



Keeping warm this winter

Evidence from parents and carers living on low incomes

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Summary

The rapid escalation in energy prices creates particular challenges for families with dependent children living on a low-income. Families need to keep their children warm this winter. However, with household budgets stretched to breaking point, they face enormous challenges in doing so. This rapid response briefing shares findings from the Changing Realities research programme, which works in partnership with over 100 parents and carers living on a low income from across the UK. In the briefing we document the higher energy needs of families with dependent children; needs which are often overlooked by policy responses that favour temporary, flat-rate payments. We provide stark evidence of the hardship families are facing, and the strategies they are forced to adopt in their effort to keep their children warm. We provide insight into the impact and shortcomings of the existing support packages offered by the UK Government.

We share policy recommendations for change that draw directly upon the expertise and experience of parents and carers on low incomes. Central to these is a call for the Government to recognise and respond to the additional needs that families with dependent children face. A simple and effective way for the Government to do this is through an increase to Child Benefit. We also call for the government to recognise the additional needs of disabled people, and work to restore the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly so that Stormont can use its powers to make impactful policy decisions and help families on a low income.

None of us want to live in a country where families are struggling to keep their homes warm. The UK Government should listen to parents and carers on low incomes and work speedily to target more support and help families keep warm this winter.

Recommendations for change

- The government's approach of providing flat-rate support to households regardless of household size has left families with children struggling more than others. The government should **recognise the additional costs of children** by increasing Child Benefit to help people on the lowest incomes, as well as those on middle incomes who will also be struggling.
- The £150 payment to recipients of certain disability benefits only offsets a fraction of their increased energy costs. The government should **increase and expand the support provided for disabled people** and those with a health condition by increasing the value of Personal Independence Payments and reducing the time it takes to process a new claim.
- One-off payments provide only limited and temporary financial relief. It is much harder for families who are struggling with the cost of essentials to budget when they have long gaps between support payments, especially when it is not clear if and when they will be paid. The government should **move away from temporary, one-off payments and towards regular payments.**

- All parties must work together to **restore the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly** so that Stormont can use its powers to make impactful policy decisions and help families on a low income.
- Social tariffs can provide discounted energy costs to families on a low income. But social tariffs for internet and phone costs are difficult to access. A **social tariff for energy** would need to be easily accessible and not be conditional on an individual's provider or region.
- The UK government must **invest in the social security system in the longer-term** so that a rise in living costs does not tip millions of families into crisis.

Introduction

The UK enters 2023 in poor social and economic health. The high cost of living creates pressures across much of society, especially in the coldest part of the year. Through the Changing Realities research programme, we are working in partnership with parents and carers on a low-income to document everyday life during the cost of living crisis, and to work together to develop recommendations for change.

In this rapid-response briefing, we focus on efforts to keep children and homes warm this winter, drawing on everyday experiences of struggle and hardship. We also share experiences of the government's energy support schemes, highlighting the difference made by the support, but also the gaps and shortcomings in the provision. Our evidence comes from responses we received in November and December 2022, when participants were asked about how they keep their children warm, their thoughts about the Chancellor's autumn statement, and their experiences of the cost of living support packages. We additionally share some individual diary entries and transcriptions of spoken testimony provided in the period since data collection began in September 2022.

This evidence provides a compelling account of the urgent need for change and our briefing concludes with policy recommendations which have been collaboratively developed with parents and carers. We invite those reading this briefing to help us make change happen; if you're a policymaker, instigate change; if you're in the third sector, draw on our evidence to argue

for better interventions; and if you're an academic help us to document and share the gaps in the provision, and the extent of hardship that so many today face.

1 – The impact of high energy costs

The increase in the cost of living has been driven by higher energy costs. In October 2022, when the [annual inflation rate](#) reached a 41-year high of 11.1%, households were spending 89% more on fuel than they were a year ago. As households on a low income spend a higher share of their money on essentials like energy, their inflation rate has been higher than the average household. The [IFS estimate](#) that the poorest fifth of households experienced an inflation rate of 18%. Even after taking the government support packages into account, [analysis by Antonia Keung and Jonathan Bradshaw](#) shows that 26.4% of households (equating to over 7m households) will be spending over 20% of their income (after housing costs) on energy in April 2023.

