



Impact Report 2023



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The British Gas Energy Trust (the Trust), which incorporates the Scottish Gas Energy Trust, is an independent Charitable Trust established in 2004 and funded solely by British Gas.

The Trust is governed by an independent Board of voluntary Trustees and led by the Chief Executive, who runs the Trust with a dedicated team.

As a charity these are the values we seek to uphold: *Kindness, empathy, respect, and working in an innovative, agile and collaborative way.*

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“I want to thank all of you – the call handlers, assessors and trustees – for granting my Mum a payment that has allowed her to pay off a debt that caused her massive distress. I cannot emphasise enough how grateful we all are (me, my Mum, and the other members of the family who have been supporting her). It is so very appreciated.”

Trust energy debt grant recipient



“We’ve seen a significant increase in demand for our services with specific requests for support related to finances and coping with the rising costs since early 2022. We’re delighted to be working with British Gas Energy Trust to meet this increased need and provide support to thousands of people at most risk of poverty.”

Trust funded project, Kidney Care UK



Photo credits: adobe stock/Viktor Koldunov, istockphoto/SolStock

About us

The British Gas Energy Trust (the Trust) is an independent charitable trust funded solely by British Gas, with a mission to alleviate the detrimental impact of poverty by focusing on fuel poverty. Since the launch of the Trust in 2004, over £175.8 million has been invested in helping more than 700,000* people manage their energy costs.

Our aims

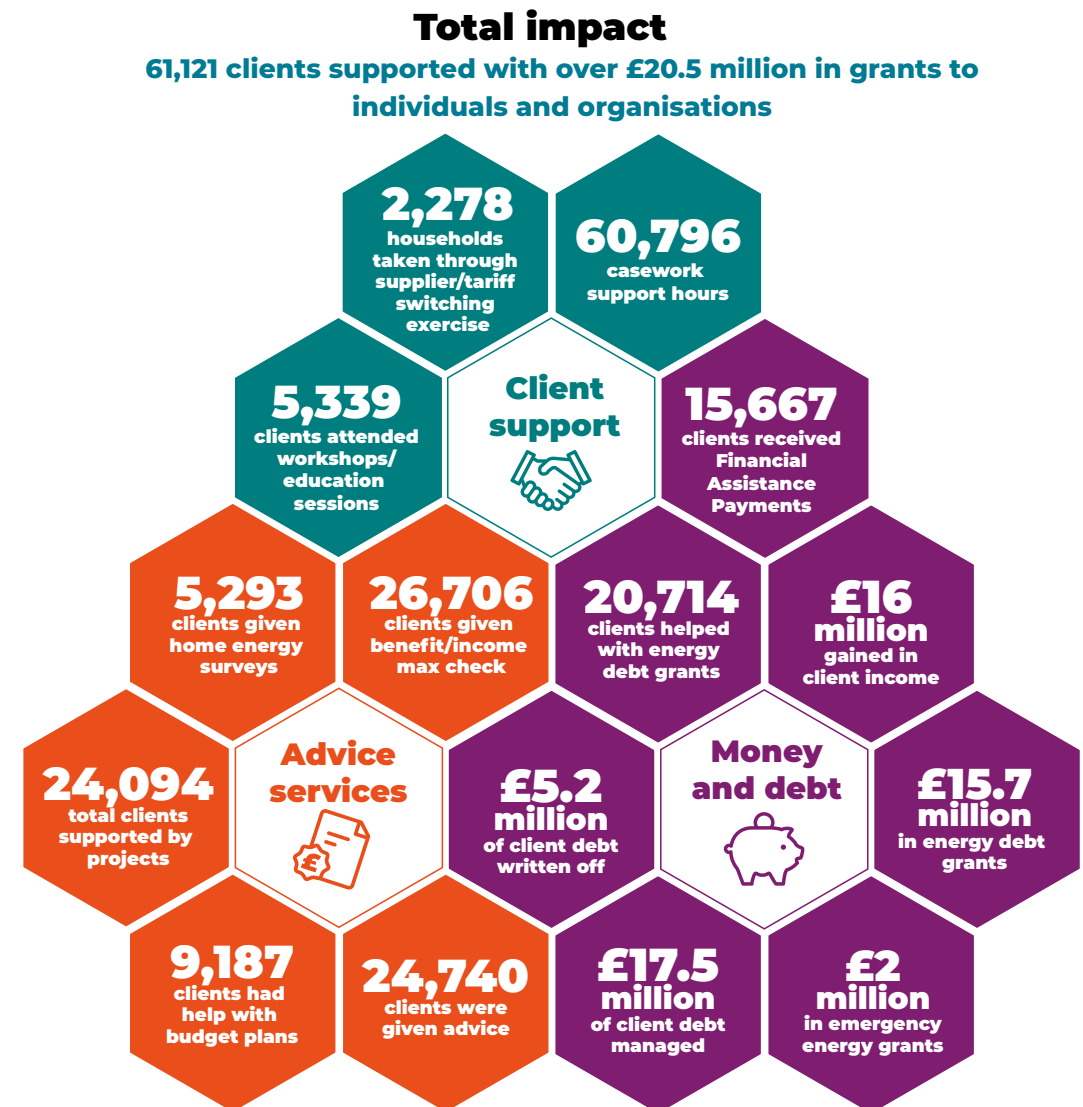
For households: We aim to help people avoid the burden of energy debt, make informed energy choices and improve their money management skills. We believe that this will lead to more efficient homes and improved customer wellbeing.

