



THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

Cost of Living Crisis

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on the action by members of the Edinburgh Partnership Board to address the current cost of living crisis. Individual contributions are set out below for discussion and identification of further opportunities for joint activity to augment work being taken forward under the auspices of the LOIP. This activity formed the basis of previous reports to the Board in June and September 2022.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is recommended to:

- i. discuss and identify further opportunities for joint working; and
- ii. note the content of the report.

3. Main Report

3.1 The Board received two previous reports on action being taken under the auspices of the LOIP to address the current cost of living crisis. This activity was based on joint action involving a range of Partnership members.

3.2 In addition to this joint action, individual partners have been taking forward work to address the current crisis. This work is summarised by contributing partner as set out below.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

3.3 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has been working in partnership and supporting stakeholders as the increase in the cost of living impacts households and potentially increases fire risk. The national Prevention and Protection (P&P) directorate held a successful online event, which was attended by over 200 stakeholders from across the public and third sectors, as well as internal staff, who were advised how they could support the work of the Service. The presentation included the main causes of fire in the home, who is most at risk and how partners can identify risks when visiting households. Speakers included the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Trading Standards, who highlighted the dangers of scams and buying counterfeit goods, while Energy Action Scotland also provided advice.

- 3.4 The Service anticipates seeing an increase to the number of households deemed as being vulnerable to fire. As people seek to cope with rising bills, to cut costs they could turn to using portable heaters, candles, woodburning stoves and open fires, inadvertently placing themselves at risk from fire and carbon monoxide poisoning. In addition, there is an increased risk associated with the cost of living crisis where people attempt to bypass gas and electrical meters in an attempt to save money. Meter tampering is illegal and is also extremely dangerous, posing serious risks which include electrocution and fire.
- 3.5 A newsletter article (see appendix) for inclusion in the Adult Protection Committee Newsletter has been developed by the City of Edinburgh P&P Team which identifies some of the dangers associated with the cost of living crisis and encourages the referral of people deemed at increased risk of fire in their home to our 'Make The Call' initiative. Make The Call is a hard hitting appeal to carers, family, friends of those who are at risk of serious injury or even death because of an accidental fire in their home. SFRS is appealing to communities across Scotland to help save a life and consider home fire safety when checking in on vulnerable neighbours, patients, friends and family members and to put them in touch with SFRS wherever possible using the free Home Fire Safety Visit phoneline- 0800 1731 999. www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/make-the-call/

Skills Development Scotland

- 3.6 Skills Development Scotland has expert careers advisers around the country who can provide free, impartial advice and guidance. This support is available through centres and community venues nationwide. They can help anyone impacted by redundancy or looking to get into work, change career, upskill or reskill. The centres also offer access to IT, phone and print facilities to help with job search and applications. Find your nearest centre at myworldofwork.co.uk/centres
- 3.7 Career information and advice is also available online at careers.myworldofwork.co.uk
- 3.8 SDS runs a programme of weekly, free online webinars which are delivered by expert careers advisers. The webinars cover a variety of topics, all designed to help customers improve their employment situation. Find out more and book here <https://careers.myworldofwork.co.uk/career-advice/facing-redundancy/pace-webinars#/>
- 3.9 SDS offers a variety of free, funded learning opportunities for anyone looking to upskill or reskill. Those include:
- Individual Training Accounts - £200 towards a training course
 - Future Learn – free access to a range of online courses for anyone aged 25+
 - Women Returners Programme – free tailored support for women looking to return to the workplace



- Google Career Certificates – free certificated online courses across a range of topics. See <https://careers.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train>
- 3.10 Free access to support with reading, writing and using numbers is available through the Big Plus. See <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/employability-skills/the-big-plus/>
- 3.11 Scottish Careers Week runs 7-11 November 2022 and will provide information and events related to career support. [Find out more](#) or follow #ScotCareersWeek22.
- 3.12 SDS is a partner supporter of Scottish Government’s Cost of Living Crisis campaign.

University of Edinburgh

- 3.13 The cost of living actions to date are:
- Low cost meal options added to all University run cafes - £1.50 for soup or a roll.
 - Setting up a community pantry to tackle food poverty amongst staff and students.
 - To protect students from rising bills, rent levels fixed at November 2021 levels. Students pay a standard rent that includes all utilities and the University will absorb recent additional costs. The rental rates are some of the lowest in the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) sector.
 - Extended and extensively promoted the University’s financial support for students including hardship funding and wellbeing services is available on the website:
 - <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/financial-support>
 - <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/hardship-funding>
 - <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing/wellbeing-services>
 - Established a Cost of Living working group with representatives from across academic and professional services to look at further support going forward.

Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP)

- 3.14 EHSCP is working closely with its partners City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian in the response to the national cost of living crisis. It is also working closely with the third and voluntary sector including EVOC, to ramp up engagement within the community as winter approaches.



- 3.15 The EHSCP winter (surge) plan was approved by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) on 18 October 2022.
- 3.16 An EIJB workshop aimed at the community which will include the surge plan and response to the cost of living crisis is scheduled for 8 November 2022.

Primary Care

- Focus in delivering welfare rights and debt advice services within 21 medical practices across the city.
- Increase the awareness of local/third sector resources to primary care teams to display on Practice websites and within Practice premises.
- In partnership with the Council, NHS Lothian and third sector, the development of Money Counts training which will be offered to all Primary Care staff including staff within GP Practices.

Vaccinations

- 3.17 Continue to work in partnership with Home Energy Scotland (HES). HES advisors are working at vaccination clinics to raise awareness about the service, providing advice in situ and identifying eligibility for programmes like Warmer Home Scotland. This programme offers heating and energy efficiency improvements to homes. The HES team to date has helped over 1000 households and already referred over 30 households to the Warmer Home Scotland scheme.
- 3.18 Shortly a poster will be available at all sites for patients to seek assistance by calling, looking at the website or scanning a QR code to request a call back from an advisor.

Raising the awareness of cost of living support – comms, resources

- Sharing content via the EHSCP staff newsletter. An example was Challenge Poverty Week: 3 – 9 October. Further examples are in the pipeline.
- EHSCP Long Term Conditions Team currently updating the [Crisis Guide](#)

Community

- 3.19 Community mobilisation is at the heart of the EIJB flagship strategy the Edinburgh (Wellbeing) Pact. Community mobilisation activities are progressing well and will play a part in the response to the cost of living crisis. The EHSCP seeks to collaborate with the third and voluntary sector to build resilient communities. Forthcoming activities include:
- 'Coorie in for Winter'. 114 organisations and partnerships will receive between £600 to £3,500 to deliver a raft of activities and warm and welcoming places between November through to February. This creates



capacity for around 40,000 slots for people and builds on the Enliven Edinburgh Summer programme which was set up to address loneliness. The “Coorie in for Winter” booklet which will provide information to support mental health and wellbeing through the winter months will be available for dissemination in early December.

- ‘Nights are fair drawin in’. A total of 15,000 copies of the booklet which details a wide range of support available for people will be distributed to libraries, community centres, locality offices and third sector organisations.
- Events. Two events hosted on 10 November from 12 noon through to 6.00 pm: one at Hearts FC with 14 partner organisations and one at Hibernian FC with 20 community partner organisations. Staff from a range of community organisations and health and social care staff are there to talk with the public about what is available to support them. Links are being made with a number of organisations who are also hosting events and ensuring that “The Nights are fair drawin in” booklets are available.

Home First Edinburgh

- 3.20 Home First Edinburgh is an EIJB flagship strategy. A core element of Home First is to improve and maintain flow in the system through prevention of admission, engagement at front door access points, engagement whilst in hospital and optimising discharge without delay (DWD). Home First staff are able to identify those at risk and to provide guidance on support available. Post discharge activity involves the third and voluntary sectors as well as internal services.
- 3.21 As part of the EHSCP winter (surge) planning there is collaborative working with third sector organisations, including a new community resilience team hosted by the Cyrenians called RESET. The RESET team comprises 4 resilience workers who, as part of their role, and in collaboration with the DWD programme, will directly support those who are impacted by the cost of living crisis and whose health and wellbeing is at risk of decline. The RESET team will focus on prevention of admission to hospital and in the event of admission, supporting people pre-discharge, on the day of discharge and when people get back home. Taking referrals from November 2022, the resilience workers will be working closely with the Home First team supporting people who present at the front door of acute hospitals, the 6 acute Medicine for the Elderly (MoE) wards across the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE) and Western General Hospital (WGH) and those referred to the single point of access for urgent response within the Flow Centre.
- 3.22 A £15k Response Fund will be accessible to support those with an immediate need, and it is estimated that this will support approximately 60 people with any essentials required such as gas and electric top ups, white goods, furniture items, warm clothing and anything that will better support people on discharge from hospital or to keep them safe and warm at home or prevent re-admission. Supporting activities such as lunch clubs and pantry deliveries will also aid those with highest need. The team will also help with income maximisation including



benefits claims, access to grants from charitable organisations and food and fuel security.

