

2021/22 REPORT

Warm and Well

QUARTER 4



Warm and Well Progress Report, Quarter 4, 2021-22.

21 April 2022

This report has been prepared by Severn Wye Energy Agency as part of a programme of works funded by the seven local authorities in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, and the NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

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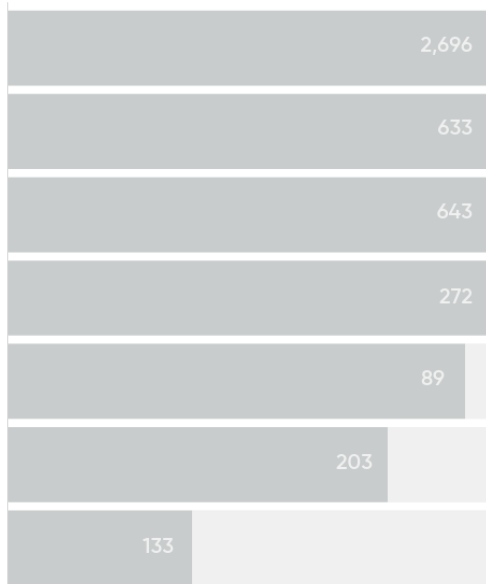
The Warm and Well scheme aims to improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce the risk of fuel poverty and associated health problems by:

- Raising public awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- Providing specific and appropriate advice by telephone, referrals from partner organisations and engagement at events
- Delivering home visits to vulnerable customers that include an energy survey and bespoke advice report
- Making referrals to grant and discount schemes



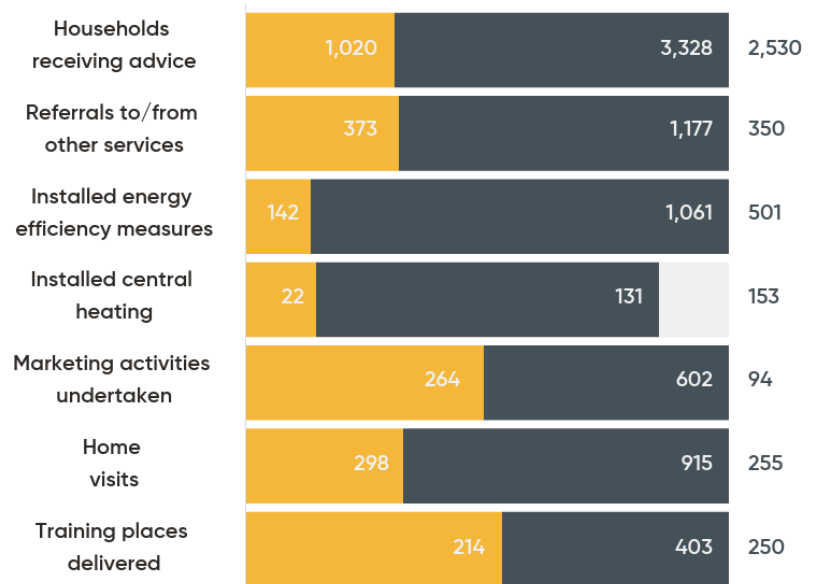
Warm and Well Targets

This time last year



● 2020/21 ● Annual target

This year



● Q4 ● Total, 2021/22 ● Target

Executive Summary

This year has followed the pattern of previous years and been an exceptionally busy time for Warm and Well. We've received enquiries from **3,328 unique households** and have seen the number of enquiries we've received increase month on month compared to the previous year. With the increase to the price cap widely publicised and coming into effect in April, it was no surprise that March saw a significant increase in calls to our adviceline. We expect this trend to continue into the new financial year, as the cost of living and energy crises rage on.

Some of our key achievements this year include:

- **Installed Measures:** the installation of 1,061 energy efficiency measures
- **Carbon Savings:** total lifetime carbon savings of 22,714 tonnes as a result of these installs, with 33% of savings coming from cavity wall insulation
- **Home Visits:** 915 home visits carried out
- **Public Awareness:** participation in a wide range of community and public events, attending 71 partner events and holding 71 of our own drop ins. We engaged a total of 2,725 people through community and partner activities this year
- **Funding levered:** we've accessed £3.8 million in funding for capital works. For every £1 invested from Warm and Well and Health top-up funding, we've levered £11.43 in external capital investment.

Having previously experienced a slowing down in measures installed, this quarter has seen a return to form, and we have more than doubled our target of 501 energy efficiency installs for the year, by **installing 1,061 energy efficiency measures**. We've seen a significant increase in the number of enquiries from people reporting mental health issues this year, with **272 clients self-reporting a mental health concern**. With the anxiety produced by the ongoing energy crisis and price cap increases, this is a trend we expect to continue.

We've continued to develop strong links with partner organisations and have received **1,050 referrals from our partners over the year**. The largest proportion of these referrals come via our advocacy work, with significant proportions also coming from charity partners, social housing groups and food banks, who were our largest external referrers this quarter.

The Local Authority Delivery Scheme phase 1 is now complete, with **204 park homes receiving external insulation** as a result of the project. Over the past eighteen months we have supported 214 households through LAD phase 1, either via external wall insulation or the installation of air source heat pumps. This work accounts for a total of **£1.7 million in grant funding** and the feedback from households has been fantastic.

In addition to the completion of LAD phase 1, the Warm Homes Fund is nearing completion. Since it began in December 2017, the project has funded 648 on-gas and 120 off-gas installs, **lifting 334 households out of fuel poverty** in the process.

The advocacy team have supported a **total of 378 households** across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire during this quarter, with the team in Gloucestershire carrying out a **record-breaking 159 home visits**.

Following on from a difficult winter, the ongoing energy crisis and huge price cap increases have seen an increase in stress and anxiety for some of the most vulnerable households in the region. We've noticed various trends in enquiries coming through to our adviceline, including:

- Requests for fuel vouchers for prepayment meters and help with payments for solid fuel and oil
- Grants for cavity wall and loft insulation
- Grants for the replacement of old, inefficient and/or broken gas boilers
- Grants for air source heat pumps and solar PV
- Grants for window and door replacement, particularly replacement of existing double-glazed windows
- Fuel debt and tariff switching

These trends appear to reflect the growing awareness of low carbon energy technologies and growing concern around paying energy bills, particularly amongst households who rely on unconventional energy sources, such as solid fuel.

We predict that the climate around fuel poverty and affordable warmth will become increasingly challenging over the coming year and demands on the Warm and Well service will continue to grow. We are hopeful that new schemes, such as the Sustainable Warmth Competition, will bring much needed funding into the region and that the renewed government commitment to ECO4 will ensure the longevity of the install support we offer. Our team remains as committed as ever to supporting the most vulnerable in our community and ensuring that through our adviceline and advocacy work no one in Gloucestershire or South Gloucestershire has to struggle with fuel poverty alone.

Bernadette Muldowney

Project Manager, Warm and Well

People Engaged

Households and Referrals

Over the course of the year, we have received enquiries from 3,328 unique households – 1,020 in Q4. It has been an exceptionally busy year for our team with more households supported every month than in previous years. With fuel bills soaring and the cost of living crisis we saw an increase in calls in March rather than the usual drop as outdoor temperatures start to rise.

