

Affordable Warmth Charter

Annual report 2023-24



**Barnsley – the place
of possibilities.**



BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

A comment from the Chair

"I'm pleased to present the first annual report for the Affordable Warmth Charter, setting out the achievements of our members since our launch in December 2022.

"We're proud to have organisations in Barnsley that are passionate about addressing fuel poverty by supporting our vision of 'A Barnsley where everyone lives in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home'. This work is crucial in supporting our Barnsley 2030 ambitions, and other strategies such as the Private Sector Housing Plan, the Sustainable Energy Action Plan, and the Collaborative Cold Weather Plan.

"Our partners have been crucial in supporting our communities through the cost-of-living crisis, as demonstrated in this report. The work to eradicate fuel poverty is ongoing and we cannot do it alone.

"I'd like to encourage other partners to join us and become members of the Charter and make their own pledges to help bring affordable warmth to every home in the borough.

"Finally, I'm looking forward to working with Charter members over the next 12 months to address the causes of cold homes and support our residents to live in homes that protect their health and wellbeing for years to come."

Sarah Clyde, Head of Strategic Housing, Barnsley Council



Context

Barnsley's Affordable Warmth Charter was launched in December 2022, bringing partners and groups together from across the borough to share knowledge, skills and resources to tackle health differences caused by fuel poverty.

By signing the charter, organisations make a pledge using one or more of the five key priorities:

- Energy efficient homes
- Affordable energy
- Employment, education and skills
- Partnership working
- Low carbon commitments

The members of the Affordable Warmth Charter are:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| • Age UK Barnsley | • Citizens Advice Barnsley | • National Energy Action |
| • Barnsley Council | • DIAL | • Goldthorpe Salvation Army |
| • Berneslai Homes | • Groundwork Green Doctors | • South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust |
| • Blue Bird Care Barnsley and Glossop | • Healthwatch Barnsley | • Wates |



What have we been doing and what have we achieved since launching the Charter?

Age UK Barnsley



Secured £105,873.60 in benefit gains for 140 clients after completing Home Energy Checks.



Helped a client who lives on their own, was struggling with bills and using minimal energy, resulting in a cold home. Free draught excluders and radiator foils were provided to help the home to retain heat. A benefit check revealed they were eligible for £25 per week in Pension Credit and was signposted to CAB for debt advice.



Helped a client secure a total benefit gain for the year of £10,320.60. The client, who had significant health problems, was awarded £108.55 per week in Attendance Allowance, £65 per week in Pension Credit and no longer had to pay Council Tax, saving an extra £108 per month.

Barnsley Council Strategic Housing Service



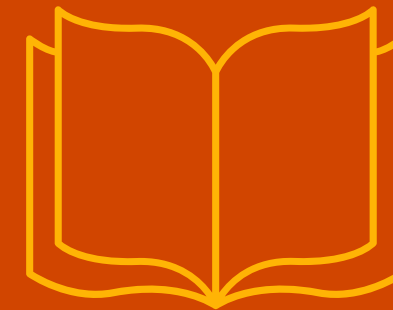
60 new homes built to the Barnsley Low Carbon Standard.



114 Affordable Warmth Grants provided for first time and replacement boilers to those in the private sector.



Hosted Healthy Homes Week, including an event at Barnsley Market which was well-attended.



Regular articles in Spotlight magazine delivered to all residents.



Hosted 47 drop-in sessions at libraries, 19 workplace pop-up sessions and attended other relevant events.



5,988 hits (3,010 unique) on the Warm Homes webpage (1 Nov to 31 Mar).



Received 146 direct enquiries for support, issued 120 fuel vouchers and installed heating and insulation at 466 properties. Assisted 595 homes in total.

Berneslai Homes



83% of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) C across council homes stock. Mop up programmes planned in 2024-25 to achieve 100%.



Continuing to deliver Carbon Literacy training, which is mandatory for all new staff.



Initial assessment on Construction Services for PAS2030 accreditation complete and documentation submitted. Decision expected in summer.



Retrofitting and green skills training have been completed by staff.



An Electric Vehicles strategy is being developed by Construction Services to meet the target of 65% of the fleet being electric.



Awaiting an agreement on a strategic approach to renewable technologies, such as air source heat pumps and solar panels, with the council.