1.2 – “Children are using energy more”: the costs of children

Families with children are inevitably vulnerable to high energy costs - especially those with young children who are at home during the day and are particularly vulnerable to the cold. This makes it harder for families to reduce their energy use. [Average energy expenditure is 30% higher for families with children than for households without children](#). Single parents are especially at risk; with [61.8% of single parent households with two or more children expected to be spending more than 20% of their net income on energy from April 2023](#).

The high energy costs are hitting families with dependent children hard. As Lili K, a Changing Realities participant with a teenage daughter, explains:

Energy costs are higher for families with children, especially babies and younger children. More laundry, showers & baths, heating, cooking. School uniform & sports kit has to be washed and dried at the end of each week which is 2 loads of laundry extra in our house. – **Lili K**

More people in the household creates higher energy needs which cannot be easily managed or reduced. Participants expressed concern for families with very young children, who might not be able to reduce their energy usage as easily as families with older kids. Beverly, a single parent with one teenage child at home, reflected on the challenges parents of young children face:

I think we are just about coping with energy prices. It certainly doesn't fill me with pride, joy or relief to say so. More like fear. It's largely down to the fact we've been extremely frugal with usage recently. It's not always the case and I doubt families with younger children would find it easy to live like this with all the washing and cleaning that goes hand in hand with babies and children. They generate tons of the stuff. – **Beverly W**

On the other hand, having older children can create different energy pressures. Ana Q, a mother of school age children from London, describes the energy needs of her children who use laptops and other devices to do school work. She also describes the difficulties and frustrations she feels in trying to control her children's energy consumption:

Energy cost is higher for the family with children as children [are] using energy more for their education such as on laptop or mobile devices and [occupy] more room[s] with [the] light ON. [I] [s]witch everything off when children are not at home. Other ways, put all the children in the same room to save electricity. Children are...

...getting frustrated by following this new house rule and I am getting frustrated also for the same reason by telling [them] to save energy or save money. – **Ana Q**

Parents are acutely aware of children’s energy needs. Indeed, many parents' coping mechanisms are organised around them: for example, only having the heating on when children are at home (see next section). Parents and carers talked about the additional energy pressures of having children at home during school holidays and breaks. Dotty G, a single mother of a teenage daughter and a seven-year-old son, explains:

[C]oping with energy prices is very challenging, especially when my children are home, like during the holidays. This is because they tend to use more energy when they're home and the library is closed and they can't study there, so have to study at home instead. Having the electric on most of the day is very expensive for me, and so is the gas especially if it's a cold day outside. In order to help combat this, we try to wear extra layers on around the house, so that we are not as cold when we are home. – **Dotty G**

Children have their own energy needs which are sometimes different from those of adults. In the context of rising and increasingly unaffordable energy costs families must make difficult decisions about which needs to prioritise. Parents and carers routinely prioritise the needs of their children, and adopt coping strategies that minimise their own energy use. The next section explores some of these different strategies in more detail.

1.3 “What am I not doing”: coping strategies

Parents and carers describe a range of coping strategies for dealing with escalating energy costs. These include different ways of rationing and going without: only using energy for certain activities, or at specified times.

Aurora U, a widow with two school age children, who is in part time work, describes how she has tried to conserve every last bit of energy:

What am I doing to save on my energy bills? What am I not doing. Switching everything off at the plugs. Not putting my lamps on or the lights under the kitchen cupboards. Boiling the kettle then putting what is left in a flask for the rest of the day. Putting a blanket round my legs instead of putting the heat on. – **Aurora U**

Lili K explains her efforts to conserve energy, including batch cooking and changing her personal bathing habits and methods of doing laundry:

I am wearing clothes for longer than I would like, to help limit the amount of laundry and clothes are washed cold now. We are not able to have our heating on as it is too expensive, we wear dressing gowns or extra clothing indoors instead. I shower as quickly as possible (2-3 minutes) to keep the cost down, I only boil the kettle if someone else wants a hot drink too. I batch cook and put several things in the oven whenever I turn it on and cook meals in the slow cooker as much as possible. These measures mean that our house is cold, we no longer invite friends over. Every action is carefully considered and costed, nothing is done that would waste energy and we use only what is strictly necessary. – **Lili K**

Often parents and carers prioritise the needs of their children, and limit their own energy consumption in order to do so. Gabriel K, a mother from Manchester, describes what she endures while her children are not at home:

I'm absolutely freezing. I have two jumpers and a dressing gown and a blanket. The thermostat says 12 degrees. I am too scared to put the heating on even though people with multiple sclerosis should ideally be at 18/9 degrees all the time. I have to save the money ...