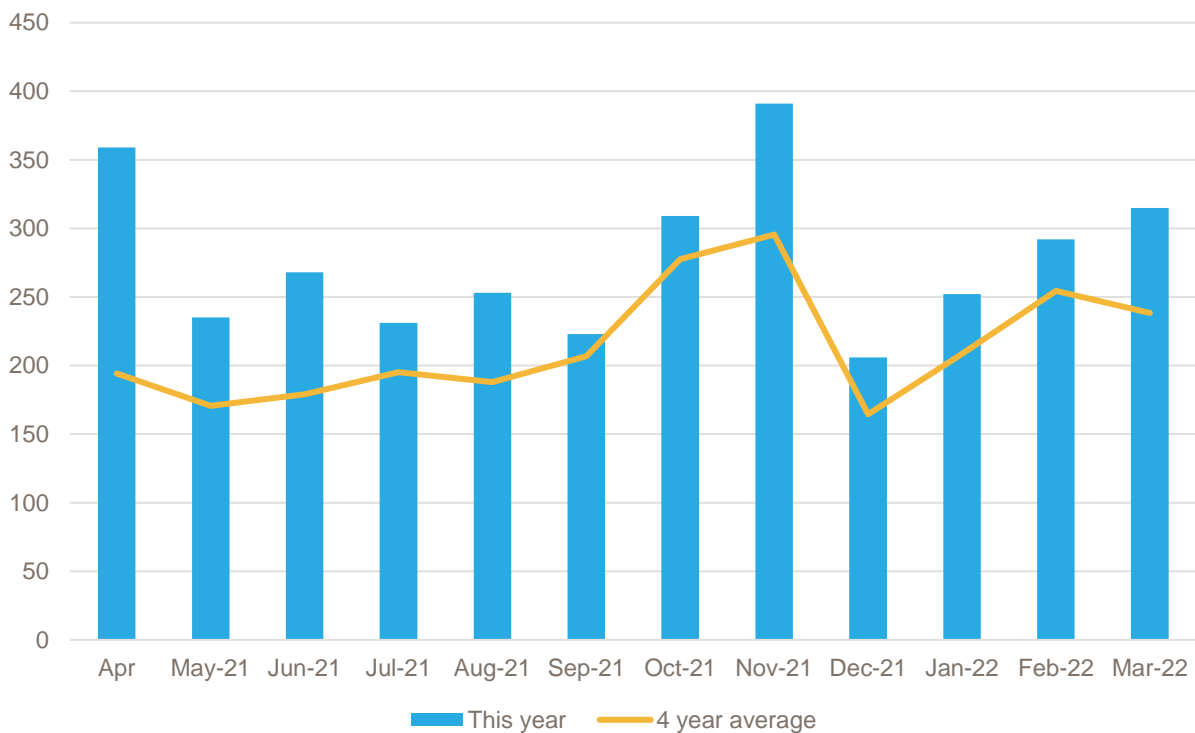
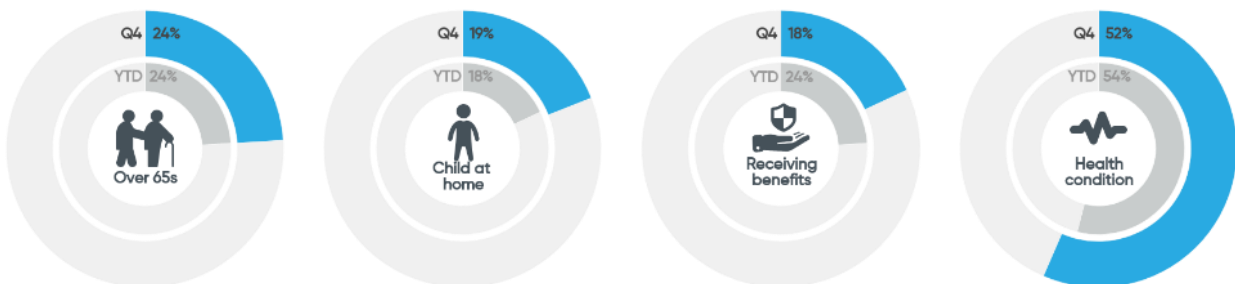


Figure 1: Households advised this year compared to the 4-year average

Client Groups



Total households supported: **1,020 in Q4**, 3,328 YTD

A total of 1,800 clients reported a health condition in the household this year, including 527 this quarter. This year, we have seen a large increase in the number of Mental Health conditions being reported (272), whilst mobility issues including Arthritis (185) and Limited Mobility (161) continue to make up a large proportion of primary health conditions reported.

We are seeing many 'other' conditions being reported so will be looking to include a more comprehensive list within our database and improve training within the team to ensure that information is being captured correctly.

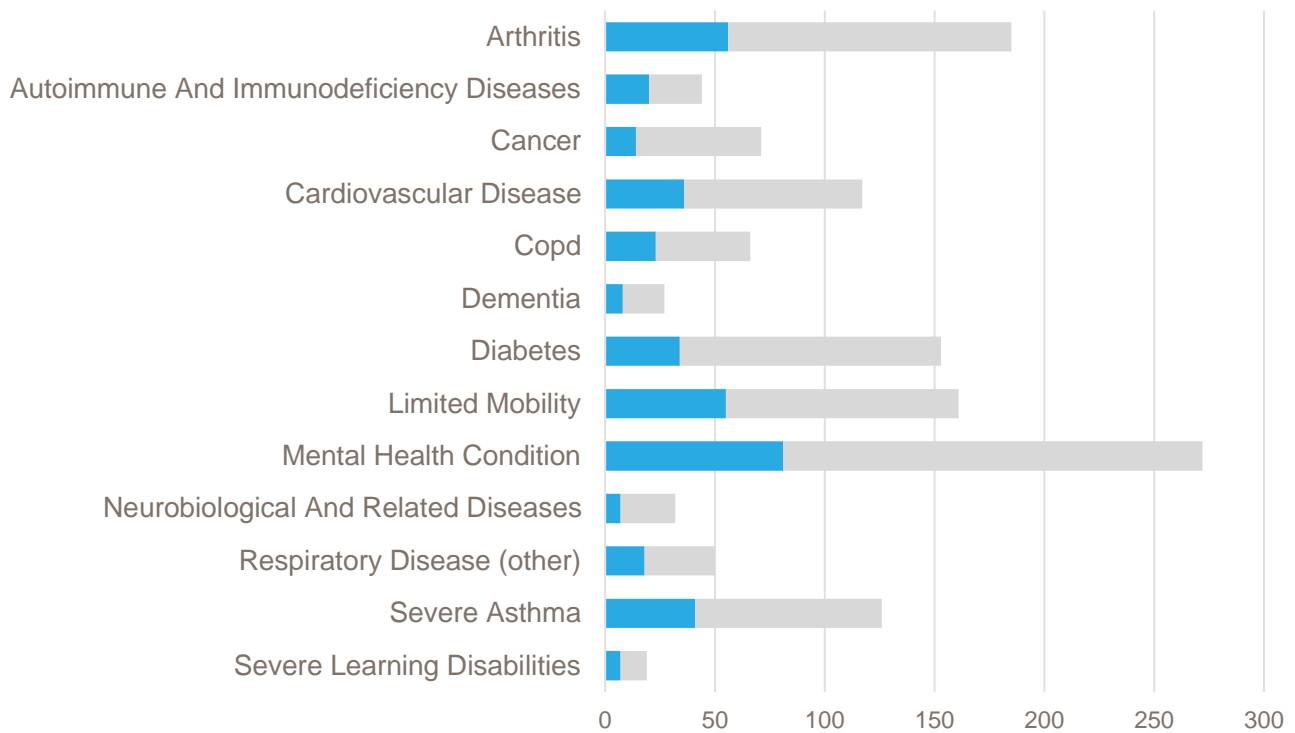


Figure 2: Primary health condition reported in Q4 and YTD

Tenure

The tenure of Warm and Well clients has remained consistent over the year. Most clients are vulnerable owner occupiers who have no safety net to fall back on for important repairs and maintenance.

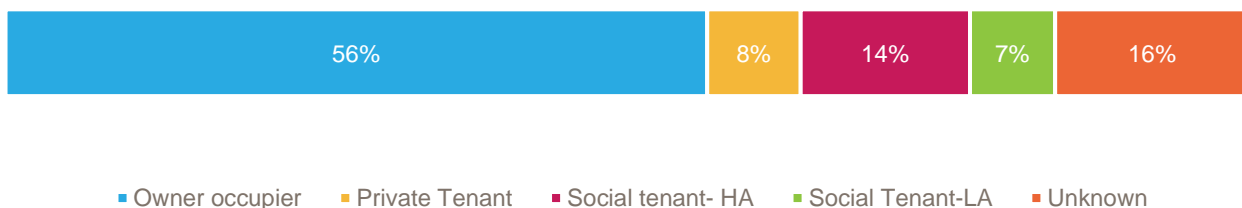


Figure 3: Client engagements by tenure in this year

Partnership Working

Referrals in and out of Warm and Well

We have built strong relationships with local organisations to provide additional support to clients. This breaks down as follows:

- **346** referrals received from partner organisations in Q4, **1,050** to date in 2021/22.
- **27** clients were referred on to partners for additional support after a conversation with a Warm and Well advisor or advocate, of **127** total so far this year.

