

Worried This Winter campaign Impact evaluation



The campaign

From 22 November 2023 to 31 January 2024, Citizens Advice Scotland ran our national winter energy campaign – **‘Worried this Winter?’** – encouraging anyone who was worried about winter energy bills to seek support from our network, either by searching our online advice site or by making an appointment with a local bureau.

Background

Increased living costs and months of unaffordable energy bills means many of us were, and continue to be, worried about managing energy payments right now. As part of research for the campaign, we asked CABs in our co-design to run focus groups hearing from different vulnerable groups, to hear their personal experiences of struggling with bills.

Whether it was hearing about people going to bed early, in the dark to save on energy, sitting on buses during the day to get a heat, or cutting back on treats for their children, every group showed clearly that people all over Scotland are making tough choices to try and keep their heating on. We wanted to raise awareness of the support available from our network and mirror some of these experiences in our creative to help materials resonate with clients.



Creative and co-design

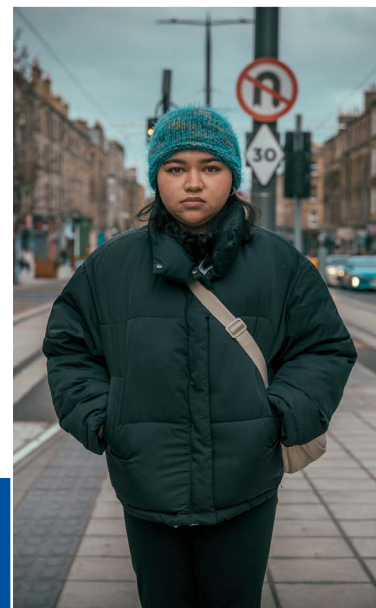
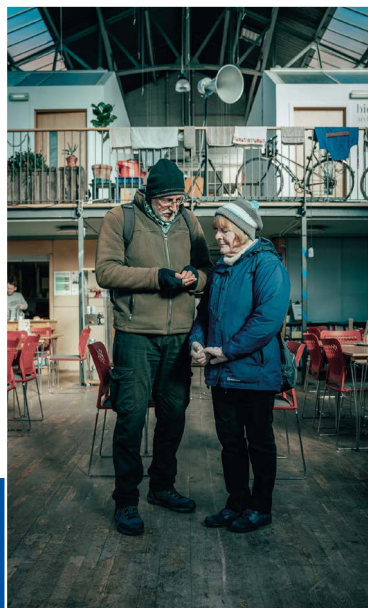
32 bureaux signed up to support the campaign and of these, six bureaux signed up to take part in our co-design for the campaign.

These six bureaux ran the previously mentioned focus groups with clients to hear about real experiences with rising energy bills during the current cost-of-living crisis. As part of the focus groups, CABs asked clients what they would like to see in promotions and anything we could include to help make our materials more accessible. The vast majority spoke about seeing real people on posters, showcasing scenarios they felt were familiar to them and clearly signposting where to get help.

With this in mind, we picked out three case studies to represent in our creative, shot a campaign video interlinking these, and ended the video showcasing different ways to seek advice from the network. This also informed our photography-led creative, focusing on different demographics including:

- > A mother and child using a library as a warm space
- > An elderly couple in a cafe worrying about bills
- > A young person in early 20s working, but struggling to manage the bills

These character studies carried the campaign all the way through, in our toolkits for CABs local promotions, social media, out of home advertising, and radio ads.



Aims and outcomes

As part of our aims to measure the success of the campaign, we hoped to achieve the following:

- > Encourage and see a significant increase in the uptake of energy advice on energy both online and in bureaux from the previous year
- > Increase our digital reach with this campaign, benchmarking against the previous year's energy campaign
- > Raise awareness of support available through a range of promotions, including press, outdoor advertising and social media
- > Work with partner organisations to help increase awareness and promotion of the campaign and the network's services

This document will set-out our effectiveness in reaching each campaign aim.

Increasing energy advice sought in bureaux

Comparing the live campaign period to the previous year, for energy-related advice, clients have increased by **8%** during the campaign period from 7,883 in 2022/2023 to **8,521** in 2023/2024. Pieces of advice have increased by **4%** from 25,273 to **26,513**.

