

# Shotts Healthy Living

Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance

December 2024  
SGN



**SGN**

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## 1 Description

Project title	Shotts Healthy Living
Funding GDN(s)	SGN
New/Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New
Date of PEA submission:	December 2024
Project contact name:	Margaret Hamilton
Project contact number/email:	<a href="mailto:Margaret.hamilton@sgn.co.uk">Margaret.hamilton@sgn.co.uk</a>
Total cost (£k)	£5,306
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£5,306

## 2 Problem statement

North Lanarkshire is an area with high levels of urban and rural deprivation, with some of the areas within the ward (Fortissat, which covers the town of Shotts and surrounding areas), being positioned in the top 10% of the overall SIMD rank.

Income and Employment Deprivation also shows that the percentage in this area is 20.29%, compared to an average of 16.6% for the wider North Lanarkshire area.

Alcohol related hospital stays are also much higher in North Lanarkshire compared to Scotland in general, and children living in poverty here is much higher than the average for Scotland. ([North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Locality Profile](#))

Unlike nearby areas, Shotts lacks a local Citizens Advice Bureau, making it harder for residents to access essential support services, and with increases in running costs, there is a risk that without further support Getting Better Together will be unable to continue to fund the part-time position of a Financial Wellbeing Officer.

The removal of this role would reduce access to crucial support for individuals facing financial hardship, leaving them to navigate rising levels of food and fuel poverty within the community.

Reduced access to a full range of services available through other organisation like Home Energy Scotland, and a Healthy Living Centre within the community, would also limit support which addresses immediate financial challenges and connects individuals to health, wellbeing, and social support programs that promote long-term resilience.

A current trial to extend reach in nearby villages has already shown promising outcomes, demonstrating a clear need and positive response from residents who otherwise struggle to access centralised services.

## 3 Scope and objectives

The project will target individuals and families in Shotts and surrounding rural villages who are experiencing food and fuel poverty, particularly those who may face barriers to accessing mainstream support due to location, lack of transport, or limited digital access, and aims to alleviate hardship, enhance financial stability, and foster resilience within the community during challenging times.

By supporting the provision of a part-time Financial Wellbeing Officer, the project will enable ongoing support for communities facing food and fuel poverty in an area with high levels of urban and rural deprivation. This will enable the project to continue to assist individuals with urgent needs related to food, fuel, and other essentials.

The Financial Wellbeing officer will work closely with both statutory and CVS partners ensuring that households receive the help they require. This role will be pivotal in delivering direct financial support and coordinating referrals to partner organisations.

The project will target individuals and families in Shotts and surrounding rural villages who are experiencing food and fuel poverty, particularly those who may face barriers to accessing mainstream support due to location, lack of transport, or limited digital access.

The Healthy Living Centre in Shotts will provide an accessible space for both drop-in support and scheduled appointments, allowing the project to reach those in immediate need.

An experienced team of staff and volunteers will assist with delivering the wraparound support. This includes helping individuals by providing additional referrals, and connecting clients with health and wellbeing programs.

Ultimately, the project will enhance the sustainability of the financial wellbeing services, ensuring they remain a key pillar of community support, and will enable GBT to provide continued, more comprehensive support to those who need it most.

## 4 Why the project is being funded through the VCMA

The project delivers against SGNs Vulnerability Strategy by providing targeted support to households most at risk of living in fuel poverty based upon their personal circumstances and their geographical location.

The partnership service aligns to our strategic ambition to support customers in energy crisis, helping those in fuel poverty to access services including the Priority Services Register, awareness of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide and energy efficiency advice, empowering vulnerable households to use energy safely, efficiently, and affordably.

This partnership aligns to the SGN commitment to deliver support services customers aligned to our four strategic pillars:

1. Services Beyond the Meter
2. Supporting Priority Customer Groups
3. **Fuel Poverty & Energy Affordability**
4. Carbon Monoxide Awareness

This project aligns to strategic pillar 3 (with outcomes in pillar 4).

## 5 Evidence of stakeholder/customer support

### 5.1 Stakeholder Support

**Cash First Event:** When GBT attended a 'Cash First' event, the Tackling Poverty Team stated how keen they are to work in partnership with GBT to identify people they can help, stating that many households won't go to the council for help if they have rent or council tax arrears etc, as they think this will be picked up and go against them.