3.23 The EHSCP is teaming up with Home Energy Scotland (HES) who will be providing fuel poverty support and impartial advice through various resources including grant funding for energy efficiency and heating improvements, energy carers longer term casework and promotional self-referral materials placed in RIE and WGH acute sites. The RESET team will work closely with HES and will be trained to refer via their portal to support people on discharge and to arrange for HES to visit (to replace for free an old boiler in over 75's). Linkage to HES is set out in the table below:

To prevent admission	At front door	Pre-Discharge	Day of Discharge	Post-Discharge
Provide staff with access to a referral portal to access Home Energy Scotland services.	Provide posters to enable patients to self-refer for assistance from Home Energy Scotland using a QR code.	Provide posters and leaflets to raise awareness of support available from Home Energy Scotland.	Ensure that eligible customers are referred for Warmer Home Scotland. The criteria is listed here and we would be delighted to provide discharge staff with training and resources to access this free help.	Provide leaflets to raise awareness of support available from Home Energy Scotland.

Carers

3.24 EHSCP is responding to the national State of Caring in Scotland 2022 Report [State of Caring in Scotland 2022: A cost-of-living crisis for unpaid carers in Scotland - Carers UK](#). The position described for carers in the report is consistent with what we know in Edinburgh and the plans being implemented in accordance with the EIJB Joint Carers' Strategy. The national recommendations are welcomed, and will make a significant difference for carers, particularly if the actions indicated for Scottish and UK Governments are financially supported in full during implementation. Recommendation 9 of the report seeks to consider what can be introduced locally to support carers incomes and their health and wellbeing. This includes:

- Extending the Scottish Welfare Fund to include unpaid carers experiencing hardship.
- Expanding social prescribing of free leisure access
- Expanding access to taxi cards or other such schemes to support transport costs and help those who are more isolated due to concerns over COVID



- Providing income maximisation services (or have an active referral system to these) across all services including in acute hospitals, primary care and community.
 - Expanding access to adult carer support plans, in particular offering them to all carers during the hospital discharge process.
 - Developing a more coordinated approach across health, social care and local council services to refer carers to third and community support including, in particular food support and fuel vouchers.
- 3.25 EHSCP is working with the Scottish Government to enhance local support for carers' income, and their health and wellbeing. It is seeking to expand the use of the Scottish Welfare Fund, social prescribing of free leisure and access to schemes to support transport costs and support for those who remain isolated due to concerns over COVID.
- 3.26 As part of the £7.5 million annual investment in the carer strategy in Edinburgh, key actions already underway to support carers are:
- £1.3 million investment for the identification of carers, and provision of information which includes income maximisation across communities, with the Edinburgh Carer Support Team ensuring carers are identified in acute hospitals, and link workers playing a valuable role across primary care in identifying support for people who may be experiencing poverty.
 - £1 million investment to support carer health and wellbeing.
 - Widespread roll out of adult carer support plans, including people who are identified as carers in hospital, with an investment of £3.4 million a year for associated carer payments.
 - c£500k investment to enhance provision particularly over winter, when people feel pressure most of all, including one off payments for local communities and Edinburgh wide support:
 - £10k Winter pressures programme – older carers
 - £250k Additional carer assistance fund
 - £90k Cost of living benefits advice and information service – adult carers
 - £80k Enhanced Young Adult Carer cost of living support
 - £30k Parent carer cost of living crisis support - disabilities
 - £30k Enhanced cost of living benefits advice and Information - early years
 - £3.5k Carer cost of living groupwork – adult/ older carers
 - An active network of third sector provision to assist in monitoring and managing response to poverty.

City of Edinburgh Council

3.27 The City of Edinburgh Council continues to work with key agencies to deliver a network of support to help mitigate the cost of living crisis and has adopted a cash-first approach for people facing financial hardship, whilst also offering a range of support and advice.

Direct cash and crisis support

3.28 To support families on the lowest incomes during 2022, the City of Edinburgh Council invested a total of £8m in additional funds to:

- provide one-off direct cash payments to 31,900 low income families in the city, including two £100 payments for every child in receipt of Free School Meals - In total, this programme delivered a typical payment of £550 during the year for a low income family with 2 children;
- boost the level of funds available for crisis grant programmes, energy crisis grants, and food crisis projects in the city; and
- clear school meal related debts in Edinburgh.

