

# Anti Poverty Annual Report 2025



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## 1. Introduction

We are pleased to share with you our latest report highlighting the support provided to Calderdale residents during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Over the past year, our collective efforts have made a meaningful difference in many people's lives, helping them to alleviate financial pressures and access vital support services.

Whilst we acknowledge the scale of the challenge, especially as we head into the colder months, we also want to celebrate the outstanding work of our local partners and community organisations, whose contributions have been instrumental in delivering support and building resilience across Calderdale.

As Councillors we are committed to the Council's [Vision 2034](#) for Calderdale to be a place full of opportunity, where we can all live a larger life and where everyone will have reason to be full of hope to enable us to thrive and get us through testing times. Of course, we can only achieve this with our partners through collaboration and partnerships such as the Anti-Poverty Partnership.

We invite you to read the report and reflect on the progress made, and the work still to be done.



Councillor Danielle Durrans  
Cabinet Member  
Public Services and  
Communities



Councillor Scott Patient  
Cabinet Member  
Climate Action and Housing



Councillor Sarah Courtney  
Cabinet Member  
Regeneration and Transport

## 2. Context and Key Priorities

The Anti-Poverty Action Plan has three key priorities:

Key Priority	Outcome
1. Prevention	Preventing local residents from falling into poverty
2. Intervention	Providing support to local residents who have fallen into poverty
3. Resilience	Keeping residents out of poverty

The partnership structures outlined on page 5 show the groups that meet regularly as part of the Anti-Poverty Partnership. All our events are advertised on our [Eventbrite page](#). The four thematic forums highlighted below have an open membership. The Anti-Poverty Steering Group ensures that the key priorities of the plan are delivered, and links are made to other key strategic groups such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Inclusive Economy Partnership. The Steering Group is made up of a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners and meetings are chaired by Calderdale Council.

There is a significant amount of activity by partners which can be viewed in more detail in the action plan on the [Money and Wellbeing webpages](#). Activities are wide ranging and cover housing, welfare and debt, food and fuel, education, employment and training, health and wellbeing and early intervention and signposting.

Factsheets for frontline workers have been updated and expanded during 2024/25 and are published alongside monthly newsletters.

The action plan is reviewed and updated annually and updates on each action are provided by lead officers.

The anti-poverty dashboards hold the latest data and can be viewed on [Dataworks](#).

### 3. Partnership Structure



## Anti-Poverty Steering Group

## Anti-Poverty Events Programme

Gambling harms task & finish group (June – Dec 25)

Healthy Holidays Steering Group

### ANTI-POVERTY ACTION PLAN

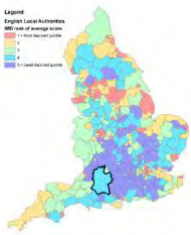
Money and Debt  
Forum

Affordable  
Warmth Forum

Food Poverty  
Forum

Digital Inclusion  
Forum

## 4. Key Issues



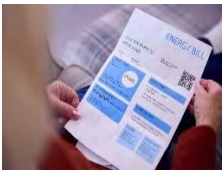
Index of Multiple Deprivation: Calderdale is ranked 66th most deprived local authority out of 317 in England. 10 areas in the Borough are within the 10% most deprived in the country. 14.9 % of people live in poverty in Calderdale compared to 12.9% in England. The Index is updated every 3 to 5 years (next update expected 30 October 2025).



12,150 (30.5%) children aged 0 to 15 in Calderdale live in poverty. Rates vary between wards from 14% to 67% (2023/2024 data). This is an increase of 523 from the previous year.



Calderdale job density was 0.85 per resident in 2023, slightly higher than 0.82 for the Yorkshire and Humber region. Average wage per hour of people who work in Calderdale is £18.11 in 2024, compared with £17.18 for the Yorkshire and Humber region.



In 2023 15.1% of households in Calderdale were "fuel-poor" compared with 11.4% in England using the Government's definition of fuel poverty (Low income low energy efficiency). The worse affected ward (Park) is as high as 24%.



There were 686 individual insolvencies in Calderdale in 2024, compared with 676 in 2023. There were 463 Debt Relief Orders in Calderdale in 2024, compared with 427 in 2023.



19,844 households claiming housing benefit or universal credit with a housing element in Calderdale in May 2025, compared with 19,582 in May 2024. Town, Ovenden, Park, Illingworth and Mixenden and Warley wards are the highest with 1,600 or more claimants.





9,834 pupils are eligible for free school meals in Calderdale (May 2025), which represents 27.9% of all school aged children. This is an increase of 557 pupils compared to May 2024. Nationally, one in six people are experiencing food insecurity (January 25, [Trussell](#)).



Nationally, 7.9m working age adults lack basic digital skills and 21 million adults can't complete the essential digital tasks for work. 69% of those with no basic skills have a disability or impairment. 61% believe there's not enough support for people who can't get online (Digital Nation UK 2025). Find out more at the [Good Things Foundation](#).



5,470 (4.3%) people aged 16 plus claiming benefits were seeking work. Calderdale's total claimant count reduced between August 2024 and August 2025 from 6,170 to 5,470. In 2025 there were 213 young people aged 16 and 17 were not in education, employment or training (3.9%).



In the first 9 months of 2025 (January – September) over 12,000 food parcels were distributed, over 23,000 community meals served and nearly 5000 affordable food 'shops' were undertaken. These figures are taken from the groups who submit data and does not include all provision across Calderdale. Compared to the same period last year, food parcels have increased slightly, community meals remained consistent and affordable food shops has increased slightly.



The percentage of young children achieving a good level of development in their first year of school in 2025 was 65.3% in Calderdale and 68.3% in England. The attainment gap in achievement at Level 2 at age 19 between young people previously eligible for free school meals and those not eligible was 20.3% in 2024.

## 5. Vulnerable Groups



61% of people in poverty live in a family where someone works at least part time. In 2023 89% of West Yorkshire households with dependent children had at least one person in work compared with 88% in 2022. The average income in the borough was £26,300 in 2023 and £24,900 in 2022.



2,060 adults claiming Employment and Support Allowance have mental and behavioural disorders (February 2025).



