



The British Gas Energy Trust, launched in 2004, is funded solely by British Gas but governed by an independent Board of voluntary Trustees. Trustees have a wealth of relevant experience from within the money advice, energy, charitable and financial sectors.

The British Gas Energy Trust (BGET) exists:

- (i)** For the relief of poverty among those who are unable to meet or pay charges for the supply of energy to premises used or occupied by them.
- (ii)** For the prevention and relief of poverty by educating the public in relation to debt awareness and prevention.
- (iii)** To work with other UK trust funds and organisations to encourage good practice and consistency for the public good.

The Trust meets its aims by delivering two grant making programmes:

1 Individuals and Families Grants Programme

Grants are awarded to clear gas and electricity debts. In exceptional circumstances the Trust can also help with other essential household costs and items (these are known as Further Assistance Payments (FAPs)).

The Trust encourages applicants to seek money advice at all stages of the application process to increase their chance of a successful application and of becoming financially sustainable. This includes budgeting advice, negotiating affordable payment plans with existing creditors and referral to other organisations that may be able to further improve the applicant's situation.

Applicants also benefit from the Trust administrator's (Charis Grants) 'Shared Programme of Giving' providing holistic help and enhancing the advantage of their awards. An applicant only has to complete one application form to be considered for help from any of the following Trusts and Funds - the Anglian Water Assistance Fund, EDF Energy Trust, npower Energy Fund and the E.ON Energy Fund. The Trust also encourages applicants to communicate with their utility suppliers to enable them to best manage their bills going forward, and to avoid falling back into debt.

2 Organisational Grants Programme

Grants are awarded to increase specialist fuel debt advice, providing one-to-one assistance including:

- Resolving energy debt problems and negotiating with energy suppliers.
- Completing applications to the British Gas Energy Trust and other grant giving schemes.
- Referrals to other grant making trusts or schemes or alternative specialist advice agencies for resolution of other debt issues.
- A range of other energy related advice such as:
 - Energy efficiency advice.
 - How to read energy meters.
 - Setting up payment plans and monthly direct debits.



Imelda Redmond
CBE, Chair

Chair's Report

I am pleased to present the 2016/17 Annual Report for the British Gas Energy Trust in its twelfth year of operation.

In 2016/17 the Trust received 23,331 applications (23% reduction on 2015/16) and made a total of 14,309 awards (30% reduction on 2015/16) totalling £9.3 million (32% reduction on 2015/16). Awards were granted to families and individuals in need to clear their energy debts, and in exceptional circumstances help with funeral arrears, insolvency fees, energy efficient white goods and boilers. Trustees maintained their policy of supporting customers of all utility companies.

In 2016/17 the average energy debt award was £692 (10% increase on 2015/16) and the average value of other awards was £602. In addition the Trust awarded £404,469 of e-learning vouchers in 2016/17.

The Trust's Organisational Grants Programme continued to fund specialist project workers within charitable advice organisations across England, Scotland, and Wales. This year has seen continued success of the programme, helping to provide support to over 18,000 vulnerable individuals.

The organisations funded to provide 'Debt via Health' projects continued to support thousands of vulnerable individuals experiencing financial difficulty in addition to health concerns. Advisors engage with the health sector and provide a holistic service that can help tackle the often interlocking problems and make a positive change to their clients' lives.

On behalf of Trustees, I would like to thank all those involved with the funded projects for their hard work and support of the Trust.

2016 also saw the delivery phase of the £11.1m BGET Healthy Homes fund. Forty three unique and innovative projects were undertaken, all aimed at addressing health problems exacerbated by fuel poverty. Following the conclusion of these projects in March 2017, their impact is being assessed and we look forward to sharing the findings later this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow Trustees for giving their time generously and their continued commitment and contribution to the Trust. During 2016 we were sorry to lose Marie Wardrobe and Stephen Harrap (Treasurer) having completed six year terms on the Board.