For organisations: We want to enhance the capacity of the organisations we fund and enable the development and provision of support to people in financial hardship, through money, energy and advice services.

Our objectives

- ▶ To foster individual skills, capabilities and competencies so that people can build financial stability and thrive.
- ▶ To help people in financial hardship maximise their income, avoid the burden of energy debt, meet their energy needs and manage their energy and other household costs, while informing their energy decisions and supporting choice in a changing world.
- ▶ To identify interventions to improve the support services for those facing financial hardship.
- ▶ To effectively manage our funds and develop our organisation to be more impactful.

To see how the Trust goes about achieving its mission, aims, and the outcomes that it seeks to deliver, see our [Theory of Change](#).



*Figures are based on historic records and sources, some of which are not audited accounts.

Introduction from our Chair, Helen Charlton



“With its renewed focus, strengthened operational capability and improved financial position, the Trust is well-poised to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.”

Since the Trust was founded almost 20 years ago, it has made a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable people in England, Scotland, and Wales. The support offered by the Trust is crucial and particularly important now, and will remain so in the years ahead, as high energy prices and cost of living pressures continue to impact the most financially vulnerable people in communities across Britain.

The Trust was founded in 2004, since then our beneficiaries have faced enormous social and economic challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, swiftly followed by an energy crisis, and the increased cost of living. With the support of our funder, British Gas, the Trust has risen to these challenges and has made a significant impact.

In the last year we have supported 61,121 clients, 65% who were in fuel poverty and the remaining 35% at risk of fuel poverty and provided over £20.5 million in grants to individuals and organisations.

Between March 2022 and April 2023, the Trust continued to extend its reach into areas of need, funding 54 projects which supported 127 money and energy adviser posts across Britain.

In an innovative approach to reaching more people in need, Trust-funded projects supported

102 British Gas/Post Office pop-up events across Britain. With the aim of communicating with more digitally vulnerable people, the events held at post offices offered in-person money and energy advice as well as follow-up referrals, reaching an estimated 25,000 people.

Our Individuals and Families (I&F) Fund and the Energy Support Fund (ESF) continue to provide energy debt relief grants, £17.5 million in this year, to people to clear household energy debt.

