

Northern Gas Networks' Supporting Communities to Achieve Affordable Warmth and Safety

Funding scheme outcomes and impact

August 2025

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Background

The Supporting Communities to Achieve Affordable Warmth and Safety (SCAAWS) scheme has been running since summer 2024. It aims to work with grassroots organisations to deliver energy advice and support to vulnerable and fuel poor customers in the Northern Gas Networks' (NGN) area. The scheme is an NGN-funded project in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), which is the fund administrator. It is funded through Ofgem's Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA). In the 2024 – 25 round of funding, 4,432 households were supported by the 14 funded organisations. A total of £204,512 was distributed in funding.

The second round of funding for this scheme runs from June 2025 – January 2026 and will fund a mixture of existing organisations and new organisations.

This report summarises the outcomes and impacts of the scheme from the 2024 - 2025 round.

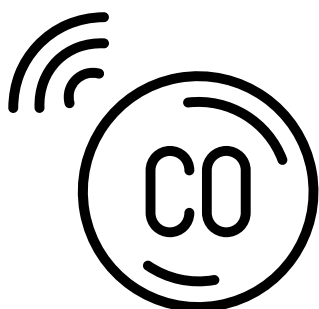


Households supported



4,432

Households supported with energy advice and other crisis support

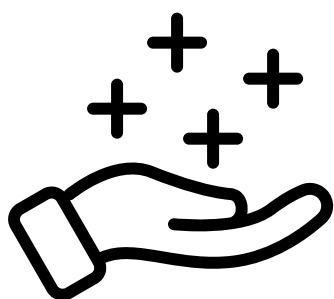


3,046

Households provided with carbon monoxide (CO) safety awareness advice

2,536

Households supported to sign up to the Priority Services Register (PSR)



2,563

Households supported with accessing benefits eligibility checks

1,914

Households supported to access debt advice



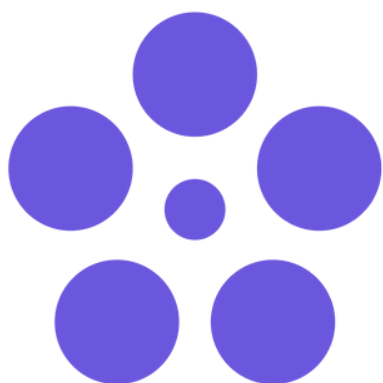
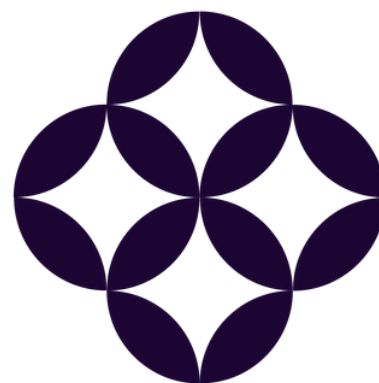
Impact on households



This page includes reflections from funded organisations on the impact the scheme and their work has had on the community they support.

“This scheme has had a profound impact on vulnerable individuals and families facing financial hardship, fuel poverty, and housing challenges. Many clients reported feeling less anxious, more secure in their homes, and better equipped to manage their energy use.”

Give a Gift



“The funding has ultimately helped us to support more people, more effectively, during a time of rising energy costs and growing need. We made a positive impact on community wellbeing and developed a deeper understanding of our communities—and vice versa.”

Shaping Care in Kirklees

“It has had a massive impact on the people we support and gave them a more positive outlook for the future. Previously they had no idea they could access this type of help. They feel more confident having somewhere to go to help them with their situation.”

City of Hull Sport and Community Group



Partnership with NGN



“Northern Gas Networks (NGN) has worked with CSE to develop projects with grassroots organisations, delivering essential services to support our vulnerable communities achieve affordable warmth and safety.