3.29 This additional investment helped augment existing delivery of core support services delivered by the Council. During 2021/22 welfare and benefits teams supported:

- 33,000 households through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Almost 8,000 households through Discretionary Housing Payments
- Almost 9,000 children with Free School Meals payments, and 9,700 School Uniform Grants
- 32,600 applications for support through the Scottish Welfare Fund

3.30 These teams have also played a crucial role in administering a range of one off or short terms funds from the Scottish Government, a significant addition to their existing work. This included the Scottish Child Bridging Payments to families of young people who are entitled to free school meals, paying £3.2m to over 8,600 families in 2022-23, with a further £260 will be paid to eligible households in December 2022.

Prevention and early intervention

3.31 The Council's prevention team are leading and co-ordinating activity to make sure that key frontline staff have the skills and knowledge that they need to help people to get support with the cost of living, and that people know where to go for help.

1. Campaign and Key Messages

Lampost wraps and posters are being distributed during the week beginning 7 November. This timing was set to align with the Scottish Government's launch of their Cost of Living webpages and campaign.



2. Money Counts Training

The team launched Money Counts training courses during Challenge Poverty week, with 102 people taking part during October 2022. Dedicated sessions have been provided to library staff, Family and Household Support's North East Team and another to a multi-disciplinary group including primarily Housing Officers, Care Workers and a Social Worker. Evaluation to date shows:

- 93% of participants reported greater awareness of the causes and impact of poverty

'Poverty is something that everyone is talking about at the moment with the hike in energy costs and the cost of living in general; but the course really made you think of the impact by breaking it down in detail and providing statistical information on the impact within Scotland and Edinburgh.'

- 72% reported feeling more confident to identify those experiencing poverty and have conversations with them about their money worries.

'Ideas given on ways on how to have a conversation. I feel like I could have a conversation now more confidently than before'

- 90% felt more informed about where to signpost people for more information and support around a range of money worries.

'I found it difficult to find the appropriate information before but knowing that this has been pulled together into an easily accessible webpage is really helpful.'

- A final thought from one person was that *'There is an urgent, critical issue here. I'm in this line of work to help people, so if having what might seem like a difficult conversation is a necessity to help someone, so be it.'*

3. Cost of Living Webpage on the Council's Website

The team co-ordinated work to revise the Council's webpage, with input from the End Poverty Edinburgh citizens group. The new page was launched during Challenge Poverty Week. Google analytics showed that during the first month, the pages had 10,000 views with *'Help if you Are Worried About Money'* and *'Foodbank information'* being the most commonly viewed pages. Informal feedback from GPs and from the Money Counts training is that the revised webpages provide a useful and easily navigated source of information.

Support during the Cost of Energy Crisis

- 3.32 The Council's Culture and Wellbeing service are working with partners and organisations across the city to provide and promote "Warm and Welcoming" public spaces where people can keep warm and comfortable in the coming winter months and get support and advice to help alleviate food and fuel poverty. These



places include the Council's own libraries, community centres and museums and galleries.

- 3.33 The Council is developing a web page which includes a map showing the locations of the 28 libraries, along with details including opening times and the accessibility of the venue. Details of the community centres involved will be added at a later date.

Police Scotland

- 3.34 With regards to Edinburgh City Division's activities to address the cost of living crisis, these include but are not limited to the following:

- SPA/Police Scotland have been an accredited Living Wage employer since 2019, offering a minimum wage in excess of the Living Wage;
- The Senior Management Team are active participants across the city's strategic partnerships, wherein the cost of living crisis has been variously discussed and actions agreed.
- This commitment is replicated across the four localities, with officers engaged in local partnership work. As a practical example, funding has been provided to support various community based initiatives focused on supporting the most vulnerable, including the homeless community. The Beat Hunger Campaign in North East is one such example, wherein officers worked with partners to tackle food inequality through the provision of food boxes, which also included accessible materials relating to maximising income and providing health and educational support.
- Police Scotland remains committed to advancing its Public Health Policing approach which acknowledges underlying causes, including poverty / inequality / disadvantage. As an exemplar, the VOW team provides an innovative outreach programme, wherein officers work in tandem with peer-mentors, with 'lived experience' of the criminal justice system, addiction and trauma. The peer mentors have been pivotal to the success of this initiative, breaking down barriers and stigma, to facilitate engagement with those subject of long term criminal justice involvement, ensuring access / maximisation of welfare entitlements, and supporting their positive transition into education / training / work.
- Police Scotland is currently working with City of Edinburgh Council colleagues to adapt the established '1 in 5' training package to raise awareness amongst police officers and staff, this will include accredited signposting material.
- Officers have received trauma informed and anti-stigma inputs to raise awareness around the underlying causes of vulnerabilities and behaviours and how these may impact on choices / chances / life trajectories.