Where our referrals come from

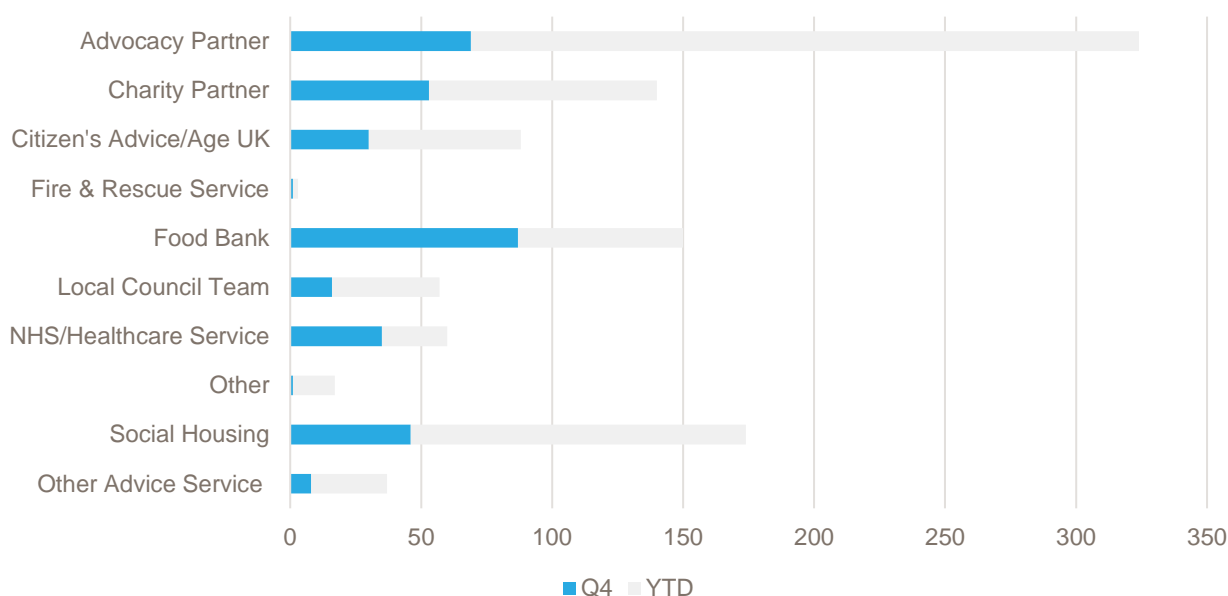


Figure 4: Referrals from partner organisations in Q4 and YTD

Where we are referring to

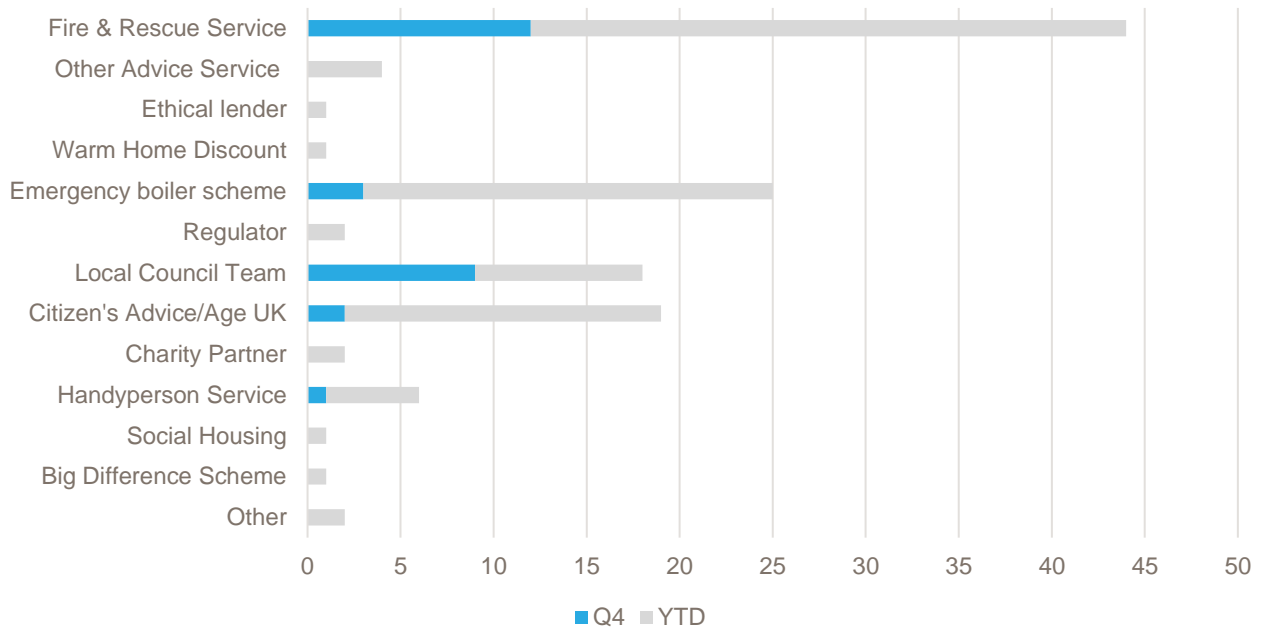


Figure 5: Referrals to partner organisations in Q4 and YTD

Partner and Community Engagement

Over the past year we attended 71 networking events and partner meetings, this has aided the profile of the Warm and Well project and allowed us to engage with many new organisations across all areas. We have also run 71 drop-ins across the year, where we provide 'surgery' style advice to people coming to see us. Drop-ins have formed an integral part of our work engaging 573 members of the public, who are struggling with their fuel bills. Below is some feedback from one of our most established drop-ins at CCP Pantry:

We absolutely love having Sharon come and do her drop ins for our Pantry clients. These drop ins allow the clients to have informal and friendly chats and have resulted in a lot of advice and advocacy being given by Sharon. This is a good way of 'warming up' clients for a possible home visit. A lot of our clients are anxious and suffer from poor mental health - they would be unlikely to let someone into their house without having had some sort of contact with them first. Sharon is very good at making the clients feel at ease which is essential for a fruitful relationship. From our point of view the input from Severn Wye contributes to the holistic approach that we like to offer our clients. It is invaluable.



Activity Type	Count of activities	Number of people engaged
Drop In	71	573
Leaflet Drop	7	355
Networking Event	54	858
Partner(s) Meeting	17	156
Promotional Email	51	411
Stand	7	167
Total	247	2,725

Support for the ‘Able to Pay’ sector

With the remaining Green Homes Grant funds, we have supported a variety of groups that have requested our attendance at carbon neutral or home improvement events. The below events were attended this year, with great success. It was a chance for us to launch our Greener Homes presentation and to engage the community with carbon neutral advice stands. All events have received a positive response, and interest in this type of event remains consistently high, something we expect to continue.

Beyond this year, it will be difficult for us to maintain the delivery of these events without impacting on our core Warm and Well services, which are more often linked to supporting people in fuel poverty, rather than supporting carbon neutral or home improvement events. We are keen to continue this work, however as funding has now ended for these events, we may have to decline invitations to various future events, unless another resource stream can be accessed. We will be monitoring our demand and capacity for these events moving forward and will seek additional funding where possible, to address carbon neutral goals alongside our core work on fuel poverty and affordable warmth.

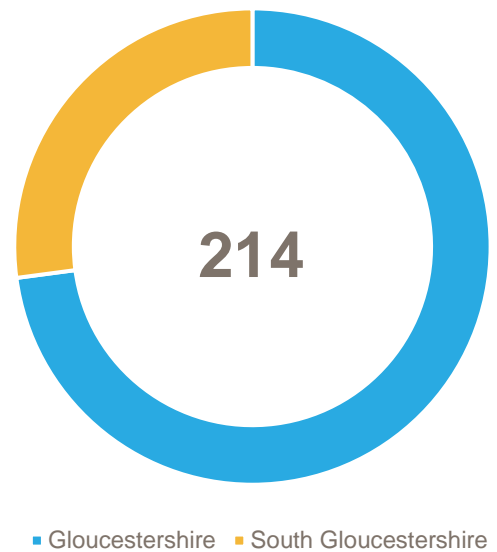
Activity Type	Activity Details	Estimated Engagements
Public Talk	Cheltenham Education Partnership	50
Public Talk	SPAJARA group - Sustainable Solutions for Your Property	50
Public Talk	Chedworth Village - green buildings/ decarbonisation meeting	50
Stand	Bingham Hall, King Street Cirencester, to promote our service	30
Stand	Nailsworth Climate Action Network retrofit fair	25
Stand	COP26 Event Berkeley	40
Public Talk & Stand	From the Ground up	110
Public Talk	Wotton Climate Action Network	52
Public Talk	Carrington Lime	20
Public Talk	Sheepscombe Village Hall	20
Public Talk	Bisley Climate Action Network	20
Public Talk & Stand	Carbon Neutral Northleach	65

Training

Overall, this quarter has seen good registration and attendance rates at webinars. We continue to monitor which training attracts the most interest, with 'Saving Energy' and 'Energy Funding' remaining popular.

