



severn wye

2022/23 REPORT

Warm and Well

END OF YEAR



a fitter home for a healthy future



Warm and Well Progress Report, Quarter 4, 2022-23.

1 April 2023

This report has been prepared by Severn Wye Energy Agency as part of a programme of works funded by the seven local authorities in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, and NHS Gloucestershire.

The Warm and Well scheme aims to improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce the risk of fuel poverty and associated health problems by:

- Raising public awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- Providing specific and appropriate advice by telephone, referrals from partner organisations and engagement at events
- Delivering home visits to vulnerable customers that include an energy survey and bespoke advice report
- Making referrals to grant and discount schemes.

Fuel poverty in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire's mix of urban and rural communities means there is a wide variety of housing with distinct challenges to achieving energy efficiency and affordable warmth at home. The counties have a varied patchwork of housing stock, from the very rural off-gas properties in the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean, to the inner-city areas of Gloucester where we see hard-to-treat solid walled blocks of flats and terraced houses. The two counties have a significant number of park home sites which have shown to have poorer-than-average health outcomes. In addition, South Gloucestershire has a large number of HMO's linked to the Universities and student population.

Distribution of fuel poverty across the Warm and Well region

The latest (2020) fuel poverty statistics compare the proportion of households in the area who suffer from fuel poverty:

- Gloucestershire: 10.8%
- South Gloucestershire: 8.4%
- Warm and Well region: 10%
- South West: 11.4%

These figures pre-date the current energy crisis and increase in the cost of living, which we know has had a dramatic impact. We estimate 28% of the population are in fuel poverty.

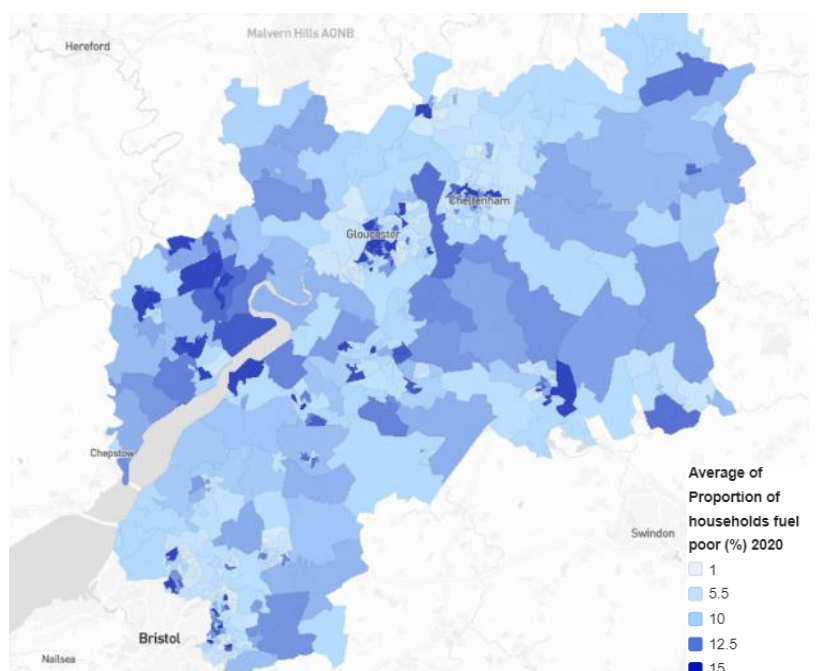


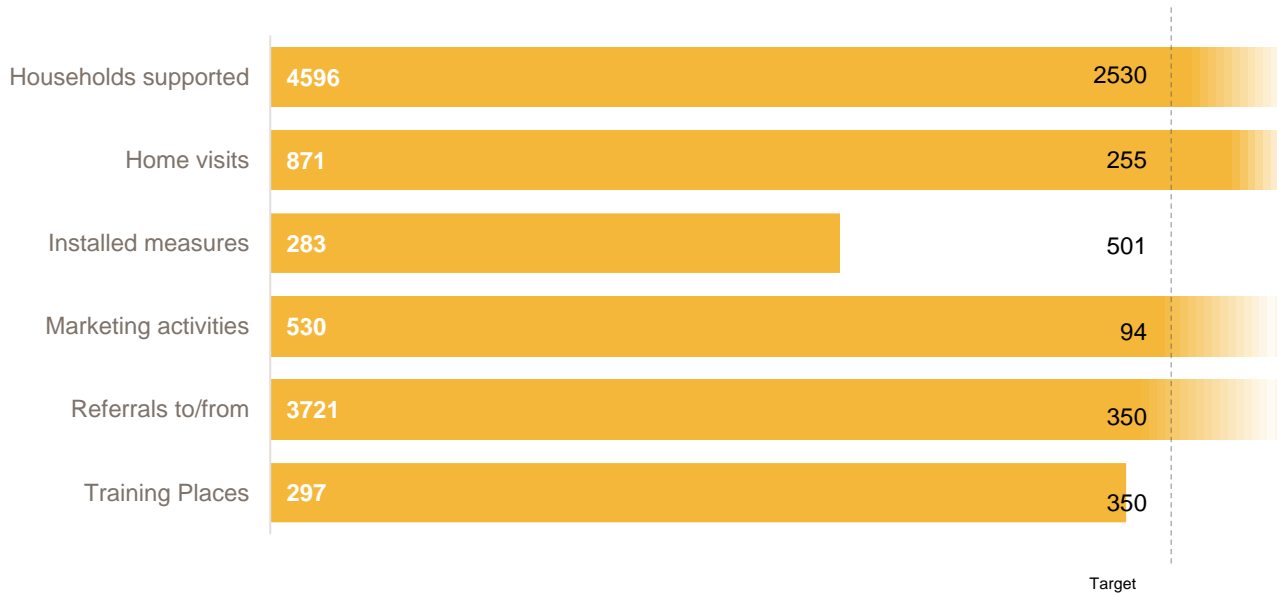
Figure 1: The spread of fuel poverty by LSOA using the 2020 sub-regional statistics

Warm and Well key achievements

Over the course of the year so far:

- 9,210 contacts made supporting 4,596 unique households.
- Visited a total of 871 people at home.
- Grants of over £1.73M provided to 1,523 households (installs and financial support).
- Engaged with 2176 members of the public and 440 staff at events.
- 12 fuel poverty training sessions delivered to 297 people.

Progress against targets



Executive Summary

The demand for Warm and Well services has remained high and continued to grow throughout the winter. For the fourth quarter in a row the number of households supported has increased. Despite the Energy Price Guarantee the long-term nature of the cost of living crisis and rising energy bills means those who had a financial 'buffer' are struggling and those who are living in fuel poverty continue to suffer the consequences of high energy prices.