4,454 older people claimed Pension Credit in February 2025, compared to 4,333 in February 2024.



25,310 people in Calderdale were entitled to disability benefits in February 2025, compared to 22,477 in February 2024. Provisional estimates indicate employment rates for disabled people were 48.5% in June 2025 compared to 46.6% in June 2024.

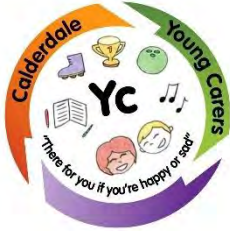


The proportion of males and females claiming work related benefits reduced in the last 12 months. It was 5.4% in August 2024 and 5.1% in August 2025 for males. It was 4.2% in August 2024 and 3.5% in August 2025 for females. Provisional estimates indicate the proportion of males who were economically inactive has reduced from 23.5% in June 2024 to 18.1% in June 2025. In contrast provisional estimates indicate economic inactivity rates increased for females from 27.5% in June 2024 to 30.2% in June 2025.



In 2024/25 Calderdale Council completed 1,250 assessments for homelessness compared to 1,157 the previous year. Of these, 1,224 were assessed as eligible for support in terms of prevention (864) or relief from homelessness (340).





In October 2025 there were 646 young people aged under 18 providing unpaid care, compared to 602 in November 2024 (Calderdale Young Carers Service).



49% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were in education, employment or training in 2025, compared to 50% in 2024.



Poverty rates are very high for some minority ethnic groups. Over half of people in Bangladeshi (56%) and around half of people in Pakistani (49%) households lived in poverty between 2020/21 and 2022/23, with even higher poverty levels for children in those households (67% and 61% respectively). Around 4 in 10 people in households headed by people from Black African backgrounds (40%) were in poverty, with around half of children in these households in poverty (January 25, [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)).



Around 9 in 20 (44%) children in lone-parent families live in poverty, compared with 5 in 20 of those in couple families (26%).



Pupils eligible for free school meals in Calderdale can access the Healthy Holidays programme. Calderdale has a high take up rate of 40%, which is well above the national average post summer 2024 of 21.5%. The take up in summer 2025 reached over 70%.

## 6. Case Study: Anti-Poverty Steering Group

### Supporting frontline workers and residents with essential COL information

The group has overseen the development of a range of factsheets and guides for frontline workers, including:

- Cost of Living Factsheet
- Support with Digital Factsheet
- Affordable Warmth Guide
- Children and Young People's Education Guide

These are all available to partner organisations on a central One Drive folder.

#### Cost of Living Factsheet for Frontline Workers in Calderdale (September 2025)

This is our fifth edition of the factsheet to provide you with information about the cost-of-living and how to support people living in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty. It is recommended that frontline workers spend at least 30 minutes reading the factsheet and refer back to it regularly. This is everyone's business with wider impacts being seen on education, employment, housing, crime and health and wellbeing. The [Income and Wellbeing](#) web pages are updated regularly to support residents and frontline workers with the latest information. Everybody is doing an amazing job in supporting the growing number of people who continue to face financial hardship.

**Click on the links and icons for further information**

**Food Support:** Healthier foods are more than twice as expensive per calorie as less healthy foods, with healthier foods increasing in price at twice the rate in the past 2 years. In order to eat healthily, the most deprived fifth of the population would need to spend 45% of their disposable income on food, rising to 70% for those households with children. The numbers of people accessing [food support](#) on a weekly basis remains high. There are 5 [social supermarkets](#) operating in Halifax, Morland and Brighouse offering affordable food from as little as £3 per bag of shopping (6 items).

**Health & Wellbeing:** The cost-of-living crisis and struggling with money worries and debt can impact the physical and mental [health](#) of residents. Services, including Staying Well, Healthy Minds, Samaritans, NHS Talking Therapies and Andy's Man Club are there to help. Low-income households may be eligible for free travel to receive NHS treatment or help with prescription costs. Households with someone who is living with a cancer diagnosis or is terminally ill may be eligible for financial support from charities such as Macmillan and Marie Curie. [Mental Health Crisis Broshures](#) [Socia](#) is a debt respite scheme which can provide protection for people who are in debt and receiving mental health crisis treatment.

**Household bills and staying warm:** The energy price cap is set at £1,720 per year for a typical household using both gas and electricity and paying by direct debit (1 July to 30 September 2025). This represents a 7% decrease from the previous period (£1,849). The price cap changes every 3 months so check [Citizens website](#) for the latest information. [How to heat a home](#) can be provided by the Healthy Homes Service and Greener Together Energy Service. Citizens Advice also provide a COL assessment starting with energy (including a benefit check) and provide free energy workshops for clients (call 0800 2787879 or use the [contact us](#) form). Take a look at our [energy bills](#) section for tips to keep safe and warm as well as help and support available. You can find your nearest warm welcoming place [here](#). The [Warm Home Discount](#) and [Cold Weather Payments](#) are available to eligible households. Households who are in emergency need and cannot pay their energy bills may be referred for a fuel voucher - refer to the Affordable Warmth Guide for full details.

#### Cost of living Support with digital factsheet

This factsheet has been produced to help frontline workers support clients who face digital barriers. There are many benefits to being online including being better off and getting better value for goods and services. People without digital devices, internet access, data or basic IT skills face major barriers and services. People without digital devices, internet access, data or basic IT skills face major barriers and services. People without digital devices, internet access, data or basic IT skills face major barriers and services. People without digital devices, internet access, data or basic IT skills face major barriers and services.

Please use this information to talk to your friends, family and clients about digital support.

**Broadband and phone services**

**Cheap broadband deals for people on benefits**  
Social tariffs are low-cost broadband packages for people who get certain benefits, such as Universal Credit. For more about this and to see the full list of packages available, visit: [Ofcom](#) and [Money Saving Expert](#).

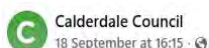
Free broadband could get six months free broadband with TalkTalk or their local Fibrecentre Plus. There is no contract and no usage limit, and or the six months, you have the option to cancel the service or contribute on a standard TalkTalk contract. Speak to your provider if you qualify.