Our full 2 hr CPD 'Introduction to Energy Use in The Home and Fuel Poverty Awareness,' which covers all four themes, had an excellent sign-up rate of 50 people, with a higher-than-average attendance rate.

This training has also been delivered to two Ecotricity teams. Two more dates for the 2hr CPD sessions have been scheduled and advertised for April and May.



Activity Details	Trainees
Full two-hour CPD session: Introduction to Energy Use in the Home & Fuel Poverty Awareness	32
Full two-hour CPD session: Introduction to Energy Use in the Home & Fuel Poverty Awareness to Ecotricity Teams	49
Health and Cold Homes webinar	4
Health and Cold Homes + Energy Welfare webinar	13
Energy Welfare Webinar	14
Energy Funding for the Home	40
Saving Money & Energy	30
Saving Money & Energy + Energy Funding for the Home	32

- 97% of participants answered yes for 'will this training be useful for you role/work?'
- 97% of participants rated the training overall 4-5 'stars' out of 5.



I am frequently contacted regarding fuel poverty with members asking for help, so the training will be very useful in discussing the issues and being able to signpost.



Working in housing and tenancy sustainment, we are seeing a huge increase in customers facing fuel poverty. This training will help us plan what we can do to prioritise our help and how we help.

Marketing and Communications

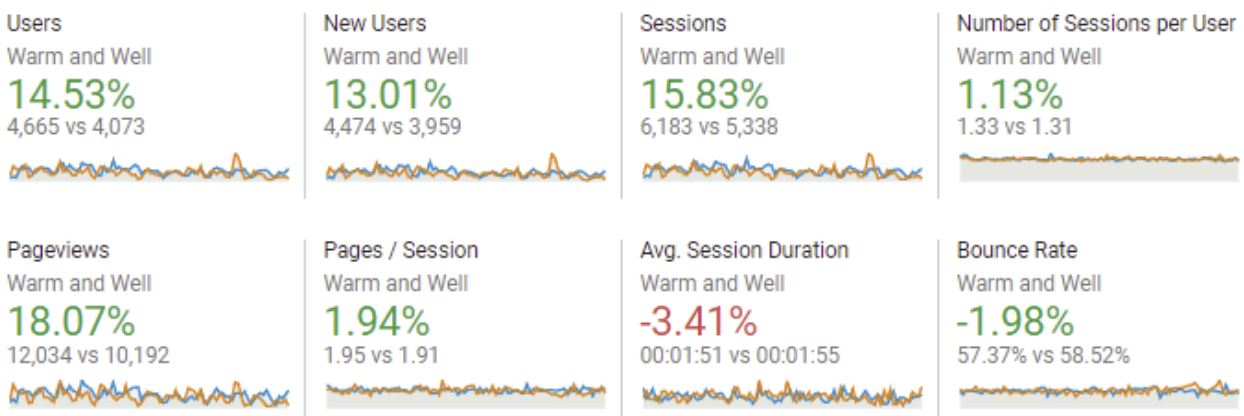
In the final quarter of the year, the dominant theme running through our communications, publicity and marketing was the looming energy crisis and price cap increases. This became a key concern for many clients and in response Warm and Well wrote a handful of timely articles and updates on how to cope with the increase in energy costs.

The team also featured in live interviews and special programming on BBC Radio Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire-based radio stations on the Bauer Media network.

Also of note this quarter has been the growing concern over scams operating in the area, targeting our clients in order to deceitfully offer insulation and energy efficiency products that they do not need, for fees they should not attract. We have worked alongside local authority partners to produce a press release and include scam-awareness branding on our client-facing materials and these have subsequently been picked up by the BBC's Watchdog programme to highlight the issue further.

Warm and Well website

The Warm and Well website continues to go from strength to strength, partly owing to the high-profile nature of the energy crisis and its impacts across the region; and partly owing to the additional focus going into improving the content and distribution of digital marketing content on the website itself. The website will grow considerably in the depth and range of advice it gives over the coming year, and we are seeing this investment pay off in terms of our reach to local households.



The homepage and grants page of the website always attract the greatest traffic, and the guides now available on the resources page are consistently receiving high visit numbers. This quarter, however, our press releases relating to spray insulation scams, the energy crisis and the forthcoming Sustainable Warmth Competition funding have also received significant footfall – a sign of what is important to our audience.

Page Title	Pageviews
Warm and Well	12,034 % of Total: 92.05% (13,074)
1. Home - Warm and Well	5,858 (48.68%)
2. Grants and Funding - Warm and Well	2,498 (20.76%)
3. Resources - Warm and Well	384 (3.19%)
4. Spray insulation scams: what you need to know - Warm and Well	320 (2.66%)
5. Home visits - Warm and Well	299 (2.48%)
6. Skyrocketing gas prices: advice for households - Warm and Well	266 (2.21%)
7. Inefficient homes in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire set to benefit from £5.25m in energy-saving improvements - Warm and Well	236 (1.96%)
8. Installers - Warm and Well	206 (1.71%)
9. Free Central Heating - Warm and Well	195 (1.62%)
10. Advocates - Warm and Well	188 (1.56%)

Social media

Capacity in the marketing team increased this quarter with a new copywriter delivering higher volumes of written content and social media posts. In particular, we have begun to use our social media platforms to share practical tips to help followers make gradual and achievable changes to their behaviour.

158

Posts and tweets

350

Engagements

188

Link clicks

Warm & Well @WarmAndWell
Jan 8

SCAM ALERT Residents in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire could be at risk of falling foul to a spray insulation scam currently running in and around the county. Make sure you know what to look out for and how to spot a doorstep scam. warmandwell.co.uk/news/spray-ins-...



Warm & Well @WarmAndWell
Jan 18

Don't miss our #SpeakUp event with @InclusionGlos TOMORROW, 2-3.30pm. For all the info about how to join this free, online #EnergyAwareness event, contact advocacy@inclusion-glos.org #EnergyAwareCommunities



Warm & Well @WarmAndWell
Feb 22

We always jump at the opportunity to support other local organisations doing incredible work. It's not always obvious how an #energyefficiency charity can support the work of charities like @TheNelsonTrust, but here's one great example!



Warm & Well @WarmAndWell
Mar 18

Reminder: Drop-in session this Monday (21st March) at Sixteen Community Café in Coleford (GL16 8BA). Questions about your home energy? Are you worried about how you'll cope with rising prices? Call in between 12-2pm for free and confidential advice.



Warm & Well @WarmAndWell
Mar 25

If the #energycrisis has you wondering what you can do to reduce your bill, get in touch with our friendly advice line. There may be funding available to help you make #energyefficiency improvements to your home. Call us on 0800 500 3076, or follow the link warmandwell.co.uk/grants-and-fun...



Warm & Well @WarmAndWell
Mar 29

This is your reminder to make sure you take a meter reading on March 31st! It's more important now than ever before to know how much energy you're using- take a meter reading now to make sure you don't get charged at your new tariff rate for energy you've already used #pricecap

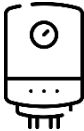








Energy Efficiency Measures

This year we have installed **1,061 measures** in **858 properties**, including park home insulation, central heating, and emergency boiler replacements.

The estimated saving for clients as a result of these installs totals **£157k** a year, **£4.3 million** over the lifetime of the measures.

Measures Installed		Q4	YTD
	Gas boiler	34	193
	LPG / oil boiler	2	24
	Electric Storage heater upgrade	2	39
	Cavity Wall Insulation	12	292
	Loft Insulation	15	145
	Solid Wall Insulation	2	11
	Other Insulation	0	6
	Gas central heating system	13	93
	Air Source Heat Pump system	7	23
	LPG heating system	2	15
	Park Home insulation	48	193
	Minor works (repairs/ radiators/thermostats)	5	27

Funding Accessed

A total of **£3.8 million** funding has been accessed for capital works clients over the year. **£3.6 million** of this has been accessed from external sources (ECO, WHF, LAD etc).

During Q4, the installation of measures totalled £959k, of which **£908k** was external funding.

Over the year, for every £1 invested between Warm and Well core funding and Health top-up funding (HTUF), we have levered in **£11.43** more in capital investment into the region.