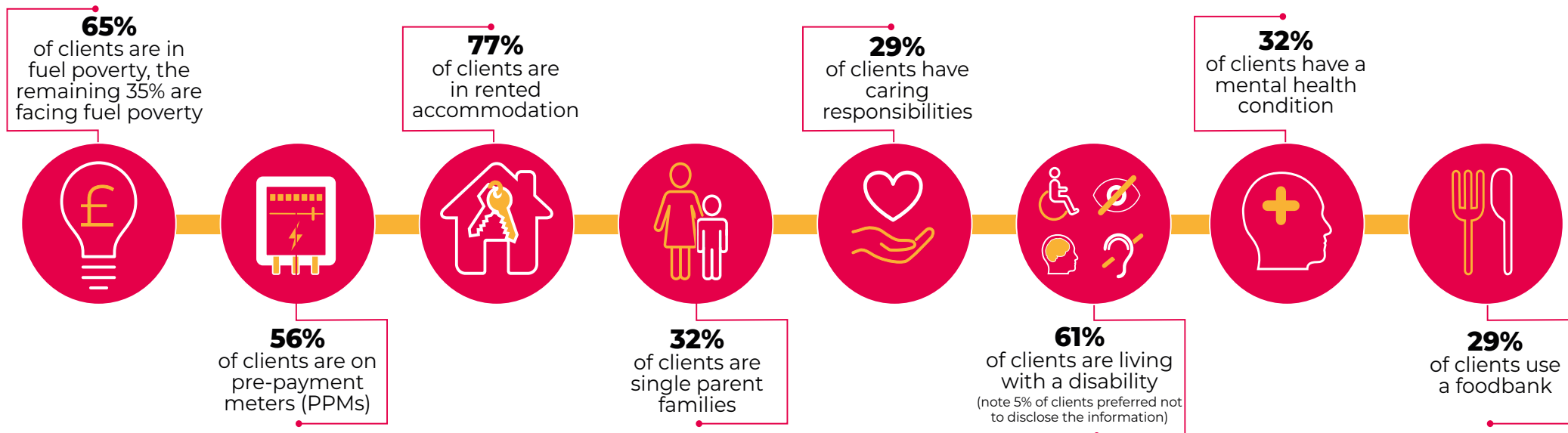
With its renewed focus, strengthened operational capability and improved financial position, the Trust is well-poised to tackle the challenges that lie ahead. Ongoing economic uncertainty, high energy prices and financial insecurity continue to affect the people the Trust supports; those in the lowest deciles of household income nationally, but also those facing

challenges which mean they are more likely to suffer from the detrimental impact of fuel poverty, for example disability, long-term illness, or being a sole parent of younger children.

Through the Trust’s intelligent funder approach – which focuses on funding holistic money and energy support projects in combination with direct grants – we will renew our efforts to help alleviate the challenges faced by households and communities across the country to break the cycle of energy deprivation.

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank our CEO Jessica Taplin for her inspirational leadership, and all of the team and our contractors for their dedicated work in support of the Trust and our beneficiaries. As ever, we are deeply grateful for the support of Chris O’Shea and British Gas, whose funding makes all this work possible.

Client demographics



An intelligent funder

Two British Gas Energy Trust funded charities located 500 miles apart participated in an innovative knowledge exchange to enhance energy advice in rural communities.

One of the main aims of the Trust is to enhance the capacity of the organisations we fund, building the skills, knowledge, and experience of their teams to help them support as many people as possible to reduce the burden of energy debt in communities across Britain. With almost 20 years of experience and an expansive network of funded organisations, we have a wealth of knowledge to support the charities we fund.

Following our brokerage, Ashley Comley, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Rhondda Cynon Taff, a charity in the Welsh valleys, flew to the most northerly part of Britain to meet the team and trustees of THAW Orkney. As well as providing the THAW Orkney team with a series of recommendations, Ashley also came away with a few ideas to help his own service delivery back in Wales, saying the visit had broadened his understanding of the impact of fuel poverty and the challenges of rural life.



"We needed peer-to-peer advice. There were huge benefits in Ashley coming, he is so knowledgeable and experienced – and specifically so in energy advice."

Caroline Butterfield, THAW Orkney Trustee

A view from our funder



Rest assured that as we approach winter, we'll continue to work ever more closely with our friends at the Trust, so that no one has to struggle alone."