**Anyone can get**  
Find out how to get the best deals for:

**adband bill? Speak to your provider as soon as possible**

**ad and pay by card. For example,**  
- it's a better deal  
- it's better deals you've seen elsewhere

The group agrees a communications plan annually, promoting a number of awareness raising campaigns throughout the year for residents. On average, 4-6 topics are covered each month with specific messages promoted on social media and newsletters. A few examples are shown below on Pension Credit and Carer's Allowance:



Calderdale Council  
18 September at 16:15 · 🌐

Are you claiming your Pension Credit? Figures suggest that around a third of our eligible residents might not be getting the benefits they are entitled to. If you have recently reached state pension age you may be eligible. You can check this online 🌟 <https://ow.ly/zX7a50WXVny>



Calderdale Council  
7 August · 🌐

Are you aged 66 or over with caring responsibilities? Even if you're not paid Carer's Allowance, you could still receive a Carer Addition payment on top of Pension Credit. Find out more about Carer Addition payment 🌟 <https://ow.ly/Y2wc50WBntx>



## 7. Case Study: Food Poverty Forum

### Fantastic collaboration in Brighouse



#### Background

Working in Partnership

Following a Food Poverty Forum meeting during which Citizens Advice Calderdale spoke about a project working with Happy Days (to give clients supermarket shops instead of food parcels), Brighouse Central Food bank approached a local funder to obtain a grant to replicate the project in Brighouse.

#### How did stakeholders come together?

Brighouse Central Food Bank and Focus4Hope already work together, they are located close to each other and serve the same community. They have collaborated numerous times previously, but this is the first funded project.

#### What did the intervention/activity look like?

The Food Bank are now in a position to distribute vouchers to service users who they feel are ready to take the next step and move on from their support to a more independent way of obtaining their food. The vouchers can be redeemed at the Focus4Hope Food Club, which aims to reduce dependency on food banks and free emergency food provision, by offering a low-cost food market, with high quality fresh and store cupboard food for a low weekly membership fee of £10. In addition, there are opportunities to talk to one of the Focus4hope team who can offer further support and referrals to other services. By working together in this way, Brighouse Central Food Bank are ensuring that their service users are moving towards a more sustainable future, whilst at the same time, protecting stock for those who are facing emergency, crisis situations.

#### Positive outcomes

- Prevention - Fostering greater co-operation and co-ordination, sharing of knowledge, skills and resources across food support providers via the Food Poverty Forum
- Intervention- Supporting pathways to food resilience for local residents

*Case Study: K had been attending Brighouse Food bank off and on for a year. He is an educated and sociable young man, who has served overseas in the British army and subsequently has a diagnosis of PTSD. He has a history of drug dependency but has been actively engaging in a recovery programme and has been clean for over a year. K managed to get a job but had to use a lot of his salary to pay off historical debts, so he didn't have much left for food. Every week when he went to collect a food parcel, he would update them on his circumstances and tell them how many months he had been clean for. He also reconnected with his family during this time and was now spending time with his mum. K was keen to get recipe ideas, so that he could make the most of his food parcel contents. During his time with the food bank, he was signposted to Noah's Ark in Halifax, who were able to advise him on debt management. He was also given vouchers to spend at the Focus4Hope social supermarket. Whilst there, K engaged in Focus4Hope's budgeting course. K now has a better job with more money, and the food bank haven't seen him for a while and are hopeful that he is now living an independent life.*



## Next Steps

Once the client has accessed an emergency food parcel, they will be given vouchers to use at focus4hope's social supermarket. They can then access the additional support they have in place, such as the Friday drop in sessions and the Budget Like A Boss!!!! course. After this, they will have a meeting at Focus4hope to go through their finances with the aim to equip them with the knowledge and skills to move away from emergency food provision.

[Brighthouse Central Foodbank - Facebook](#)

[Focus4Hope - Facebook](#)



**FOCUS4HOPE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BETTER LIVES ARE OFFERING A NEW WEEKLY SUPPORT DROP IN**

This is a new service for any adults over 18, providing the support you need to stay healthy, independent and in control of your life for as long as possible.

We can help you by:

- Providing information about health and well-being
- Providing general health checks carried out by members of the Focus4Hope team
- Promoting independence and preventing the need for formal services like home care and residential care
- Offering support for Carers
- Providing information about Telecare, pendant, alarms and other technology
- Providing information about equipment and adaptations for your home
- Providing information and support with accessing community groups and social activities
- Referring for further support as required

Weekly from: **FRIDAY 3RD OCTOBER**  
**9.30am-12.00pm** at our **Community Hub**  
12 Huddersfield Road, Brighthouse, West Yorkshire HD6 1JZ  
(Access from Bethel Street car park)

**BETTER LIVES**

**NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED - JUST DROP IN AND TALK TO US**



Listen to Rachel and Louise talk about the partnership between Brighthouse Central Foodbank and Focus4Hope.



## 8. Case Study: Affordable Warmth Forum

### Co-ordinating and promoting the affordable warmth offer to frontline services

The Affordable Warmth Forum co-ordinates the work of a wide range of partners to ensure all the support and advice is complimentary and not duplicated. The Forum regularly updates the Affordable Warmth Guide which explains to frontline workers the range of support offers in place and how to refer clients. It also runs an Energy Officers Network to provide networking opportunities, ensure that officers have the latest national and local information and to best target resources, particularly during the winter months.

A summary of the Calderdale-wide offer is provided below from the guide:



Affordable warmth and energy advice on:

- Meter reading
- Help people understanding billing and energy switching
- Managing energy debts and dealing with energy complaints
- Energy saving tips
- Accessing financial support schemes
- Priority Services Register
- Help with some small measures
- Training for staff and community groups



Energy efficiency improvements to increase thermal comforts and reduce energy costs for residents with certain health conditions which are evidenced to be made worse by the cold. This includes temporary electric radiators, small heating repairs, boiler replacements and loft insulation.



Newground Together operates a fuel voucher scheme offering fuel voucher support to customers on pre-payment meters. Referrals are being accepted until Mid-March. Referrals can only be accepted through a registered fuel voucher partner.