On behalf of Trustees I would like to once again express our thanks and gratitude to British Gas for their continued support and generosity. Without the considerable level of funding and support they provide, the Trust would not be able to continue helping the vulnerable families and individuals most in need of support. The level of funding from British Gas is currently subject to review, the outcome of which may significantly alter the funding landscape. The Trust is budgeting in the expectation that for the next year the recurring donations from the principal donor will continue, but at a lower level than in the past, meaning that there could be some changes in the Trust's activities during the next twelve months.

Finally Trustees would like to thank the staff at Charis Grants for their services in administering the Trust and the support and guidance they provide to Trustees.

Imelda Redmond
Imelda Redmond, CBE, Chair

Achievements in 2016/17

- 14,309 awards were made to individuals and families in need.
- The total value of these awards was £9,306,420.
- An additional £404,469 was granted in the form of e-learning solutions.
- The Trust provided total grant funding of £2.3 million to 27 advice organisations during the year to deliver specialist fuel debt advice within their local communities and raise awareness of the help available from the Trust.

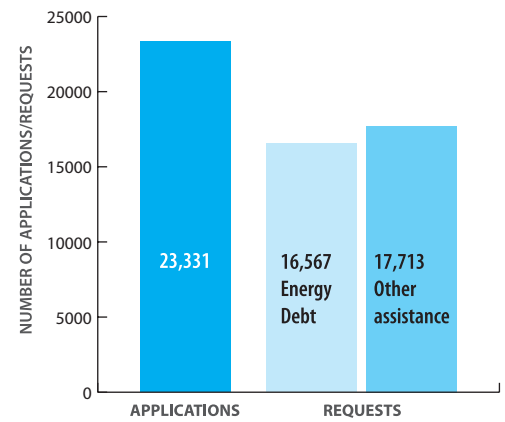
Summary of the Trust's 2016/17 Objectives

- The effective administration of a programme of grant giving aimed at reducing energy debt for individuals and families experiencing poverty and hardship.
- The effective utilisation of the funds available to the Trust to meet the objectives of the Trust.
 - i. Charitable money advice organisations, e.g. Citizens Advice Bureaux.
 - ii. GP surgeries and healthcare centres.
- The funding of an effective organisational grants programme supporting the provision of holistic advice services aimed at reducing and managing debt, maximising income and tackling fuel poverty via specialist fuel debt advisors based in:

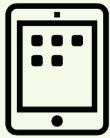
Grant Making Programmes 2016/17

1. Individuals and Families Grants Programme: APPLICATIONS AND REQUESTS

The Trust received and assessed a total of 23,331 applications. As applicants can make multiple requests within their application the total number of requests is always greater than the total number of applications made. In 2016/17, 34,280 requests were made within the 23,331 applications submitted to the Trust. 16,567 requests were for help to clear energy debts with the remaining 17,713 requests for other assistance.



METHOD OF APPLICATION TO THE BGET

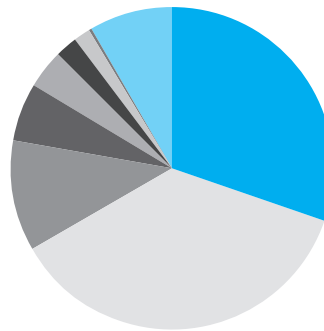


ONLINE APPLICATIONS
Number of applications
14,525
62% of total applications submitted



PAPER APPLICATIONS
Number of applications
8,806
38% of total applications submitted

HOW PEOPLE HEARD ABOUT THE TRUST



% OF APPLICANTS

- 30.4% Utility Company
- 36.6% Advice Agency
- 11.0% Other
- 5.9% Website
- 3.9% Support Worker
- 2.2% Word of Mouth
- 1.7% Housing Agency
- 0.3% Media
- 8.2% Unspecified

AWARDS

In 2016/17 the Trust made 14,309 awards totalling £9,306,420. The breakdown of awards made by the Trust is shown below – both by number of awards and also by value of awards. Primarily the Trust's awards are related to alleviating fuel debt, either directly or indirectly, and helping people to pay their bills going forward.