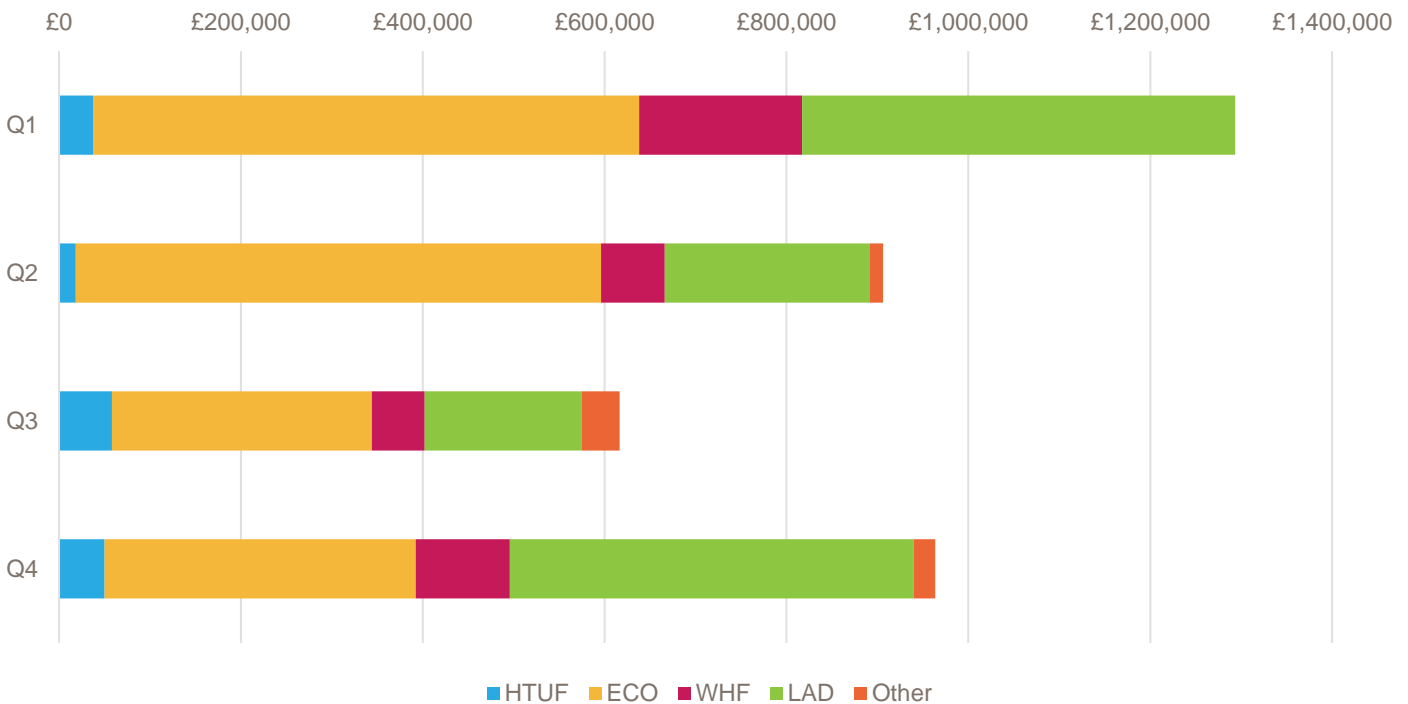


Figure 6: Funding Accessed by stream compared to over 2021/22

Carbon Savings

In Q4, installations of energy efficiency measures have led to annual carbon savings of **148** tonnes CO₂e, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of **42** UK households. The lifetime savings of the measures is **3,395** tonnes of CO₂e. the equivalent of **56,000** saplings planted and grown for 10 years.

The installation of measures completed over the year has led to an approximate saving of **896** tonnes CO₂e annually, and a total **22,715** tonnes CO₂e prevented from being released into the atmosphere over the lifetime of the measures.

The breakdown of lifetime carbon savings by measure installed through Warm and Well is as follows:

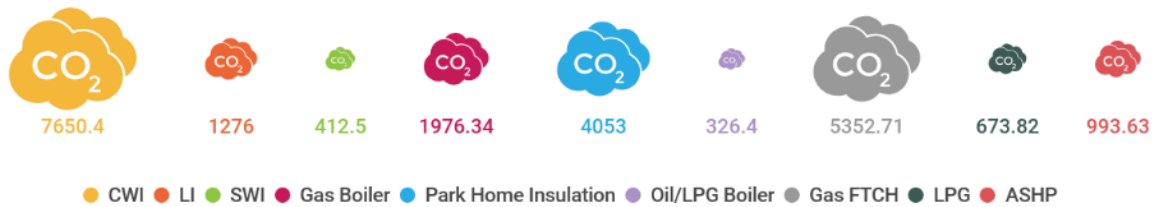


Figure 7: Carbon saved over measures lifetime by measures installed 2021/22

The main contributor is cavity wall insulation, making up 33% of all carbon saved. Gas central heating installations also made a significant contribution to overall carbon savings, due to their efficiency compared with the electric heaters or solid fuel heating systems they have replaced.



Grant funding schemes

Warm Homes Fund

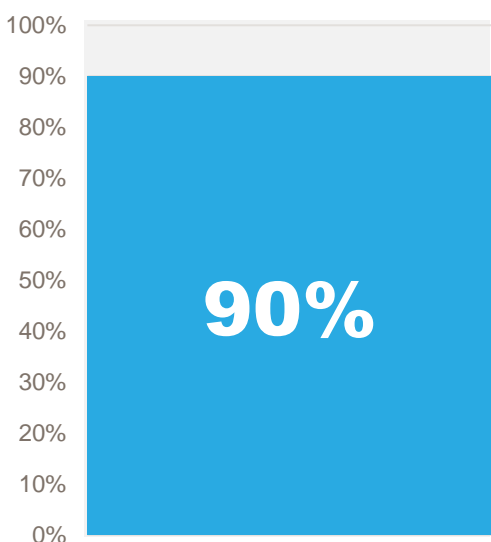
We have been delivering the Warm Homes Fund project since December 2017 and this phase of the project is now in its final stages and due to be completed by May 2022.

The project is broken down into two Categories – urban on-gas (Cat 1) and rural off-gas (Cat 2) homes. We aim to install 722 urban on-gas and 150 rural off-gas central heating systems by the end of the project.

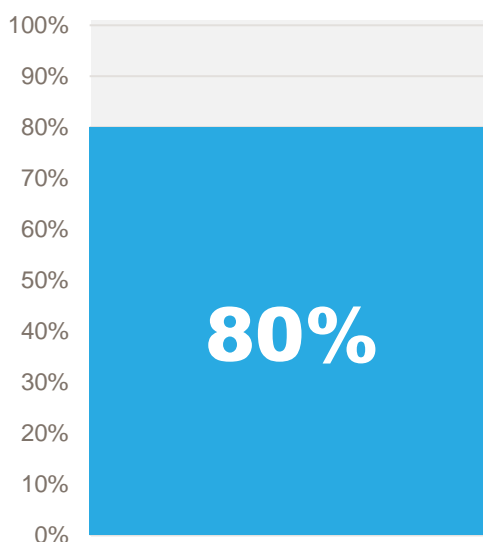
The total number of Warm Homes fund installs is currently at **648** Cat 1 and **120** Cat 2 installs completed. We have allocated a further **20** on-gas and **6** off-gas to be completed by the end of the project.

Over the life of the project, we have lifted at least **334** households out of fuel poverty, comprising of **420** adults and **121** children. This is based on the current Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) fuel poverty calculation and is largely a result of the installation of first-time central heating, raising a number of properties from an EPC rating of D or below to a C or above. The remaining households will have experienced a decrease in energy costs and an improvement in thermal comfort and have had their fuel poverty gap reduced.

On-Gas Cat1



Off-Gas Cat2



Health Impact Monitoring

To date, 678 properties have had a pre and post EPC completed as part of the Warm Homes Fund project. The average improvement in SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) score from having central heating installed has been 23 points. Using the BRE's Housing Health Cost Calculator (HHCC), these scores can be used to calculate the savings to the NHS and to wider society.

The total grant spend by the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group towards the installs in these properties has been **£152k**. Through the lifetime of this project, the estimated annual saving to the NHS is **£439k**, with annual savings to wider society of **£7.86 million**.

For every **£1** invested by the health service, **£2.88** of wider health-related savings are made.