Catherine O'Kelly, Managing Director British Gas Energy

Over the last year, customers and communities have needed our help more than ever. With everyday essentials like energy and food rising amidst the wider cost of living crisis, household budgets have increasingly come under pressure. We've wanted to do whatever we can to help – such as committing 10% of British Gas Energy's profit for the duration of the energy crisis to support people with their energy bills.

This enabled us to put together the biggest energy supplier support package in the UK since the crisis began, which included giving £20 million to the British Gas Energy Trust with further funding committed during 2023. With this support, the Trust has been able to face the rise in demand head-on by directly providing expert money and energy advice alongside grants, whilst building extra capacity at the heart of communities through funding over 45 projects and advice centres.

We are proud that support like this can make such a difference. Not only can it ease the intense worry and isolation felt by those in or at risk of fuel poverty, but it grows life-long money and energy management skills that are crucial to building a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Rest assured that as we approach winter, we'll continue to work ever more closely with our friends at the Trust, so that no one has to struggle alone.



Professor Green meets Victoria, one of our grant recipients, to find out about the positive impact of the support she received.



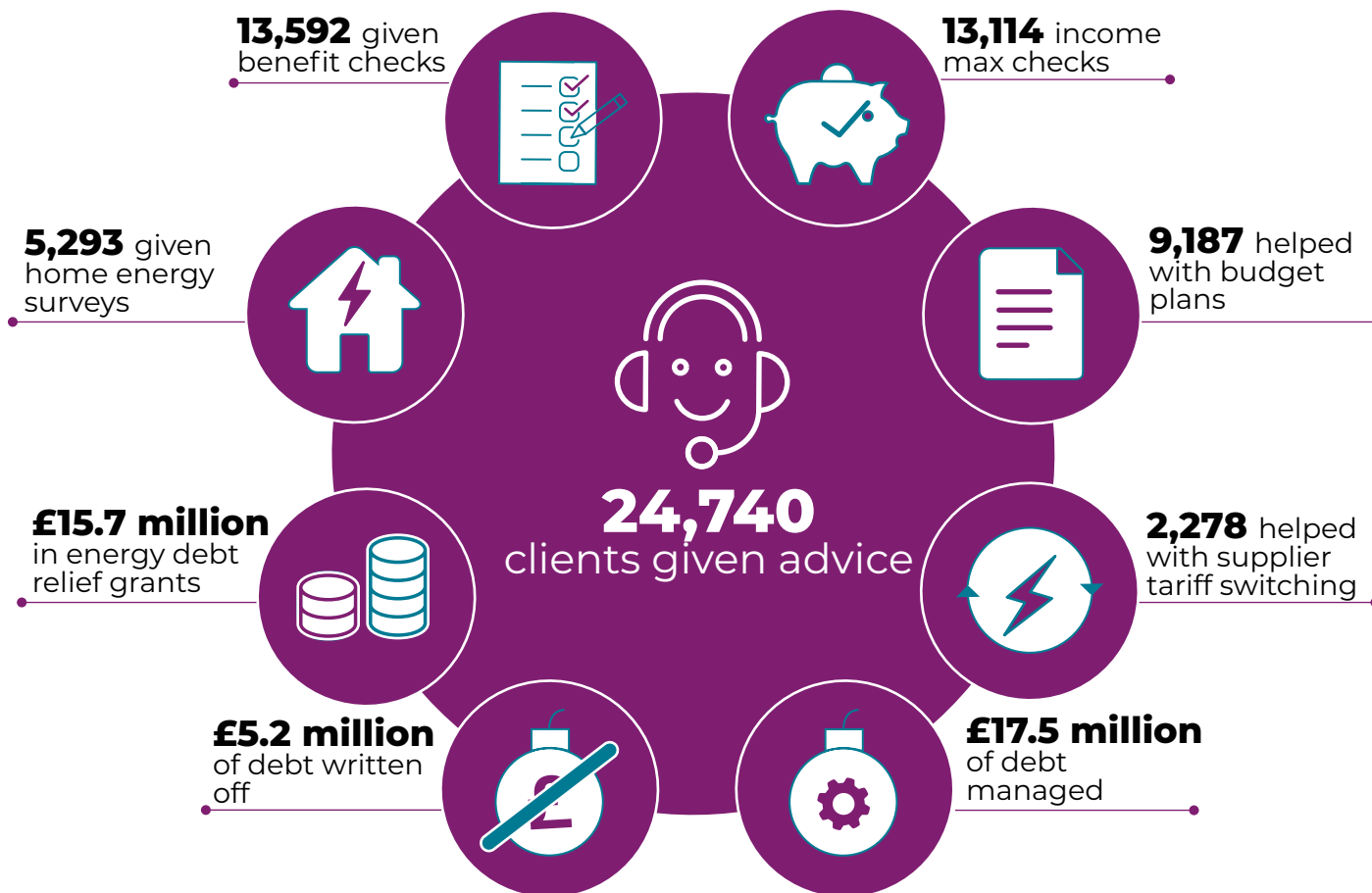
Nothing is more important than delivering for our customers and the communities we serve. That's why since the start of the energy crisis, we've increased our energy support package to more than £100 million and helped customers with their energy bills on over a million occasions. The British Gas Energy Trust is one of the key ways we've been able to reach those who need it most, and we're forever thankful for their continued collaboration, care and commitment."

