

Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme 2018-2021

funded by



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Executive summary

The Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme, funded by the British Gas Energy Trust (BGET) commenced in October 2018 and continued to March 2021. It worked across five local authority areas of the Liverpool City Region: Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, and Wirral.

The Programme's aims were to engage with vulnerable residents struggling to afford their fuel bills, and support them to improve their financial position, achieve warmer homes, and as a result improve their overall health and wellbeing.

The programme supported residents in all tenures facing financial hardship linked to their energy or water use.

Our programme was designed to be primarily outreach based:

- Providing advice and support directly in clients' homes
- Working with our partner local organisations, such as food banks and children's centres, to meet potential clients at locations and services they use
- Using community centres local to clients for providing face to face support, as opposed to requiring them to travel distances and meet travel costs, which had been previously shown to be a barrier to them taking up the important support.

The programme was designed to be delivered through 80% home visits as a highly effective means to support clients. The Covid-19 restrictions had a significant effect on the delivery in the final year of the project, with advice changing to telephone and digital media methods, however the full support service continued throughout this period.

The programme supported 4,713 unique beneficiaries (households) over its 30-month period. During the final 2020-21 year:

- 83% of the 2,422 households supported were in receipt of at least one state benefit.
- 54 Covid compliant home visits were completed (1,222 home visits had been provided in the previous 18 months)
- 1,667 funding/measures grant applications were made of which 1,464 were successful (some households had multiple applications/awards made) with a total value of £218,180

Over the two and a half years of the Programme all 4,713 households received energy advice at a level relevant to their immediate need and interest. 43% of our 2020-21 survey respondents reported that they acted on the energy efficiency advice they were given; 23% said it made their bills more affordable and 18% said it saved them money.

2,295 applications were submitted on behalf of clients across the lifetime of the programme. The applications included white goods, fuel debt, water debt, heating repairs, furniture, food or fuel vouchers, cost of living grants, and Warm Home Discount support.

1,967 individual awards were made to clients in the 30 months of the programme totalling £402,793.

During the life of the Programme the number of partners referring clients into our service grew to over 150 organisations and teams. These included teams within all 5 local authorities, various CABs, foodbanks, social housing providers and community organisations across the Liverpool City Region. Regular newsletter updates to referral partners maintained our profile and kept them updated of changes to available schemes and support.

To measure the impact of our final year actions we wrote to 800 clients enclosing our questionnaire (see appendix 1) and asked them to complete and return. The mailing was followed up by a telephone call to encourage participation and response was also encouraged by the chance of winning some shopping vouchers.

We received 166 responses (21% response rate) and results of individual elements have been reported in the relevant section. A key element of our survey was to determine what impact the overall service had on clients and 69% of clients reported improved wellbeing as a result of our support, and 69% reported warmer homes.

The securing of multi-year funding for the programme had a positive impact on our Charity by providing stability to the team delivering the programme, organisations who referred clients in, and vulnerable clients who could be assured of sustained support to deal with their issues. The sustained nature of the funding also provided opportunities to enable other schemes to coalesce around the core delivery. One example from 2020-21 was the attraction of funding for providing emergency fuel vouchers to residents at imminent risk of self-disconnection.

The programme has identified that an increasing number of clients are presenting with complex issues that require time to resolve. Some of our more challenging client issues have taken 6-9 months to resolve, and a small number even longer. This reinforces the importance of programmes that are multi-year, with stable delivery teams and robust systems, that ensure clients can reach a resolution supported by the service throughout.

Due to the multi-year funding, we were able to build up strong relationships with front-line teams across a wide range of organisations. The programme provided specialist advice and support that most referring organisations could not offer independently. The single point of contact, accessible through a variety of methods and offering the ability to directly request support for clients (as opposed to signposting clients to make contact) was valued by referrers and reduced pressure on their core service provision.

Sustained, multi-year funding to invest in supporting clients to overcome their immediate challenges and develop skills to manage in the future (and avoid crisis situations) is needed more now than before. Our charity will continue to develop proposals and programmes that will attract funding that provides the solutions to clients and outcomes for funders alike.

Energy Projects Plus thanks the British Gas Energy Trust for providing funding for the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme for 30 months from October 2018 – March 2021 enabling over 4,000 vulnerable households to receive support in overcoming challenges to achieving affordable warmth.