The number of people contacting us – and the complexity of their circumstances – continues to increase from last quarter and meeting this demand and supporting vulnerable residents has been challenging.

This is borne out in our support metrics. This quarter we have:

- Exceeded the annual target for home visits
- Exceeded the annual target for households supported by around a third
- Undertaken four times the marketing activities in the first three quarters than expected for the whole of the year
- Received seven times the annual target number of referrals in/out of the service for the year.

Calls and Enquiries to the Warm and Well service has continued to surpass the previous year's figures. As experienced last quarter, many calls are from the 'first-time fuel poor' due to the current economic climate, and those seeking advice (rather than funding or support) to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and prepare for winter. There has also been an increase in clients asking for help with payments towards gas and electricity bills. As of the end of Quarter 4, we had supported over 4500 households.

Community Outreach and Engagement activities are in high demand. Our advocates have undertaken 871 home visits in the year, which typically have the potential to generate up to an estimated £250 per year in savings for each household. We are reaching an ever-increasing number of residents through surgeries and drop-ins who are financially, socially or geographically excluded from existing advice and support. The majority of these home visits have been funded through our EST Redress Advocate project in Gloucestershire. We have also seen a notable increase in referrals to Warm and Well from partner organisations, this is, in part, attributed to referrals for Household Support Fund monies.

We continue to work with partners and other front line organisation to build awareness of fuel poverty and energy awareness through our CPD accredited training.

Retrofit Projects and Installs: Delays to ECO4 have significantly reduced the income generated for 2022-23 through the installer referral fees. This has also impacted other grant-funded retrofit projects, such as Warm Homes Fund and Sustainable Warmth, especially where they are dependent on the funding being blended with other schemes. The most recent delays have primarily been associated with rereferral frameworks and the requirements and expectations of Data Sharing and the associated expectations of the Warm and Well contract and Ofgem, and requirements under GDPR. This has proved to be most challenging in respect of 'health' referrals/eligibility. However, these issues have

now been resolved and ECO is well underway. We expect to see significant numbers in the next quarter.

The Sustainable Warmth Local Authority Delivery 3 and Home Upgrade Grant schemes are currently behind target.. Assessor demand/skills shortage contributed to delays and we have had to make improvements to the customer journey and marketing. A 'final' 79 clients are being taken through the process and new enquiries are being funnelled into the HUG 2 scheme.

Through the capital funding leveraged for clients and the additional projects and support services added on to the Warm and Well programme, the added value for money for the Local Authorities is **£6.07 for every £1 invested.**

Sandy Hore-Ruthven MBE

CEO

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People we support

Households supported

We supported extremely high numbers of households this quarter. 2,597 individual enquiries were received, from 1,622 unique households. The extreme cold weather in January led to almost double the number of households supported compared with last year.

Since the start of the year, 9,210 enquiries have been made across a total of 4,596 households.

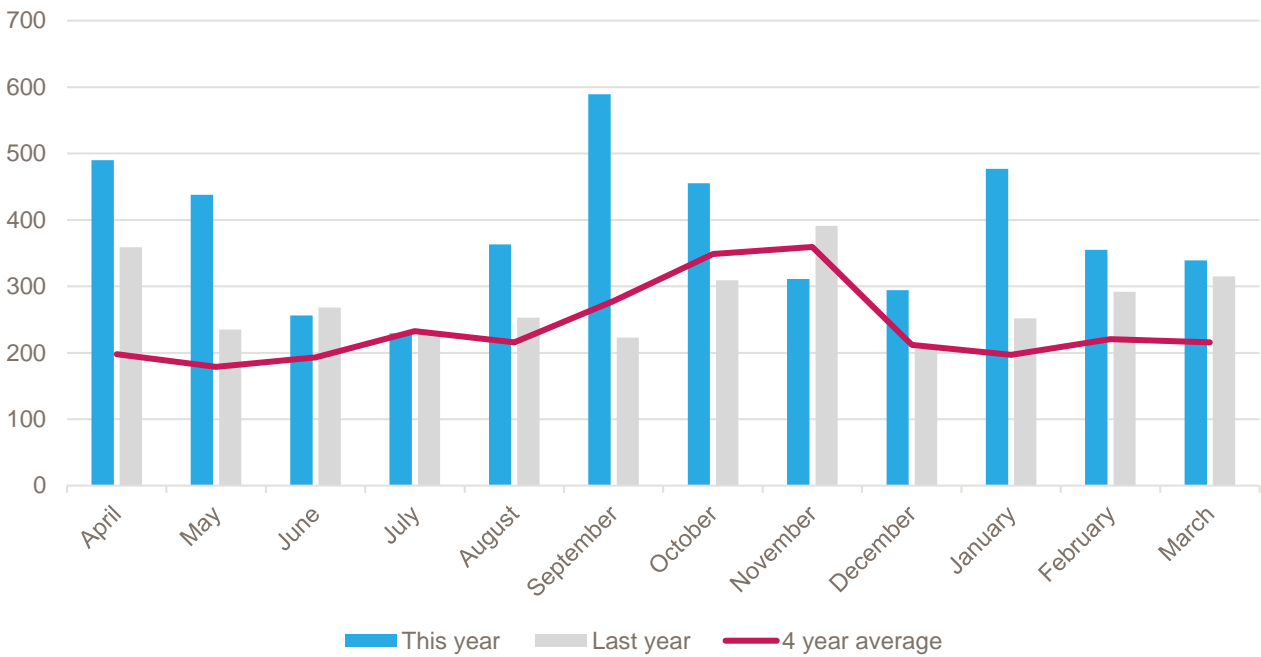


Figure 2: Households advised per month this year compared to the 4-year average

In addition, there were over 1400 enquiries from people out of area or people who didn't want their details stored on our system.

Client characteristics

97% of all clients reported at least one vulnerability.