Chris O'Shea, Centrica's Group Chief Executive

Funded projects programme

Between April 2022 and March 2023, the Trust continued to extend its reach into areas of need across Britain, funding 54 projects which supported 127 full-time money and energy adviser posts across the three nations.

Trust-funded advisers supported over 24,000 clients to increase their income by nearly £16 million per annum and write off over £5 million in debt. This was achieved through over 60,000 hours of casework support which enabled budget plans, income max checks, home energy surveys and various education sessions to be delivered at the point of need for people who were significantly impacted by the cost of living crisis.



Case study



The Bromley by Bow Centre (BBBC) Empowering a single parent with multiple challenges

Client background

A single parent raising three dependent children, living in a housing association property who received universal credit since January 2023 was referred to the Bromley by Bow Centre for fuel vouchers, by the local foodbank. The client faced numerous challenges, including health issues and language barriers, she struggled with speaking, reading, and writing in English.

The client had rent and energy arrears and was overwhelmed and distressed due to her deteriorating financial situation.

Outcomes

BBBC negotiated down the clients' rent arrears to an affordable £35 per month, provided immediate fuel vouchers and registered the client on the Priority Services Register. They also provided LED light bulbs to enhance energy efficiency and are projected to clear electricity arrears of £833.19 through the British Gas Energy Support Fund. Potential income has been maximised through the projected weekly PIP income of £68.10.

Client testimonial: "I wasn't sure if all my issues would be looked at, so I am happy that one adviser was able to support me with my problems. I feel I can move forward now."



Highlighting our impact

by Jessica Taplin, Chief Executive Officer



As we enter our 20th year as a funder, it is clear from the evidence that we are helping more people than ever before. In fact, we have almost tripled the number of households supported in three years.

But these have been three years of huge turmoil across England, Scotland and Wales. Initially with the pandemic, and now with the global economic and political challenges that continue to impact on communities and household finances.

So it is in this grim context that we continue to strive to deliver on our mission to alleviate the detrimental impact of poverty, with a focus on fuel poverty. This is only possible thanks to the ongoing support and generosity of British Gas, enabling us to respond to the increasing levels of need with greater activity and funding. We will continue to listen and learn to ensure we are maximising the positive impact of this funding.

As part of a wider ecosystem of support, we work hard to identify the most constructive use of our funding, supporting funded projects and grant programmes that lead to proven positive changes for the people in acute financial hardship and need.

We know from previous research and evidence that the Trust's combined intelligent funder approach – which focuses on funding

holistic money and energy support projects in combination with direct grants to help alleviate immediate pressures – works, but in these challenging times we recognise that new groups are affected who might not have needed help previously.

In 2024 the ambition and focus of the Trust, the direct grant programmes, together with the funded network of charities and partners, will be on convening and discussion; to help develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by households, looking at how through shared learning we might break the cycle of energy deprivation.