Introduction

Energy Projects Plus successfully bid in 2018 for support from the British Gas Energy Trust to deliver the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme. The programme commenced in October 2018 and continued to March 2021.

Working across five local authority areas of Liverpool City Region (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, and Wirral) the programme's original aims, which remained consistent throughout the programme, were to engage with vulnerable residents struggling to afford their fuel bills, and support them to improve their financial position, achieve warmer homes, and as a result improve their overall health and wellbeing. This included providing advice and support in:

- Understanding bills, energy usage and dealing with actual or potential energy or water debt
- Understanding how best to use the home's heating and hot water systems
- Accessing grants or other financial support for improvement measures such as replacement boilers through ECO, heating repairs and smaller measures such as draughtproofing or LED bulbs available through other local schemes
- Applying (where available) to national and local funders for other energy efficient measures such as white goods
- Applying to energy and water utility trust funds on behalf of clients to reduce or remove energy or water debt that was causing financial hardship alongside working with clients to ensure they achieved a more stable financial footing going forward
- Where clients had general debt requiring specialist debt support, we made formal referrals to local specialist support services (as appropriate to each local area)
- Assessing clients for eligibility for state benefits/tax credits and where appropriate supporting them to make an application. Where specialist support was required, such as handling appeals, we made direct referrals to local specialist support services
- Registering clients for Warm Home Discount, priority service register and other vulnerable customer support services provided by utilities

The programme supported residents in all tenures facing financial hardship linked to their energy or water use. Clients facing more general debt or hardship were referred to other local specialist advice agencies for support.

Delivery model

Our programme was designed to be primarily outreach based:

- Providing advice and support directly in clients' homes
- Working with our partner local organisations, such as food banks and children's centres, to meet potential clients at locations and services they use
- Using community centres local to clients for providing face to face support, as opposed to requiring them to travel distances and meet travel costs, which had been previously shown to be a barrier to them taking up the important support.

The programme was designed to be delivered through 80% home visits as a highly effective means to support clients. The advisor is able to see clients' circumstances at home and identify other areas of support, such as damp and mould or clutter, which can also have significant impact on their health and wellbeing but would potentially not be identified otherwise. It also overcomes potential barriers to support such as not bringing all the correct documentation to a central office-based service, inability to attend due to childcare or other caring responsibilities, or physical infirmity or disability.

The Covid-19 restrictions had a significant effect on the delivery in the final year of the project, with advice changing to telephone and digital media methods, however the full support service continued throughout this period. In a few cases, Covid-safe home visits were undertaken to provide emergency temporary heating for the most vulnerable clients or to obtain copies of documents required for grant applications.

Outcomes

The programme supported 4,713 unique beneficiaries (households) over its 30-month period. The final year coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions in contact methods. During this 2020-21 year:

- 83% of the 2,422 households supported were in receipt of at least one state benefit.
- 54 Covid compliant home visits were completed (1,222 home visits had been provided in the previous 18 months)
- 1,667 funding/measures grant applications were made of which 1,464 were successful (some households had multiple applications/awards made) with a total value of £218,180

Home Visits

Home visits and face-to-face contacts with clients were an integral part of the programme. It had been found in previous projects that clients were more receptive to advice and open to giving more personal information when seen face to face, which would enable more in-depth assistance and solutions.

1,222 in-home advice sessions were undertaken between October 2018 and March 2020. With Coronavirus restrictions and lockdowns commencing in March 2020 the programme team were able to adapt the home visits to telephone / social media advice sessions. Between April 2020 and March 2021 54 home visits to deliver emergency heating or deal with essential paperwork were safely executed.

Adviser comment after home visit to their client:

You supported this lady with her fuel suppliers. They got her into a bit of a mess and with your help the Ombudsman stepped in. She wanted me to send her regards and said how lovely you were helping her.

Energy Advice and Home Energy Surveys

Over the two and a half years of the Project, all 4,713 households received energy advice at a level relevant to their immediate need and interest. Of these, 2,275 received more detailed home energy advice and completed a Home Energy Survey. Not all clients wish to discuss other energy efficiency options at the time of intervention.

43% of our 2020-21 survey respondents reported that they acted on the energy efficiency advice they were given; 23% said it made their bills more affordable and 18% said it saved them money.

Switching Supplier and Challenging Bills

The programme helped clients who were challenging their bills, with a range of actions required. Some of the cases were referred to the Ombudsman for intervention, all of which were successfully ruled in favour of the client.