Citizens Advice Barnsley



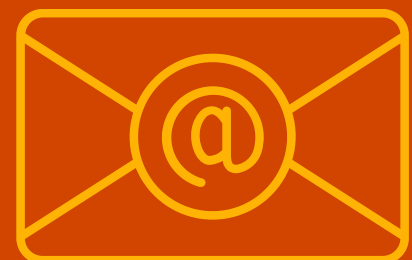
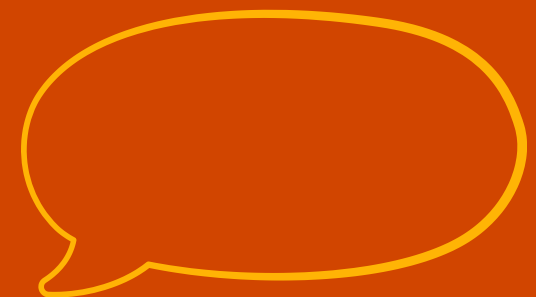
Provided advice on over 8,000 benefits issues, 5,000 debt issues and close to 900 issues relating to charitable support and Food Banks.

Distributed over £19,000 of shopping vouchers, issued 119 food vouchers and 182 fuel vouchers (up to the end of December 2023).



Trained two generalist advisers to become specialist energy advisers, had specialist energy appointments available every week between November and March, advertised energy services and energy information on social media.

Delivered advice on over 1,300 energy related issues including fuel debt, energy efficiency measures, smart meters, PSR and billing.



Shared useful information regarding available schemes and MMIYP site with staff and volunteers via meetings and email.

DIAL

Since June 2023, DIAL's Warm Connections Team have:



**Attended 22 external events
and engaged with 153 residents**



Delivered 138 free winter duvets



**Done 320 home visits and
provided 526 small measures
to 193 households**



Increased income by £713k



**Supported 226 residents
at foodbanks**



Undertaken 419 benefit checks



**Advised 685 residents
over the phone**



Made 278 external referrals

Green Doctors



Conducted 46 first home visits, three first phone consultations, 17 follow-up calls and four follow-up visits with bespoke advice given at all home visits.

Fuel poverty awareness sessions have delivered training to over 100 frontline workers across Yorkshire. Outreach and community events have engaged with over 470 people in Barnsley.



Case study:

Helped a partially deaf resident who is also a single parent after an emergency referral for a broken down boiler in a privately-owned property.

Provided updated energy readings and arranged for a smart meter to be installed to provide more control over energy costs as she had struggled to make payments.

Referral was made to Berneslai Homes for damp and mould in the home, given a food voucher, told about the Priority Services Register, had draught proofing measures installed and also given a heated blanket.

New boiler was fitted and a phone consultation arranged with DIAL. It was great to see partners come together so quickly to help the resident and improve her situation.

Healthwatch Barnsley



Engaged with approximately 3,500 residents at events and engagement activities, promoting other advice services where appropriate and providing information on fuel poverty and where residents can go for support.

Help the NHS with winter planning messages to ensure a consistent message and distribute the Keeping Well in Winter booklets to residents.

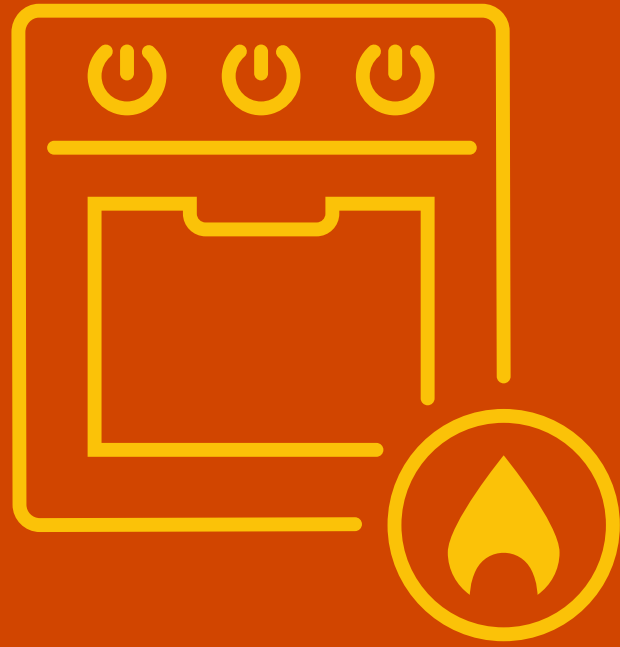


Staff walk to meetings or events where possible, often car sharing when walking isn't an option.

Offices have a good recycling culture and try to reduce single-use items, such as plastic bags.



