



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

## POVERTY



## Rochdale Council

### Tackling the Cost of Living Crisis in Rochdale

When the cost of living crisis started to bite in 2022 we knew it would hit some of our people and communities particularly hard. It's a borough which already had significant disadvantage and deprivation - with 15.3% of households in fuel poverty, 29.8% of children living in relative poverty and 30% eligible for free school meals.

#### The response

A cross sector Anti-Poverty Group was quickly brought together. It included the local voluntary sector infrastructure organisation, social housing providers, DWP, Groundwork, the Fire Service, the NHS and a range of council teams (strategic housing, public health, revenues and benefits, work and skills, communications, policy, early help, and the customer contact centre).

#### Immediate support

Offering a range of support was vital to alleviate the immediate issues people faced. Over 40 warm spaces were set up in different community locations. They didn't just offer a hot drink, but also provided access to activities, advice and information. Funding for winter warmer packs was made available. Community groups set about making sure they were designed to meet a range of needs and could be made bespoke for different communities. Food banks and food clubs have also continued to offer a vital source of help. This was underpinned by our "helping hand" communications campaign to let residents know that help was available.



### **A longer lasting approach**

Integrating Good Help and community wealth principles have also been key to our response. We want to provide the type of support which will help people out of poverty and provide long term outcomes. Money Max roadshows have provided advice and information on financial support, training, wellbeing and energy-saving. We've been promoting the local credit union to make sure residents have access to responsible lending and saving. The Warm Homes Programme was expanded to offer vulnerable people access to a range of interventions including boiler repair and replacement, cavity wall insulation, extra radiators and thermostats, as well as fuel vouchers, heaters and blankets.

Partnership and collaboration have been vital to tackling the cost of living crisis in Rochdale. It has provided the networks, co-ordination and communication to enable us to provide immediate relief and longer lasting interventions for people facing the hardest of circumstances and living the most difficult lives.

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