Savings/refunds ranged between £15 and £2,266, however not all of the cases involved a financial gain. For example, some required a single phone call on the client's behalf to get e.g. paper bills sent. Other support included advising and giving confidence to clients in what to say/ask for when calling the supplier as they preferred to do it themselves.

The overall percentage of clients taken through an energy company or tariff switching exercise was lower than forecast at the start of the programme. One challenge to switching supplier for clients applying for the Warm Home Discount is the requirement for them to stay with their supplier until the payment is received. This can lock vulnerable consumers into their supplier for up to six months after their application is made. The Adviser team avoided putting the clients into possible conflict of interest by not offering the switching service if it was deemed to be detrimental to their interests and a risk to financial well-being.

The programme also found a reluctance among pre-pay meter clients to consider switching, though this may also be linked to the challenging circumstances vulnerable clients were facing, leading to a reluctance to risk changes to their current position. 6% of clients proceeded through a comparison of tariff/supplier with switches enabling total savings of £7,707, ranging between £10/month to £63/month.

In our 2020-21 post-intervention survey 41% of respondents reported our advice made their bills more affordable, whilst 52% reported no change and 7% responded no.

Client comment:

I moved from [supplier 1] to [supplier 2]. When switching I felt that [supplier 1] were trying to stop me moving and putting up barriers. Said I owed money but it turns out [supplier 1] owed me money. Got £400 returned to me.

Budget Plans and Income Maximisation

779 clients were taken through a Budget Plan exercise to raise awareness of their spending pattern and where their energy and water costs fit in. In capturing their levels of income and expenditure the exercise highlighted the disposable income after essential bills, which was used by the Advisers and clients in negotiating payment plans and repayments to utility companies as well as identifying if they were eligible for grant funding.

General debt advice and support did not form part of our service and we worked with partner agencies to provide this to those needing this support. Referral partners were able to refer in clients who had already been taken through the process of money advice and benefits maximisation for our specialist support. Those clients who came into the programme from other sources were offered benefits maximisation checks and 79 clients were taken through this process by the advisers during the lifetime of the programme.

Client comment:

Once benefits are paid properly this info will help.

Fuel and Water Debt

Assistance with fuel debt ranged from low-level advising clients how to communicate with their supplier, having a three-way conversation between client and supplier, or to submitting a full application to a grant fund to clear debt. Grant-funding became sparse midway through the programme, which meant clients who could have previously been assisted no longer had the same solutions available. However, the presence of the programme also enabled local funds to be bid for or harnessed. This included a Wirral Covid-19 fund to help with utility debt where the programme team were invited to be one of two services able to access it.

The programme was able to secure funds to clear £93,293 of utility debt for 1,006 vulnerable clients. 24% of clients responding to our survey said getting help with this debt had improved the health of someone in their home and 30% said it had improved their wellbeing.

Client comment:

You helped with a fridge-freezer and to reduce water bills, which have now been capped, saving £20 per month. Thanks very much as lost my job and was in a dark place but now back in work and much better off.

Applications for support submitted and awards secured

2,295 applications were submitted on behalf of clients across the lifetime of the programme. The applications included white goods, fuel debt, water debt, heating repairs, furniture, food or fuel vouchers, cost of living grants, and Warm Home Discount support. 52% of respondents to our 2020-21 survey said the award of a white good improved their wellbeing.

1,967 individual awards were made to clients in the 30 months of the programme totalling £402,793. Of these, 45 were white goods (e.g. fridge freezer, washing machine, cooker), awarded through applications submitted directly to local funds, totalling £15,822.

Applications were made to funders including: British Gas and Scottish Power Emergency credit vouchers through Let's Talk, local EST and Fuel Bank Foundation funded fuel voucher schemes, United Utilities for washing machine, fridge-freezer and freezer, HEART scheme for white goods, United Utilities Trust Fund for water debt write off, npower for fuel debt write off, ECHO boiler repair/replace scheme, Eon replacement boiler scheme, and Wirral Covid-19 Winter Fuel Debt Fund.

Client comment:

Received fridge freezer. Really happy, I couldn't ask for more. Also got a washing machine. Boiler hasn't been sorted but in process of being sorted. From my heart a very big thank you. Your support was phenomenal.

Whilst the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme was not a money advice service, which was recognised when funding was bid for and awarded, we were able to secure for 3 clients annual grant funding from a regional charity of £6,000 each, totalling £18,000 per annum, for cost-of-living expenses.