**Neighbourhood Networks:** This organisation has fed back that they feel the services provided by GBT has been a great service for their client group, as many of their members have accessed the service which has benefited them financially. Comments such as "easily accessible," "seen in a timely fashion with no waiting," and "because the group are in the building and know Mags (Financial Wellbeing Officer) it helps them feel comfortable in sharing their situation."

## 5.2 Beneficiary Feedback

Feedback from beneficiaries include the following statements:

*"The food parcel came at just the right time. We were really struggling to make meals stretch, and it gave us a bit of breathing space."*

*"It wasn't just about the food; the advice we got from Mags really opened our eyes to the help that's out there. We didn't know we could get support with our energy bills and benefits"*

*"I came for the support, but I ended up joining a community fitness group. It's been great for my health and has helped me meet new people"*

*"I've been struggling for months, and it felt like I was drowning in bills and stress. The 1:1 support gave me a safe space to talk, and it helped me feel like I could actually tackle my financial problems instead of just worrying about them."*

*"Before I got help with my flat, I was constantly stressed about bills and my health. I didn't feel like I could manage anything. After the improvements, it's like I can finally breathe again. I don't have to worry so much about being cold, and I'm starting to feel more like I'm in control of my life."*

## 5.3 SGN's Vulnerable Customer Steering Group

During the shaping of the SGN business plan we committed to support at least 250,000 vulnerable households to use gas safely, affordably, and efficiently over GD2. During 2023, following ongoing engagement with Ofgem, SGN's Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Group and Vulnerable Steering Group we increased this commitment to support 500,000 vulnerable households, those most at risk of living in a cold and unhealthy home. SGN have used data and insights to develop our programme, this has underpinned how this commitment to support those most in need from a strategic ambition into an extensive partnership-based delivery programme.

As we have progressed our portfolio of projects throughout GD2, our strategic steering group reiterated the vital impact we could have by co-ordinating our activities with others to support those most in need, those most impacted by the cost of living and energy cost crisis. The VSG have recommended that we look at ways in which we can build stronger links with other organisations including collaborating with other utilities, health services and charities to deliver support services that tackle the fuel poverty gap and the underlying causes of fuel poverty.

# 6 Outcomes, associated actions, and success criteria

## 6.1 Outcomes

The project aims to alleviate hardship, enhance financial stability, and foster resilience within the community during current challenging times.

The project will target individuals and families in Shotts and surrounding rural villages who are experiencing food and fuel poverty, particularly those who may face barriers to accessing mainstream support due to location, lack of transport, or limited digital access, and aims to alleviate hardship, enhance financial stability, and foster resilience within the community.

The Financial Wellbeing Officer will provide crucial guidance and support to individuals with urgent needs related to food, fuel, and other essentials, and will be pivotal in delivering direct financial support and coordinating referrals to partner organisations.

## 6.2 Success Criteria

120 households will receive support including information about the Priority Services Register and Carbon Monoxide awareness. This will be provided at targeted outreach events, in-person, by phone or through online communication.

From which we forecast:

- 120 PSR conversations
- 120 CO Awareness conversations
- 96 Supported to access benefits eligibility checks
- 72 Supported to access other crisis support – food, clothing, or housing
- 60 Supported to sign up to the Priority Services Register
- 60 CO Alarms distributed
- 60 Supported to access emergency crisis funding
- 36 Supported with in-depth personalised energy advice
- 36 Supported to access heat the person items
- 28 Supported to access debt advice
- 72 Households supported in other ways within the community

### In addition:

Around 75-100 referrals over the six-month project period, depending on the demand and individual needs of each family or individual. The Financial Wellbeing Officer and team will work closely with households to identify suitable resources and services that provide targeted support.

The project will also be providing holistic, wraparound support through a Healthy Living Centre to promote health and wellbeing across all ages, offering a range of programs that support both physical and mental health.

Services include exercise groups, mental health workshops, and social activities that help individuals build resilience and improve their overall wellbeing. This will ensure individuals are linked into wider community support services, including peer support groups, befriending schemes, and other local resources that foster long-term stability and wellbeing.

By offering this holistic approach, the project aims to not only alleviate immediate financial pressures but also empower individuals to engage in the broader support networks available, creating lasting positive impacts on their health and quality of life.