... given from the government for when it gets really cold. No chance I would use heating without kids at home. – **Gabriel K**

Despite the numerous coping strategies adopted by parents and carers to reduce their energy consumption, many described a situation that felt frightening and beyond their control - they felt that they were reaching the limits of their ability to cope. When we asked participants how they were managing increasing energy costs, Olivia Rose wrote:

Not well at all. Struggling to feed the kids with the rising costs.
– **Olivia-rose I**

Edison P, a single parent from Scotland who works part-time and has an eleven year old daughter, told us:

I'm not coping at all, it's terrifying me the cost. – **Edison P**

As these parents and carers make clear, coping with rising energy costs on low incomes involves intensive and time consuming work. This includes rationing usage and changing patterns of energy consumption, for example, by altering ways of cooking, washing, or doing laundry. These coping strategies come with their own costs, particularly in terms of people's social interactions, health and wellbeing. They place real and continuous strain on parents' mental and physical health, creating a situation of extreme financial and emotional stress. The next section considers the overall impact of rising energy costs on families.

1.4 “We’re on our knees, broken”: the impact on families

Overall, the impact of rising energy costs on families on low incomes has been deeper impoverishment. The impact has been felt across every dimension of family life with significant consequences for people's health and wellbeing. As Lili K explained:

Scrimping like this does have a negative effect on us all. We are more isolated, spend less time with our friends and family. We feel scruffy and self conscious when our clothes are not as fresh and clean as we would like them to feel. I spend more time in bed just keeping warm when our house should be warm enough for us to move about comfortably. I wake up in the night worrying about money and know how much it costs to use every single appliance. My standard of self care and wellbeing has declined but I am trying to ensure that our daughter's does not. We are surviving but not really living, let alone thriving. – **Lili K**

Like many parents, Lili K described trying to protect her daughter from the worst consequences of poverty, at a cost to her own wellbeing. However, parents also described limits to their ability to protect their children. For example, Winnie O, a mother of three, expressed her concerns about how the cold weather will impact the health of her youngest child:

My youngest child has asthma and cold weather has caused him to have breathing troubles before, he's often admitted to hospital in ...
...winter and I know this winter will be bad. The worry is affecting my mental health. I've so much financial pressure and I've no way out. It's just getting worse. It's affecting my children too, you can see they are getting depressed as we scale back in everything. The whole state of everything going up in price week by week is destroying families like me. We're on our knees broken. – **Winnie O**

Rising energy costs have placed families on low incomes under increasing pressure. This is often framed in the media as a choice between heating or eating, and it is true that this is often a feature of the situation families face. However, the impact extends well beyond such choices, reaching deep into various aspects of individual and family life. As Winnie O described, families must live with the difficult knowledge of the harm being done to them, with little means to protect themselves.

Sometimes neither adequate heating nor adequate food are available options. This is [the situation faced by Lexie H](#), a disabled mother from Wales with four sons:

It's not living anymore, is it? It's barely surviving... Treading water. That's been my mantra for a very long time. But now it's not a choice between heating or eating because you can't afford to do any. We're lucky if we get one hot meal a week, me and my husband, because we insist on feeding the kids first because that's what you do as a parent. Where does it stop? What else do we cut out of our lives - just to keep your kids fed? – **Lexie H**

The next section turns to look at the support that has been offered to low income families and the impact it has had.

2. The impact of one-off payments

Alongside the energy price guarantee, support specifically for energy costs has come in the form of discounts. The Energy Bills Support Scheme, which is universal, provides a £400 discount to energy bills this winter. For households who pay their energy bills by direct debit, the discount is automatically applied and spread over six months beginning in October 2022. In addition, some low income families will be eligible for the Warm Home Discount Scheme. This provides a one-off discount of £150 to electricity bills for winter 2022/2023, to be applied in March 2023.

In addition to these schemes, families on low incomes claiming benefits may also have been eligible for a Cost of Living Payment. These were intended to support people more broadly with the rising cost of living. Most families receiving a means-tested benefit would have received a £326 payment in July 2022 and another payment of £324 in November 2022. People claiming certain disability benefits also received a £150 payment in late-September/early-October 2022.