Client comment:

I can't give a glowing enough report. (The adviser) gets things done. Without her help my wife would have died this winter. Sorry to hear about the stopping of your very helpful/needed service. Thanks for all your help with the Liverpool Merchants Guild Bursary. It's going to make a big difference to getting by and survival in the future!

Warm Home Discount

The programme supported 652 vulnerable clients at risk of fuel poverty to apply for the Warm Home Discount Broader Group £140 payment and over 60% of clients assisted said they would not have applied for their Warm Home Discount without our help. Clients were also offered assistance with energy advice and in-depth support where identified.

Client comment:

Really helpful at the time of year that there was someone open who could help me. Haven't had the time to look into all the energy efficiency stuff.

Large Capital Items e.g. boilers

The programme was able to refer clients to other schemes as and when they were available either directly or via other services within Energy Projects Plus such as LEAP. In total there were 65 referrals by the programme team for boilers, with a value of over £100,000.

Client comment:

Very happy with the boiler and the service provided. You were brilliant - made a massive difference to my life. Now nice and warm.

Emergency Fuel Top-ups

The programme accessed local and other funding for Emergency Fuel Vouchers; this included a local budget provided by British Gas Energy Trust during 2019-20. A total of £4,040 was spent on emergency fuel vouchers for 108 interventions for residents at risk of self-disconnection from fuel due to lack of finances.

Covid-19 caused an upsurge in requests for Emergency Fuel Vouchers, which the fuel suppliers were asked to extend credit to help with, however we were regularly asked for assistance by clients who had been refused this support. Fortunately, our charity was successful in securing funds through the EST Redress Covid support fund and were able to provide support.

From December 2020 Wirral Foodbanks approached Energy Projects Plus as a trusted partner to take over supply of fuel vouchers to local residents, and the programme team took on this work. Wirral Council also secured funds from DWP for Emergency Fuel Vouchers for residents and the programme was also able to access their funds through the Fuel Bank Foundation.

85% of respondents to our 2020-21 survey reported that the Emergency Fuel Voucher improved the health of someone in their home and 86% said their own wellbeing was improved due to the intervention.

Client comment:

Voucher was a massive relief for me and the baby as I was really struggling - Was using electric heaters as boiler was broken which I could not afford. Boiler now fixed by landlord.

Emergency Heat Sources

The programme secured funding through the British Gas Energy Trust Local Fund during 2019-20 to provide emergency electric heaters to vulnerable clients. A total of 85 oil-filled radiators were delivered to needy residents across the City Region under the programme.

Client comment:

Much appreciated. Didn't think I'd be eligible for help.

Referral Partners

During the life of the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme the number of partners referring clients into our service grew to over 150 organisations and teams. These included teams within all 5 local authorities, various CABs, foodbanks, social housing providers and community organisations across the Liverpool City Region. Regular newsletter updates to referral partners maintained our profile and kept them updated of changes to available schemes and support.

Our programme referred out to other schemes (some delivered locally by our charity) such as ECHO boiler replacement scheme, local authority funded schemes such as first-time central heating, HEART white goods scheme, LEAP for "easy measures" such as LEDs, draughtproofing, and radiator panels.

The monitoring of available schemes and the adjustment of our advice support to account for their starting and ending formed a core part of the service.

Referral Partner Feedback:

I just want to share the wonderful praise EPP just received from our local community connectors. I just had 20 connectors on a BESN affordable warmth training. At the end of the training, they went out of their way to mention how EPP are a huge support to their jobs when out in the field speaking to vulnerable clients. It was said that we are on the 'top of their list' and their 'go to' for help with energy efficiency/ white goods/ general advice and went on to say how much our work benefits the community.

Strategic Meetings/ Presentations and Local Campaigns

We worked alongside many different agencies throughout the region, some already established referral partners and some new relationships were forged. 138 strategic meetings were attended during the 2.5 years of the project. For example, we had successful meetings with Housing Associations such as Prima, Torus and ForHousing, which led to campaigns directly interacting with tenants by, for example, pre-arranged door-knocking, coffee mornings, new tenant workshops and wellbeing events for a Roma community.

Our investment in being part of the Wirral Council Covid Humanitarian Cell led to our being asked to manage some local emergency budgets for heating repairs and debt relief grants due to the health impacts over winter of Covid hardship.