- Affordable warmth and energy advice on meter reading, energy switching, heating systems and repayment/energy debt
- Installation of small measures including LEDs, draught-proofing, reflective radiator panels, warm pack items
- Training for staff and community groups
- Home visits and phone consultations



Warm Homes Programme:

- Providing practical advice about keeping warm
- Home visits installing free energy saving devices such as draught excluders, radiator panels, timers and cold alarms
- Installation free energy saving light bulbs
- Information and referrals to other services

In addition to the five Calderdale offers, Halifax Opportunities Trust support their clients to stay warm and save energy by providing information, signposting and emergency fuel vouchers when needed.





The following three case studies illustrate how the signposting and referrals are working in practice.

### 1. Newground Together Energy Home Visit

The client has a three-year-old son and is living in private rented accommodation with her sister, and both adults in the household have health conditions and are unemployed. They are also in debt with their energy provider and have set up a payment plan. There is also damp and mould in the property and pests. The participant has spoken to their landlord but doesn't seem to be heard and has now been given an eviction notice for the end of December.

Support package included:

- Help from the Newground Together Employment & Skills Team to look for part-time work
- Referred for fuel vouchers
- Referred for housing support through Together Housing
- Referred for energy home visit as fuel poverty identified. In addition to tailored energy advice, clients benefitted from insulation (radiator foil), window seals and draught excluders, timer plugs, LED lightbulbs, electric blanket, air fryer, carbon monoxide detector and a hygrometer. Household added to Priority Services Register.
- Referral to Citizens Advice Calderdale to support the participant to review what benefits they are entitled to claim, help with their debt, support with essential items, and help with form filling.
- Referred to Zarach for a new bed for the client's son (bed had broken)
- Support from EAST at Calderdale Council
- Environmental Health are due to visit the property to review damp and mould and pest issues

### 2. Green Doctor Energy and Water Support for Low-Income Customer

Customer was previously with EDF Energy and used a prepayment meter, topping up approximately £40 per week. She expressed concern that this cost was unsustainable within her current budget and she was also struggling to pay her water bill.

Energy Bill Support:

- Switched to a smart meter with client's consent helping her to monitor her energy usage
- Following the switch the client was then eligible to switch to a Direct Debit payment method and gain access to a wider range of more affordable tariffs.
- Tailored energy-saving advice provided, highlighting the importance of ventilation and other practical tips.
- The customer was given two energy-efficient light bulbs and a Winter Warm Pack.

Water Bill Support:

The customer's annual water bill was £593.79, which was unaffordable. Team contacted Yorkshire Water on the customer's behalf and updated her account information. She was eligible for **Water Support Scheme**, pending submission of proof of income. Following this, the customer agreed to a payment plan of £38.72 per month via Direct Debit, covering both arrears and ongoing usage. Once the arrears are cleared, her annual bill will reduce to £270.

### 3. PowerCalderdale – Partnership Energy Advice and Support

Household Support Funding was used to provide a partnership approach to fuel poverty and energy advice. All providers shared their criteria and agreed to work in partnership with each

other to ensure there was a fair distribution of resources across the district. Stakeholders are all part of the Affordable Warmth subgroup and included on the Affordable Warmth Guide.

Referrals were made to PowerCalderdale for Donna and Thomas. Donna was referred for vouchers through the Newground Energy Service, Saving Together. During the assessment call, it was identified that, although she was working part-time, she sometimes had to choose between eating and heating. As she was a Together Housing tenant, the assessor made a referral to the Tenancy Sustainability Hub on her behalf. As a result, she received a £30 supermarket voucher from Calder Community Cares, a partner of the Together Housing Group.

Thomas struggles with severe anxiety, low self-esteem, and complex needs. His support worker informed him about the scheme and encouraged him to visit independently, which he did. This was a significant step for him, as he had been street homeless for quite some time and was not taking care of himself. He also had a high dependency on Class A drugs.

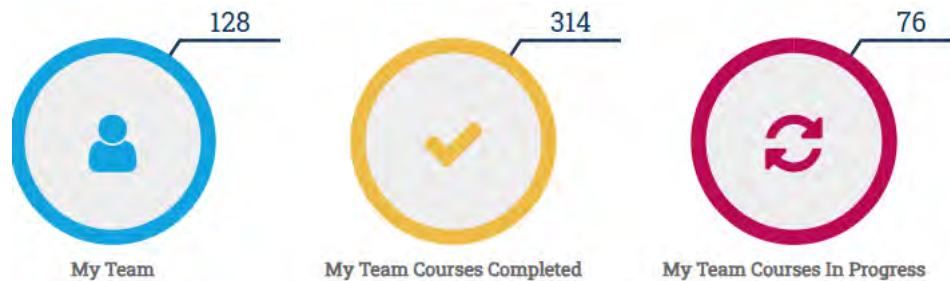
The service offered to Donna and Thomas was both preventative (keeping them from falling into further poverty) and resilience building. Donna reported feeling more financially stable after speaking with Together Housing and has continued to engage with the Energy Service. Thomas opened up about wanting to turn his life around and shared his difficulties with daily life. Since he didn't have a phone, we arranged for his vouchers to be sent to our Net Call email so he wouldn't have to wait for the post.

Thomas's support worker accompanied him to collect the vouchers and help him redeem them. Thomas planned to use the vouchers for electricity, which would allow him to wash himself and his clothes, giving him a reason to stay home and better manage his addiction. He expressed how much he appreciated the time we spent chatting with him, not just about fuel vouchers but also about his drug use and ways to keep himself busy.

## 9. Case Studies: Money and Debt Forum

### A place-based approach to Money Guidance

In 2024, Calderdale's place-based approach to providing money guidance was recognised nationally by the Money and Pensions Service. The current participation in the programme is summarised below:



Comments from money guiders and a photo from Talk Money Week in November 24.



"I can extend the wrap around support that I can provide to customers".

"I can help my clients more confidently with regards to money".

"It improves awareness around money guidance, how to help people in a more thoughtful, clear way".

"It will benefit me as I support families who have financial concerns. I will feel more confident to signpost them to services and it will help me better support them".

"It will increase confidence in having conversations about money with customers so that we can understand the needs they are facing better and support them appropriately".