Joanna explains how she found out about the Trust's energy debt grants and what the application process was like.

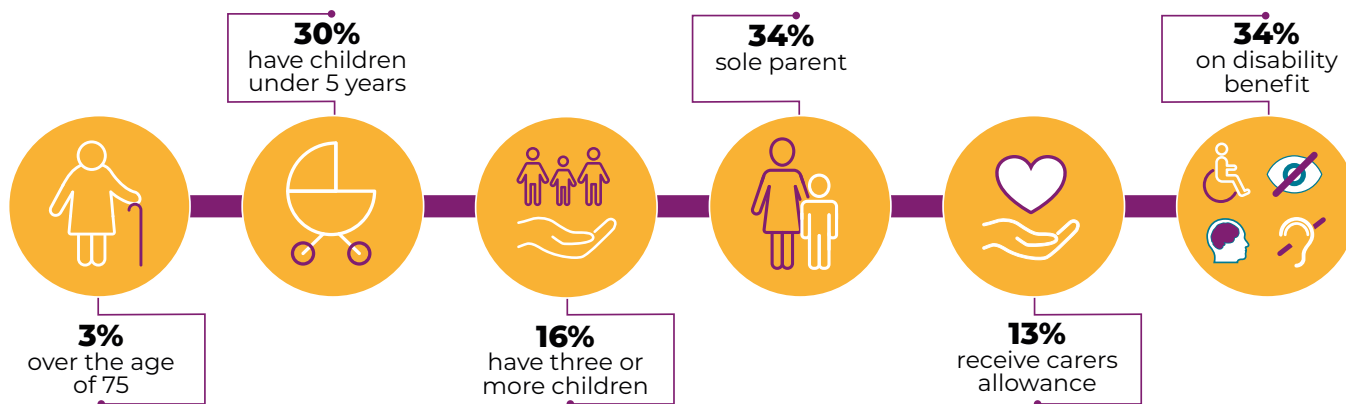
"In 2024, our 20th year and the third year of our strategy, we will continue to use research and evidence, together with robust analysis of our own data and the most up-to-date mapping tools, to enhance our intelligent funder approach – ensuring we are effective and efficient in meeting the needs that so many face."

Energy debt relief grants

The Individuals and Families (I&F) Fund and the Energy Support Fund (ESF) provide direct grants for debt relief to people to clear household energy debt.

The funds support people experiencing financial difficulty who cannot pay their outstanding energy debt. A key difference is that the I&F Fund supports British Gas and non-British Gas customers who cannot access energy debt help from their own supplier, whilst the ESF helps British Gas customers. Applications are individually assessed. Assessors look for evidence to show

that, after clearing their debt with an energy grant, applicants would be able to manage their income to meet their outgoings longer term. The assessment process includes criteria and an assessment of the applicant's financial situation to help ensure this. Grant awards are made in the form of credit applied to energy arrears of up to £1,500 and are paid directly to energy accounts.