In the Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced that further Cost of Living Payments will be made. During 2023/2024, households on means-tested benefits will receive £900 in three instalments and people claiming certain disability benefits will receive £150. The Chancellor also confirmed that benefits will increase in April 2023 in line with inflation.

2.1 “It’s so confusing”: clarity and consistency

Parents and carers on low incomes welcomed and were highly appreciative of both the discounts and one-off cash transfers. Precious D, a single parent to five children from England, wrote about the Cost of Living Payment:

The second one-off payment has been a huge help to my family: not just financially. Emotionally, I know that I don't need to be stressed as much about paying my bills. I am very grateful. – **Precious D**

However, the implementation of the Cost of Living Payment has been accompanied by delays and changes which haven’t always been well communicated. Furthermore, the variety of different ‘cost of living’ support schemes, using different mechanisms (payment or discount), each with their own eligibility criteria, has been a source of confusion. In November, Marcie M, a single parent with a toddler, wrote about the Cost of Living Payments:

I definitely appreciate the help, but it's so confusing having multiple different schemes and different amounts of money coming at...

...different times. I'm actually a benefits adviser and I still can't keep track of who gets what, how much and when. – **Marcie M**

Lili K similarly found the scheme to lack clarity:

I had to search online that we would be eligible for the payment as the letters we received said we 'may' be, and when a payment 'may' be made. But until the money went into our account there was nothing definite, and it was not guaranteed. – **Lili K**

In addition to complexity and confusion, Evelyn G, London-based single parent to a toddler, thought the various schemes and their eligibility criteria were a source of inequity, and failed to reflect peoples' real needs:

I was waiting desperately for the second one-off payment, after it was silently pushed back from being in October to November. I partly used it to pay bills and partly for getting ready for my baby arriving in January - the car seat and cot mattress, things I can't get second hand. The cost of living payments make a big difference to me but I feel guilty when I speak to my aunt, who is disabled, about the fact that she only got the £150 payment because she's on a contribution-based ESA. She struggles as much as me and it makes no sense at all that she, and many other people with disabilities, gets less than a quarter of what I received. As helpful as the money has been, I am cynical about the cost of living payment scheme. We shouldn't have to wait for random payments as if the government is being charitable - it is not; Universal Credit should be enough to live on with a dignified quality of life. – **Evelyn G**

Participants also complained of administrative delays, mistakes, and missing payments, compounding the anxiety and uncertainty they already faced:

I have only just received my £66 payment for November from the energy support payment - however the October one never came and the wait on the phone to speak to my energy supplier is over 2 hours. We still haven't switched on our heating, and the weather feels much colder today. I have instead bought my children hot water bottles to take to bed instead" - **Mollie U**

The temporary nature of the support and the climate of uncertainty about whether the measures will continue makes it difficult for people to plan and generates extra uncertainty in an already fraught situation. For example, although it was initially announced in May 2022 that benefits would be uprated in April 2023 in line with inflation, this was then subject to months of further uncertainty when the Government suggested it had yet to reach a firm decision. By the time uprating was confirmed in November 2022, benefit recipients had been subjected to months of anxiety. The temporary and last-minute nature of the cost of living supports repeat a problematic feature of the measures implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as the £20 increase to Universal Credit and furlough scheme. Changing Realities participants describe the negative impact of this constant climate of unpredictable and temporary support.

2.2 Overlooked

In addition to administrative problems, there were other examples of people missing out on support. In particular, people in Northern Ireland did not receive energy support scheme discounts because of the collapse of the devolved executive, and had to wait until December 2022 for clarification about what was going to happen:

Thankfully the energy cap has kicked in here in N Ireland as well as the rest of the UK. Unfortunately the energy support hasn't, ...