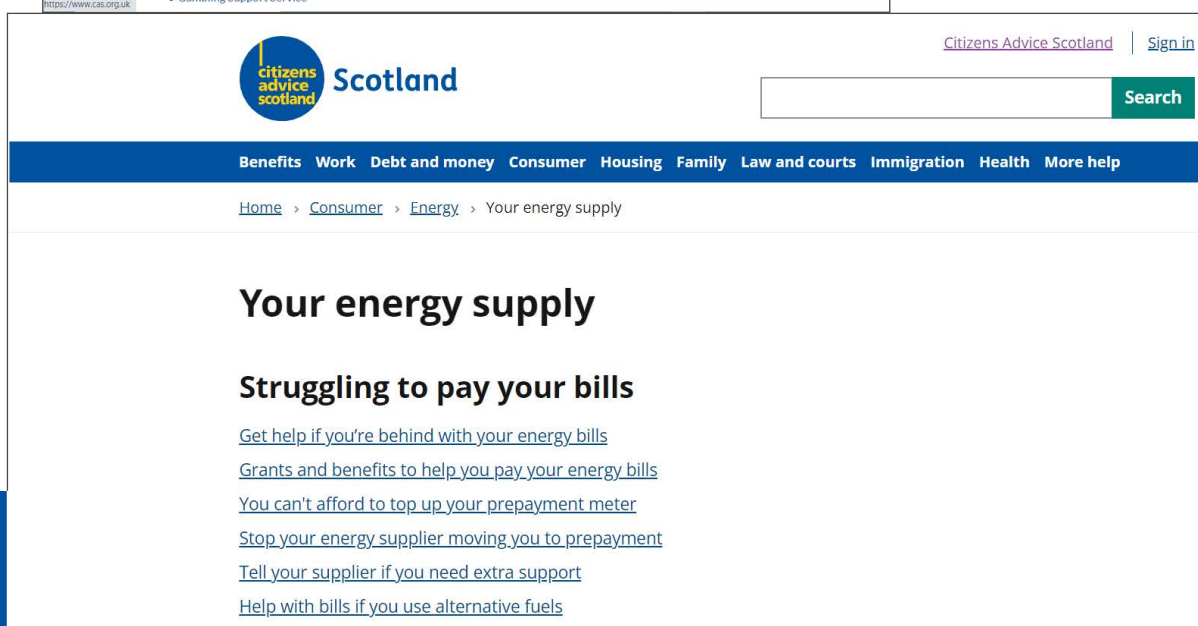
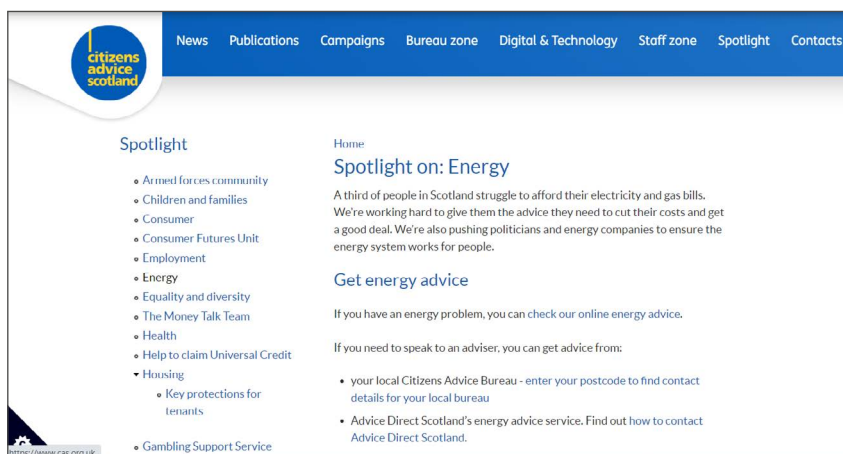
Some key advice areas where we saw a clear increase in cases compared to the same period the previous year included:

- > **Need for 'pre-payment meter - discretionary credit'** advice increased by **64%** and the client numbers increased by **82%**
- > **Need for 'trust fund applications / fuel vouchers'** advice increased by **41%** and the client numbers increased by **41%**
- > **Need for 'changing tariffs with existing supplier'** advice increased by **29%** and the client numbers increased by **28%**
- > **Need for 'smart metres'** advice increased by **19%** and the client numbers increased by **22%**
- > **Need for 'priority services register'** advice increased by **10%** and client numbers increased by **12%**.