£15.7 million of energy debt relief grants

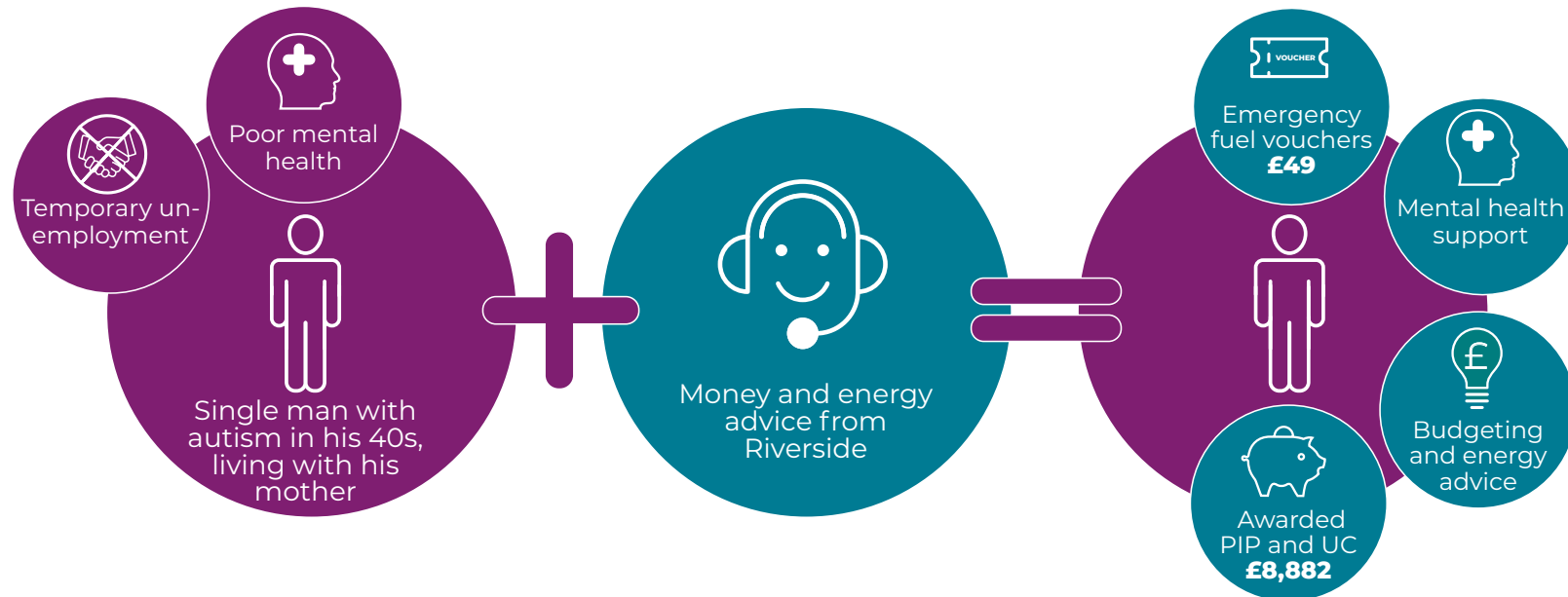


20,714 clients were helped with 28,859 energy debt grants



£2 million of Financial Assistance Payments (small emergency payments)

