, the fire & rescue service and a range of customer facing teams across the Council and partners.

Project Aims

The Forum aims to bring front line advisers, support workers and managers from relevant key services together to;

- Collate key service data to get an in depth understanding of the problems
- Take a proactive approach to responding to the problems identified built on collaboration
- Ensure referral pathways are joined up and effective so people access the right support when they need it
- Share good practice from elsewhere
- Build effective partnerships to tackle financial exclusion

Identified needs / outline of problem

The cost of living crisis is forcing more households into poverty. Some households who are struggling to make ends meet have not been in this position before. Organisations are reporting record numbers of people needing support around food, fuel, debt and benefits. As a response to the increased demand the Forum decided to develop the Money Worries leaflet.

Project outcomes

The Cash First approach aims to reduce the need for charitable food aid by helping people access any existing financial entitlements and advice on income maximisation as a cash first approach to food insecurity.

Client feedback

The project is in its early stages and client feedback has not yet been collected. Partner agencies are engaging well and there is a significant demand for the leaflets.

Plans for the future

The Forum is in the process of rolling out Money Counts training sessions on how to make use of the leaflet with the support of Feeding Britain and the Independent Food Aid Network. There are also plans to have the leaflet translated into a number of different languages.

The Forum is also promoting the [Money Guiders Programme and Network](#) to members to support staff and volunteers who talk to their clients about money.

Worrying about money?

Support is available in Calderdale



Three steps to find options and places to get help

Step 1: What's the problem?

I suddenly have no money

- Lost job or reduced hours
- Money stopped
- Lost money
- Unexpected expense
- Disaster (e.g. flood or fire)
- Relationship breakdown
- Sanctioned (see option: 5)

See options 1 2 6

My money doesn't stretch far enough

- Deciding between food, fuel, and mobile credit
- Low income
- Zero hours contract
- Statutory Sick Pay too low
- Facing redundancy
- Not sure if eligible for support
- Change of circumstance

See options 1 2

I have debt

- Rent or Council Tax
- Gas and electricity
- Payday loans
- Owe friends or family
- Benefit repayments

See option 3

I am waiting on a benefit payment or advance

- New claim for benefit
- Payment delayed
- Waiting for decision

See options 1 4

Case Study 7 – Homelessness

Gathering Place

Project Description

- Food bank: We provide over 60 family food parcels and over 100 single food parcels on a weekly basis. In addition to this we have provide over 30 weekly emergency food parcels. Organisations can refer in to use this service on behalf of their clients.
- Banqueting Table: We provide a free two course meal three times a week. Figures for this are around 150 a week.
- Crisis management: signposting support service. Support workers will deal with an immediate crisis then signpost and “hand hold” if necessary to relevant organisations. This can be anything from benefit issues, homelessness and addiction.
- We offer temporary accommodation for up to 8 residents from Oct – March, individuals can stay here, where a bespoke support plan is implemented, and residents will work with partner agencies to obtain secure permanent accommodation. Many of the residents are in addiction or have been in crisis for a prolonged amount of time
- We host a wound clinic run by the NHS for those that are not able to maintain appointments
- We host a sexual health clinic run by the NHS
- We currently host a drop-in service run by Calderdale Recovery Steps.
- We host multiple mutual aid groups weekly. Such as A.A, N.A etc.

Project Aims

Vision: To bring an end to homelessness across the UK and empower people to live independent and purposeful lives.

Identified needs / outline of problem

A 71 yr old gentleman had been using the banqueting table for a few weeks, staff noticed a deterioration in his demeanour. Support staff asked GG if we could assist with anything, he explained that he had a relationship breakdown with his partner and has found himself homeless. He was registered with local authority and was trying to bid on properties but found this difficult because he didn't understand computers and had no internet access. He also informed staff that he was currently sleeping on his brother's floor, he complained that he was often very cold because his brother couldn't afford the heating. Support workers helped GG to place regular bids and after a few weeks, his situation hadn't changed but the struggles that GG was facing were increasing. Staff identified private affordable accommodation and assisted with the application process. GG went to view the property and moved in within a week. He was assisted in obtaining furnishings and linens etc. GG continues to do well in his new property and is still a regular at the banqueting table, just a much happier one!

Project outcomes

The outcome for GG is, he is now accommodated, he has a stable income and knows that he has support should he need so in the future.

Client feedback

GG said "I will never ever ever leave this place until I die! I love my new home and I am so very grateful for the support you have given me. Thank you so much, your just angels!"

Plans for the future

We hope to increase the capacity of the Shelter and the need to obtain additional food supplies is always of paramount importance, especially in the current situation. Our aim is to provide hope and support to those that have none.

Conclusion

The cost of living crisis is going to continue, and while we are seeing the current impacts play out in terms of inflationary increases in food and fuel, we know there will be further waves. We can already see the impact on housing costs, rental and mortgage increases and increased homelessness and use of temporary accommodation. Furthermore, there are likely to be other issues that we are simply not yet aware of. We have strengthened our partnership response in 2022 and will continue to respond flexibly to the changing needs brought about by the crisis.

Our Anti-Poverty Partnership is well established and has provided a sound platform on which to work together to maximise the support available and to mitigate the harm that the increase in cost of living is causing. This year saw our first face to face event since the Covid pandemic and nearly 200 people attended from 60 organisations. Presentations covered food, fuel, digital inclusion and money/debt and an extensive marketplace was set up with activity zones on food, fuel and money/digital access.

This year we have also strengthened our communications with campaigns on pension credit, healthy start and carers allowance to promote take up rates locally.

It isn't possible to present the full picture of formal and informal help and support that is being provided every day in our local communities in this report. Social media does however provide excellent examples of such activity. The case studies within this report demonstrate the impact we can have and will continue to have through effective collaboration, coordination and determination.