

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
DATE	11 June 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Supporting People with the Cost of Living Crisis 2024/25 – Full Year Evaluation
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/25/131
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Susan Thoms, Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1, 3.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a full year evaluation of the outcomes achieved from the Cost of Living Funding allocated for 2024/25.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the outputs and outcomes of the Cost of Living Fund 2024/25.

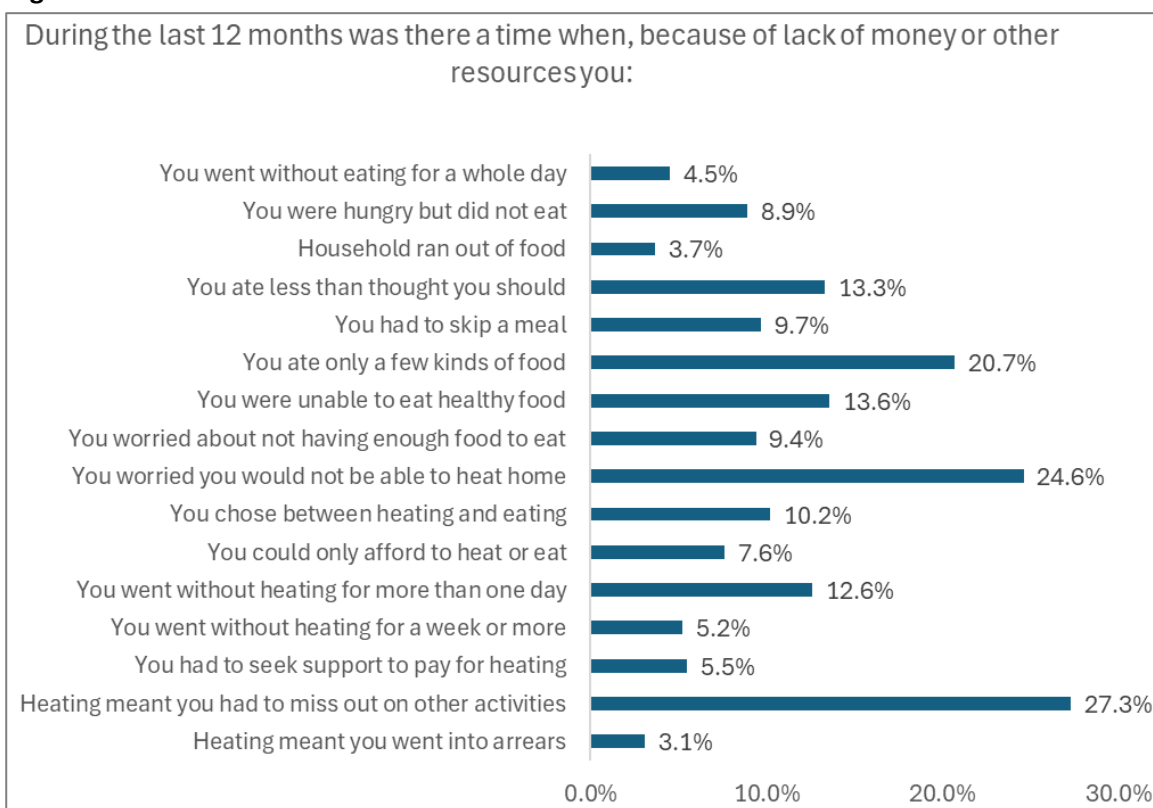
3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Cost of Living Crisis

- 3.1.1 The Aberdeen City [Population Needs Assessment 2024](#) provides an overview of the current cost of living crisis in the City. It states that while all households will be affected by increases in the cost of living it is those with lower incomes and little or no savings who will be most impacted as they spend a higher proportion than average on energy, food and transport and they therefore have less flexibility in their budget to cope with price rises. Research by the Money and Pensions Service (November 2022) suggests that one in six UK adults have no savings and a quarter of UK adults have less than £100 put away. More recent research (January 2023) suggests that as many as one in five adults are borrowing to pay for food and other essential bills, with half doing so for the first time.
- 3.1.2 Research published by the End Child Poverty coalition reported that in 2021/22 an estimated 7,994 children (0-15 years) in Aberdeen City were living in poverty (below 60% median income after housing costs). This is equivalent to 20.5% of children compared to 18.3% in 2020/21.
- 3.1.3 It has been reported nationally that poverty and the cost of living crisis is pushing people to choose between heating and eating. To understand the impact on people and families across the City, questions about food and fuel security have been included in City Voice questionnaires each year since 2018.