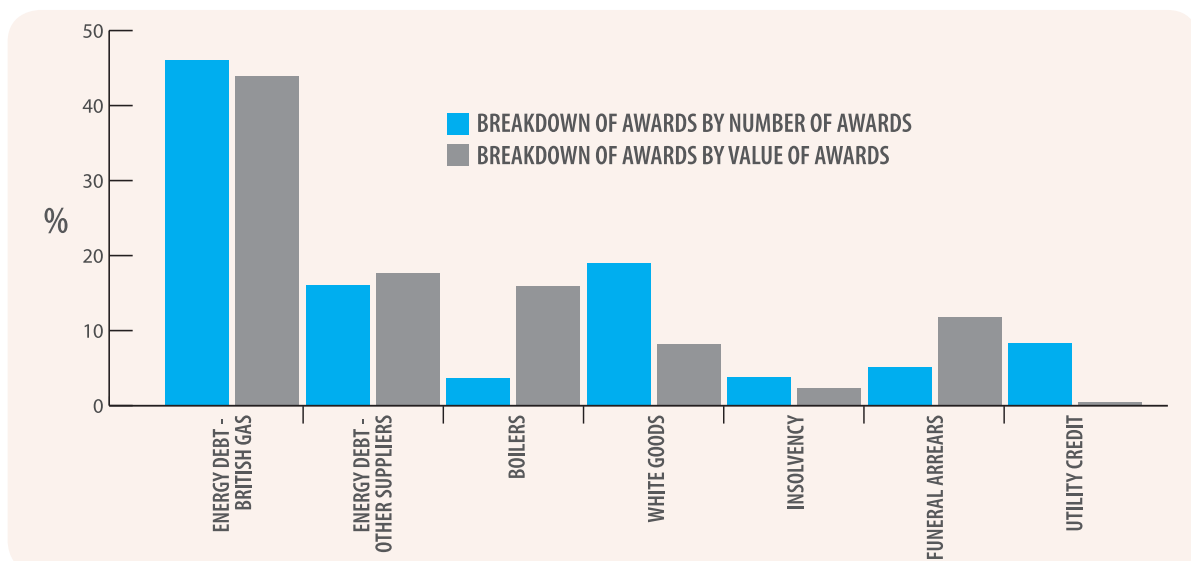
- 8,610 awards were made to clear **energy debts** owed to British Gas or other suppliers (value £5,727,624)
- 522 awards were made to **repair or replace inefficient boilers** (value £1,464,109)
- 2,714 awards were made for energy efficient white goods (value £757,888)
- 1,188 awards were made to provide **emergency utility credit** (value £47,501)

The Trust provides emergency utility credit to vulnerable people with both severe financial and health needs, identified by organisations funded via the Trust's Organisational Grant Programme. Such clients have no 'crisis' to explain falling into debt but may simply have very low, or no, incomes, multiple debts and no ability to pay going forward. They are without money to put into their utility meters, and often for food, and are in need of holistic help.

In addition the Trust helps with **other priority household costs and items** including:

- 547 awards for **insolvency solution fees** (value £212,338)
- 728 awards made for **funeral arrears** (value £1,096,960)

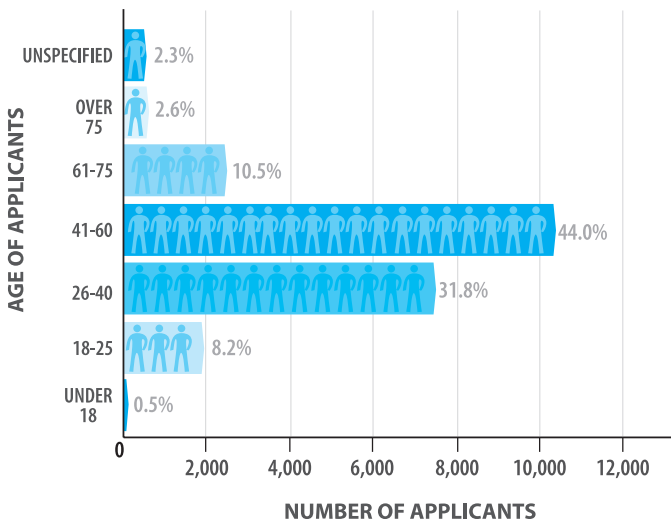
Such awards release additional funds into a household budget, which can help to take away the burden of threats from debtors and allow grant recipients to make a fresh start.