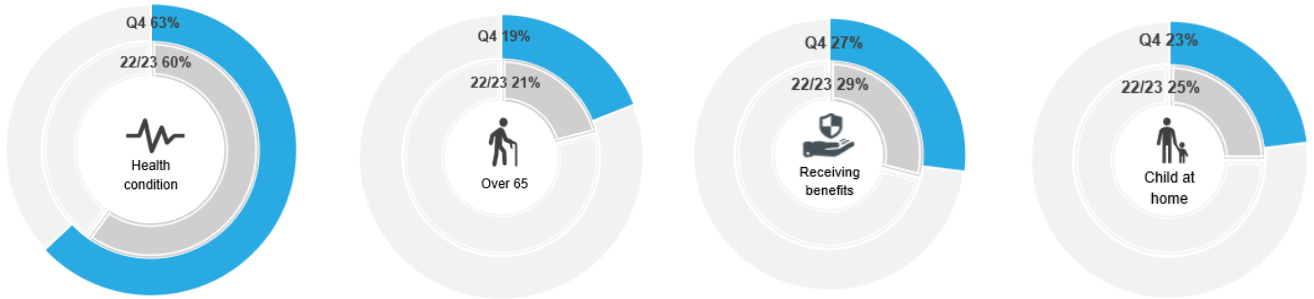


Figure 3: Proportion of Q4 clients declaring key vulnerabilities compared with YTD

A total of 897 clients provided details on an existing health condition in the household this quarter (2,426 this year). We continue to see a high number of mental health conditions being reported (561 this year), and mobility issues continue to account for a large proportion of primary health conditions reported. This quarter we have seen an increase in the number of people reporting respiratory disease (207), this includes Asthma, COPD etc.

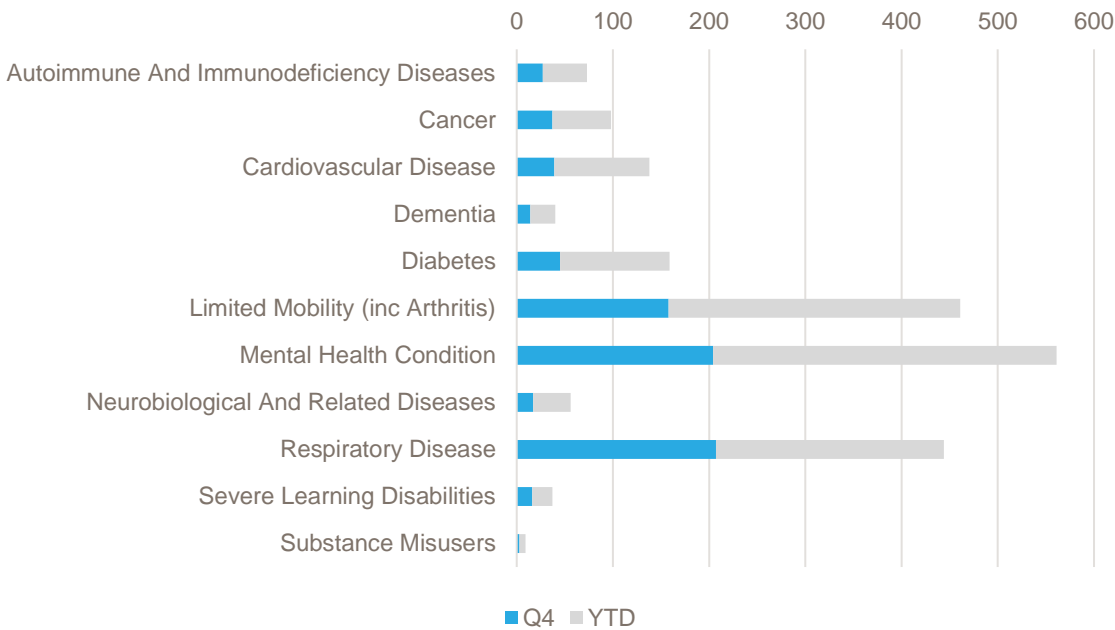


Figure 4: Primary health condition reported in Q4 and YTD

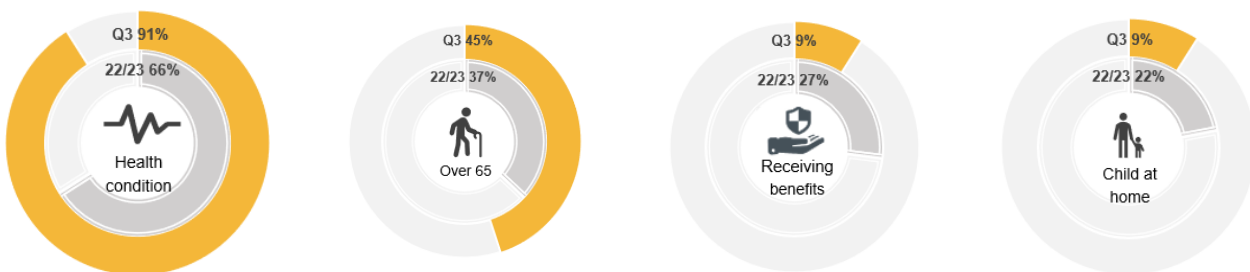
Home Visits

In total we have carried out **149 home visits** across all our services this quarter, a total of 581 this year.

Energy Advice Visits

A total of 71 visits have taken place through the Warm and Well team this year, including 11 this quarter.

Overall, 95% of clients visited at home had at least one of the following vulnerabilities.



Total visits: **11 in Q3**, 71 YTD

Capacity for home visits has been challenging due to the high demand on the phones, so the majority of visits are covered through the Energy Advocacy service.

Advocacy Home Visits

The advocacy team carry out home visits which range in purpose from supporting residents with bills and meter issues to making applications for grants and funding. The team have carried out an additional 277 visits this quarter, totalling 800 this year.

Partnership Working

Training for other support organisations

Following a pause in January due to staff changes, the CPD programme resumed and a total of five sessions were offered during February and March. Attendees included staff and volunteers from a range of charities and community organisations, local authorities (mainly in roles relating to housing), social housing providers and the NHS. Feedback from participants confirmed that they found the material helpful in their work with vulnerable clients.

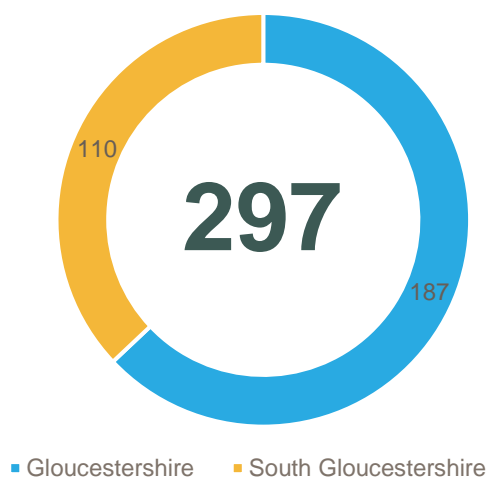


Figure 5 Split of CPD delegates this year in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire



I work with mostly older and vulnerable adults so the information to support them to manage their concerns around fuel bills will be very helpful

I had little knowledge on this area, and I will be helping lots of patients with problems with energy questions.



Referrals in and out of Warm and Well

We have built strong relationships with local organisations to provide additional support to clients. This breaks down as follows:

- **1031** referrals were received from partner organisations in quarter 4 (3,548 this year).
- **30** clients were referred to partners for additional support after a conversation with a Warm and Well advisor or advocate, a total of 173 this year.