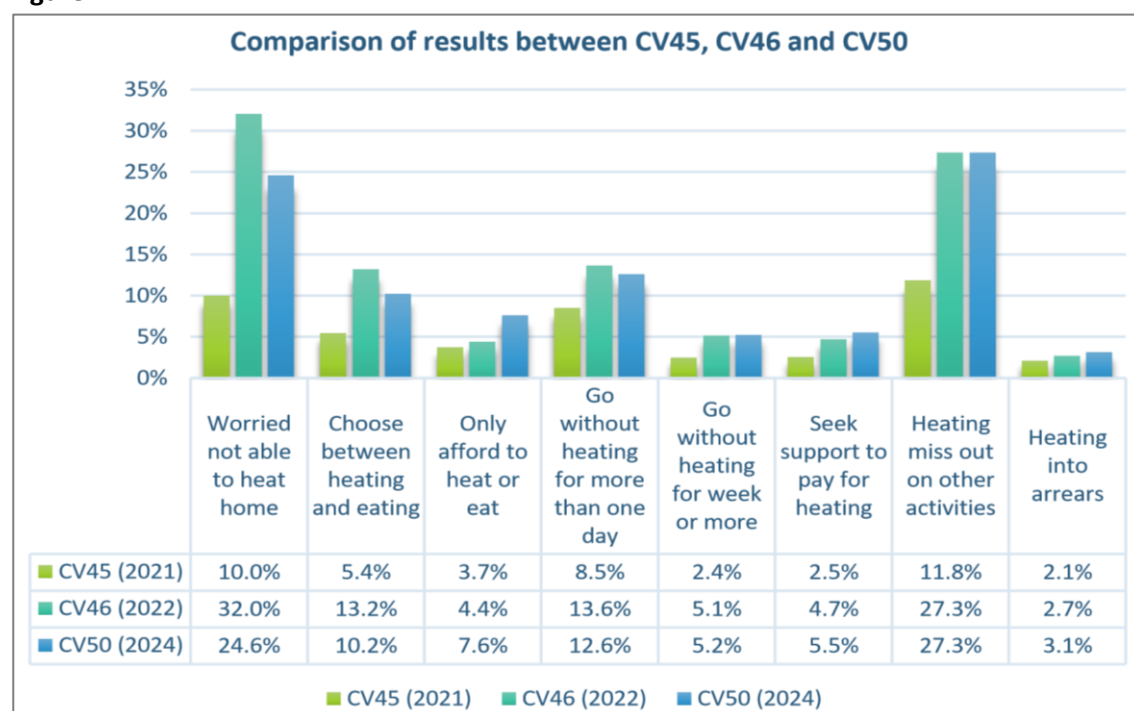
3.1.4 In the latest [City Voice Report published in July 2024](#), participants were asked if during the last 12 months there was a time when, because of lack of money or other resources they had to go without food or fuel or other activities.