- The Prevention, Interventions and Partnership and local community teams continue to work with partners, including Trading Standards and the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, to raise awareness and provide crime prevention advice. Recent themes have included ‘scammers’ and acquisitive crime.
- Acknowledging that the officers and staff are not immune to cost of living concerns, various support mechanisms are in place.

Edinburgh College

- 3.35 To support students through the cost-of-living crisis, the College has set up, through ECSA (Edinburgh College Student Association) a free breakfast provision. This is a pilot project which will run until the Christmas break 2022 with a commitment to continue into 2023. There is also a small community café at Milton Road campus, led by curriculum, which is free, but customers can make a monetary donation if they wish.
- 3.36 There are Hubs on all 4 campuses set up by the Go Green team. Each campus hub has a designated area for a Community Fridge and Swap Shop where students can pick up free food and free clothing, books & accessories. Although the original impetus and funding for these services was very much from a low-carbon, waste-reduction perspective, they have quickly become a lifeline for students increasingly struggling to survive the cost of living crisis.
- 3.37 Financial assistance is available for students through Wellbeing Funds, and the college also offers a laptop loan scheme to support students who may be impacted by digital poverty.
- 3.38 Libraries and/or study rooms are available at all campuses as a ‘warm space’ for students.

NHS Lothian

- 3.39 NHS Lothian is responding to the cost of living crisis in a variety of ways.

Support for patients and families

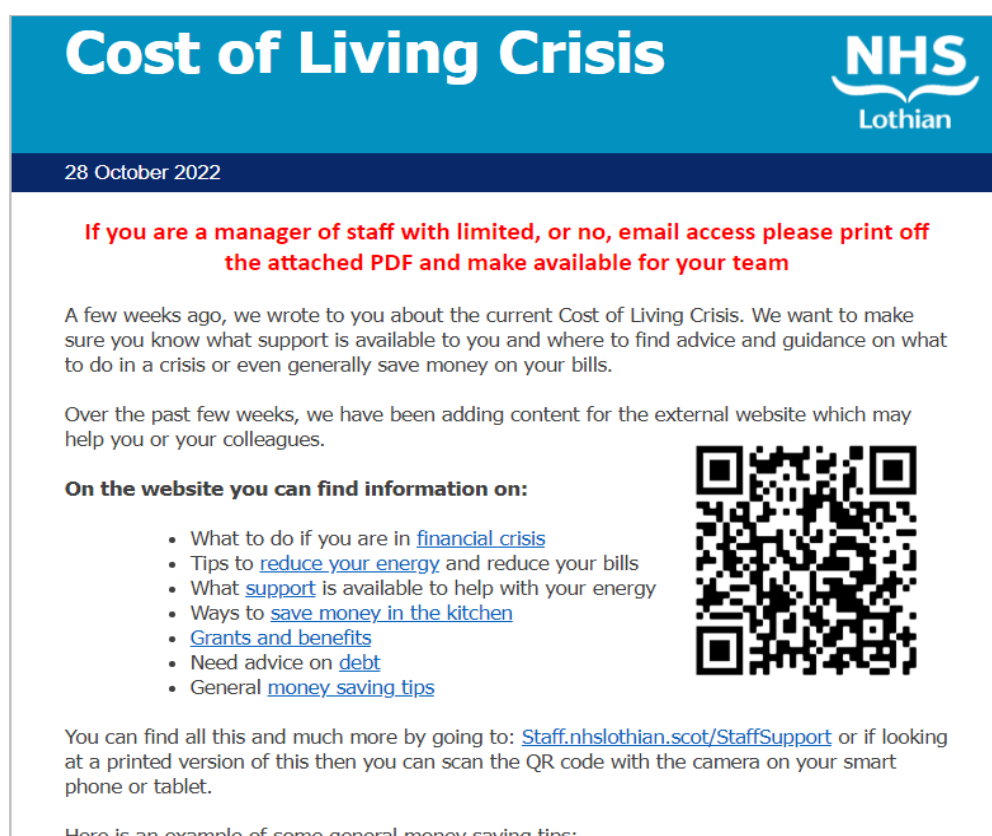
- 3.40 As part of ongoing work linked to the Anchor Institution agenda, NHS Lothian recently recommissioned welfare advice services across a number of their acute hospital sites (funded by the NHS Lothian Charity 2022-2027). These services are available to any patient, carer/family member or NHS Lothian staff on these sites who require financial information or advice. Whilst these services would have been commissioned anyway, their contribution to addressing the cost of living crisis for those accessing hospital care, and the staff working there, cannot be underestimated.
- 3.41 Work is also underway to offer staff training on financial wellbeing and raising the issue of money worries within the acute hospital settings. This training has been developed in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council and will initially be offered to staff working at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People in conjunction with partners in the third sector.