Sustainable Warmth Competition: LAD3 and HUG1



This project is now live, and Severn Wye are currently developing and refining its internal processes, learning from LAD 1a/b delivery to ensure the scheme is delivered as smoothly as possible. While the bid was a single application, LAD3 and HUG1 are being treated as separate schemes and each will have its own marketing and communications plans and process route, as there are nuances between the schemes that require careful management.

The Sustainable Warmth Competition will run in Gloucestershire, from January 2022 to end March 2023 and will support 250 owner occupied homes and 50 privately rented homes where the landlord will contribute a third of the cost towards installs. This will work in connection with other projects including Warm Homes Fund and Health top-up fund. To be eligible for the scheme, households must have a gross annual income of under £30k, to ensure the most vulnerable people in the county have access to funding for measures.

The measures available for install include ASHP, GSHP, IWI, EWI, Solar PV, Solar Thermal and HHRSH. A change to the original bid has been approved by BEIS to ensure the scheme now includes provision for 20 park homes, an area of work discovered through the LAD 1a/b projects.

To date the Sustainable Warmth Competition has onboarded 6 installers for the variety of measures the project provides. These installers were required to tender and price measures to ensure those with the necessary skills were onboarded. The project currently has 13 applicants signed up with a further 56 on a wait list currently being processed. Those whose application has been successful are currently having retrofit assessments before being passed over to installers to begin work next quarter.

Household support fund

At the time of this report, it was announced that the Household Support Fund will run for another year, with another £500 million nationally provided (total fund £1 billion nationally, over two years). This funding is in addition to the figures discussed below.

Locally, Warm and Well have been approached to distribute fuel vouchers and fuel payments. The below funds were secured via the original household support fund.

In Gloucestershire, Severn Wye has secured funding of **£300,000** from the Household Support Fund at Gloucestershire County Council to distribute to those most in need around the county. The funds have been divided into relevant areas, including funds for our well received Winter care bags and well as debt relief. 50% of the funding is to go towards supporting those households with children and the other 50% to support other households in genuine need but who may not qualify for benefits. This funding will help towards eligible spend for food, energy, water, and wider essentials.

In South Gloucestershire we have secured **£25,000** from the Household Support Fund to distribute to clients accessing our service largely through our South Gloucestershire advocate, Mike. We have worked closely with the One Stop shops (community support centres) to deliver these funds in South Gloucestershire.

In both areas we are only accepting referrals from trusted partners with a code, to prevent possible fraud and ensure our Warm and Well adviceline can continue to run efficiently, without the impact that administering this scheme would bring.

Park Homes: Local Authority Delivery Scheme



Funding for this project was secured via the Green Homes Grant Local Area Delivery Scheme (LAD), phases 1a and 1b, with a total of just under **£1.7 million** of capital funding accessed to provide park homes external wall insulation to properties across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. LAD phase 1b is being delivered to PAS2035:2019 standards and was completed by March 2022.

The LAD Phase 1 schemes aimed to reduce heating costs and create healthier homes, for residents experiencing fuel poverty. The project aimed to alleviate fuel poverty, improve health outcomes and reduce carbon emissions. Eligibility was determined using existing ECO flexible criteria, or through the receipt of Affordable Warmth benefits, alongside having a gross household income of under £30k annually. Health data was used to identify park home sites across the region that had statistically poorer health outcomes. The scheme then primarily targeted properties with an EPC of D or below

By August 2021, LAD phase 1a was completed, and **102** park homes had received external wall insulation using this funding. In addition, 10 households received an air source heat pump, which were part funded through the LAD scheme and the Warm Homes fund. LAD phase 1b was completed in March 2022 and supported a further **102** park homes with the installation of external wall insulation, bringing the total over the project to **204** park homes.

The carbon calculator supplied by BEIS for this project estimates that around **239** tonnes of carbon has been saved annually as a result of the external wall insulation installed. In addition, 30 properties have now had EPCs completed which indicate an uplift to an EPC rating of C for insulated properties.

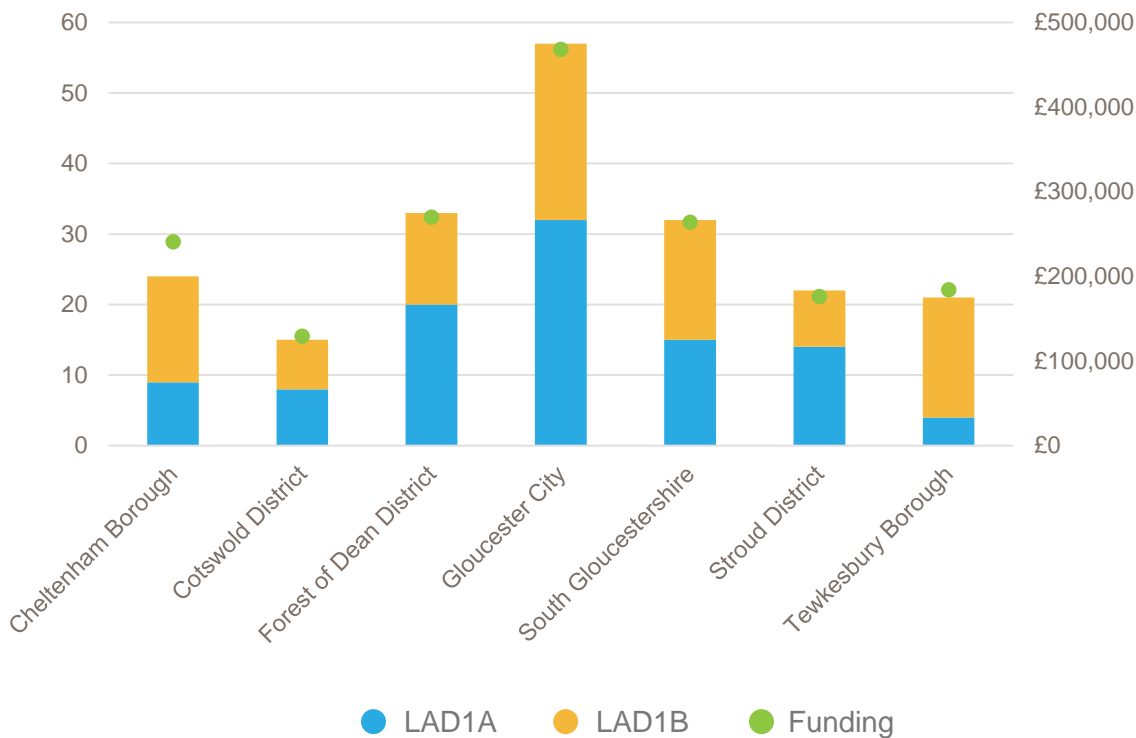


Figure 8: Park Home External Wall Insulation installations by Local Authority (as of 31 March 2022)

Client Feedback

Feedback from 70 residents who received external wall insulation through LAD phase 1 was overwhelmingly positive. The findings confirmed that there had been a positive impact on mental and physical well-being resulting from the external wall insulation.

- **All respondents** described the **service** from Warm and Well as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’
- 98% agreed that they **felt warmer in their home** after insulation was installed
- 93% of agreed that they **felt happier** in their home
- 87% agreed that they felt more **comfortable** in their home
- 80% indicated they were **less worried about their heating bills**, although the LAD1a respondents were generally less worried at the time of survey than the LAD1b respondents, likely due to the current energy crisis.

61% of residents indicated that they couldn’t have afforded to have the external wall insulation installed without grant funding. The project has supported many residents who are vulnerable, based on fuel poverty and/ or health conditions, who couldn’t have otherwise afforded to improve the energy efficiency and warmth of their home.

Health Impact Monitoring

It is estimated that for the 146 park homes for which data was available, the project generated annual savings of **£26,757** for the NHS and **£478,733** to wider society (derived using the BRE Housing Health Calculator).