"Money Guiders training has strengthened my confidence in offering consistent money guidance, while helping my organisation support people more effectively and signpost wisely".

"It will help me and others in my team to provide relevant support and signposting to specialists".

Our partner Money Guider Network currently includes the following organisations (the number in brackets refers to the number of employees who are currently registered):

1. CAB (1)
2. Calderdale Academy (1)
3. Calderdale Carers Count (6)
4. Calderdale Council (50)
5. Community Support Services (1)
6. Community Works Mixenden (1)
7. Elland and District Food Bank (1)
8. Focus 4 Hope (3)
9. Halifax Opportunities Trust (9)
10. Healthy Minds Calderdale (7)
11. Imagine Independence (1)
12. Locala (1)
13. Newground Together (9)
14. NHS (6)
15. North Halifax Partnership (16)
16. Together Housing (1)
17. Voluntary & Community - VAC (2)

In 2025/26, we are keen to continue to support our current team of Money Guiders as well as expand our team so more residents can benefit from effective money guidance.

The Anti-Poverty Partnership hosted a **money guidance** event with the Money Guiders England Network in September attracting over 120 colleagues across health, voluntary, community and education sectors to hear more about how working together can better support low-income households around issues relating to financial and digital hardship.



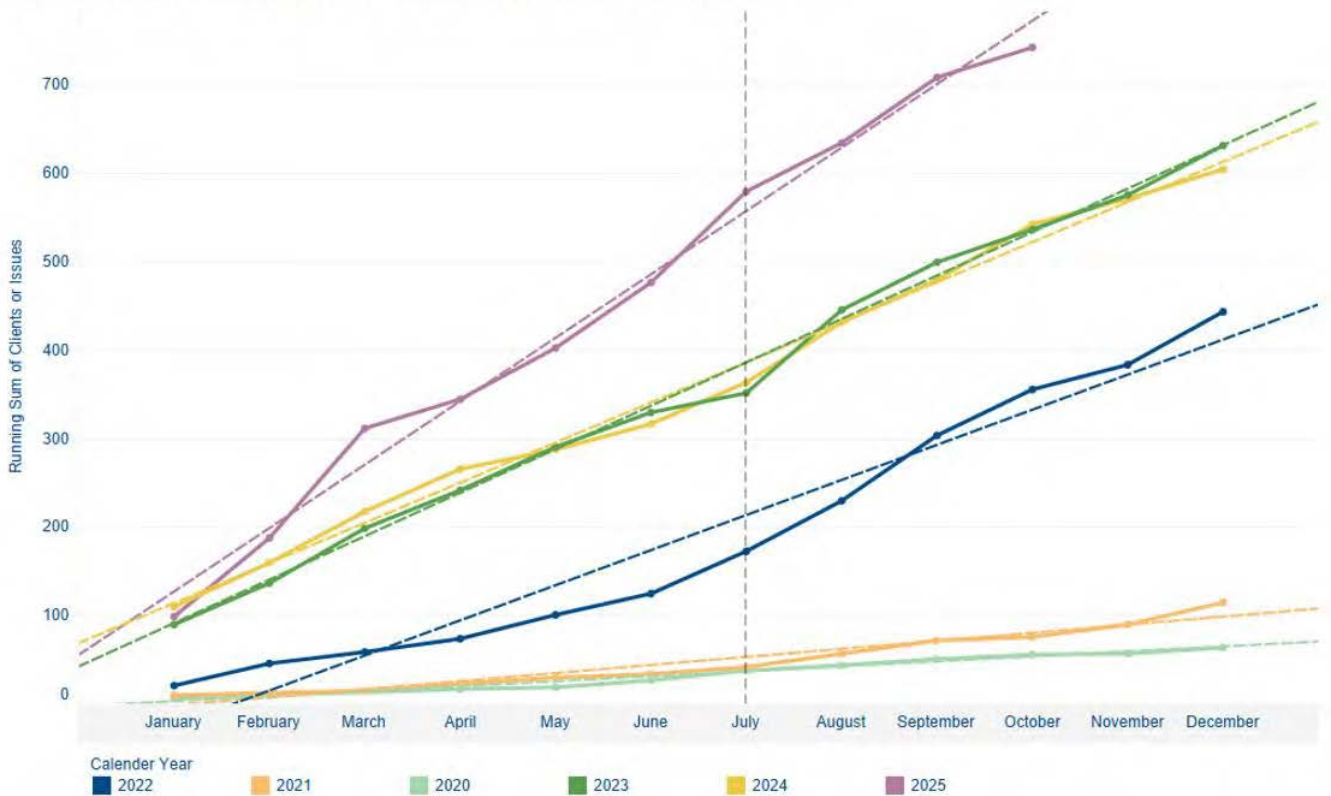
News release: [Working together to promote financial and digital inclusion | News Centre - Official news site of Calderdale Council](#)

## Working together to provide households living in poverty with household items

The need for essential household items for households living in poverty has increased. The graph below demonstrates the overall increase in demand for crisis support recorded by Citizens Advice Calderdale.

The crisis support offered below includes advice and information in accessing food support, clothing, household goods, baby food, nappies and help with applying for Discretionary Housing Payment and Community Living Support.