... and many are struggling as they had budgeted this into their winter bills. – **Meg S**

As Meg went on to explain, this reduced the impact of other support measures in ways that will continue to negatively affect people:

I received my second [cost of living] payment and it's gone already. We still have not got the energy support here in N Ireland so money that I could be spending elsewhere is going into electric! – **Meg S**

A much larger proportion of people living in Northern Ireland use home heating oil. This has been taken into consideration by the UK government with their announcement that all households across Northern Ireland will receive a single £600 payment, consisting of [£400 through the Energy Bills Support Scheme Northern Ireland \(EBSS NI\) and the additional £200 Alternative Fuel Payment \(AFP\)](#). However, many people have experienced unnecessary stress due to the delay, and some have been unable to get oil and, as a result, heat their homes:

Sitting with blankets wondering where I am getting money to put oil in. Lay crying last couple nights while my child says he's cold. – **Tommy-lee I**

In addition to people living in Northern Ireland, other groups whose needs have been overlooked or ignored include renters whose energy bills are included within their rent, and asylum seekers. In an online discussion group with Changing Realities participants we heard from private sector tenants whose bills were included in their rents, and whose rents had increased. We also heard from asylum seekers struggling to get by on £40.85 per week, and ineligible for any other support payments. In both

cases, there has been a failure to provide support where it is desperately needed, leading to families facing considerable and continued struggles.

Throughout the cost of living crisis, the government has refused to address wider design flaws in the social security system which prevent families from accessing benefits proportional to their needs, and which disproportionately impacts on children.

The two-child limit and benefit cap in particular restricts the amount of support families with children can receive. The two-child limit stops families from accessing additional means-tested support if they have three or more children, while the benefit cap places a limit on the benefit income families with no or low earnings can receive, penalising those who face high private sector rents and/or have children.

The benefit cap in particular pushes families into deep poverty, as the level has not been increased since it was introduced almost a decade ago. Benefit capped families are however eligible for cost of living payments (as they are classified as 'one-offs') and it was recently announced that the level of the benefit cap will, for the first time, increase in line with inflation in April 2023. But, this will only leave benefit capped families in the same financial position next year as they are in now, rather than undo the financial pressure that has built up from the cap being repeatedly frozen. So long as the cap and the two-child limit remain in place, the social security system will never be able to properly support families with additional needs.

2.3 “A five minute breather”: the overall impact of financial support measures

Despite these problems, the different forms of support were all welcomed by participants. However, they also failed to fully address the extent of people's needs. Participants routinely described living in cold homes as a matter of financial necessity. Rising energy costs added to other already existing pressures. For example, Victoria S, a single parent from England, describes how she spent one instalment of the Cost of Living Support Payment:

It hit my account quite early last month, and was gone within a day. I used it to pay off my budgeting advance for UC and some groceries. I was then able to get another advance out to pay for Christmas items for my children and pay towards some bills I've been falling behind on lately. It helped but on its own, if I hadn't used it to get an advance, it wouldn't have been enough to do much of anything. If they gave us that much extra every month then that would actually be helpful, but every now and then it just gives a five minute breather. – **Victoria S**

Participants acknowledged the assistance provided by the support measures, but described how they were not sufficient to make a real impact on how they were living. Artie U described how, despite the payments, she was still unable to put the heating on, slept with gloves on, and suffered from anxiety about the future:

I'm grateful for the payment, it helps ease my mind about food. The help means I know I can get enough food in the house, but honestly I'm still not able to put the heating on. Food bills and energy bills, and mortgage, have all gone up so much that although some help is better than none, it's a drop in the bucket. Especially knowing that prices will go up again in January. It's also knowing that they might not provide help next time things increase, so the future isn't any less concerning. I'm disabled and my circulation is poor at the best of times. Not being able to turn on the heating means my joints are feeling stiffer and more painful. I'm sleeping with gloves on.
– **Artie U**

Similarly, Lexie H, whose stairlift and rise and recline chair both require electricity, described how the extent of her financial hardship meant she was often confined to one room:

It won't touch the sides to be honest, it's just not enough, I'm going through £60 of electricity a week - it used to be £50 a fortnight. I honestly can't keep up, I'm at a point of living in the bedroom so I don't have to use my stairlift or rise and recline chair because we can't afford to have them being used too, the stairlift has to actually be turned on at all times otherwise it can break it so that's a little frustrating. I feel like my disabilities and need for specialist equipment is putting pressure on my family. – **Lexie H**

The experiences of Artie U and Lexie H highlight how the inadequacy of support has a cumulative impact on people with additional needs, for example as a result of disabilities.

Participants welcomed the various support measures, in particular the Cost of Living Support payment, because it was paid as a direct cash transfer. Given that energy costs are considerably higher than they were last year, the impact of the Energy Price Guarantee and Energy Bills Support discount scheme was less evident to participants, except when there were mistakes or delays in receiving this support. Complexity and confusion regarding the multiple support schemes and mechanisms, as well as administrative errors were a cause of extra anxiety and worry.