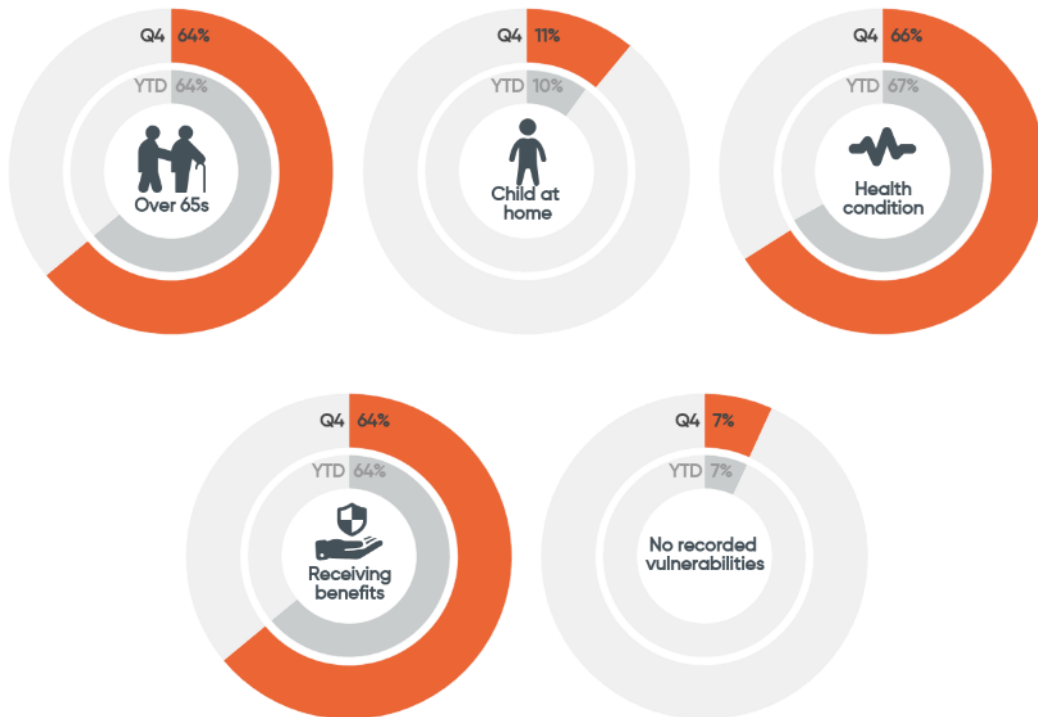
This equates to an average of **£3,279** annually in savings to society for each park home insulated, equivalent to **£118,044** in lifetime savings per park home.

Home Visits

In total we have carried out **298 home visits** across Warm and Well services this quarter and **915** this year. These are broken down into energy efficiency advice and follow up EPC visits conducted by an EPC assessor, and visits carried out by the advocacy service.

Energy advice and EPC follow up visits

82 home visits have been carried out by one of our Domestic Energy assessors this quarter, which amounts to **258 in total this year**. These visits have primarily been follow up visits after the client has had a central heating system or park home insulation install. The visits give the clients an opportunity to ask any questions about the system and provide any feedback on the install process.



Total follow-up visits: **82 in Q4**, **258 in YTD**

Advocacy Home Visits

A further 216 visits have been completed by the Energy Advocates this quarter, taking the **total number of visits this year to 417**. These home visits provide ‘hand-holding’ support to households to resolve complex energy issues. Further information on advice and support given by the advocates can be found in the below section.



Energy Advocacy

We work closely with our partners in both South Gloucestershire (Southern Brooks, One Stop shops and Healthcare providers) where we presently employ one Energy Advocate, and in Gloucestershire (Barnardo's, GARAS and Inclusion Gloucestershire) where we currently have three Energy Advocates.

Referrals to all services increased post-Christmas, with the highest number of requests received in March. We expect that the energy price rise will ensure we continue to experience high demand for the service.

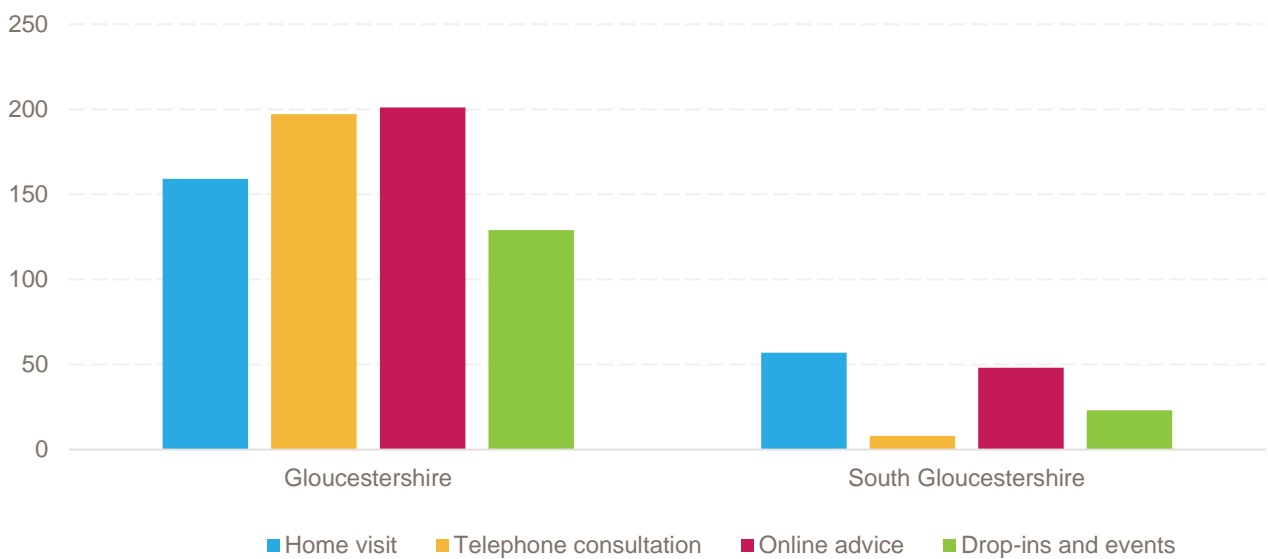


Figure 9: Energy Advocate support services

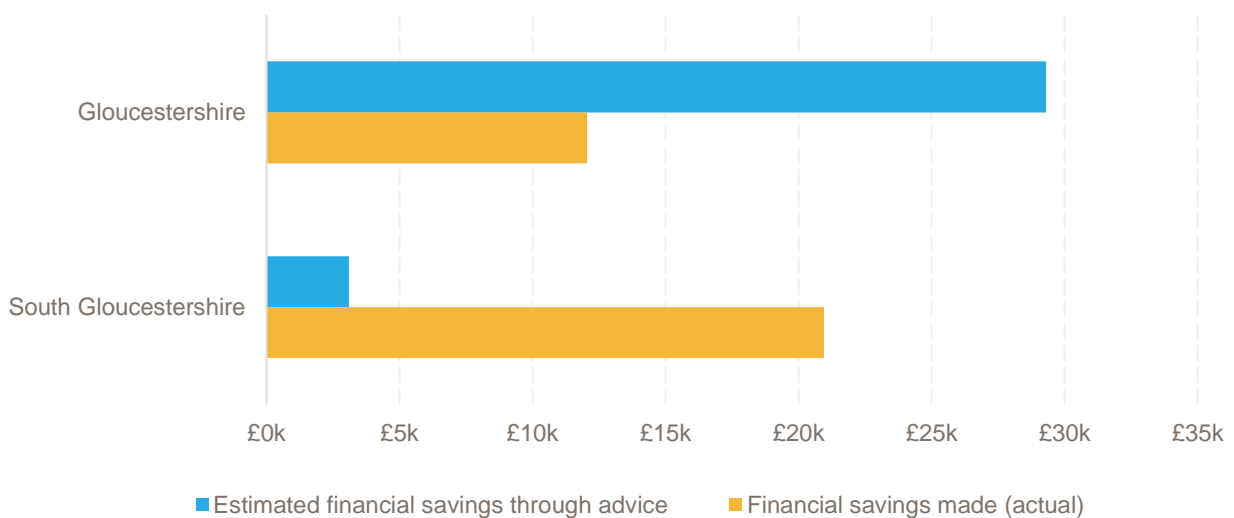


Figure 10: Financial savings identified and achieved through advocacy services

South Gloucestershire Advocacy

The South Gloucestershire Advocacy project reached its end in January 2022, **having helped over 1,000 people in the area**. With support from the Council's communities team and public health we have managed to continue delivering this wonderful work.

71 households were supported via our advocate in South Gloucestershire this quarter. Below is a breakdown of how our South Gloucestershire advocate Mike supported people, primarily via home visits. Mike has been doing drop-ins at the One Stop shops, which present a great opportunity to be involved in the community and with the One Stop teams. Mike has made many referrals to the Household Support fund which the One Stop team operate. The Warm and Well team assembled 250 care bags over the winter, which Mike distributed to partners and clients.

Care bag case study

One client had no heating, so Mike supported them in applying for emergency funds and giving them one of our care bags. The client said, 'I have had no heating for 3 days this was a godsend!'