Crisis | Charitable support & foodbanks & Localised social welfare

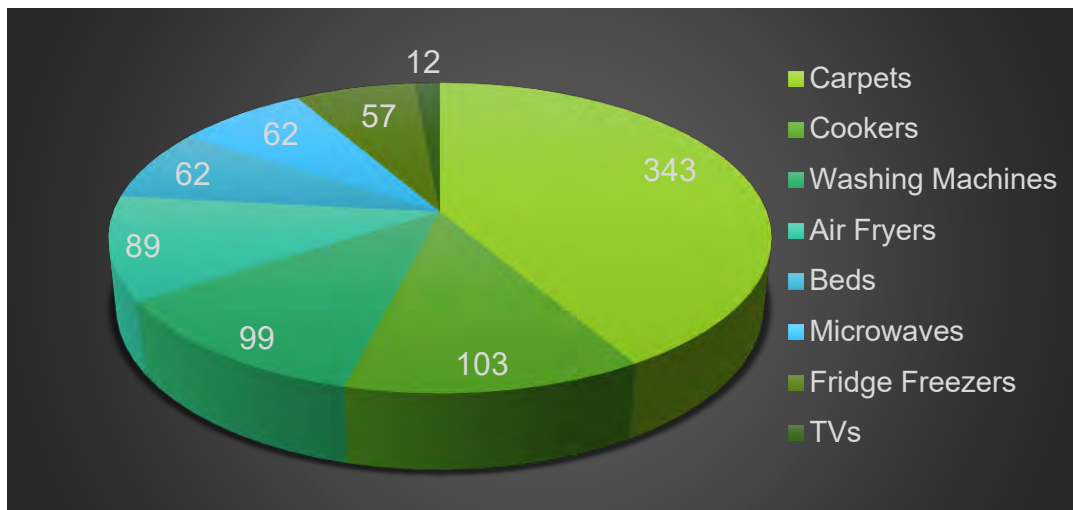


A number of organisations provide support to low-income households through the provision of free household items. Information from Noah's Ark Centre, Calderdale Council, Zarach and Together Housing has been collated for this report.

[Noah's Ark Centre](#) administer a small grants programme of around £99,000 ([Glasspool](#) and [ACTS435](#)) per year for individuals living in financial hardship. This includes donated carpets which are of significant value and come at no cost to Calderdale. In the last 12 months the programme has received a total of 827 requests for support with various household items for people living in Calderdale.

The following pie chart shows the breakdown of the types of household items that have been provided.





Noah's Ark Centre looks far beyond just supplying a carpet or cooker and regularly help their clients with a wide range of help including advice relating to money, debt and benefits, employment & food support, referral for energy efficiency advice, counselling, financial capability training and onward referrals for specialist mental health support.

Here's Andrew with his carpets ready to recycle in the households that need them most:



Watch the BBC coverage below about the carpets that have benefited local residents.



Here's some feedback from Noah's Ark Centre clients who have benefited recently:

The outcome was not what I expected and it has made a massive difference to my mental health and life

Lovely staff who don't judge you and have compassion and empathy

Relieved, less anxious and felt like a weighty had been lifted off my shoulders

[Calderdale Council](#) administer the **Community Living Support** scheme, providing residents on benefits with essential items like household goods and appliances. Noah's Ark Centre and the Council work closely together to ensure efforts are joined up and resources are stretched as far as possible to those who need it most.

Local Welfare Assistance		
Year	Number of households helped	Funding spent
2021/22	471	£152,321
2022/23	515	£167,608
2023/24	541	£177,342
2024/25	512	£178,362

A breakdown of household items issued from October 2024 to September 2025 is shown in the table below:

Purchased	Easing exceptional pressure	Planned resettlement
Beds/mattress	23	149
Bedding	5	149
Cooker	7	31
Cot/mattress	2	11
Fridge/Freezer	12	122
Microwave	0	9
Sofa	5	32
Washing machine	4	51

[Together Housing](#) support their tenants with welfare assistance. Their Sustainability Hub had 87 cases last financial year and bought in £3,258.63 of white goods. The Tenancy Sustainability Team and Welfare Benefits Team have also bought in white goods.

[Zarach](#) is a national charity dedicated to eradicating child bed poverty. They report that 1 in 20 children have slept on the floor in the past year due to a lack of beds.

Date Range	Number of beds provided
Apr-Oct 25	100
Jan-Oct 25	153
Sep 22-Oct 25	633

## 10. Case Study: Digital Inclusion Forum

### Building a network of digital inclusion hubs across Calderdale

Calderdale has a strong membership of the National Digital Inclusion Network. Each organisation below is registered as a Digital Inclusion Hub helping to fix the digital divide. They offer digital inclusion services in different ways, depending on the type of organisation and what their community needs. They may focus on providing internet access, devices or free digital skills sessions - or a combination of all three digital inclusion barriers.

National Digital Inclusion Network organisations/services in Calderdale:

1. Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees	2. Mixenden Library
3. Akroyd Library	4. Noah's Ark Centre
5. Beechwood Road Library	6. Northowram Library
7. Brighouse Library	8. O2 Halifax
9. Citizens Advice Calderdale	10. Rastrick Library
11. Calderdale College	12. Saint Augustines Centre
13. Calderdale Council	14. Sowerby Bridge Library
15. Elland Library	16. Todmorden Learning Centre
17. Halifax Opportunities Trust	18. Todmorden Library
19. Happy Days UK	20. Virgin Money Halifax
21. Hebden Bridge Library	22. WomenCentre
23. King Cross Library	

**Halifax Opportunities Trust** has shared some information about their commitment to tackling the digital divide in partnership with **Citizens Advice Calderdale**.



### Background

Digital inclusion is now an essential part of everyday life — from applying for jobs and accessing benefits, to booking medical appointments or staying connected with friends and family. Yet for many residents in Park Ward, Halifax, digital exclusion continues to be a significant barrier to opportunity.

Park Ward remains one of the most deprived areas in Calderdale, with higher-than-average levels of unemployment, low household income, and limited access to digital devices and connectivity. Many local residents face additional challenges such as language barriers, low confidence, and limited literacy, all of which compound digital exclusion and make it harder to access online services and opportunities.

Halifax Opportunities Trust (HOT), based at the Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre, has long recognised the link between digital access, confidence, and inclusion. In response, HOT developed a series of practical projects to help local people improve their digital skills and access, delivered both independently and in partnership with Citizens Advice Calderdale (CAB).

## Our Approach

HOT's digital inclusion work combines immediate, hands-on support with targeted project delivery. This approach meets people where they are — whether they're taking their first steps online or looking to develop more advanced digital confidence.

### 1. Digital Support Drop-In (Ongoing)

Every Friday, HOT hosts a free, open-access digital support drop-in at the Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre. Residents can drop in without an appointment to get help with a range of everyday digital tasks — from setting up an email account and completing online forms, to accessing government services, housing portals, or benefit applications.

The sessions are welcoming and informal, designed to build trust and confidence among those who may feel anxious about technology. Many participants are ESOL learners or people who have been out of work for some time. For some, it's their first step towards greater independence online and often acts as a gateway to other support such as employment services or financial wellbeing advice.