Most importantly, as the quotes above make clear, these supports, at most, provide only temporary relief. Families continue to face extreme financial pressure, tightly restrict their energy use and fear for the future. In the context of longstanding inadequacy in the benefit system, the support measures did little and certainly not enough to alleviate the suffering that families on low incomes are experiencing as energy costs rise.

3. Recommendations for future support

Our recommendations were developed with Changing Realities participants during an online meeting in December 2022. At the meeting we reflected on the support provided in 2022/23, the support planned for 2023/24, and

what additional help is needed. The discussion was facilitated by the project team, which includes representatives from Child Poverty Action Group. The recommendations for change are based on this discussion and are the product of collaboration between people with lived experience and people with policy, campaigning and academic expertise.

- Recognise the additional needs of children by increasing Child Benefit

There is a pressing need for additional support to be provided for families with children in recognition of the additional needs and extra cost pressures they face. The government's approach of providing flat rate support to households regardless of household size has left families with children struggling more than others. Increasing Child Benefit is an effective way of addressing this gap in the supports announced to date. It would help people on the lowest incomes, as well as those on middle incomes who will also be struggling with the additional energy costs that children bring.

- Recognise the additional needs of people with disabilities

There is also a need to provide additional support for people with health conditions that are aggravated by cold weather, and so face particular risks when they try to cope with rising energy costs by reducing usage. While the government provided a £150 payment to recipients of some disability benefits in 2022 and plans to do so again in 2023, for many people this only offset a fraction of their increased energy costs.

The government should increase and expand the support provided for disabled people and those with a health condition, for example by increasing the value of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and reducing the time it takes to process a new claim. Participants described that their PIP payments, which are intended to assist with the additional living expenses associated with having a long-term physical or mental health condition, to instead purchase food and clothing for their children.

- Provide security through regular payments

Our evidence shows that the one-off payment approach only provides a limited and temporary financial relief. It is much harder for families who are struggling with the cost of essentials to budget when they have long gaps between support payments, especially when it is not clear if and when they will be paid. The government should move away from temporary, one-off payments and towards regular payments, which are better suited to helping people to budget and plan and prevent people from being suspended in insecurity and anxiety. It has done this before, though only temporarily, through the £20 increase to Universal Credit during the pandemic. We can look to Scotland's Scottish Child Payment for inspiration, which represents a targeted investment in children, and recognises the additional needs of families on a low-income with dependent children.

- Ensure support reaches all parts of the union

To ensure that support can be accessed across the UK, all parties must work together to restore the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. Stormont has powers to make impactful policy decisions on social security that could help families on a low income this winter. Until this happens families in Northern Ireland will be forced to wait longer, or forgo, essential support.

- Develop fair and accessible social tariffs based on need

There has been considerable discussion in the media about the scope for social tariffs to provide discounted costs for families on a low income in the long-term. Social tariffs are already provided through internet and phone providers, but awareness and uptake are low – many Changing Realities participants had struggled or been unable to access them. For social tariffs for energy costs to work, they would need to be easily accessible (ideally with automatic enrolment like with the Warm Homes Discount) and eligibility cannot be conditional on an individual's provider or region.

- Strengthen the adequacy of the social security system

More fundamentally, the UK government must invest in the social security system in the longer-term. It can restore the link between need and entitlement by abolishing the two-child limit and the benefit cap. It can increase levels of benefits so that a rise in living cost does not tip millions of families into crisis. An adequate social security system should provide sufficient income for families to live with dignity, and without the constant worry of financial pressures.

Conclusion

This briefing has set out why action is urgently needed to support families with dependent children to keep their houses and families warm. Most pressingly, targeted support for families with dependent children on a low-income is needed, while there is an equally pressing need to get systems of support in Northern Ireland in place.

As we approach the coldest months of the year, these changes are urgently needed.

We conclude the briefing with some words from Changing Realities participants. In a series of workshops taking place in Autumn 2022, Changing Realities participants came together to collectively author a letter to the Prime Minister - a letter that included the following message:

We are not case studies, but people with stories you would have nightmares about if it was your reality. Perhaps you don't see desperation unless you have lived it? Well learn from us. Because we are living it.

Acknowledgements

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