Client stories



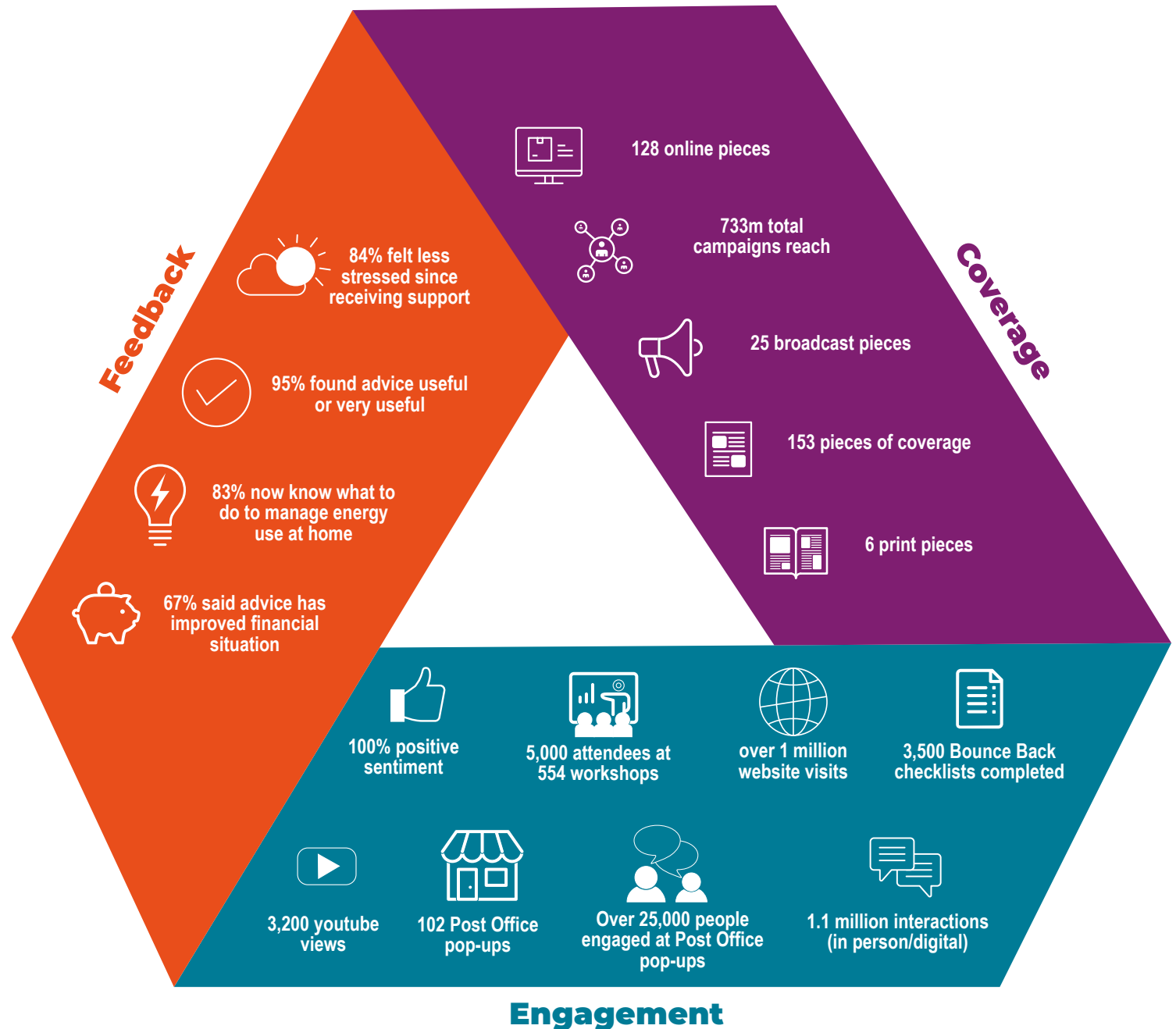
Watch our 'Trusted Hands' video to find out how our funding is helping support people in energy debt across England, Scotland and Wales.

"I was shown respect and patience when being asked about disability. I now have more money so I can pay my bills and keep warm. I can't thank you enough you have changed my life."
Client testimonial

Increasing our reach

Between March 2022 and April 2023 Trust-funded projects supported 102 British Gas Post Office pop-ups across Britain.

The events offered in-person money and energy advice and follow-up referrals at post offices to an estimated 25,000 people. One of the key objectives of the campaign is to reach more digitally vulnerable people.



Research – funded projects

How the Supporting Communities at Risk Programme (SCARP) helps combat fuel poverty.

To help address the challenges faced by people across the country and break the cycle of fuel poverty, the British Gas Energy Trust developed the Supporting Communities at Risk Programme (SCARP), funding money and energy charities, to help ensure accessible support for those in need.

Recently commissioned Sonnet research explored what difference this support makes for clients. The report tells the

stories and situations of the people affected by fuel poverty. It explores the difference that the support they receive makes to them, their families and the public services they interact with.

A key element of SCARP is the trust BGET has in the 45+ organisations it funds to deliver the support that will meet its communities needs in relation to fuel poverty, giving them the freedom to decide how to support their clients through

money, energy, and debt advice, and in wider holistic ways that address underlying needs.

A key approach is to understand the underlying reasons why households are in or at risk of fuel poverty. Our funded organisations then seek to address these causes, supporting clients to access the other services they need to sustain the changes for the longer term. You can read the [full report here](#).

SCARP is:



Reaching the right people



Supporting those most at risk or already in fuel poverty in the UK



Making a difference in people's lives: funded projects are able to best support their communities

A client's story



"I would like to thank you for helping me with my gas and electric bills. Your help is much appreciated and has rescued me from a very anxious time. Thank you again."

Trust energy debt grant recipient