### 2. Let's Get Digital Project

Delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice Calderdale and funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the *Let's Get Digital* project offered structured support to help people build digital skills for everyday life.

The project combined practical digital training with wraparound advice and wellbeing support. Participants gained the confidence to use devices safely, complete online forms, manage Universal Credit accounts, apply for jobs, and save money by accessing online services. The partnership between HOT and CAB ensured that those facing the most complex barriers — such as language needs or financial hardship — received holistic, joined-up support.

In total, 73 participants benefited from the project.

Funded by UK Government

halifax opportunities trust

# LET'S GET DIGITAL

Helping you build confidence & get the most out of your devices

## Every Friday

10am - 12noon  
Starting on 13th December 2024

### About

We've teamed up with Citizens Advice Calderdale to bring you free weekly drop-in sessions! Whether you're struggling with your smartphone, tablet, or laptop, or just want to get the most out of your tech, we're here to help.

Join us to:

- Learn how to use your devices with confidence.
- Get answers to your tech questions.
- Save money through switching to online.
- Explore tips to make your life easier online.
- Stay safe while using the internet.

No appointment needed—just pop in! Everyone is welcome.

### What's Included

- Access to our WiFi while on site ✓
- Friendly, impartial advice ✓
- No device? No problem ✓
- Access to our bank of devices ✓
- Accessible location in the community, with free hot drinks ✓

### Where?

Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre  
Halifax, HX1 5PG

01422 347392

[lisa.connelly@regen.org.uk](mailto:lisa.connelly@regen.org.uk)

citizens advice Calderdale

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire



### 3. Device Bank Project

Alongside *Let's Get Digital*, HOT and CAB also delivered the *Device Bank* initiative, funded by UKSPF. The project provided smart phones and tablets to individuals and families without access to digital devices, helping them to engage more fully with education, employment, and public services. Devices were allocated based on need through a simple means test, ensuring they reached those most affected by digital exclusion. Each recipient was also offered setup support and signposted to digital skills sessions to help them make full use of their new equipment.

A poster for the Device Bank initiative. At the top left, it says 'Funded by UK Government' with the Royal Coat of Arms. The title 'DEVICE BANK' is in large, bold, blue and green letters. Below the title, a dark blue banner reads 'Helping to Bridge the Digital Divide'. The main text states: 'Many people in our community are digitally excluded due to a lack of access to a smart device. The Device Bank provides free smart devices to individuals who need them, helping them stay connected, access vital services and improve their digital skills. We can also provide data. We are inviting local organisations to refer eligible individuals to this scheme, ensuring support reaches those most in need.' A central image shows an older man with a grey beard looking at a tablet. To the right of the image is a green circle with the word 'FREE' and '\*eligibility criteria applies'. Further right is a QR code labeled 'Referral Form'. At the bottom left are logos for 'halifax opportunities trust' and 'citizens advice Calderdale'. A small disclaimer at the bottom states: '\*The scheme is open to residents of Park Ward, Worley Ward, and Boothtown who meet our means-tested eligibility criteria. We rely on referral organisations to confirm eligibility and ensure devices are allocated to those who will benefit the most. Proof of eligibility required. Please use the referral form for full eligibility criteria.'

Funded by UK Government

# DEVICE BANK

Helping to Bridge the Digital Divide

Many people in our community are digitally excluded due to a lack of access to a smart device

The Device Bank provides free smart devices to individuals who need them, helping them stay connected, access vital services and improve their digital skills. We can also provide data

We are inviting local organisations to refer eligible individuals to this scheme, ensuring support reaches those most in need

**FREE**  
\*eligibility criteria applies

**Referral Form**

\*The scheme is open to residents of Park Ward, Worley Ward, and Boothtown who meet our means-tested eligibility criteria. We rely on referral organisations to confirm eligibility and ensure devices are allocated to those who will benefit the most. Proof of eligibility required. Please use the referral form for full eligibility criteria.

halifax opportunities trust citizens advice Calderdale

This initiative is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice Calderdale and Halifax Opportunities Trust.

### Impact and Legacy

"Before we got the tablet, my daughter was really struggling with her schoolwork. We don't have a computer or internet at home, and I couldn't afford to buy one. Now she can study at home and keep up with her class — it's made such a big difference to us."

Device Bank Participant  
Parent - Park Ward

Through these projects, HOT and CAB are strengthening digital inclusion in Park Ward — improving residents' confidence, access, and opportunities. Participants who previously relied on others to complete online tasks are now independently managing their affairs, connecting with services, and engaging more actively in community life.

Although the *Let's Get Digital* and *Device Bank* projects have now concluded, their impact continues to be felt through the ongoing Friday drop-in and the strengthened partnership between HOT and CAB. Building on the success of this collaboration, both organisations are now developing further projects to sustain and expand digital inclusion work across Calderdale — ensuring that no one is left behind in an increasingly digital world.

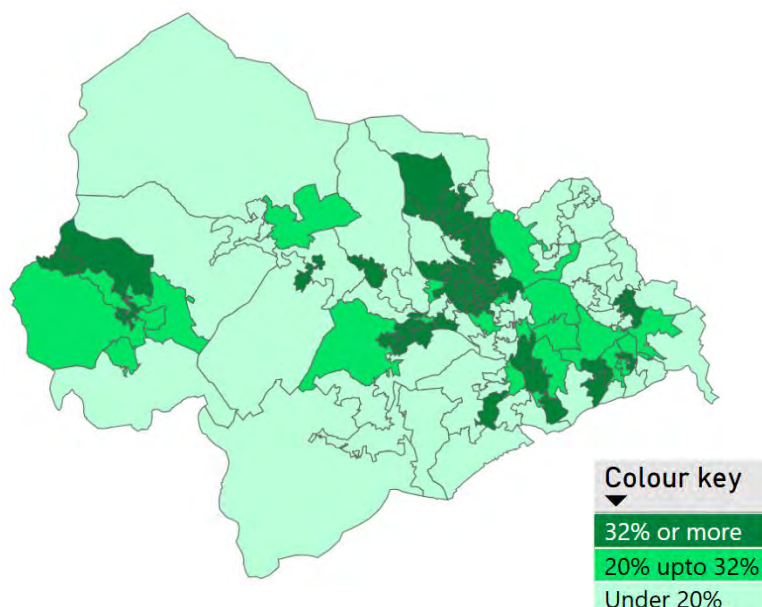


## 11. Case Study: Healthy Holidays Steering Group

### Supporting children and young people on benefits related free school meals through school holiday activities

#### Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals

Year	Calderdale	England
2025	27.1%	25.7%
2024	25.6%	24.6%
2023	25.2%	23.8%
2022	23.7%	22.5%
2021	21.8%	20.8%
2020	19.1%	17.3%