Support for staff

3.42 In terms of supporting staff, an ongoing programme of work has been established based on four broad areas. These include:

- Curation of all trusted cost of living and wellbeing resources and information in both digital and print format (please see screen shot below as example) so that staff have a trusted source of information.



Cost of Living Crisis **NHS**
Lothian

28 October 2022

If you are a manager of staff with limited, or no, email access please print off the attached PDF and make available for your team

A few weeks ago, we wrote to you about the current Cost of Living Crisis. We want to make sure you know what support is available to you and where to find advice and guidance on what to do in a crisis or even generally save money on your bills.

Over the past few weeks, we have been adding content for the external website which may help you or your colleagues.

On the website you can find information on:

- What to do if you are in [financial crisis](#)
- Tips to [reduce your energy](#) and reduce your bills
- What [support](#) is available to help with your energy
- Ways to [save money in the kitchen](#)
- [Grants and benefits](#)
- Need advice on [debt](#)
- General [money saving tips](#)

You can find all this and much more by going to: Staff.nhslothian.scot/StaffSupport or if looking at a printed version of this then you can scan the QR code with the camera on your smart phone or tablet.

Here is an example of some general money saving tips:

- In-person roadshows and 'lunch and learn' sessions on financial wellbeing topics including general welfare advice, income maximisation and energy cost saving advice. This programme of events also links to initiatives such as 'Talk Money Week' and warm spaces.
- Education and support for managers in reducing the stigma of financial wellbeing and effectively signposting staff to sources of advice and information. This includes awareness raising sessions and written information for managers and leaders across the organisation.
- Increase in provision of income maximisation services including capacity to increase staff access.



3.43 NHS Lothian has also achieved its Living Wage Accreditation. Work is ongoing to support our suppliers to conform to the living wage requirement.

4. Contact

Paper based on contributions by partners. Contact details of the relevant agency can be provided by contacting:

Michele Mulvaney, Strategy Manager (Communities)
michele.mulvaney@edinburgh.gov.uk

Cost of Living Impact – The dangers of tampering with energy meters

As people struggle with rising energy costs, there is the potential for an increase in domestic Gas and Electrical meter tampering. This is done in an attempt to save money on energy bills. Tampering/bypassing meters is not only illegal, it is extremely dangerous and poses serious risks, including:

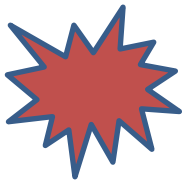


Electrocution

- 230v Domestic supply, 440v non-domestic.
- Risk of severe burns/hospitalisation/death
- Fire / Arcing
- Loss of power to property

Gas Escape

- Fire
- Explosion
- Suffocation



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have attended incidents where meter bypassing and tampering have occurred. Such incidents can be fatal and the practice is strongly condemned by SFRS.





If you witness, or suspect, meter tampering/bypassing please contact:

Scottish Power on 105

Scottish Gas Networks on 0800 111 999



Candle Safety

Candles can create a relaxing atmosphere and may be seen as a cheaper, alternative source of light (and perhaps even heat) during the cost of living crisis. This could lead to an increase in domestic fires as a result of distraction or careless use. A safer option is to use battery operated flameless candles which provide a similar flickering effect. Where naked flame candles are used, the following advice should be followed:

- Candles should always be held firmly in tight fitting holders on a flat, stable heat-resistant surface.
- Keep candles away from curtains, clothes, cushions, paper or other combustible items and out of any draughts/wind.



- Without additional holders, tealights can become very hot and melt through plastic if placed directly on a surface.
- Do not put candles under a shelf, they can heat up the underside and cause a fire.
- Ensure candles are out of the reach of children or pets and never leave them alone with burning candles.
- Do not use candles if you are feeling sleepy or have consumed alcohol.
- Never leave candles unattended. Always extinguish candles if you leave the room, no matter how long you intend to be.

For further information, please arrange a **Home Fire Safety Visit**:

- www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/home-fire-safety-visit
- 0800 0731 999
- Text “FIRE” to 80800