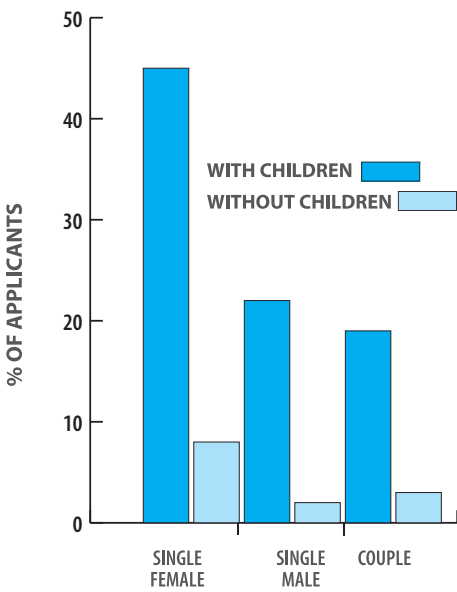
The average energy debt award value was £692. The average value of other awards was £602.

The Trust also supports provision of **e-learning** solutions to help grant recipients to learn new skills and increase their chances of employment and/or help with a change of career, e.g. Microsoft skills and CV building. The Trust awarded £404,469 of e-learning vouchers in 2016/17.

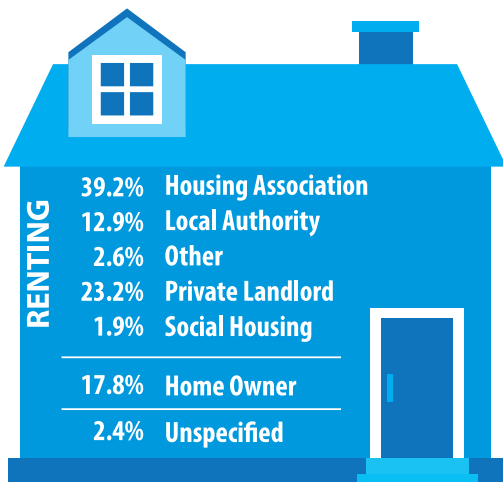
APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHICS



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



APPLICATIONS BY TENURE TYPE



2. Organisational Grants Programme

During 2016/17, the Charity's Organisational Grants Programme continued to fund 27 organisations (including 13 Shelter locations and their national helpline) across Great Britain. Total grants of £2.3 million funded 66 specialist advisors within 36 individual projects. Twenty three advisors worked within the Charity's 'Debt via Health' (DVH) projects, seeking to tackle fuel poverty and promote energy efficiency via the local health sector.

FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Bromley By Bow Centre (Core & DVH) | Shelter Birmingham |
| Community Law Service Northampton Et County (DVH) | Shelter Bristol |
| Energy Projects Plus (The Wirral) (Core) | Shelter Lancashire |
| Local Solutions (Liverpool) (Core & DVH) | Shelter London |
| Manchester CAB (Core & DVH) | Shelter Newcastle |
| Money Matters Money Advice Centre (Core & DVH) | Shelter Norwich |
| Citizens Advice Northumberland (DVH) | Shelter Sheffield Et Helpline |
| Plymouth Energy Community (Core) | Shelter Manchester |
| Preston Et District CAB (Core) | Shelter Cymru |
| Riverside Advice Centre (Cardiff) (Core) | Shelter Glasgow |
| Speakeasy Advice Centre (Cardiff) (Core & DVH) | Shelter Dumfries |
| St Ann's Advice Group (Nottingham) (Core) | Shelter Edinburgh |
| St Helens CAB (Core & DVH) | Shelter South Lanarkshire |
| Talking Money (Bristol) (Core & DVH) | |
| Zinhiya Ganeshpanchan Trust (Leicester) (Core) | |



Overview of Funding Performance

The funded advisors supported 18,449 clients in total, and submitted 6,286 applications to the Trust on their behalf. This resulted in 4,452 awards with a combined value of almost £2.5 million.