We took part in or initiated 64 local events and campaigns to promote the service across the Liverpool City Region. For example, Social Media was used by Prima Housing Association and Wirral Citizens Advice to promote our services to residents. The Wirral Labour group published our contact details in their newsletter, which has a wide local circulation. We attended flu clinics in Sefton run by Sefton Healthwatch and collaborated with Faiths4change in attending local culturally and spiritually diverse events.

BGET funded (and our Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme organised) the Merseyside Annual Fuel Poverty Conference, which was held virtually in March 2021 following postponement in March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Some 80 delegates from across the country joined to hear from senior figures, including Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram, BGET CEO Jessica Taplin, BEIS, OFGEM and Energy Projects Plus CEO Peter Owen, about fuel poverty issues facing the population.

Feedback from the conference included:

- 100% of delegates agree a regional, fuel poverty conference is a valuable contribution towards tackling fuel poverty in our area
- 94% were satisfied with the quality of the presentation
- 100% of delegates had a better knowledge and/or understanding of fuel poverty after the conference compared to before the conference
- 80% feel better equipped to tackle fuel poverty in their work as a result of attending the conference
- 93% of delegates agree the event was 'very organised' or better
- 93% are likely to attend the next event

Impact on Energy Projects Plus

There is a significant cost to charities in monitoring for funding opportunities aligned to their focus, bidding at risk, as well as setting up and closing down shorter-term programmes.

Securing multi-year funding for programmes provides stability to the funded organisation, the team delivering the programme, organisations who refer clients in, vulnerable clients who can be assured of sustained support to deal with their issues, and the funders themselves who can develop systems and relationships with funded organisations to increase the effectiveness of monitoring and measuring outcomes.

The sustained nature of the funding also provides opportunities to enable other schemes to coalesce around the core delivery. One example from 2020-21 is the attraction of funding for providing emergency fuel vouchers to residents at imminent risk of self-disconnection. The funder provided grants for the value of the fuel vouchers but required the funded organisation to provide energy efficiency advice, which was provided by this and other programmes across our charity. Without the core support offered by the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme the funding would have been inaccessible meaning vulnerable residents would have missed out on important support when they were in a crisis situation.

The funding from the British Gas Energy Trust also included contributions to core organisation costs and overheads. The multi-year funding contributed to our charity's continued stability by supporting longer term planning and development of staff and structures.

Feedback from survey

Impact and Improved Wellbeing

During the 30-month programme we had three separate follow-up campaigns to feel the temperature of the service and its impact on clients lives.

Initially our questionnaire was brief and simple as we waited for guidance on a common survey approach. We wrote to 614 clients to ask them to complete our follow up questionnaire. We telephoned 571 clients and were able to speak to 254 of whom 155 completed our questionnaire. A significant number of clients' telephones were out of service (19%), which is common with the client base, many of whom have been referred by foodbank or face other hardship which leads them to change phone number or cease provision.

From this, 75 clients reported improved wellbeing, 69 no change, and 8 feeling worse. Some client comments highlighted the difficulties they faced before support:

"cooker and a washing machine. Thank you very much...I have now been able sort my finances out being able to cook and not have to buy takeaways..the expense of the laundrette would have been a nightmare"

"fuel voucher....thanks for taking the time to explain, I didn't know that my meters weren't best, I was advised about smart meters and I am on a monthly payment plan for my water. I can now manage"

"got given a washing machine. I was doing school uniform in a mop bucket previously. My mental health was suffering, am feeling tonnes better with washing machine and 4 children"

"there was no way I could have done this (myself) with what I was going through"

"really helped my mental health. I can't remember how much saving on other bills, but I am clear on everything now"

At the end of the project our survey was more in-depth and asked specific questions about the effects of our work on the clients themselves and their households.

Clients of the service were asked to feedback to us through a written survey. We wrote to 800 clients enclosing our questionnaire (see appendix 1) and asked them to complete and return. The mailing was followed up by a telephone call to encourage participation. Response was also encouraged by the chance of winning some shopping vouchers.

We received 166 responses (21% response rate) and results of individual elements have been reported in the relevant section. A key element of our survey was to determine what impact the overall service had on clients. 69% of clients reported improved wellbeing as a result of our support, 62% reported improved finances, and 69% reported warmer homes. 5% of clients did not have a positive impression of the support provided, which will be reviewed to identify improvements.