Age UK (the partner who made the referral) said, 'We often come across people who have little or no heating on, living in fuel poverty. They can rely upon the pack [care bag] when the temperature drops.' For anyone facing a disconnection due to lack of finances, the care bags provide a much welcome immediate respite, as no application or assessment is required. It also provides an opportunity for us to discuss long term solutions or applying for emergency funds. The only improvement Age UK suggested we could make was, 'More of them!'

Gloucestershire Advocacy

On our Gloucestershire Advocacy project, we supported **308 new households** this quarter via direct support. **A record 159 home visits were delivered**, recovering after issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic caused reticence to home visits last quarter. These households receive an in-depth service, and lots received energy saving advice, the estimated savings of which are given below. The advocates also gave out the last of the 350 care bags to individuals, families and partners supporting clients in fuel poverty (put together through combined funding from Summerfield Trust and Gloucestershire Community Foundation).

Care bag case study

Client A is a single mum with two young children under the age of four. She is reliant on benefits, which do not always cover her outgoings. She was very grateful for the winter care bag we provided, and said, "Thank you so much for this, it does get cold at home, and I don't want to put my heating on all the time as it's too expensive at the moment." Without the support of our energy advocate and the essentials provided in the care pack, this client may not have been able to keep her children warm over the winter months.

Case studies

Arriving as a refugee or asylum seeker

A client was referred to us by GARAS. The advocate arranged to visit her the day she moved into her new flat, which was particularly important as the client was new to living alone. The advocate spoke to the supplier (British Gas) on the client's behalf to set up new energy accounts and chose the cheapest tariff available at the time. The advocate explained the current energy crisis to the client and warned her about the April 2022 price rises, using this as an opportunity to reiterate our ongoing support and make sure the client knew she could call us if she became anxious about her energy. The advocate set up the heating programmer and showed the client a video of how to do this (which was then also sent to the client for future reference). The client was really pleased with the service the advocate delivered and thanked her for her support at what could have been a scary time.

Negotiating with energy suppliers on behalf of vulnerable clients

The advocate visited the client and her husband at home in January 2022, as they were finding the property draughty, and were struggling to pay for their energy. The couple are elderly and the client herself suffers from COPD (and is on oxygen 24 hours a day).

Back in May 2020, the client's electric meter was changed from an old prepayment meter to a credit meter. They set up a direct debit to pay the supplier and believed that the £20 a month they were paying was for their gas and electric. At the first visit the advocate took a meter reading and called EDF on the client's behalf. At this point it was discovered that the direct debit was for gas only, as no account had been set up to pay for the electric. EDF were finally able to set up an account in February 2022, by which time the client's bill totalled £2,279. This bill was not only high but also inaccurate, as a supplier can only backdate a bill for 12 months, as it was their error that no account was set up in the first place. At this point the couple were very worried about paying the bill. Both struggle on the phone due to the client's oxygen dependency and the husband being partially deaf.

Another home visit was arranged in February and after two more calls the advocate managed to speak to an extra care team, to raise a complaint and have the account put on hold. They also arranged for draught-proofing to be fitted and a payment of £551 (from another Severn Wye scheme) was accessed to contribute towards the bill. A standing order of £50 per month was set up whilst the account was on hold, to prevent the bill increasing further.

Another home visit took place in March 2022 as the clients had a new bill through, and they wanted to set up a repayment plan. Upon calling EDF, the advocate discovered they have issued a new bill that deducts the £551 repayed but doesn't include any adjustment for the back billing. We're now awaiting a call from EDF with an update on the correct amount owed.

Frontline team referral in South Gloucestershire

A client was referred to our advocacy service by his social worker. He lives alone and suffered a complete physical breakdown, resulting in a lengthy hospital stay last year. He is now housebound and uses mobility aids to navigate his first floor flat. His heating has been capped by his housing association as there was no credit on the meter to carry out safety checks. He has no internet connection.

The advocate made a home visit where they discovered the client (who has a prepayment meter) was in a debt of £350 on his gas, as well as an additional debt on his electricity. He tops up rarely as he must rely on a carer to do this. His gas debt has an extortionate recovery rate of 70%, which meant most of his credit was being swallowed up by the debt. The advocate spoke to his supplier, but as they had reviewed the recovery rate in the past, they would not review it further.

The advocate helped the client apply to the local authority Household Support fund. The advocate obtained the necessary evidence and submitted the application online on the client's behalf. The award was confirmed and due to the client's health issues and lack of internet, the advocate collected identity evidence from the client and collected his award from the local One Stop shop. An award of £350 for debt repayment, £120 for fuel credit and £120 for food was given.

The client's carer put the credit on his meter and the client himself will call the housing association to complete the safety check and uncap the meter to restore his supply. The client's electricity debt is ongoing, and the advocate is seeking a grant from his supplier's hardship fund and has arranged for an affordable repayment plan whilst this takes place.

Future Developments and Insights

Future Developments

Donations fund

Over the last 12 months we have had enquiries from individuals wanting to donate funds to directly support the most vulnerable in society, with this type of enquiry increasing substantially since December. On the back of this, Severn Wye have established an emergency assistance fund in response to rising energy prices in 2022, and the devastating impact this is having on people living in fuel poverty.

The emergency assistance donation fund allows Severn Wye to support people living in fuel poverty with direct payments when they need it most, something that's often not possible through other funding sources. We aim to alleviate some of the financial pressure people are experiencing in the short term, whilst offering longer-term support with energy efficiency changes and energy saving advice. We would encourage delivery partners to promote this, if possible, so that more people within our region can benefit from emergency support. The fund can be found at <https://severnwyne.org.uk/donate/>.

Warm Homes Fund – Round 6

Severn Wye and Stroud District Council have made a successful funding bid for Round 6 of the Warm Homes Fund (WHF). The value of the award is **just under £2 million**, and delivery is expected to commence from April 2022. Installers have been engaged and capacity secured over the coming two years of the scheme and this, alongside our learning from the current WHF delivery, has shaped the bid to include technologies such as air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps.

This project aims to support **310 households** to install relevant measures to provide first time central heating. These measures will be partially funded by WHF, with other funding completing this support, to ensure households receive full funding.

ECO4

The Government has recently confirmed that ECO4 will commence, albeit later than April. We are hopeful it will start by July 2022 (subject to legislation being passed), but we believe it could slip beyond this date and the ECO3 transition could remain in place for a while longer. From now until the end of June 2022, measures can continue to be installed to ECO3 rules with some exceptions (new and replacement oil/LPG heating systems are excluded).

Lord Callanan, the Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility, reaffirmed in his Ministerial Foreword, that the government was committed to extending the ECO scheme until 2026 at a value of £1 billion per annum. This would be targeted at low income and vulnerable households living in the least energy-efficient homes (EPC rated D to G).

Due to new requirements on ECO4 and the required uplift in SAP scores (e.g. a G or F rated property should achieve at least a D rating) to get the full ECO funding, it is expected that ECO4 will require multiple measures to be funded, which coincides with the PAS2035 whole house approach.

ECO4 is expected to upgrade around 450,000 homes, with around 150,000 private rental properties within this total. It is believed that around 3 million homes could be eligible for ECO4 funding across the UK.

Severn Wye will now commence refining internal procedures to ensure we are ready for the move to ECO4.

Future Insights

As this report is written, the National Energy Agency have confirmed that **an additional 2 million households across the UK have been plunged into fuel poverty**, taking the **total up to 6.5 million**. Energy companies are predicting (based on the huge increase in customers voicing concerns about their ability to pay for their energy) that **up to 40% of UK households could fall into fuel poverty when the Autumn price cap takes effect**. On top of this, there is an expectation that **customer debt could rise by 50% (up to £800m)**. There are growing calls from all areas of society for better support for households, such as social tariffs and more support to insulate and retrofit houses to future proof them against rising costs.

While the Warm & Well region has an excellent range of support packages for vulnerable households, each funding scheme has limitations around what an eligible person or household looks like. Whilst ever increasing numbers of people find themselves in fuel poverty, the traditional definitions and eligibility rules are not changing and therefore there is a risk that an increasing number will not be eligible for support, despite suffering from unaffordable energy costs.

With new schemes such as the Household Support Fund and additional health funding, we are expecting to support more and more vulnerable clients in 2022-23. No one knows how long the energy and cost of living crises will last, but the need for Warm & Well is as great now as it ever has been.



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