#### Number of Calderdale pupils eligible for free school meals

Year	State-funded primary	State-funded secondary	State-funded special school	Non-maintained special school	State-funded AP school	Total
2025	4,753	4,498	239	43	50	<b>9,583</b>
2023	4,852	4,067	190	48	56	<b>9,213</b>
2024	4,702	4,212	195	50	47	<b>9,206</b>
2022	4,752	3,684	187	48	38	<b>8,709</b>
2021	4,505	3,279	172	45	32	<b>8,033</b>
2020	4,049	2,755	134	49	27	<b>7,014</b>

For many children, school holidays bring freedom, fun, and fresh opportunities. But for those from low-income households, holidays often mean reduced access to nutritious food, safe activities and social connection.

The **Healthy Holidays Calderdale Programme**—part of the national Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) initiative—exists to close that gap by providing free, high-quality food and enriching activities during school breaks for **children on benefits related free school meals**.

Guided by the government's HAF framework, Healthy Holidays Calderdale delivers:

- Healthy meals
- Engaging, diverse activities
- Nutritional education

- Family support

In 2024/25, the programme reached **6,934 unique children and young people**, with over **30,000 hot meals provided** and thousands of activity sessions attended across **28 local providers** in Calderdale.

From canoeing to cooking, fencing to forest school, these activities build confidence, keep children active, and help them return to school ready to learn.



“My children live in High Rise flats with no garden, this camp has allowed them to stay active and socialise with other children which will benefit them and it will make transitioning in school less hard on them, because they have been mixing with a large amount of children in their school setting”.

Calderdale is ranked top in the UK for Free School Meal (FSM) reach, with 57.7% of eligible children accessing the programme in Summer 2025.

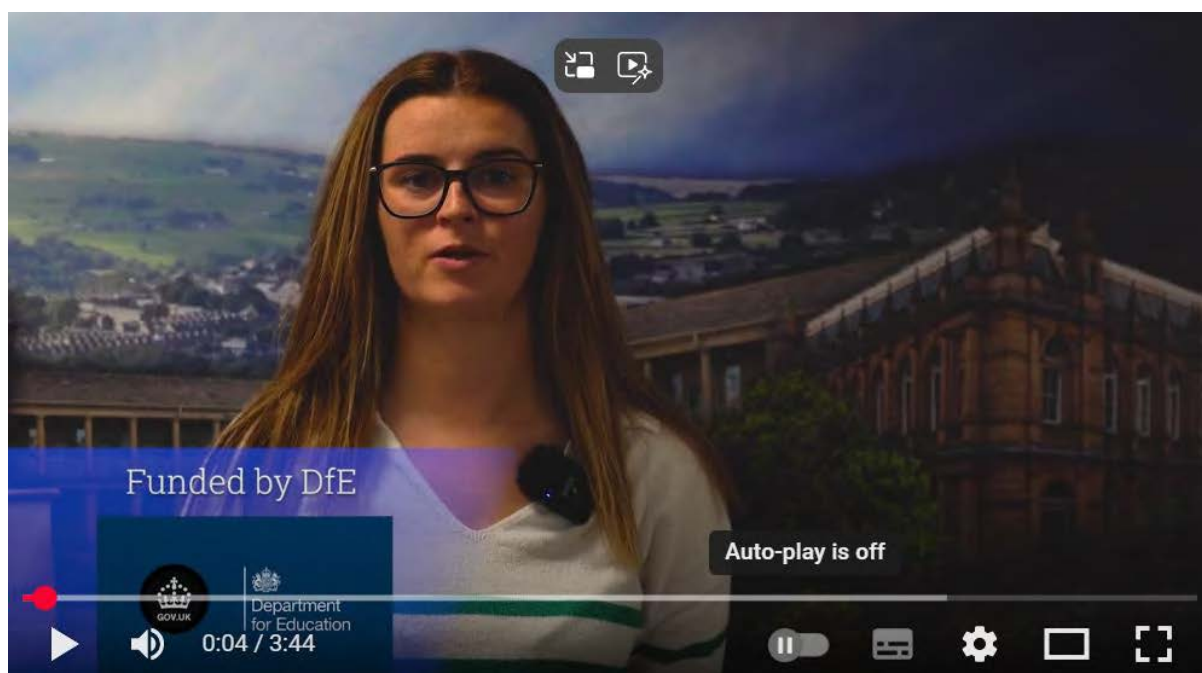
The Healthy Holidays Steering Group has a number of plans to further improve the programme including:

- To expand accessibility, especially for children with SEND, diversify activities to include arts, sports, mental health and digital skills, strengthen collaboration with local providers and enhance data collection and impact evaluation.
- The average number of days attended per child is 2.9, compared to the national average of 6.68. While our reach is excellent, there is scope to encourage longer or more consistent attendance.
- To improve secondary participation in the programme, which remains lower (28%) compared to primary (88%), in line with national trends.

The Department for Education recently extended the funding for this essential programme until March 2029.

Healthy Holidays Calderdale is a vital part of building a healthier, happier, and more equitable future for all Calderdale children.

**Click the video below to find out more:**





## 12. Conclusion

More residents are falling into poverty, and demand for debt and welfare advice remains high. Continued rising costs are deepening inequalities, but Calderdale's collaborative approach continues to make a difference.

Our expanding team of **Money Guiders**, updated **cost of living resources**, and strong local partnerships are helping residents access the support they need.

Thank you to all the partner organisations who feature in this report and all the organisations who help to tackle poverty in Calderdale.