Section 7: Impact of our help				
Thinking of all the above as a whole, has our assistance made any difference to the following:				
		Yes It Did	No It Didn't	No Change
7a	Less anxiety or worry?	71.52%	9.49%	18.99%
7b	Improved mental health?	63.06%	10.83%	26.11%
7c	Better physical health?	44.59%	17.20%	38.22%
7d	Better sleep?	47.13%	16.56%	36.31%
7e	Improved Wellbeing?	69.23%	8.33%	22.44%
7f	Fewer GP or hospital visits?	17.45%	32.89%	49.66%
7g	Improved finances?	62.34%	11.69%	25.97%
7h	More confidence to deal with energy suppliers?	42.58%	20.00%	37.42%
7j	More confidence dealing with my fuel bills?	42.11%	21.71%	36.18%
7k	Warmer home?	69.87%	12.18%	17.95%
7m	Healthier home?	62.18%	12.18%	25.64%
7n	Did you find our service non-judgmental and friendly?	94.90%	5.10%	-
7p	Would you recommend Energy Projects Plus to friends and family if they were struggling with any of the issues we deal with?	95.33%	4.67%	-

Insights from Programme

Client contact

During the early stages of the programme approximately 25% of clients referred did not respond to our contact attempts. There were a number of reasons identified:

- clients would often change their phone provider and number due to their circumstances (or have their service disconnected)
- clients did not recognise our number so were reluctant to answer
- clients had no credit on their phone to enable them to listen to voicemail messages

We discussed the issues with referrers and clients and significantly improved the contact success by introducing ourselves by text message so the client would recognise our number and answer, our referrers strengthening their “next steps” message so clients were expecting our call, and by writing to clients, where appropriate, after 3 contact attempts to invite them to make contact. Once the initial contact had been made clients were confident to respond to follow up calls, and should their number become “out of service” we were able to contact their referrer and check if a new number had been provided.

Changing to Universal Credit

The introduction of Universal Credit has affected many of our clients. Some clients with automatic deductions, for example fuel payments, from their benefits have faced difficulty when migrating to Universal Credit as the deductions did not automatically migrate to the new benefit and the clients were unaware. Subsequently, payments were not going to the creditors, resulting in more debt, defaults and recovery action which set the client back even more.

Warm Home Discount

The requirement for applicants to remain with their supplier until they have received their Warm Home Discount payment limits their ability to secure more affordable tariffs for up to 6 months. Additionally, the lack of co-ordination between suppliers in regard to opening application windows (including one supplier that opens their application window for a single week in August) means that clients can seek support before their supplier’s window is open and potentially miss out by not being able to keep re-visiting until it is open or indeed miss the opportunity as the application window has closed before they are aware.

Suppliers offer the option to register interest, but this does not work for clients who do not have email accounts or do not respond to unrecognised callers on their phone.

Client circumstances and importance of sustained support

The project has identified that an increasing number of clients are presenting with complex issues that require time to resolve. Some of our more challenging client issues have taken 6-9 months to resolve, and a small number even longer. This is due to lengthy processes encountered with energy suppliers in resolving complaints, further problems coming to light and Ombudsman timescales, as well as clients struggling to provide the necessary information because of health or social difficulties.

This reinforces the importance of programmes that are multi-year, with stable delivery teams and robust systems, that ensure clients can reach a resolution supported by the service throughout.

Next steps: Legacy and Gaps

The Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme was able to build up strong relationships with front-line teams across a wide range of organisations. The programme provided specialist advice and support that most referring organisations could not offer independently. The single point of contact, accessible through a variety of methods and offering the ability to directly request support for clients (as opposed to signposting clients to make contact) was valued by referrers and reduced pressure on their core service provision.

Whilst the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme ended in March 2021 the need of clients and referring organisations continues unabated, and our charity has committed, through the alignment of other funded programmes and some internal investment, to continue supporting clients through 2021-22.

Sustained, multi-year funding to invest in supporting clients to overcome their immediate challenges and develop skills to manage in the future (and avoid crisis situations) is needed more now than before. Our charity will continue to develop proposals and programmes that will attract funding that provides the solutions to clients and outcomes for funders alike.

Energy Projects Plus thanks the British Gas Energy Trust for providing funding for the Liverpool City Region Warm Homes Programme for 30 months from October 2018 – March 2021 enabling over 4,000 vulnerable households to receive support in overcoming challenges to achieving affordable warmth.