Figure 1



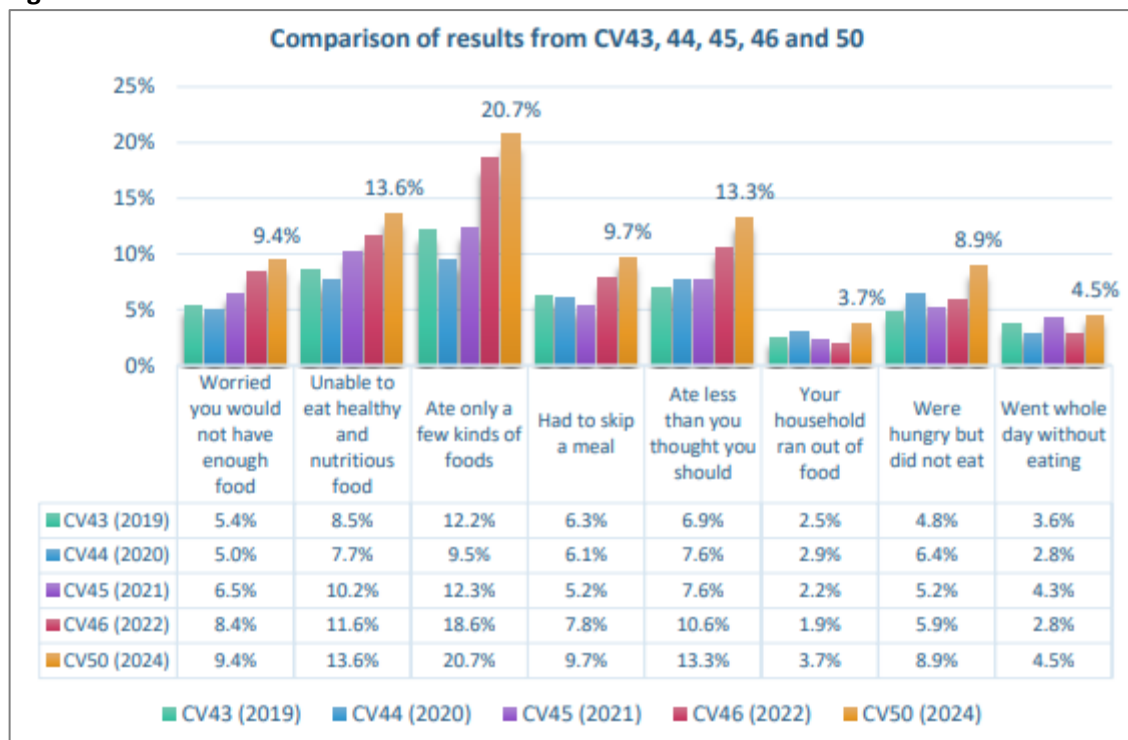
3.1.5 These questions have been asked in previous City Voice questionnaires. The charts below show the proportion of respondents who answered 'yes' to each question.

Figure 2



3.1.6 The chart above shows that with the exception of worried not able to heat their home which has gone down from 32% to 24.6%, the responses in 2024 are broadly similar to those in 2022. The largest increase is in the proportion of respondents who reported being worried they could only afford to heat their home or feed themselves/their family (from 4.4% to 7.6%).

Figure 3



3.1.7 The chart above shows that since the questions were first asked, the percentage of respondents who answered 'yes' has increased for every question. Similarly, since last asked in December 2022, the percentage who answered 'yes' has increased for all questions, with the largest increase being in the proportion who reported they were hungry but did not eat (from 5.9% to 8.9%).

3.1.8 While there has been support for people with the cost of energy, people and families have been affected by the increase in inflation and locally there has been an increase in demand for emergency support. Support to mitigate some of the impacts locally has included:

- Increased financial advice provision
- Increased support through Scottish Welfare Fund
- Procurement of suitable food to increase supply of emergency food
- Provision of fuel vouchers
- Provision of [Warm Spaces](#) during the winter period to alleviate cost of heating homes

3.2 **Supporting People with the Cost of Living Crisis 2024/25**

- 3.2.1 On 6 March 2024, Aberdeen City Council agreed to provide £1 million to mitigate against the ongoing cost of living crisis. Between June and August 2024 the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee agreed recommendations for how this funding should be spent.

Allocation	Organisation	Amount
Round 1 – June 2024		
Food procurement and pantries	Food Poverty Action Aberdeen	£251,260
Fuel	SCARF	£50,000
Poverty Awareness Films	SHMU	£20,000
Discretionary Housing Payments	ACC Revs and Bens	£100,000
School costs (Winter Clothing)*	ACC Revs and Bens	£20,000
Telecare/Tec	ACHSCP	£20,020
Power of Attorney	ACHSCP	£10,000
Childcare Costs	ACC ABZ Works	£60,000
Round 2 - August 2024		
Christmas Family Panto Package for low income families.	Aberdeen Performing Arts	£10,000
Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants/ Community Care Grants	Aberdeen City Council (Revenues and Benefits)	£96,382
Food procurement and pantries	Food Poverty Action Aberdeen	£242,038
Fuel poverty vouchers and advice	SCARF	£80,000
Essentials for underprivileged families	AberNecessities	£40,300

3.3 **Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes**

- 3.3.1 This report provides an update on the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the cost of living the funding 2024/25. A summary is provided overleaf in a logic model format. A logic model helps illustrate the relationships between a program's resources, activities, outputs, and the anticipated outcomes.

