



**Customer Working Group Meeting  
Meeting held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7pm  
at Knowes Housing Association's Office**

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**In Attendance:**

Mary Campbell	
Audrey McKie	
Joe McCormack	Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
Erica Davidson	CEO
Graham Bruns	Property Officer
Amy Sweeney	Corporate Services / Compliance Officer

**Meeting Topic:** Energy Advice – CAB In Attendance

The group met for the third time on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Joe McCormack from Citizens Advice Bureau also attended the meeting to provide the group with information on advice and support that is available for people struggling with the cost of living.

**1. CAB Presentation**

- Joe gave a presentation to the group about the cost of living support that is available and how CAB can provide guidance to people and help them to applying for funding. He spoke about the current situation and how he believes that unfortunately people will still feel the effects of this for years to come.

Joe advised that SGN, who maintains Scotland's Gas Network, has announced a new vulnerability funding package of just over £1 million over two years to help people reduce their energy bills and also avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. He advised that SGN is funding the Citizen Advice network in Scotland to provide advice and support to over 6,000 households over the next 2 years. The new Safe and Warm Advice Service will be targeted at vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups across Scotland and it will ensure more people are advised on how to use energy safely and efficiently in their homes to help reduce their energy bills.

Joe explained that around 70% of the CAB's enquiries are income related. He advised that if you have problems paying your energy bills then the first step that you should take is to contact your supplier. He advised that they may be able to assist by setting up a payment plan to help make payments more manageable.

Joe advised that a dedicated Energy Advisor has been funded by a joint partnership between Knowes HA, Clydebank HA, Dalmuir Park HA to providing tenant with energy advice and support. He advised that CAB have also been working alongside Knowes Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Fiona Campbell has been who has been referring tenants to CAB for energy advice. Joe advised that a member of staff from CAB will also be based in Knowes office on a Friday.

Joe advised that around 20 Warm Centres have been planned across West Dunbartonshire to provide people with a warm place to go to help reduce their costs at home. Here they will be able to meet with others and have something to eat. Locations include Centre 81 and the Chatty Café in Dalmuir. Joe advised that he will email a list of the locations to Amy.

Joe explained that although there are many different funds available for people to access, some of these have qualifying criteria therefore it is worthwhile for people to contact CAB for more information and advice before applying.

Joe explained that The DWP estimates that millions of pounds worth of Pension Credit went unclaimed in the financial year 2021/22 because many pensioners do not know that they are entitled to this. He advised that applying for Pension Credit can open doors to further grants for people therefore it is important that they are aware of this.

A discussion took place about further support is available including the Scottish Welfare Fund, Child Warm Benefit Scheme and £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment. Joe advised that people should contact their energy supplier for more information on the Warm Home Discount Fund and Owners/Occupiers can contact Home Energy Scotland for energy advice and support.

A discussion took place regarding groups that would benefit from receiving information about the funding and support that is available. The group advised that local schools are eager to help families in need and it would be a good idea for CAB to contact them because many parents are struggling and don't think that they meet requirements to receive support.

A discussion took place about energy vouchers. Amy advised that unfortunately there has still not been any update on whether we will receive additional vouchers. The group advised that it may be worthwhile to contact the local MP as they may be able to identify any organisations that still have access to energy vouchers.

A discussion took place regarding meter tampering and the possibility of people resorting to this because they are struggling to afford costs. Graham advised that if we become aware of this happening it will be reported to the energy supplier.

The group decided that it would be beneficial to put together a list of energy saving tips to include in the newsletter, contact details for organisations that are providing support to people and that a member of the CAB team will be based in Knowes office on a Friday. Amy to include this information.

## **2. Topic of Discussion for Future Meetings**

- To be confirmed at next meeting.

### **3. Date of Next Meeting**

- To be confirmed – February 2023.