Appendix 1: 2020-21 Post Intervention Survey Form

Section 1: Energy Suppliers

We know how difficult it can be to contact and communicate with Energy Suppliers, so we step in to help you:

1a	Did we discuss switching supplier with you? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1c
1b	Did <u>we help you</u> with switching to another supplier or a better tariff?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	OR Did <u>we give you the confidence</u> to switch ----- supplier/tariff yourself?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Did you switch and save money? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1c
	If Yes, how much? £ _____ per month / per year (please circle correct one)			
	Now go to 1c			

1c	Did we help resolve a problem with your bill? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1e
1d	Did <u>we talk to your energy supplier on your behalf</u> to ----- resolve a problem with your bill?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	OR did <u>we give you the confidence to talk to your</u> ----- <u>energy supplier</u> to resolve a problem with your bill ?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Was your problem resolved? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1e
	If Yes did you save money or get some money refunded?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	How much? £ _____ per month / per year (please circle correct one)			
	Now go to 1e			

1e	Did we help resolve a different issue with your supplier?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1g
1f	Did <u>we talk to your energy supplier on your behalf</u> to ----- resolve this issue?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	OR did <u>we give you the confidence to talk to your</u> ----- <u>energy supplier</u> to resolve this issue?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Was your issue resolved? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1g
	If Yes did you save money or get some money refunded?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If Yes, how much? £ _____ per month / per year (please circle correct one)			
	Now go to 1g			

1g	Did we help you to raise a complaint with the Energy Ombudsman?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1j
1h	Did <u>we</u> raise a complaint on your behalf with the Energy Ombudsman?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	OR did <u>we</u> give you the confidence to raise a complaint with the Energy Ombudsman yourself?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If Yes, did the Ombudsman rule in your ----- favour (i.e. agree with your complaint)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 1j
	If Yes did you get any goodwill, compensation or money back?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If Yes. how much? £ _____			
	Now go to 1j			

1j	Thinking of the above questions, if we assisted you has our advice or assistance:			
	Made your bills more affordable? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
	Improved your wellbeing? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
	Now go to Section 2			

Section 2: Gas, Electricity and Water Bills/Debts

We try to access funding and grants to reduce gas, electricity and water debts, and signpost to other organisations for general debt we cannot help with.

If you have a pre-payment (top-up) meter go to 2a. If you pay your fuel bills monthly or quarterly go to 2f

2a	Did you speak to an Advisor about running out of gas or electricity on your pre-payment meter?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 2f
2b	Did you receive an emergency fuel voucher? ————	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 2f
2c	Did you receive more than one emergency fuel voucher?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
2d	Do you think getting the emergency voucher has improved the health of someone in your home?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
2e	Do you think getting the emergency voucher has improved your wellbeing?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
Now go to 2f				

2f	Did you speak to an Advisor about Gas debt? ————	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 2g
If Yes, how much gas debt did you have? £ _____				
	Were we able to reduce your Gas debt? ————	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 2g
If Yes, how much financial help did you receive? £ _____				
Now go to 2g				

2g	Did you speak to the Advisor about Electricity debt? ———	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 2h
If Yes, how much electricity debt did you have? £ _____				
	Were we able to reduce your electricity debt? ————	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 2h
If Yes, how much financial help did you receive? £ _____				
Now go to 2h				

2h Did you speak to the Advisor about Water debt? ----- Yes ☐ No ☐ if No go to 2j

If Yes, how much Water debt did you have? £ _____

Were we able to reduce your Water debt? ----- Yes ☐ No ☐ if No go to 2j

If Yes, how much financial help did you receive? £ _____

Now go to 2j

2j Did you have any general debt that we (Energy Projects Plus) couldn't help with? Yes ☐ No ☐ if No go to 2k

Did we refer you to another organisation to help with that debt, such as Citizens Advice? Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, how much general debt did you have? £ _____

Did you get help with the debt? ----- Yes ☐ No ☐ if No go to 2k

If Yes, how much financial help did you receive? £ _____

Now go to 2k

2k Thinking of the above questions, if we assisted you:

Do you think getting help with this debt has improved the health of someone in your home? Yes ☐ No ☐ No change ☐

Do you think getting help with this debt has improved your wellbeing? Yes ☐ No ☐ No change ☐

Now go to **Section 3**

Section 3: White Goods (e.g. fridge/freezer/cooker/washing machine) and furniture

We try to help people access white goods from trust funds and other charities, when their white goods are broken or they don't have one.