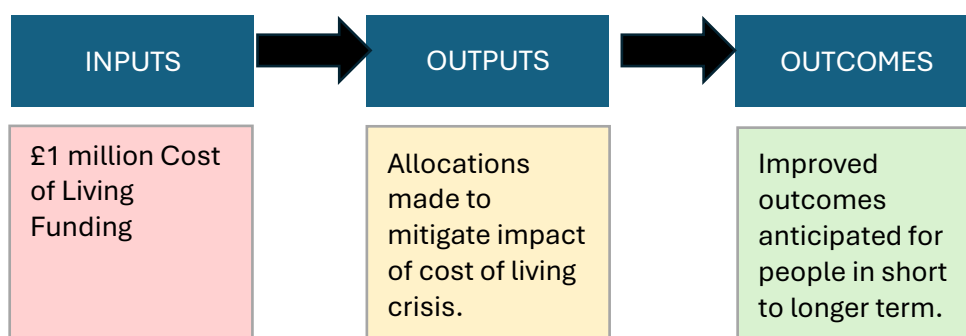


Figure 4 – Summary of inputs, outputs and anticipated outcomes.

INPUTS			OUTPUTS	ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES	
What did we invest in to mitigate against the rising cost of living and why?			What have we done so far and who have we reached?	Short term impacts	Longer term impacts
RESPONSE	Food £493,298	The rising cost of living has put pressure on food banks, causing increased demand and falling food donations.	159 tonnes of food, equivalent to 378,480 meals distributed to 85 organisations across the City. 61 people supported through SAFE outreach with £232,490 client financial gain, and 500 weekly pantry shops.	People experiencing food insecurity are able to access good, nutritious food to meet their basic needs.	Food pantries and financial advice can help people break free from poverty by providing additional support that can help prevent future crisis.
	Fuel £130,000	Fuel poverty can have a significant impact on people's mental and physical health over winter.	696 households provided with payment towards their fuel bills and tailored energy efficiency advice. 1,117 onward referrals to appropriate advice/support organisations. 82 households removed from fuel poverty.	People are able to heat their homes over winter to help ensure their general wellbeing.	Better living conditions can contribute to improvement in health outcomes in the long term.
	Crisis Grants £96,382	Without a safety net, unexpected expenses can overwhelm a household, leading to difficulties in meeting basic needs and debt.	1,108 people received a Crisis Grant to provide immediate financial assistance to help them through an emergency situation..	Crisis grants act as a safety net, offering a temporary boost to manage immediate needs in a crisis, preventing further financial hardship.	Can prevent situations from worsening such as homelessness or hunger by providing resources to cope with immediate crisis.
	Family Essentials £40,300	Providing family essentials including food clothing and hygiene products directly mitigates the cost of living.	1,000 families supported with toiletries and cleaning products, 80 pregnant women supported with maternity clothes and hospital bags, 50 families fleeing domestic abuse provided with kitchen items.	Families can redirect their resources to more important expenses and improve their financial stability.	Supports better relationships with public services to provide early help and intervention to enhance children and family wellbeing.
EARLY INTERVENTION	Housing £100,000	There are people that rent their home that get Housing Benefit or Universal Credit but still can't afford their housing costs.	146 claimants supported with shortfall in their local housing allowance or income related, preventing further escalation of harm to people.	People who are having difficulty paying their rent due to financial challenges are supported to prevent going into rent arrears.	Discretionary Housing Payments can help people address financial challenges and achieve housing security.
	Winter clothing £20,000	The rising cost of living can make clothing difficult to afford and children in poverty can suffer not only physically but mentally as a result.	4,381 winter clothing payment awards of £30 made, supporting children to have the clothing they need over winter.	Children and young people are supported to purchase weather-appropriate clothing which removes stress and improves school attendance.	Providing winter clothing to children and young people in poverty can improve their self-esteem, wellbeing and improve test results.
	Family Experiences £10,000	Families experiencing financial hardship can struggle to afford cultural events, which offer valuable enrichment and mental health benefits, due to the cost of living.	67 families provided with a Christmas Panto Package to give them the opportunity to visit the theatre and enjoy the festive panto.	Families can enjoy a positive and enriching experience at a time when expenses tend to rise, helping alleviate the stress of the cost of living.	Cultural experiences can having lasting positive impacts including improved well-being, improved confidence, enhanced social skills, and increased aspirations.
PREVENTION	Telecare £20,020	Telecare helps elderly and disabled people live independently and safely at home. However, digital poverty can impact access to telecare and health services.	1 low income family supported to purchase telecare equipment. Identification of individuals in need ongoing.	Older people and people with disabilities that can't afford telecare are assisted and kept safe in their home over winter when there is a greater risk of harm.	Benefit checks are built into the application process to ensure people receive the support they are entitled to and supported to stay in their homes for longer.