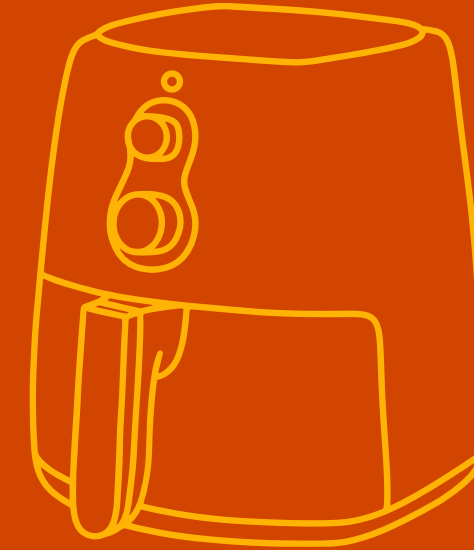
National Energy Action



One client was referred after a gas leak was reported on her gas cooker by Cadent engineers. She was supported with energy advice to reduce her usage, given a winter warmth pack, emergency fuel vouchers and a replacement gas appliance.



Another self-referred via webchat after becoming overwhelmed with energy debt. Advice was given on how to reduce and manage her usage as well as a more appropriate tariff identified, and ultimately over £700 in fuel debt written off.



Another resident was referred via his support worker after struggling to set up a payment plan for debt on his pre-payment meter. He was referred to a debt specialist due to several financial issues. It was noticed he had high costs due to cooking for himself daily. He was supported with an emergency fuel voucher and an air fryer.

218 clients supported through energy advice, crisis support, benefits advice and community events.

Salvation Army



Had the Warm Homes team and Green Doctors attend monthly drop-in sessions.



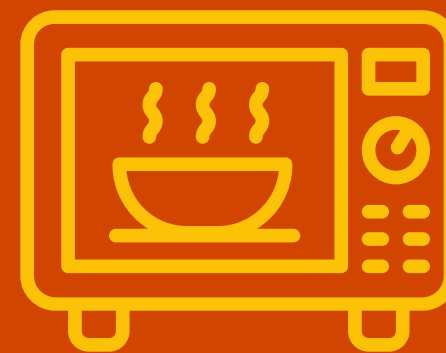
Distributed approximately £300 of gas and electricity vouchers, usually £20-£25 per person.



Delivered 50 sessions offering the Salvation Army premises as a warm space, providing hot drinks and internet access.



Referred six residents who were living in a cold home, liaising with private landlords, Berneslai Homes' Tenants First team and the council's Warm Homes team.



Delivered 30 sessions where residents could help themselves to items to help them keep warm and offered microwavable meals as an affordable option over winter.



Became a member of the Positive Climate Partnership and received an award as an ECO church. Now working towards silver level.

SWYFT

Worked with BHF to put together winter wellbeing packs, mostly for housebound patients, which included a blanket, gloves, hat, socks, thermos and a thermometer card. This was supported with general info/links and a poster etc with info links.



Several staff have received fuel poverty training and there is a section on the intranet for learning about fuel poverty. Training opportunities have been shared widely.

Offered advice to staff around linking in and engaging with those looking after others to connect them with these services e.g. connecting with NQ&P to share with Care Groups as they look after residents who use our service (particularly community services) and are close to it.



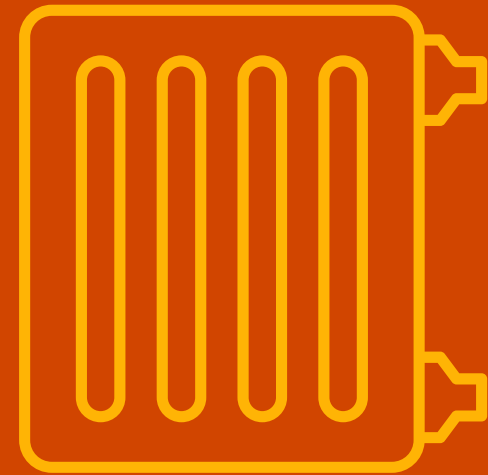
Lots of information available on the staff intranet about the Charter and financial wellbeing, linking to the council's More Money In Your Pocket webpage.

Made good links with food banks in the borough and have been able to forward referrals for those people who have met the necessary criteria.



Wates Group

Trained the workforce to provide energy efficiency advice to residents and fuel poverty awareness.



Work shadowing training taken place on Air Source system to improve repairs best practice and knowledge.



Supervisors now in Electric vehicles with the Trail of 1 number Trade in an Electric vehicle.



Frontline staff trained to Level 2 standard in delivering retro fit.



Thanks for reading

For further information about the Affordable Warmth Charter, please go to barnsley.gov.uk/affordablewarmthcharter or email jennifermacphail@barnsley.gov.uk.



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