Raising awareness and increase uptake of online energy advice

To help triage advice and aiming to ease the pressure on bureaux during the campaign, we directed audiences to our online advice first, and face-to-face advice second. Looking at our public advice site, we can see online advice increasing steadily over autumn into winter as people began seeking energy advice.

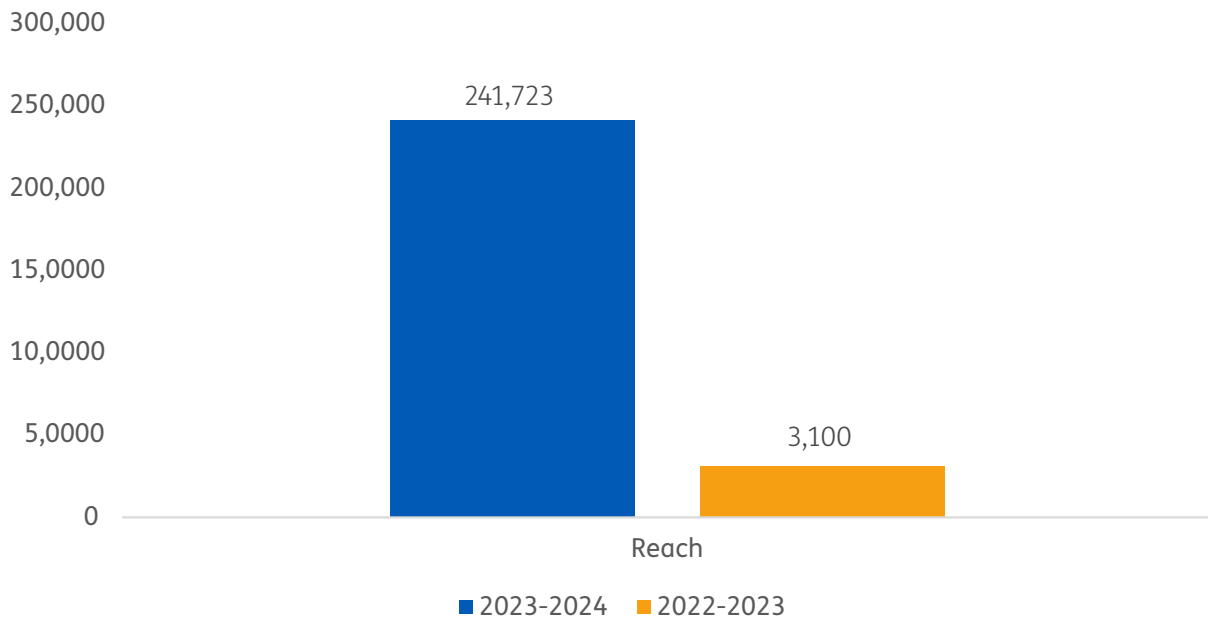
In total, we saw almost **26,000** views of energy advice over the campaign period. The same period the previous year, we saw almost **44,000** views of energy advice, so while there is a noticeable dip in traffic to our online advice, the previous year was the peak of the energy crisis so it is expected to see some decline this year.



Increasing reach and engagement on social media

During the campaign, we reached over **241,723** people through our own Facebook activity alone, which was an increase of over **600%** on last year's **31,000** reach for combined social media activity. Our budget for social media has remained very modest, and a large percentage of the reach is organic, showing a genuine engagement in our campaign content.

Social media reach



Facebook

Paid advertising

- > 152,962 people reached
- > 344,382 impressions
- > 6,157 link clicks
- > 1,148 video plays at 50%

Organic posts

- > 88,761 people reached
- > 3,836 engagements

Twitter

- > 63.8K Twitter impressions
- > 356 likes
- > 310 retweets
- > 308 link clicks

Raising awareness of the campaign

Google Ads

We advertised through Google Ads to help link our advice pages to key search terms commonly used around advice, such as ‘help with benefits’ or ‘help with energy bills’. Through Google Ads we saw:

- > 2420 impressions
- > 590 clicks to key pages

Raising awareness of the campaign

Radio advertising

We advertised with Bauer radio and used different CAB advisers to record ‘Bauer loves’ ads using scripts featuring energy case studies, mirroring the campaign creative. These ads were promoted on a range of radio stations across Scotland including Clyde 1, Forth 1, Northsound 1, Tay FM, Radio Borders, West FM/West Sound/ West Sound FM And MFR:

- > Estimated combined reach of 1,078,467
- > Impacts of 3,601,197 (average number of people listening to one radio slot)
- > Opportunities to hear of 3.3 (average number of changes a listener will hear an advert on average)
- > Duration of 10 days

Raising awareness of the campaign

Digital promotion on radio station websites

As part of our radio promotions with Bauer, they also included digital promotions on their different radio station websites, a home page takeover and social media promotion on their channels, which included:

Campaign features page on each stations website (avg. figures)

- > 46 seconds on page
- > 871 page views
- > 828 unique views
- > 93 website clicks

Social media promotion

- > 48.5k impressions
- > 47.8k reach
- > 61 clicks

Direct emails

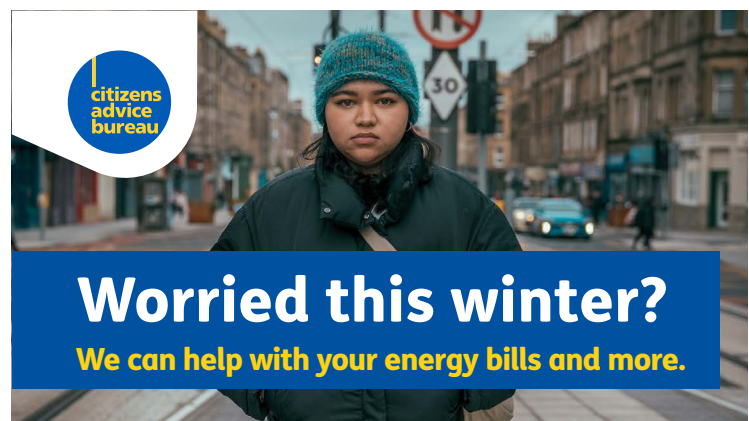
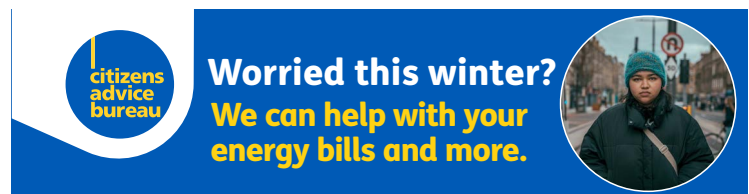
- > 106,457 sent
- > 18720 opened
- > 17.6% open rate
- > 1125 link clicks

Home page takeover

- > 50,477 impressions
- > 39 clicks
- > 0.09% CTR

Directional run of the site

- > 251,992 impressions
- > 347 clicks
- > 0.14% CTR



Digital campaign assets
used by Bauer

Raising awareness of the campaign

YouTube advertising

As part of the campaign, we promoted our campaign video via YouTube advertising as managed by Bauer. This ran for the entirety of the live campaign and achieved:

- > 215k video views
- > 342.7k impressions

This was an increase of **34%** for views and an increase of **17%** for impressions compared to last year's campaign.



Behind-the-scenes at the campaign video shoot outside Leith CAB in Edinburgh

Raising awareness of the campaign

Media engagement

National coverage

Over the campaign period, analysis through the Kantar media monitoring platform found **484** articles tagged with Citizens Advice Scotland and energy, with a total value of **£2.72million**. This included:

- > 12 press releases from CAS
- > 3 Herald columns



Tens of thousands of Scots 'forced onto pay-as-you-go energy meters'

Raising awareness of the campaign

Out of Home advertising

As part of our promotions, we planned a suite of outdoor advertising across Scotland from Global Media during the campaign period, including:

- > Bus rear advertising in Edinburgh
- > 4-sheets in the Glasgow subway
- > Phone kiosk ads across Scotland

Global work out an estimate of how the kiosk and bus rear ads reached numbers of people by looking at reach (number of people who see the ad), frequency (number of times one person would have seen the ad) and impact (reach multiplied by frequency):

- > Kiosks – 1.8 million impact
- > Bus rears – 1.5 million impact
- > Subways – 1.1 million footfall

For all the ads we received very good overshoot in certain locations (when an ad stays up for a longer duration than we paid for, giving us better value for money).