Our data is not always complete. When an onward referral is made, or a client is signposted to further support we are not always aware whether this support is subsequently accessed. We are reviewing our processes to ensure all referral and signposting information is being captured and will be reaching out to partner organisations to update the team on what services they are currently offering.



Organisations that refer clients to Warm and Well

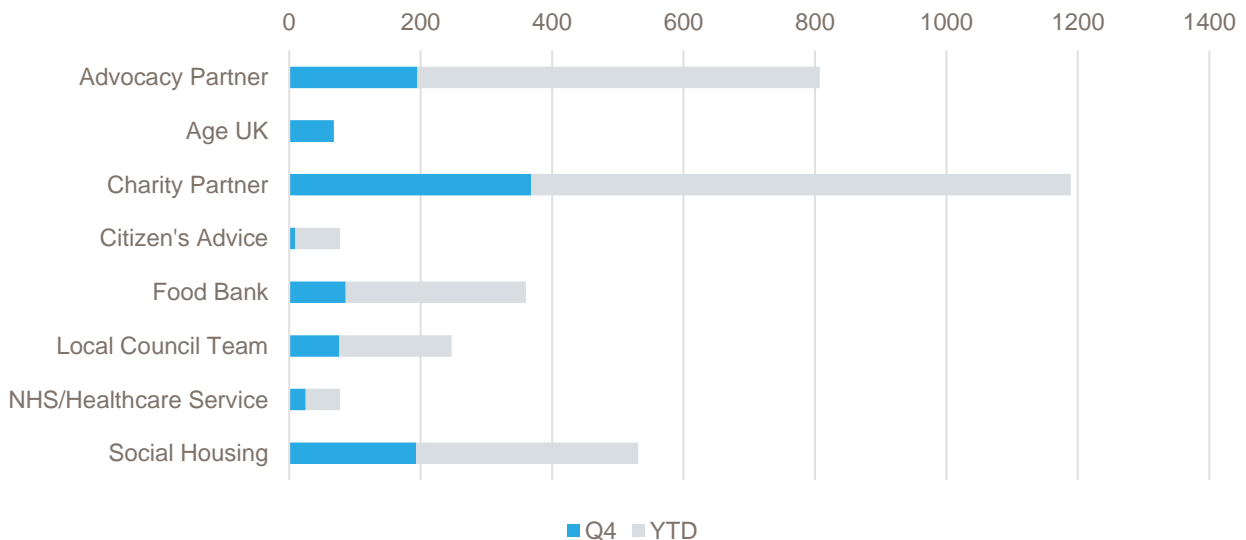


Figure 6: Referrals from partner organisations in Q4 and YTD

Organisations that we referred or signposted clients to

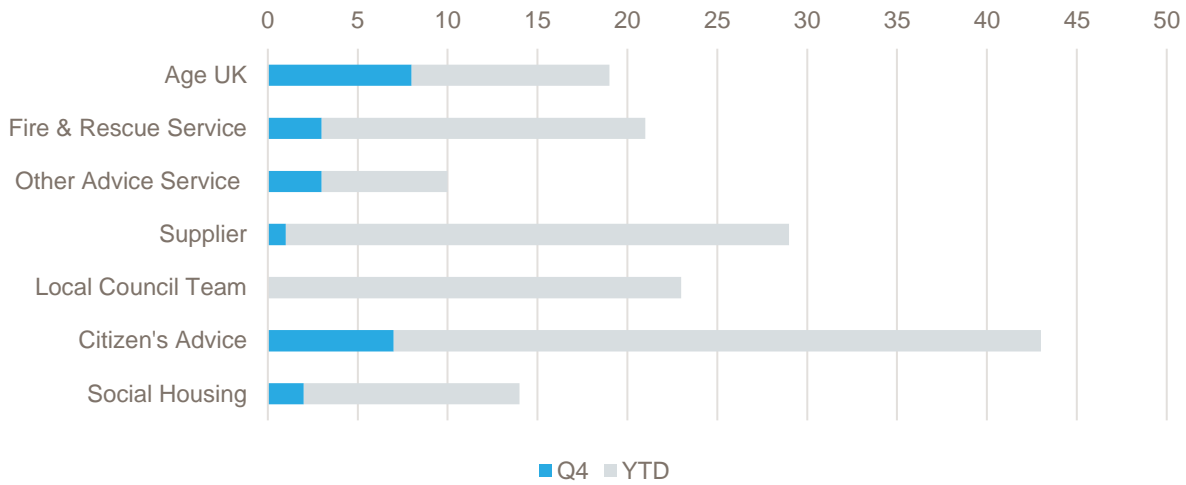


Figure 7: Referrals to partner organisations in Q4 and YTD

Working with partners to reach new clients

Through the advocacy team, we have also run 24 drop-in sessions this quarter, where we provide 'surgery' style advice to people coming to see us. Drop-ins have formed an integral part of our work, engaging 391 (QTD) members of the public who are struggling with their fuel bills.

Activity Type	Count of activities	Number of people engaged
Presentation for external organisation	20	264
Networking Event	14	142
Newsletter/ promotional email	12	781
Total	46	1187



Energy Advocacy

The Energy Advocacy service is funded through the EST Redress project in Gloucestershire and through the council in South Gloucestershire. We work closely with our partners in both South Gloucestershire (Southern Brooks, One Stop shops and healthcare providers) and in Gloucestershire with various housing associations (Two Rivers Hpousing, Bromford, Elim Housing, Cheltenham Borough home, Gloucester city Homes etc), charities and community groups, including GARAS, Barnardo's, FVAF, Salvation Army etc,

A total of 1035 households have been supported by the service this year. During these visits, the advocates have provided simple energy advice (e.g., turning down thermostat, switching off standby) which, if implemented, would see savings for clients of £225k a year. The advocates have also supported clients with grant applications, debt relief and other financial support

totalling £58k so far.

