

Disabled people and the cost-of-living crisis in Wales



Easy read booklet

Who we are and what we do



We are **Disability Wales**.



We work with disabled people's organisations to make sure disabled people in Wales

- have **equal rights**.
- can live **independent** lives.



Rights are laws that protect people and make sure they are treated well. **Equal** means they are the same for everyone.



Independent means you have control over your own life.

About this booklet



The UK is in a **cost-of-living crisis**. This means prices for lots of things are going up.



Because of this

- some people have not got enough money to pay for important things like heating and food.
- some people have problems with their **physical** and **mental health**. **Physical health** is how healthy your body is. **Mental health** is how you think and feel.



This booklet tells you how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting disabled people in Wales and the changes we want so their lives get better.

Who we talked to



Most of the information in this booklet is from disabled people in Wales.

To get this information we used



- 2 **surveys**. A **survey** asks people questions. 1 survey was last year and 1 was this year.



- 2 **online focus groups**. **Online focus groups** are groups of people who meet to talk about a subject, using the internet.



- a meeting with disabled people's organisations.

What we are worried about



Disabled people are affected by the cost-of-living crisis in a bad way. They are affected more than other people.



Some disabled people have made small changes to their lives. Others have made very big changes.

We do not think there is enough support for disabled people to help with this.

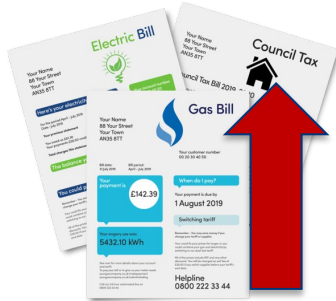


There are **4** main subjects we are worried about

- 1. Heating, electricity and water bills.**
- 2. Housing, transport and other costs.**
- 3. Wellbeing, physical and mental health.**
- 4. Support.**



1. Heating, electricity and water bills



Heating, electricity and water **bills** have gone up for most disabled people. A **bill** is how much money you have to pay.



Because of this

- lots of people use less heating.
- some people live in cold homes.
- some people go out less and use their car less, to save money.
- some people have sold things they own to help pay their bills.
- some people do not buy things they need, so they have enough money left for their bills.



For example, some people do not buy new glasses even when they cannot see very well with their old ones.



People are worried because

- they do not know how much bills will go up.
- **benefits** are not going up by the same amount as bills.



Benefits are payments of money from the government to people who need it. For example, to disabled people or people who do not have a job.



- if they have a **pre-payment meter**, because bills cost more with this type of meter.

If you have a **pre-payment meter** it means you pay for your gas or electricity before you use it.



Some people had problems paying their bills before the cost-of-living crisis. Now lots more people have these problems.

2. Housing, transport and other costs



Disabled people now spend more money on housing, **transport** and **other costs**, because prices for these have gone up.



Transport is how you get around. For example, buses, trains, taxis and cars.



Other costs include food and **leisure activities**. **Leisure activities** are things like sports or other activities that you do for fun.



Because the cost of transport has gone up some people

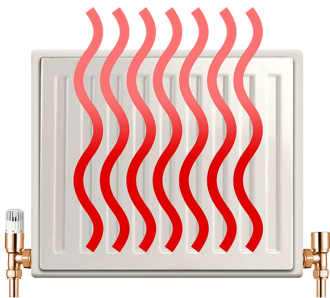
- see family and friends less. This means they are alone more.



- have not got enough money to pay for transport to their doctor, hospital, or other important services.



- have not got enough money to get to a **warm bank**.



A **warm bank** is a safe place with the heating on, where people can go to get warm in the winter if they do not have enough money to heat their home.



Because the price of food has gone up

- more than half of people buy less food.



- some people only have enough money to eat 1 or 2 meals each day, instead of 3.



- some people have not got enough money to buy the right food for them. For example, if there are certain types of food they should not eat.



Because other costs have gone up

- more than half of people buy less clothes and do less leisure activities. This means their lives are less fun.



- lots of people are alone a lot of the time. They see less of their friends, family, and people who live in their area.



- some people have not got enough money to pay for **support workers**.

Support workers help disabled people live independent lives.

3. Wellbeing, physical and mental health



Wellbeing means how healthy you feel and how much energy you have.