Raising awareness of the campaign

TV advertising

We also took out advertising with Sky Digital for the month of January to promote a 15 second cut of our campaign videos specifically for on the Sky Sports and Sky News apps. This was targeted Scotland-wide to reach as many people as possible, narrowing audiences slightly to include low, mid and mid-high affluence levels of consumers. During the campaign we received:

- > 366,790 impressions
- > 76.6% average viewing rate (percentage of video viewed)
- > 1076 clicks to our campaign page



Working with partner organisations

Prior to the campaign we reached out to a number of organisations who we have worked with previously to support campaigns, including: **Age Scotland**, **Young Scot**, **The Poverty Alliance**, **Scottish Government** and our long-standing partner for energy campaigns, **Home Energy Scotland**. Each supporting partner received a digital toolkit and supported the campaign on social media.

There are several upcoming campaigns from these organisations who we will also support on our digital channels.



citizens
advice
bureau

“The adviser applied for a grant on my behalf and got a **“good will” reduction** on the energy bill. I could not have done this without their assistance - **thank you!**”



citizens
advice
bureau

Worried this winter?

We can help with your energy bills and more.

Social
media
graphics



citizens
advice
bureau

“**CAB helped us** apply for things we never knew we were entitled to – **it was unbelievable**. We were able to get a new boiler and radiators, smoke alarms.”



citizens
advice
bureau

“The adviser applied for a grant on my behalf and got a **“good will” reduction** on the energy bill. I could not have done this without their assistance - **thank you!**”

Bureaux engagement

As previously stated, 32 bureaux signed up to support the campaign at a local level and of these 32, six bureaux took part in the co-design. As part of our campaign evaluation, we sent a post-campaign survey to CABs asking for feedback on how the campaign was received locally and any feedback to take on for next time. The following feedback is based on responses from 22 CABs.

- > **100%** of CABs felt using case studies to inspire our video and photography content worked ‘very well’ or ‘well’.
- > **73%** of CABs would like to see more of our campaigns featuring ‘real people’ as opposed to illustrations/animations. **23%** don’t feel strongly either way, and **4%** would prefer work not featuring real people.

“We felt the inclusion of real people allowed more of our clients to feel ‘seen’ and in particular younger client demographics” – Argyll and Bute CAB

“When we’ve spoken to clients about campaigns they’ve all felt real stories are the most impactful!” – Angus CAB

- > **100%** of CABs rated their experience with the Worried This Winter co-design as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.
- > Many CABs wrote comments endorsing the campaign resources available and mentioned how much easier this made participating in the campaign. Social media toolkit and posters remain the most useful according to feedback. There was also some feedback for other giveaways and approaches that would be helpful and this has been included in our ‘lessons learned’ section.



Local highlights:

East Renfrewshire CAB coordinated with outreach workers to spread awareness of campaign and distributed posters to local libraries, community centres and GP surgeries.

Aberdeen CAB attended a Challenge Poverty event, several events at Pittodrie Hub, talks to local church groups, Hydro Electric Retirement Association and other local groups. They also promoted at redundancy fayres held locally, ran a social media campaign, and raised issues with local MP Tess White.

East Ayrshire CAB participated in events such as Park School swap shop event, Home Energy Scotland roadshow and outreach events at Ayrshire College.

Angus CAB saw fantastic results with local partnership working and their social media campaign received strong engagement.

Parkhead CAB took part in a series of local outreach events, distributing materials and directly members of the local community to bureaux.

Argyll and Bute CAB ran local energy events and shared marketing materials. They also ran printed press advertorials and saw an increase in awareness of the service and clients approaching CAB for support.

Coatbridge CAB ran energy talks to several groups and highlighted the campaign. They also distributed posters locally, ran a successful social media, and sent letters to councillors and their local MSP and MP.

Motherwell and Wishaw CAB ran an engaging social media campaign utilising the toolkits and saw great engagement from partner organisations. They also ran multiple community events, including talks at the Woman's Guild and local probus events.

Skye & Lochalsh ran successful focus groups as part of the co-design, working with local organisations. They also saw great coverage in local press and were interviewed on local radio.

Dumfries and Galloway CAB ran a successful social media campaign and saw excellent local press coverage. They also worked with local partners to promote, which helped lead to Dumfries & Galloway Council's Poverty & Inequalities Partnership looking at how they could further promote the help for those struggling to pay for gas and electricity.