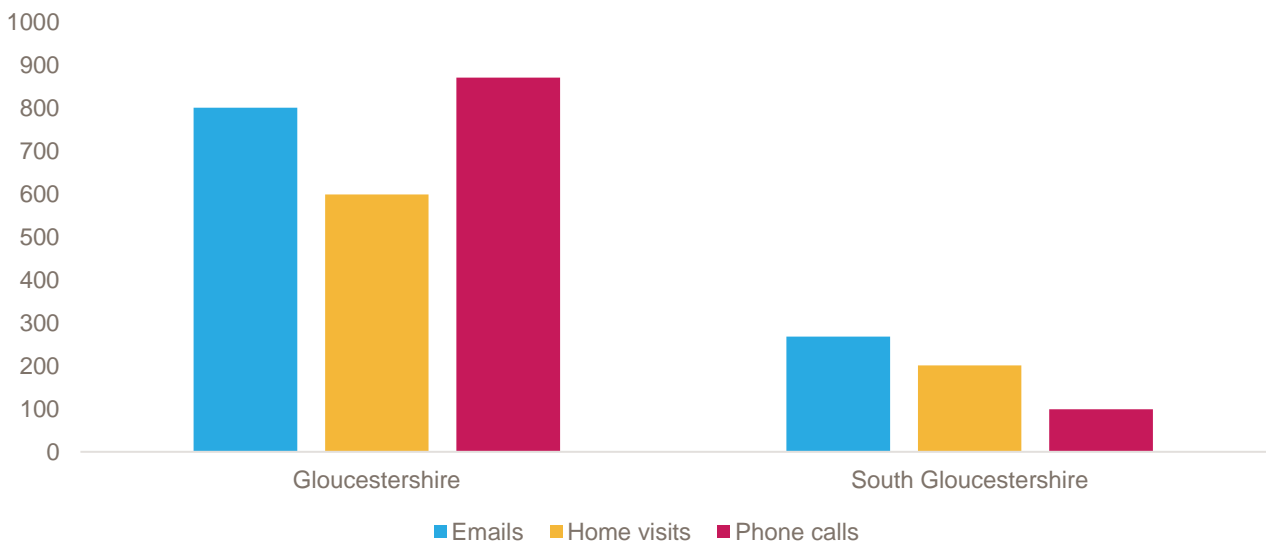


Figure 8: Energy Advocate support services YTD

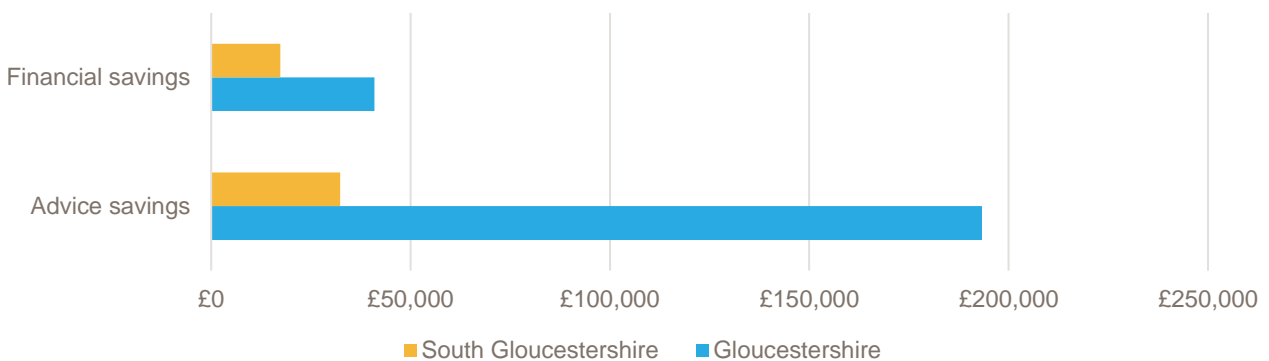


Figure 9: Financial savings identified and achieved through advocacy services YTD

Case study

One of the advocates met a client at a drop in that she had arranged. She discovered that the client had a debt of £1216, they were very stressed and worried and believed the supplier was charging them. The advocate arranged a home visit to investigate the issue further.

During the home visit, the client had changed suppliers from SSE to Ove and the advocate discovered that the meter reading that SSE had given to OVO were incorrect. Ovo then continued to estimate the meter readings, even though the client was giving correct meter readings. The advocate took photos of the meter reading and sent to OVO and then did this again 14 days later to prove the clients usage. An updated bill was sent and OVO have arranged to have the Smart Meter changed. The debt issued was resolved with this being done and the client owed nothing. The advocate also gave the client energy saving advise.

The client was very pleased and relived from stress after the support he had had from the advocate.

Step Up South Gloucestershire

The Step-up South Gloucestershire project continues to go from strength. The thermal cameras have proved to be very popular with a waiting list of 300 people at one point. Severn Wye supported the reduction in the waiting list by a thermal camera expert delivering up to 7 home visits on a Saturday, giving advice on how to improve their properties as well as demonstrating how the camera works. A [film to demonstrate the use of a thermal camera has been produced](#) and we are now looking to make a film for the summer to demonstrate how to keep your home cool. We are now looking forward to the feedback and analysing the data to understand how useful the cameras have been.

Case study

An elderly couple in their 80s were referred to us by Age uk. They had recently had some work done in the loft and were worried that the loft insulation had been disturbed and would not work effectively. They are not able to get into their loft.

Our advocate accessed the clients' loft and examined their insulation, some of which was out of place resealed the disturbed insulation and laid it back properly.

The advocate then discussed the Warm Home Discount scheme with the clients, which they noted, and also took them through some energy saving measures they could implement in their home. They took on board these suggestions, particularly the warm-up/cool-down periods recommended when using a heating programmer and reduced the water flow temperature on their boiler. This could save them over an hour of heating each day which would produce a reasonable saving in costs. The advocate also registered them for the Priority services Register.

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Warm & Well



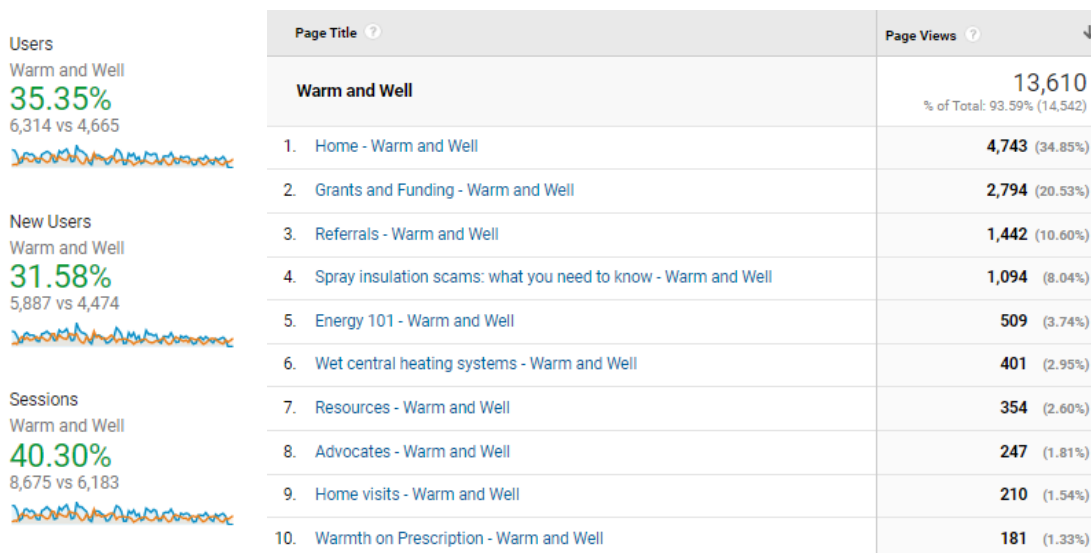
Marketing and Communications

Digital marketing

Website

This quarter, hits to the website remained higher than the average for this time of year, where we typically expect a high level of traffic anyway owing to the colder weather. Between January and March 2023 the Warm and Well website received 14,093 hits. Given that the annual expectation is around 12,000 hits, this demonstrates the sheer scale of interest in what Warm and Well provides. However, we observed a spike on 1-3 January, during which time 5,000 hits were received – skewing the averages for the quarter. These were Google hits and we expect them to be related to press coverage via the New York Times. As a result the analysis that follows omits these dates.