Some people might find what we say in this section sad, but we think it's important to tell you this information to show how bad the cost-of-living crisis is.



Most people say the cost-of-living crisis is bad for their mental health.



Some people have thought about killing themselves because they are so worried about money.



Lots of people say the cost-of-living crisis is bad for their physical health.



For example, some people have more pain in their bodies because their homes are cold.



Most people say their wellbeing is worse because of the cost-of-living crisis.



This is because they spend more time alone and they sometimes cannot get to important services like hospital.



There is not enough support for people who have problems with their physical or mental health, or for people who need care.

4. Support



Lots of people do not know they can get support to help with the cost-of-living crisis.



Most people know about the **Winter Fuel Allowance**. This is money from the government to help older people heat their home in winter.



But most people do not know about

- the **Local Housing Allowance**. This is money local **councils** give to people who have not got much money and who rent their home from a **private landlord**.



Your **council** is in charge of local services.

A **private landlord** is a person who owns a home you can rent.



- the **Discretionary Assistance Fund**. This is money from the government to help people buy important things like food, gas or electricity.



It's for people who need money **urgently**. For example, if you have lost your job but your benefits have not started. **Urgently** means straight away.



Lots of people who got a **cost-of-living support payment** did not know what it was or where it was from.

£150



This was 1 payment of £150 from the government for people who are disabled or have not got much money, to help them during the cost-of-living crisis.



Everyone we asked knew about **food banks** and some people have used them. **Food banks** are places that give people food if they do not have enough money to buy it.



Some people need to use food banks but do not because

- some food banks are not **accessible**. **Accessible** means they can be used by everyone
- they think other people in their area will be mean to them if they go there.



There are less warm banks than food banks. Some people do not know what a warm bank is.



Some people need to use warm banks but do not because

- it's hard to get to some of them on **public transport**. This means transport like buses and trains.
- the journey to get there and back would make them cold.
- some warm banks are not accessible.



Disabled people's organisations



Disabled people's organisations are run and controlled by disabled people and can give disabled people the right help and support.



But they have not got enough money to give all the help and support that people need.



Their costs have gone up too. For example, rent has gone up a lot for a café for disabled people in Cardiff.



Disabled people's organisations need more money.

The changes we want



We want the UK and Welsh governments to

- start their **Disability Rights Action Plan** as soon as possible. This is a plan to make disabled people's lives better and more equal.



- include ideas from **the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People** in their plans. This will help disabled people be treated in a fair way.



- give money and training so there is at least 1 disabled people's organisation in every area.



- work with disabled people and disabled people's organisations to change the way benefits work, so they help disabled people more.



- give control of the benefit called **Personal Independence Payment** to the Welsh government, so they can use a different way to decide who gets it.



We want them to use the **social model of disability** to decide. This means they think about how people are disabled by the things around them.



- make sure pre-payment meters are not used anymore.



- start a new way of charging for bills called a **social tariff**. This will make prices fair for disabled people, so they have enough money to pay their heating and electricity bills.



- make public transport cheaper for everyone now, and free later. We want the government to own public transport.



- give money towards the cost of food, so it's cheaper.



- start **food schemes** in each area and make sure they are accessible.



Food schemes teach people about healthy food and how to cook it.



- work with other services to find which disabled people might not have enough money because of the cost-of-living crisis, then give those people money and support.



- work with other services to support disabled people to look after the **equipment** they need because of their disability, so they do not need to spend their money on this. **Equipment** might be things like wheelchairs.

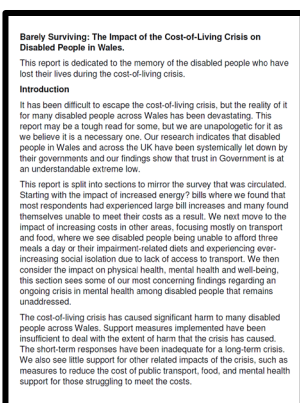


- urgently find and help disabled people who have problems with their mental health.



- think about how they decide the price for **social care**, to make sure disabled people do not pay too much.

Social care is help with daily life because of illness or disability.



Thank you to A2i for the words

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The full version of this document is called

“Barely Surviving: The Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis on Disabled People in Wales.”