## 7 Project partners and third parties involved

**Getting Better Together:** GBT will be responsible for the delivery of this project, drawing on their established infrastructure, experienced staff, and strong community ties.

GBT have strong, trusted relationships with local families and extensive knowledge of the specific challenges facing the community, including rural deprivation. Their proactive approach, combined with commitment to outreach and flexibility, allows them to engage and support those most at risk of hardship.

As the sole delivery partner for this project, GBT will be responsible for the direct provision of financial support and the coordination of referrals, however, will work closely with the referral partners such as Home Energy Scotland, The Wise Group, Energy and Utility Providers, Food Banks, North Lanarkshire Carers Network, Debt Management Services, and Mental Health and Wellbeing Services.

These partnerships will be vital in ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive support tailored to their specific needs and ensure a comprehensive support network that addresses both immediate and long-term needs, while using EKF funds to provide direct assistance where possible.

- **Home Energy Scotland:** Will provide households with advice on energy-saving measures and available grants to improve home energy efficiency
- **The Wise Group:** Will support households with access to energy advice, employability programs, and further resources to alleviate fuel poverty
- **Energy and Utility Providers:** Will provide assistance with payment plans, emergency support, and access to hardship funds
- **Food Banks and Food Pantries - Pauls Parcels:** Will provide immediate support with food security.
- **North Lanarkshire Carers Network:** Will support carers with access to respite services and related resources
- **Debt Management Services:** Such as Step Change, The Local Authority Financial Inclusion Team and Christians Against Poverty, for advice on managing debt
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Services:** To address the mental health impact of financial stress, including local NHS programs and mental health charities.

## 8 Potential for new learning

### Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to day-to-day activities, ensuring progress can be tracked, impact can be measured, and enables effective reporting.

Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are in place with data regularly being captured to ensure the project meets requirements.

This project will continue to use established systems to record customer interactions and provide data for monthly reporting, capturing data for the Financial Wellbeing Officer role, tracking key metrics such as the number of households supported, types of referrals made, and outcomes achieved (e.g., energy advice, debt management, food support). This data will be expanded to include additional indicators relevant to the EKF funds, such as the number of people engaged, the nature of financial support provided, and any follow-up actions taken.

### Learning

The learning gained from this project will be instrumental in shaping future projects. The increased engagement with households facing food and fuel poverty will help refine outreach strategies and service delivery, particularly in reaching rural communities like Salsburgh. It will also enable identification gaps in support and areas where improvements can be made, helping better tailor services to meet evolving needs.

Additionally, the insights gained from working closely with referral partners and understanding the wider challenges households face will inform future priorities and allow more holistic services that integrate financial wellbeing with health and social support.

This project will also provide valuable data on the types of support most in demand, enabling informed decisions about expanding services in the future, and ensuring the continuous reach of new communities in need.



## 9 Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations

We and the other Gas Distribution Networks worked with leading social impact research consultancy SIRIO Strategies on the development of the Industry Standard Social Value Framework and supporting GDN Rulebook. We have used that GDN Rulebook to carry out an assessment of the financial and wellbeing outcomes applicable to our services for vulnerable customers incorporated in this partnership. Carrying out an assessment of the predicted outcomes we forecast a positive net Social Return on Investment of £2.25.

### Social Value Measurement

<b>Total cost*</b>	£5,306
<b>Total gross present value</b>	£17,228.70
<b>Net Present Value (NPV)</b>	£11,922.70
<b>SROI</b>	£2.25

## 10 VCMA Project start and end date

The project will run from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025.

## 11 Geographic area

Shotts and surrounding rural villages in North Lanarkshire

## 12 Approval

SGN has worked alongside Getting Better Together to co-design this partnership and ensure that its ambition contributes to the delivery of our Vulnerability Strategy, the guidance from our Vulnerable Customer Steering Group and adheres to the updated VCMA governance criteria.

The SROI has been internally assessed by SGN using the GDN rulebook as part of the Industry Standard Social Value Framework, the current partnership scope has been forecast at adding an additional £2.25 for each £1 invested, this will be monitored closely to ensure we adhere to the VCMA governance criteria.

To support the partnership to deliver the success criteria outcomes as detailed, the partners will review progress monthly and quarterly to learn, share best practices and address any delivery issues.

The PEA has been reviewed and approved by the business lead Kerry Potter and the Director of Customer Services Maureen McIntosh.