An interesting observation this quarter is that with the running of the Warmth on Prescription partnership service with NHS Gloucestershire and frontline support organisations over the winter months, a great deal of web traffic went to the referral pages on the website. These pages enable clinicians to refer patients in fuel poverty, and as well as significant press coverage of this, the service was inundated with partners wishing to refer their clients. Practical advice pages and specialist support pages also feature highly – indicating that these remained key concerns for clients over this quarter, much like last quarter.



Our social media coverage reduced slightly this quarter with less in the way of funding availability towards the end of the quarter, but engagement levels remained high.

- 109 updates across Facebook and Twitter
- 483 engagements with these posts
- 385 clicks through to the Warm and Well website

Broadcast, media and events coverage

There have been many opportunities to have a presence at local community events, where Warm and Well staff offer energy advice and signposting to grant funding.

Over the course of the year, our teams recorded supporting 1310 households at 61 in-person events. In many instances where we were unable to provide a staff member for events, we have instead provided energy-saving advice guides and materials to the organisers to distribute. During this quarter we appointed a new Training and Events Officer who will start in the first quarter of next year to improve our capacity and raise our presence in local events.

Media interest in our work continued to be high this quarter, with some key appearances (including a feature on BBC's The One Show) related to our Warmth on Prescription scheme. Along with this we also featured regularly during the quarter on local radio (BBC and commercial) in news and public interest features.



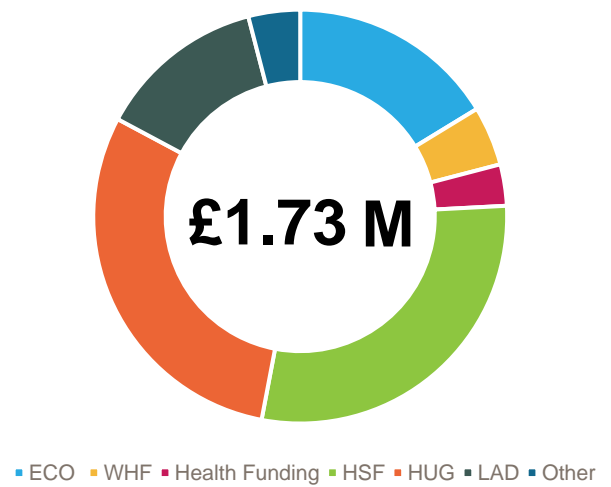
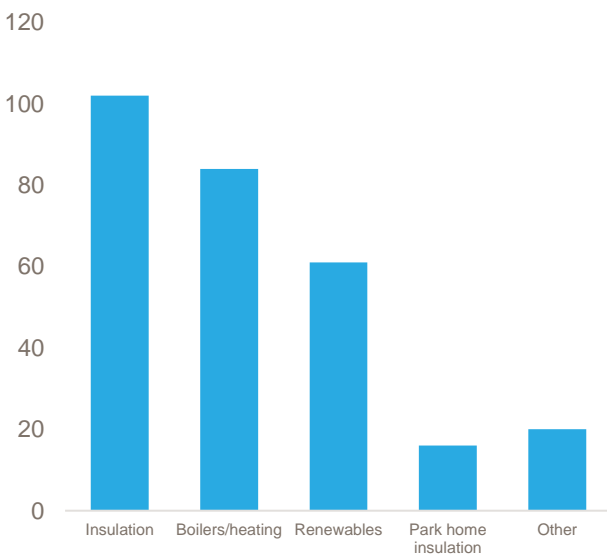
Above: Advocacy team leader Jacqui features on The One Show on 13 February along with clients and clinicians to talk about the Warmth on Prescription scheme run with NHS Gloucestershire as part of Warm and Well



Grant Funding Schemes

Summary of support provided this year

Over the year to date, we have supported the installation of 283 measures in 222 homes. We have also supported nearly 1,900 households who were struggling to pay their energy bills through the household support funds. Whilst many grant funding schemes are now up and running, we have continued to see delays with the transition to ECO4, which in turn has impacted upon project where co-funding is necessary. This has reduced the overall installation rates for energy efficiency measures over the year and we hope to see numbers picking up next quarter.



283

measures installed
benefitting **222** homes



6,395

tonnes of CO₂ saved
277 tonnes per year



1,895

households supported
with emergency funding



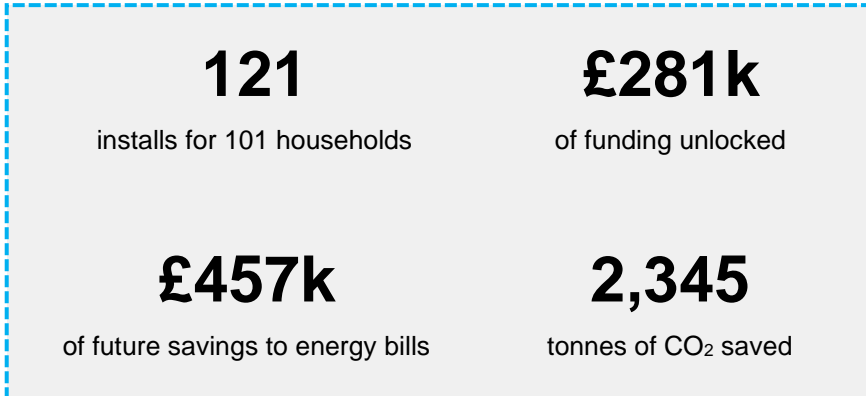
£1.24M

lifetime savings
from bills

277 tonnes of carbon have been saved per annum by the measures installed this year, equal to 79 homes' annual CO₂ emissions in the region. This equates to 6,395 tonnes over the lifetime of the measures, equivalent to the amount of carbon sequestered by 7,568 acres of forest.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

Impact



Updates

Our Data Sharing Agreements and Privacy are now in place, as part of information governance arrangements, as well as a new MoU and Service Level Agreement for ECO4 to provide installers.