At NGN we really value our relationships with community partners. This project has enabled us to expand our reach across new areas and into services we weren't previously aware of. Identified and supported by CSE, the funded partners have enabled advice to be delivered right in the heart of communities and for those who might not otherwise seek access to services. With the ongoing heightened cost-of-living and debt levels being at an all-time high, this support has never been so needed. These services can be a real lifeline for households who are struggling.”



CSE attendance at NGN's annual open day in June 2025

Who was funded?



This table lists the organisations funded in the 2024 - 25 round.

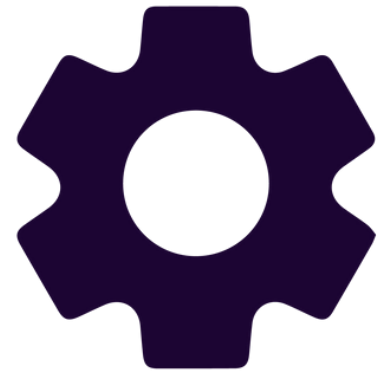
Funded organisation	Geographic area covered
Give A Gift	Leeds
City of Hull Sport and Community Group	Orchard Park and Bransholme, Hull
The Big League	Hartlepool
Shaping Care in Kirklees	Huddersfield
Welcome to English	Hull
Bridge Creative Enterprise	County Durham
Veterans Response	South Shields
The Neighbourhood Project	Skipton
People Matters	Leeds
Copeland Age & Advice Service	Cumbria
Quaking Houses Village hall	Stanley, County Durham
Cleveland Housing Advice Centre	Middlesborough
Active Families North East	Sunderland and Newcastle
Building Futures East	Walker and Byker, Newcastle

Impact on funded organisations



This page includes reflections from funded organisations on the impact the scheme has had for building their capacity to deliver energy advice and related support.

“There has been profound value in information and training offered by CSE. This has created a dual benefit, equipping our clients with crucial knowledge while enriching the understanding and skills of our team. This collective learning has been a major asset.”
Bridge Creative Enterprise



“We have a fuller picture around what is needed to keep our clients safe, particularly around carbon monoxide. We are more experienced now with any fuel related issues, where to go for debt support, how to efficiently heat your home and what help is available.”
Building Futures East

“We are grateful for this funding and training which added to our staff experience of delivering energy advice. As a result, our trustees decided to add energy advice, carbon monoxide safety awareness and related energy support as part of our main support provision.”
Cleveland Housing Advice Centre



Key challenges



Some of the key themes around challenges organisations experienced on this scheme include:

Theme	Key feedback
Stigma and lack of trust	"The key challenges for the project were the reluctance for clients to share personal information and talk about their situations. This was mainly through embarrassment or lack of trust in why we needed their information."
Language barriers	"We are giving advice to people who have limited English and IT skills (and sometimes no education at all). Just getting people to provide basic information and remembering passwords is probably the hardest part. It can then be very time consuming if we have to make phone calls, as we are often waiting for someone to pick up for a long time."
Lack of energy knowledge	Some people didn't know what type of meter they were on, or who their energy supplier is.
People experiencing complex situations	"The challenging areas were supporting clients with complex fuel debt issues or those in extremely poor housing conditions where landlords were uncooperative or absent." "Helping people who misuse substance is challenging because they prioritise substance over heating. There is also real frustration contacting energy suppliers. It is very time consuming and they are not always helpful."

Key learnings



Some of the key learnings from this scheme, based on reporting from the organisations, and CSE's reflections and experience, include:

All organisations saw the benefit of embedding energy advice into existing provision and support in their community.

Grassroot organisations are trusted within underserved communities, providing crucial and effective support. The impacts of this go beyond energy saving and include increased confidence, self-advocacy, improved physical and mental health, and reduced isolation.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact households having a debilitating impact on people's wellbeing and resilience. In some cases, despite multiple interventions to support with debt management, income maximisation and energy use, some households will still struggle.

Offering continuation funding for organisations is a real strength, providing more stable support for organisations to continue delivering essential services.

The training and support CSE provides is key in enabling grassroots organisations deliver energy advice, many for the first time.

Thank you.

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