3a	Did you speak to an Advisor for help with a white good?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 3f
3b	Did you receive a white good as a result of speaking to our Advisor?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 3f
3c	If Yes, which white goods did you receive?	Fridge <input type="checkbox"/>	Fridge freezer <input type="checkbox"/>	Electric cooker <input type="checkbox"/>
		Freezer <input type="checkbox"/>	Washing machine <input type="checkbox"/>	Gas cooker <input type="checkbox"/>
3d	Do you think receiving a white good has improved the health of someone in your home?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
3e	Do you think receiving a white good has improved your wellbeing?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
Now go to 3f				

3f	Did you speak to an Advisor for help with furniture?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to Section 4
3g	If Yes, did you receive furniture as a result of speaking to our Advisor?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to Section 4
Which furniture did you receive?				
3h	Do you think receiving your furniture has improved the health of someone in your home?-----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
3j	Do you think receiving your furniture has improved your wellbeing? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
Now go to Section 4				

Section 4: Household finances

We try to help people access financial advice or cost of living grants from other expert organisations such as Citizens Advice, Involve Northwest, Christians Against Poverty, Benefits Agencies and other charities.

4a	Our Advisor may have discussed your household income and expenditure with you, to make you aware of your household budget. Was this of any benefit to you?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 4c
4b	Have you saved any money/increased your disposable income as a result of this?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If Yes, how much was this? £ _____ per month / per year (please circle correct one)			
	Now go to 4c			

4c	Were you referred by the Advisor to another organisation for financial help?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to Section 5
	Has your income increased, or is expected to increase as a result of this?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to Section 5
	If Yes, how much was this? £ _____ per month / per year (please circle correct one)			
	Now go to Section 5			

Section 5: Energy Efficiency

We try to help people save money in their homes by giving energy efficiency and heating advice.

5a	Did you act on any advice given to you by the Advisor?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5b	Has it made your bills more affordable? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5c	Do you think it has saved you any money? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If Yes, how much was this? £ _____ per month / per year (please circle correct one)			
5d	Were you referred to another scheme for energy saving measures such as low energy lightbulbs (LEDs), radiator reflectors, or draughtproofing?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5e	Do you think it has made your home warmer?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
5f	Do you think it has made your home healthier?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
5g	Do you think it has improved the health of someone in your home?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
5h	Do you think it has improved your wellbeing?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	No change <input type="checkbox"/>
	Now go to Section 6			

Section 6: Other help

We offer help with other services, some of which are seasonal:

6a	Did we help you to apply for a boiler through LEAP/ Agility/ ECHO or ECO?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 6b
	If Yes, has a new boiler been installed? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6b	Did we bring you a plug-in oil-filled radiator to provide emergency heating?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6c	Did we refer you for a heating appliance repair? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 6d
	If Yes, was the appliance repaired? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6d	Did we help you to apply for the £140 Warm Home Discount?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 6e
	If Yes, have you received it? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6e	Did we register you, or help you to register, on your Energy Supplier's Priority Services Register? (in the event of a power failure you will be helped first, have a password for meter readers, and access to a quarterly meter-reading if necessary, plus other help)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6f	Did you ask us about the Green Home Grant? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to 6g
	If Yes, have you applied or are in the process of applying for the grant?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
6g	Did we help you with anything else? -----	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	if No go to Section 7
	Please describe:			
			
			
	Now go to Section 7			

Section 7: Impact of our help

Thinking of all the above as a whole, has our assistance made any difference to the following:

7a	Less anxiety or worry? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7b	Improved mental health? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7c	Better physical health? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7d	Better sleep? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7e	Improved Wellbeing? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7f	Fewer GP or hospital visits? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7g	Improved finances? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7h	More confidence to deal with energy suppliers?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7j	More confidence dealing with my fuel bills? ———	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7k	Warmer home? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>
7m	Healthier home? —————	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No change	<input type="checkbox"/>

7n	Did you find our service non-judgmental and friendly?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
7p	Would you recommend Energy Projects Plus to friends and family if they were struggling with any of the issues we deal with?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Optional

Name:

Address:
.....

Postcode:

Date:

Thank you for completing our survey—please return it in the freepost envelope