As of April 1st, evidence required for ECO4 Flex clients has been updated by Ofgem and we have updated our processes to reflect this. We have also updated the Statement of Intent following changes made by Ofgem to their recommended template.

All clients on our reserve list have now been sent application forms and returned these along with evidence for eligibility checking. We are in the process of checking the eligibility of these clients and all new applications received post-reserve list and will begin making referrals this month.

We are also in our final stages of onboarding new installers under ECO4 Flex, with potentially 15 installers that can be onboarded to generate leads for ECO4 Flexible eligibility checks by Warm & Well.

ABOUT THIS SCHEME

What is ECO?

Funding brought in from energy suppliers, regulated by BEIS and Ofgem

Who is eligible for it?

Those on means-tested benefits or covered by local authority flexible eligibility declarations

What does it cover?

Insulation, boiler replacements, storage heaters or renewables

How much funding is available?

A set amount is determined per measure which may or may not cover the full cost

Do we have any targets?

No targets other than helping as many as possible to access

Severn Wye leads:

Nicola Lawrance

Other Funding

As well as our main grant funding schemes, we have also supported residents through additional funding where appropriate.

LEAP Emergency Boiler replacement scheme

The LEAP Boiler Scheme is provided by AgilityEco along with its partners and funded by seven energy companies through the Warm Home Discount Industry Initiative Scheme. The scheme offers assistance to fuel poor or vulnerable households to repair or replace broken or condemned boilers and is a winter only scheme.

	Number referred	Completed installs	Value
Quarter 3	8	8	£21,725.85
Quarter 4	35	22	£62,556.74
Year Total	43	30	£84,282.59

This quarter, 35 clients in a no heat situation were referred to AgilityEco, 22 of which progressed to an install totalling £62,556.74

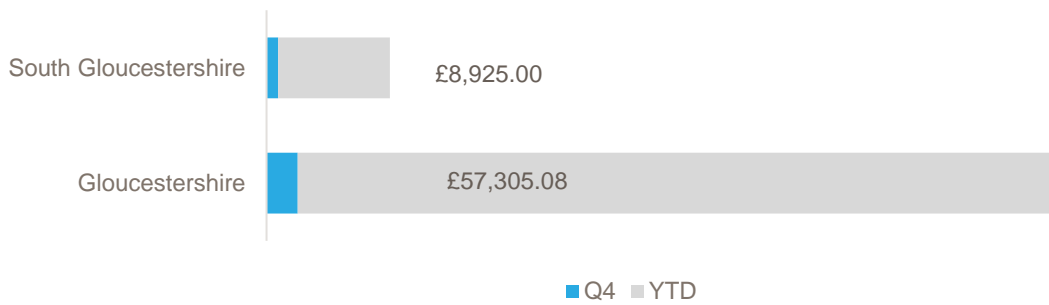
Across the county in 2022-23, there were 30 completed installs totalling £84,282.59.

Health Funding

The 'health' funding provided by the NHS Gloucestershire (in Gloucestershire) and South Gloucestershire Council Better Care Fund is designed to help vulnerable residents who have a health condition and are on a low income (or other vulnerability identified by NICE – NG6) to improve the warmth of their home in order to reduce the negative health impacts of living in a cold home.

Health funding can be used in certain circumstances where the residents' health is likely to be negatively affected because of living in a cold home. It can typically be used for (subject to eligibility and funding maximum):

- Repairs to domestic heating and hot water systems
- Enablement works, as part of another retrofit activity (where the works cannot progress without health funding, where the works are not covered by existing grant funding or where the client can't meet the customer contribution)
- In certain cases, towards the cost of retrofit installs (e.g., ECO4) where the client is unable to pay the customer contribution and the works would not otherwise proceed.



Across 2022-23, 64 homes were supported with health funding, totalling £66,230.08.

Health funding allocations have been below the expected level as they are often used to supplement the client contribution and for enablement works under ECO Flex installs, and the delays in the implementation of ECO4 have meant lower expenditure from health funding.

Connected For Warmth

During Quarter 4 a new programme called ‘Connected for Warmth’ was launched. The programme installs heating and insulation measures into homes with an aim to reduce energy bills, reduce carbon emissions and make homes more comfortable. The programme is run by AgilityEco in partnership with Affordable Warmth Solutions.

Eligibility for insulation is broad and does not take income into account, therefore we have been able to use this programme to support the many residents whose household income is above the usual eligibility thresholds.

The programme is still in the early stages, therefore we do not yet have data available to show how many have progressed to install and total value.



99

households signposted



57

households referred



156

total households for potential installs

Warm Homes Fund – 2022-2024

Update

This project aims to support **310 households** with the installation of first-time central heating. These measures will be partially funded by the Warm Homes Fund, with other funding (ECO/Sustainable Warmth) completing this support, to ensure households receive fully funded measures. To date 5 installations have been completed.

Learning from the previous round of Warm Homes Fund delivery has shaped the bid for this project so that renewable technologies, such as air source and ground source heat pumps, will be offered as central heating solutions in these properties. Installers have been engaged and capacity secured to provide these installs over the next two years.

Five households have been identified from Sustainable Warmth competition clients and received the installation of co-funded retrofit measures and there are more in the pipeline. Retrofit assessments are currently taking place to ensure the suitability of these properties (cofounded through the Sustainable Warmth Competition) from installer leads and to ensure the funding blend is correct with the new ECO4 criteria. The delays in the introduction of the new ECO4 criteria have unfortunately impacted project delivery.

We are working closely with installers who are generating leads and are processing these leads currently.

ABOUT THIS SCHEME

What is WHF?

Funded by Affordable Warmth Solutions, scheme aims to part-fund first time central heating systems using heat pumps in place of traditional gas/LPG

Who is eligible for it?

Households who qualify for other funding streams such as ECO4 or Sustainable Warmth (LAD/HUG)

What does it cover?

A contribution towards the cost of air source heat pumps or ground source heat pumps

How much funding is available?

£2m between April 2022 and March 2024.

Do we have any targets?