	Power of Attorney £10,000	Lack of Power of Attorney lacks in delayed discharge. This is often due to the cost of putting it in place. 80% of cases are from SIMD 1.	4 low income families living in SIMD 1 that are not eligible for legal aid supported to arrange Power of Attorney. Identification of individuals in need ongoing.	Older people living in Aberdeen's most deprived communities receive financial support with putting in place Power of Attorney.	Reduction in delayed discharges, minimising risk of further infection, loss of mobility and independence.
	Child Care Costs £60,000	Childcare costs can be a significant expense for parents and the cost of living crisis can put some parents off going back to work.	16 families supported with childcare costs enabling 7 parents into employment, 4 parents to stay in employment, and supporting another parent to sustain their education.	Support with childcare costs to help parents get back into work, stay employed and earn more.	Keeping parents in the workforce when their children are young can help generate economic growth and boost the local economy.
	Poverty Awareness £20,000	Raising awareness of poverty is essential to help people understand the effects on individuals and communities and think about how they can help.	4 short films and 3 podcasts produced to raise awareness of challenges for people impacted by poverty, to share widely at events. 5 people trained in podcasting and interview techniques.	Podcasts and short films capturing the lived experience of people in poverty shown during Challenge Poverty Week 2024 to raise awareness.	Increased support from all sectors in reducing stigma, increasing uptake of support available, and working together to prevent poverty,

3.3.2 See Appendix 1 for the full Cost of Living Fund 2024/25 Evaluation Report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Funding of £1m was provided within the 2024-25 budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Funds allocated to third parties are subject to Aberdeen City Council's standard terms and conditions.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the increased cost of living could lead to longer term economic harm.	Delivery of measures to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable, alongside work and support across services, partners and third sector.	L	Yes
Compliance	There is a risk of failing to comply with a Council decision to spend the allocated £1m to help the most vulnerable in our community with energy costs.	Delivery of measures to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable, alongside work and support across services, partners and third sector.	L	Yes
Operational	The project delivery in this report requires some resource from the Council, but mainly through partners	Strong partnership working with organisations identified will ensure this risk is minimised.	L	Yes

Financial	There is a risk of failing to deliver and spend the approved budget	It is expected that funds will be fully spent by April 2025.	L	Yes
Reputational	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the cost of living could lead to reputational damage.	The delivery described in this report demonstrates a clear commitment to supporting people with the cost of living.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No environmental risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting People with the Cost of Living Actively support Aberdeen's foodbanks and provide assistance with bulk purchasing where desirable.
Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Stretch outcome 1: 20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Stretch outcome 12: Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Not required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer People and Citizens Services on 15 May 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Supporting People with the Cost of Living CORS/24/152](#)

[Supporting People with the Cost of Living Interim Evaluation CORS/24/291](#)

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Cost of Living Fund 2024/25 Evaluation

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Susan Thoms
Title	Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager
Email Address	sthoms@aberdeencity.gov.uk