IMPACT

The programme saw a positive return for the beneficiaries who accessed the services available from the funded projects. From the £2.3 million granted by the Charity, beneficiaries were able to receive or save a combined total of £15.1 million.

This positive return was achieved through a combination of:

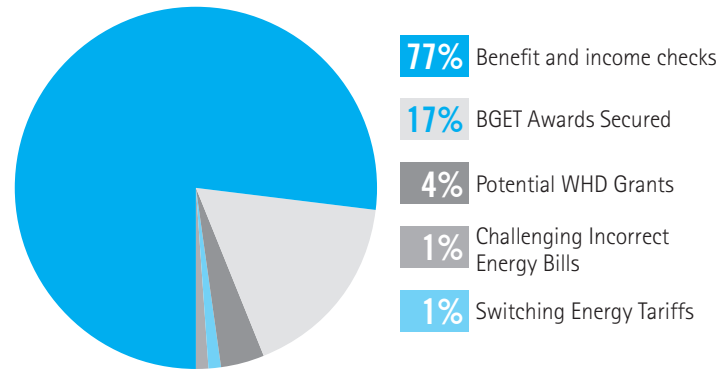
- Awards made from successful applications to the Trust.
- Annual gains in income from benefit and income maximisation checks.
- Money saved through challenging incorrect energy bills.
- Money saved through switching energy tariffs.
- Potential discount received through referrals to the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

By far the largest source of the return (accounting for 77% – over £11.6 million) was as a direct result of benefit and income maximisation checks. The projects funded under the programme report a marked increase in the number of clients seeking support with managing their finances due to the roll-out of Universal Credit, the impact of the benefit cap, and other changes to the welfare system. This result is an incredible success towards meeting the Trust's objective to increase financial stability for beneficiaries and their families and helping them to remain out of fuel poverty.

The awards secured from the Trust account for 17% of the total return. This includes financial assistance in the form of grants to clear energy debts and for other priority household costs and items. Support with challenging incorrect energy bills and switching to a more appropriate energy tariff provided total savings of £145,617 (1%) and £179,669 (1%) respectively.

Referrals of clients by the funded advisors to other sources of financial assistance was also important. 4,693 beneficiaries were referred to their supplier's Warm Home Discount Scheme, providing eligible

Total Amounts Received or Saved by Beneficiaries



customers with an annual discount of £140 against their electricity bill. If successful, these referrals could have resulted in a total discount of £657,020 – reducing the risk of vulnerable households falling into winter fuel debt.

Funded organisations reported an increasing number of clients with debt problems and demand for debt advice. During 2016/17, the funded advisors managed a total £34,820,352 worth of debt on behalf of 10,670 clients, of which 18% was written off. They also report an increase in the number of complex cases, in which energy debt is only one part of a myriad of financial problems, making the holistic service and the multiple strands of support that the funded organisations provide, so valuable.

In addition to the quantitative financial outcomes of the Programme, funded advisors also report important qualitative improvements on the welfare of clients. For example, over 2,000 clients were referred to their energy suppliers' Priority Service Registers during 2016/17, enabling vulnerable customers to access extra support, which could vastly improve their quality of life.



How the Trust helps

Mrs J is 67 years old and suffers from a number of health issues, including angina, arthritis of the spine, and type 2 diabetes, all significantly reducing her mobility. Mrs J has learning difficulties and struggles to read and write. She cares for her adult son, who has severe mental health issues.

Mrs J's poor health is made worse by living in a cold home, and her poor mobility means that she and her son rarely leave home, resulting in high energy usage. At the time of applying to the Trust, the household was solely reliant on a low, benefits-based income, and Mrs J struggled to manage finances, exacerbated by her inability to read and understand bills.