300 air source heat pumps
10 ground source heat pumps

Severn Wye leads:

Helen Curley
Rachael Wood

Sustainable Warmth Competition: LAD3 and HUG1

Progress

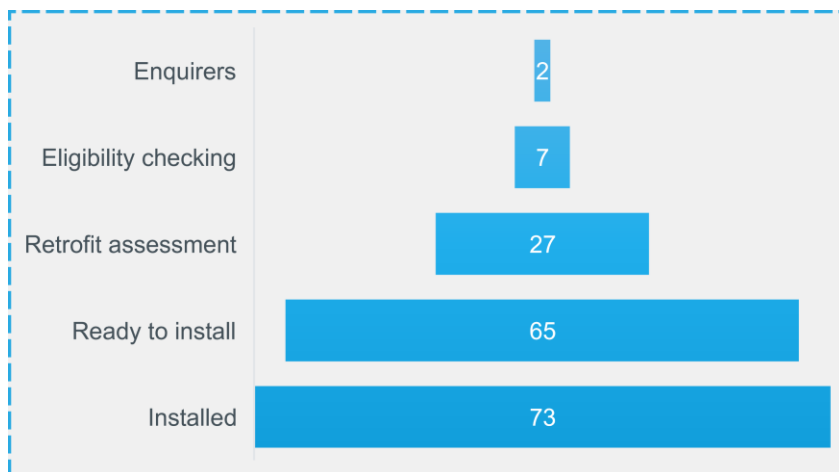


Figure 10: Install pipeline to Q4, 172 total

Update

This project is now at the installation stage.

The Sustainable Warmth Competition has onboarded six installers for the variety of measures the project provides, all of whom are Trustmark registered. The project is now due to finish in June 2023.

There is a shortage of HUG clients due to misconceptions of technology and these properties being typically harder to reach. An intensive marketing campaign was carried out in HUG target areas and we have seen an increase in uptake in these areas.

A change in policy at the beginning of March has extended the project till the end of June to coincide with installs starting on HUG2. We were able to change the measure mix to suit the clients on the scheme. We were also able to increase EPC Band D % to 68%. The policy change has means we have been able to install more measures in more homes as the previous stipulation on a 2 band uplift is no longer needed if a fabric first approach has been followed.

So far 102 measures have been installed in 69 properties.

ABOUT THIS SCHEME

What is SWC?

Funded by BEIS, blending Local Authority Delivery (LAD) phase 3 and the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) to fund various measures

Who is eligible for it?

D-G rated properties with a total gross household income below £30,000

What does it cover?

ASHP, GSHP, solar, top-up insulation and storage heaters, among others

How much funding is available?

£1m for on-gas properties (LAD) and £3m for off-gas properties (HUG) between Jan 2022 and June 2023.

Do we have any targets?

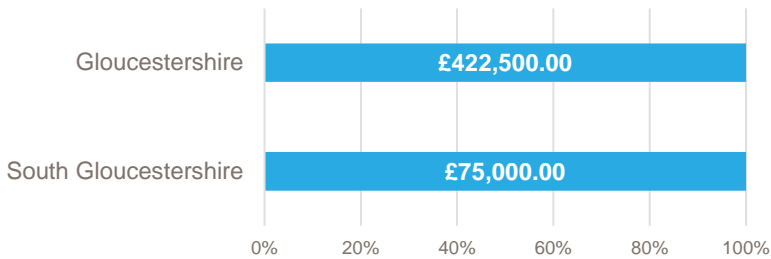
Supporting 220 homes

Severn Wye leads:

Helen Curley
Rachael Wood

Emergency Funds

Impact



Update

Between January and March 2023, the Emergency Funds project has distributed a total of £178,640.51 across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire on grants which helped 615 clients keep warm and well in their homes. This quarter, 70% of the households we supported had a disability or health condition, 36% had a child in the household, and 75% were in receipt of means tested benefits.

In December, we were awarded another £177,500 for grants in Gloucestershire, from Gloucestershire County Council and Age UK, and a further £25,000 for grants in South Gloucestershire, bringing our total funding received to £497,500. This was spent by the end of March 2023, in accordance with the funding deadlines from the Councils.

In March, we received a further £105,000 for grants from Gloucestershire County Council, meaning that the project is continuing in Gloucestershire without pause. In South Gloucestershire, we expect to have further funds from the fourth round of Household Support Fund money by the end of April 2023. The service is paused in South Gloucestershire until those funds arrive.

Key referral partners over the last quarter have been GL Communities, CCP, Citizens Advice, Age UK, Bromford Housing Association and various food banks and health centres across the counties.

ABOUT THIS SCHEME

What is HSF?

Funded by the Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire County Councils, this fund supports households referred by a trusted partner and not receiving other significant financial support towards energy

Who is eligible for it?

Priority goes to those with children, occupant(s) aged 65+, with a disability/health condition or receiving means tested benefits

What does it cover?

Care packages, energy debt relief, fuel vouchers for prepayment meters, oil tank refills

How much funding is available?

£412.5k for Gloucestershire between April 2022 and March 2023. £75k for South Gloucestershire between May-Mar 2023

Severn Wye leads:

Connie Cramp

Future Developments and Insights

We continue to explore alternative funding opportunities to support our activities across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. During Quarter 4, we submitted bids for funding for:

- WECA funding for ASHP support
- SWNZH funding for accelerator programmes for 'able to pay' retrofit market.
- Secured HUG2 funding for Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

Despite the challenges, the Warm and Well partnership between Severn Wye and the local authorities continues to be a national exemplar. By providing combined services and support the partnership is able to offer the help households need whatever their circumstances. From crisis support to full retrofit the partnership offers more than the sum of its parts. Clients contacting the service for one reason can gain the benefits of other parts of the service. We estimate about 30% of users access more than one service in the Warm and Well 'stable'.

Whilst the energy crisis appears to be abating slowly, energy prices are likely to stay high for another 2-3 years and we must continue to offer the support vulnerable people need to meet the challenges of paying high energy bills. Local and national energy saving campaigns have been broadly successful and people are more aware of how to save energy in the home but prices remain high and changing behaviours and lightbulbs is not enough. Vulnerable households can only benefit from permanently lower costs if we retrofit homes and improve energy efficiency. The energy crisis affords us a real opportunity to promote longer, more substantial energy saving programmes including home retrofit and installation of low and renewable energy systems while awareness is still high. Severn Wye and the local authorities have secured further HUG funding and are bidding for SWNZH accelerator funding. In addition, the NHS have indicated there is further capital funding for retrofit and we will develop a proposal to secure this funding. Should we be successful this will provide a significant boost to retrofit in the WW region. However, we will continue to look for further opportunities to raise funds and highlight the challenges faced by households across the Warm and Well region during the energy crisis as well as the opportunities as households realise the benefits of energy efficiency on their bills and the planet.



severn wye

Severn Wye Energy Agency Ltd

Unit 15 Highnam Business Centre
Newent Road
Highnam
Gloucestershire GL2 8DN

01452 835060
info@severnwye.org.uk
www.severnwye.org.uk

Company No: 03830608
Charity No: 1083812