

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

Funding scheme outcomes and impact

April 2026

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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 2025 – 26 round of funding, 3,504 households were supported by the 15 funded organisations. A total of £215,230 was distributed in funding.

This report summarises the outcomes and impacts of the scheme from the 2025 - 2026 round.

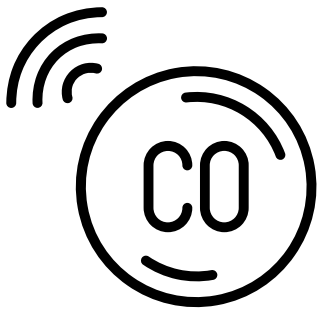
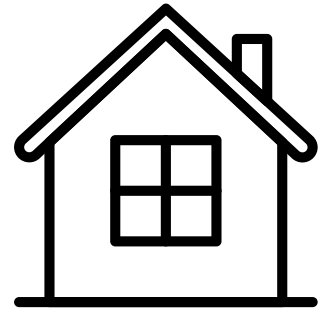


Households supported



2,656

Households supported with energy advice and other crisis support

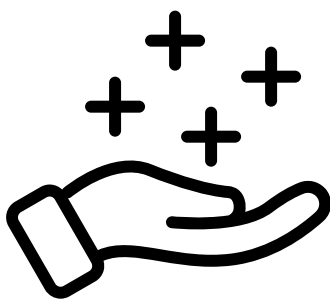


2,301

Households provided with carbon monoxide (CO) safety awareness advice

1,675

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



1,757

Households supported with accessing benefits eligibility checks

1,593

Households supported to access debt advice

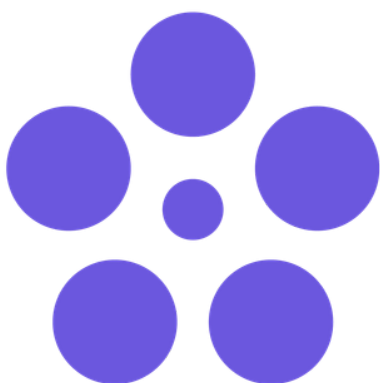
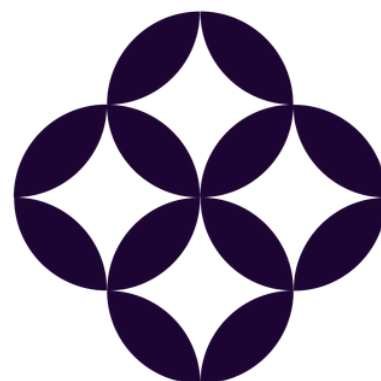


Impact on households



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

“This funding has had a meaningful and practical impact on the people we support. It has enabled us to provide timely, face-to-face advice to individuals and families struggling with rising energy costs and wider financial pressures.” **Shaping Care in Kirklees**



“The impact has been really positive. The funding has allowed us to link the dots between different types of support, not just the NGN element, but also wider services we offer. It has helped us build stronger relationships and promote our work to audiences we wouldn’t have otherwise reached. As a result, more people are aware of the support available and are able to access help that better meets their needs.” **Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen**

“Apart from the great feedback from people we helped, watching our volunteers take on this new challenge, build their knowledge and really enjoy helping people with energy advice they all found it very rewarding has been a key highlight.” **West Northumberland Foodbank**



Who was funded?



This table lists the organisations funded in the 2025 - 26 round.

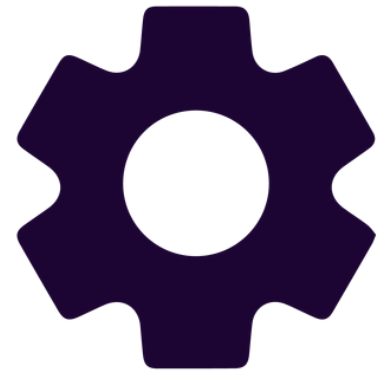
Funded organisation	Geographic area covered
Give A Gift	Leeds
City of Hull Sport and Community Group	Orchard Park and Bransholme, Hull
Shaping Care in Kirklees	Huddersfield
Welcome to English	Hull
Bridge Creative Enterprise	County Durham
Quaking Houses Village hall	Stanley, County Durham
Cleveland Housing Advice Centre	Middlesborough
Building Futures East	Walker and Byker, Newcastle
Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen	Sunderland, County Durham
Pudsey Community Project	Pudsey
Brampton and Beyond Community Trust	Brampton
The Nidderdale Plus Partnership	Nidderdale and the Washburn Valley
Scarborough Social Action Centre CIO	Scarborough
West Northumberland Food Bank	West Northumberland
Mind in Harrogate District	Harrogate District

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.

“The training and support has been invaluable. We're now in a position to continue with this kind of support for our clients as it is now part of our offer and regular routine.”
Scarborough Social Action



“The training and support has strengthened our organisational capacity. Staff and volunteers now feel confident teaching energy-related topics. This broadened our curriculum and expanded the support we can offer to people with complex needs.”
Welcome to English

“[This funding] has meant that [clients] could take back control of their energy when many felt like they were spiralling. Some became aware of their rights as tenants and the responsibilities of their landlords in regards to carbon monoxide safety and were then able to advocate for themselves. Those who were given fuel bank support expressed relief at being temporarily pulled out of a difficult situation”
Give a Gift



Key challenges



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

Theme	Key feedback
Navigating complex situations	<p>“With the training provided, I was able to support people as long as their situation was uncomplicated (which was not often the case).”</p> <p>“The main challenges were the complexity of individual cases, language barriers and students’ unfamiliarity with UK systems. Many people faced multiple issues at once, which required careful problem solving and clear communication.”</p>
Accessibility of advice and resources	<p>“Limited English meant we relied on interpreters, translation tools and visual explanations to ensure understanding.”</p>
Building trust and sharing information	<p>People not wanting to talk or share information, or not knowing important information, like their energy supplier or meter type.</p>
Fuel vouchers	<p>“In practice, many of the people we worked with did not have [a prepayment] meter, which meant they were not eligible for support through this route, even though they were experiencing financial hardship and struggling with energy costs.”</p> <p>Being unable to support with fuel vouchers for people not on a pre-payment meter. Also complications with some people who had a prepayment meter controlled by landlords.</p>

Key learnings



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

Several groups have reported adding energy advice to their core service permanently, with impacts in their communities lasting beyond the end of the project.

The project allows small organisations to build and link up their services and make connections with other organisations. This helps them reach new geographical areas and communities to offer support.

Language interpretation and accessible tools remain essential. Groups report on the labour that goes into transforming information provided into formats that would help their service users, be it through adapted presentations, picture/video formats, or translation.

The cost of living is still rising and leading to an increasing need for support. "More families are reaching crisis point, particularly single parents and individuals on low or insecure incomes, which has placed additional pressure on our food and fuel resources." This means staff and volunteers are managing heavier case loads, and access to fuel vouchers for anyone who needs one is a priority.

There is a wider need for systemic change. Many of the people organisations work with are on very low incomes and current energy costs and standing charges are not fairly distributed. A stronger collective voice pushing for lower, fairer bills — especially for vulnerable households — would make a meaningful difference to the people organisations support.

Thank you.

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