Inverness Badenoch & Strathspey CAB engaged with local Community Councils and local groups including Inverness Men's Shed, Crown Church and lunch clubs. They ran energy talks to a variety of groups including rural locations such as Whitebridge and Fort Augustus. They also collaborated with Inverness BID to produce a video on Worried this Winter themes by local media personality Grace Nicoll, which was well received online.

Roxburgh & Berwickshire CAB worked with local partners to promote the campaign and share on social media.

Western Isles CAB ran several outreach sessions and distributed promotional materials locally for the campaign.

Drumchapel CAB promoted the campaign locally and on social media. They also attended the Lord Provost Lunch in the City Chambers and promoted the campaign materials there, reaching over 200 people.

Glasgow North West CAB have over 15 partners in the local community and were able to promote the campaign directly to partners and their people. They also ran outreach services - including 23 GP practices - promoting support available.

Central Borders CAB work in partnership with foodbanks and have excellent connections with Social Security Scotland. They also attended a 'Cost of the School Day' Child Poverty Action Group event and visited a local high school to promote help available.



Peebles
CAB on
ITV news

East Ayrshire CAB outreach



Inverness CAB outreach



Glasgow North West CAB
TIS Housing Conference

Inverness CAB outreach

Lessons going forward

Merchandise giveaways for bureaux

Several bureaux noted how useful it would be to have more merchandise to giveaway especially for outreach events. One CAB said “Pens, sticky notes, note pads, stress light bulbs, keyrings and any other stationery items are great for attracting people.” CAS did send stress lightbulbs this year when we received some additional budget, but these arrived towards the end of the campaign. For future campaigns, we should look at dedicating some budget for giveaways from launch, or ensuring Brandbase is well stocked.

CABs also noted that leaflets for giveaways would be useful, included top energy saving tips with CAB details.

Recruiting and running focus groups for co-design

Some bureaux spoke about struggling to recruit participants for focus groups or difficulties encouraging open conversations with some people in the groups. We already have a focus group toolkit to help with recruiting and running the groups, but it might be good to do a more detailed ‘lessons learned’ with co-design CABs on this and link up previous co-design CABs with new ones for a chat during future co-designs.

Encouraging cross-CAB sharing

Some feedback from bureaux in our post-campaign survey showed that it would be useful for CABs to share what has worked well for them during the campaign. This report covers this in some detail – in ‘local highlights’ section – but it might be useful to work on connecting bureaux who would like more ideas for promotions (or outreach or partnership working) with other engaged CABs to share positive campaign experiences. We could also include a ‘what has gone well/what hasn’t gone so well’ section in future evaluation surveys to get both sides of the spectrum.

Summary

Worried This Winter? achieved most of our set campaign aims. We saw a notable increase in energy advice in bureaux compared to the same period the previous year. While this cannot be directly contributed to the campaign promotion - as we know that more people than ever before will have needed help with their bills this winter regardless of any campaign promotion - we can see the increase in advice as a positive that significantly more people have found energy-specific support from our network this winter. We did see a dip in energy advice searched online, but 2022/2023 was the peak of the energy crisis, so a dip in online searching is understandable.

Our **digital reach** was significantly stronger than the previous year's promotions, possibly because there was more creative content to share, and a more engaging campaign video. Using the same creative to link through all national advertising such as out of home, radio and television, in addition to local promotions through bureaux, seems to have worked very well and helped make the campaign easily recognisable and helped raise awareness of the Citizens Advice network and support available.

Digital support and collaboration with partners was really appreciated and we saw a lot of engagement from other organisations with our social media. However, it would be good to look at more ways to build a supportive relationship with other organisations, for example looking at doing a joint approach for some content (like a video with Young Scot) on points of mutual interest, and working more closely with organisations with shared common goals, like The Poverty Alliance.

Financially, the campaign shows excellent value for money. The budget for advertising came in at just under £30k, which covered over £10k of outdoor advertising across Scotland, a campaign video plus budget actor fees, Sky digital promotions, national radio and social media advertising.

32 bureaux applied for funding to support both our national campaigns (£2.5k per CAB) and six bureaux applied for co-design grants (£3k per CAB), making the total of allocation support grants £98k.

Worried this winter?