Mrs J was referred to the BGET funded advice service at Speakeasy by a home improvement charity (visiting to repair a leaking roof), following their concerns that Mrs J was struggling to pay her energy bills. The

A case study from Speakeasy, Cardiff (BGET Debt via Health funded project)

funded advisor helped Mrs J to understand her financial situation, checked her benefits entitlement, and enabled Mrs J to build a sustainable weekly budget. They also provided energy efficiency advice to help reduce the high usage in the home, and Mrs J was added to her supplier's Priority Services Register, resulting in the provision of 'talking bills' making it easier for Mrs J to understand bills going forward.

The funded advisor submitted an application to the British Gas Energy Trust on Mrs J's behalf, which was successful and cleared her fuel arrears of £756.

Ongoing, the funded advisor arranged for Mrs J's ongoing energy bills to be deducted from her benefits, helping Mrs J to maintain regular payments and avoid falling back into fuel debt.

In 2015 the Charity took on the administration of an £11.1 million 'Healthy Homes' Fund, the aim of which was to address health problems exacerbated by fuel poverty.

Applications for project funding were received from over 200 charitable and third sector organisations of which 43 were chosen to undertake their proposed projects. The £11.1 million was shared between the chosen organisations to undertake projects designed to assist low income, vulnerable households while demonstrating a positive health impact. The projects commenced on 1 January 2016 and were completed on 31 March 2017.

Throughout delivery of the projects, progress was reported to Trustees on a quarterly basis to ensure that the projects were meeting their agreed outcomes/indicators. The Fund's Programme Manager regularly communicated with each project and visited all the participating organisations to ensure that project delivery remained on track.

Now that each of the 43 projects have been completed, the process of developing a Social Return on Investment Report has begun, to highlight the positive outcomes and value of the Fund overall. The report will be published in the second half of 2017.



How the Trust helps...

A couple applied to the Trust to clear their energy debt. Their supplier had set their monthly bill, but by the time this was checked, a debt of over £1,700 had already built.

The family had a high energy usage as the couple had a terminally ill disabled daughter, who needed the house to be constantly warm and whose electric wheelchair needed to be charged every night. It was clear within the application that if their energy debt was cleared, the couple would be able to pay their monthly bills going forward.

The Trust awarded a grant of £1,759 to clear the applicant's gas and electricity debts.

"Hi, today we received a cheque from the British Gas Energy Trust to help with our out of control energy bill. Firstly I wanted to say THANK YOU. We never imagined that you would be able to help us with the full amount. The difference this will make to our lives is huge. Our first job is to make sure that it never happens again.

Secondly I wanted to put your cheque in a different context. What you do for people like us in the most extreme of family situations is obviously financially important but there is something else. We have a terminally ill disabled daughter with Muscular Dystrophy who we love and cherish every minute with, but this puts a different meaning on life. She sings her way through the day, she is cheeky, funny, intelligent and fascinated by life but every day is impossible, every day your heart breaks again and everything that you dreamed of for your family feels like a million miles away. So when someone helps you, when something good happens that you don't expect or a problem is taken away... it gives you hope that somehow other things might just be ok.

Thank you ever so much for the cheque and for making today hopeful."

A single lady, applied to the Trust after her boiler had been condemned following a long period of running inefficiently, contributing to high energy bills. She was unable to afford a new boiler and her freezer was also not working. She was housebound as her wheelchair was broken, and she looked after her son with a schizoaffective disorder.

The Trust awarded a grant of £166 to clear the applicant's energy debt. The applicant also received a grant for a new boiler and was awarded a new freezer.

"Thank you for your extreme kindness. As I write, my new boiler is being fitted. I am so relieved as my old boiler had stopped working. My debt has been cleared and the new freezer that you gave me is an absolute asset, tremendous for storing healthy food.

Several months ago I felt in despair. The boiler had been condemned by the insurance company even though I paid a high premium for its maintenance. I was housebound and our meals were coming from tinned foods. My washing machine had broken down and I used the money for my energy bill to buy a new one – my illness had caused a severe degree of incontinence, causing a large amount of washing.

I can say with every sincerity that you have truly given me a fresh start, something I did not think was possible. I cannot thank you enough for everything you have done for me and my son. I did not think that such kindness existed but I have been proven wrong."

Treasurer's Report – Financial Review 2016/17

During the 12 months to 31 March 2017 BGET continued to operate to the financial model established in earlier years.

The overall decrease in reserves from £2.5m at 31 March 2016 to £1.5m at 31 March 2017 was budgeted and reflects the reduction in donations from British Gas. The Trust aims to spend most of the money it receives within 12 months of the donation and has made a commensurate reduction in its charitable activities to ensure that the Trust continues to maintain positive reserves and holds sufficient reserves to wind up the Trust if British Gas ceases to make donations.

The operational environment continues to be subject to external pressures and review. The commitment of the principal donor

is currently subject to review of how the business meets its social obligations. The outcome of this review may significantly alter the funding landscape. The Trust is budgeting in the expectation that for the next year the recurring donations from the principal donor will continue, but at a lower level than in the past, meaning that there could be some changes in the Trust's activities during the next twelve months.

Summary Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2017

	Year ended 31 March 2017 £'000		Year ended 31 March 2016 £'000	
		%		%
Funds balance brought forward	2,489		9,228	
Income and endowments	12,719		24,822	
Total funds available this year	<u>15,208</u>	100	<u>34,050</u>	100
Expenditure				
Grant making	12,052	88	28,642	91
Other direct charitable expenditure	132	1	294	1
Support and governance costs	1,474	11	2,625	8
Total expenditure	<u>13,658</u>		<u>31,561</u>	
Fund balance carried forward	<u>1,550</u>	10	<u>2,489</u>	7



How the Trust helps...

"A huge thank you on behalf of myself, my husband and our children. We applied for help to go bankrupt, not for one minute thinking we would be successful, but you chose to support us and we will be forever grateful to your organisation. Without your financial help we would still be drowning in debt, but since we went bankrupt it has changed our lives. We can eat and have managed to open a savings account and have got a little bit put aside, paying into it regularly every payday.

With your help we can now live - we do not merely survive. I can't tell you how different our lives are now. I wanted you to know that you have saved our marriage, and probably our lives, as we were so desperate, we could not see a way out. You gave us the way out and we will forever be grateful."

How to apply to the British Gas Energy Trust



The quickest and easiest way to apply to the Trust is via its online application form via <https://bget.app.charisgrants.com>. Supporting evidence should be scanned and attached to the form to allow for assessment of the application to begin.

When submitting an application to the Trust please ensure that you provide all the required evidence. This helps to ensure that the assessment decision is not delayed by the need for the Trust to write out for supporting information.

Alternatively application forms can be downloaded from the Trust's website www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

Or requested via the Trust's dedicated telephone line **01733 421060**

Or by emailing bget@charisgrants.com

Written correspondence should be addressed to the Trust's freepost address:

Freepost BRITISH GAS ENERGY TRUST
(please note this is the full address, no postcode is required)

Trustees and Officers 2016/17

Imelda Redmond CBE

Chair

Stephen Harrap

Treasurer (end of term of service
September 2016)

Andrew Brown

John Kolm-Murray

Daksha Piparia

Peter Smith

(appointed September 2016)

Colin Trend

Maria Wardrobe

(end of term of service September 2016)

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PE1 1DA

Charity Registration Number

1106218

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Ruthlyn House
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PE1 2SP

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National Westminster Bank plc
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Cathedral Square
Peterborough
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Santander Bank
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Peterborough
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Administrators

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3rd Floor Trinity Court
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Cambridgeshire
PE1 1DA

Charis Grants is a company with extensive experience of delivering tailored financial relief programmes, facilitating corporate provision through a variety of solutions to support those who are struggling to pay their bills or have other essential needs. Charis Grants helps individuals by using skilled assessment processes to ensure those most in need receive the most appropriate help and services.

See www.charisgrants.com for further information.