

THAW Orkney



THAW's mission is:

to work for households in all Orkney communities to reduce levels of fuel poverty and achieve affordable warmth

This year THAW had a 6-month period with severely restricted funding and staffing. Even so, THAW's energy support to fuel-poor households only slightly reduced to a total of £107,745 from Apr '22 - Mar '23, as compared to £120,603 during 2021-22.

Total support for families with children was £38,499, including energy support:

- Electricity vouchers/debt support: £16,819 - 276 awards
- Home Heating Advice fund: £10,402 - 15 awards
- Fuelbank Foundation Heat Fund: £1142 - 2 awards
- Warm homes discount: £450 – 3 awards

And other wider support:

- Cosy Home Packs: £5330 – 53 awards
- Tesco vouchers for food/other items: £1890 – 31 awards
- White goods: £1249 – 4 awards
- Orkney Charitable Trust grants: £660 - 4 awards

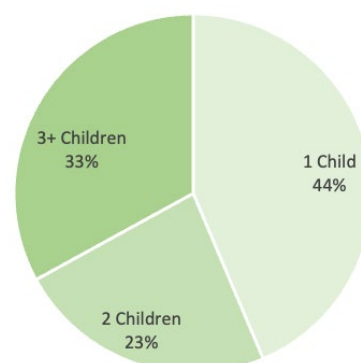
Although there have been fewer awards made since last year, THAW have provided a higher amount of electricity voucher support and created funds for energy debt support through Orkney Money Matters and white goods through BGET funding.

THAW simplified voucher distribution through digital tools, including trialling the use of Tesco vouchers for fresh food and other goods. Foodbank energy and fresh food vouchers were then taken in-house by Foodbank during early 2023, allowing greater focus on energy efficiency for the now fully staffed THAW team.

At least 178 children (down from 296 last year) were supported during 2022-2023, with at least a third of families supported had 3 or more children (see right).

We increased provision of energy advice from 37 to 57 families as well as visited at least 12 family households to provide home energy efficiency surveys and higher levels of support.

We expect the 2023/24 report to show higher provision due to increased staff capacity as well as the greater need shown since April for energy support.

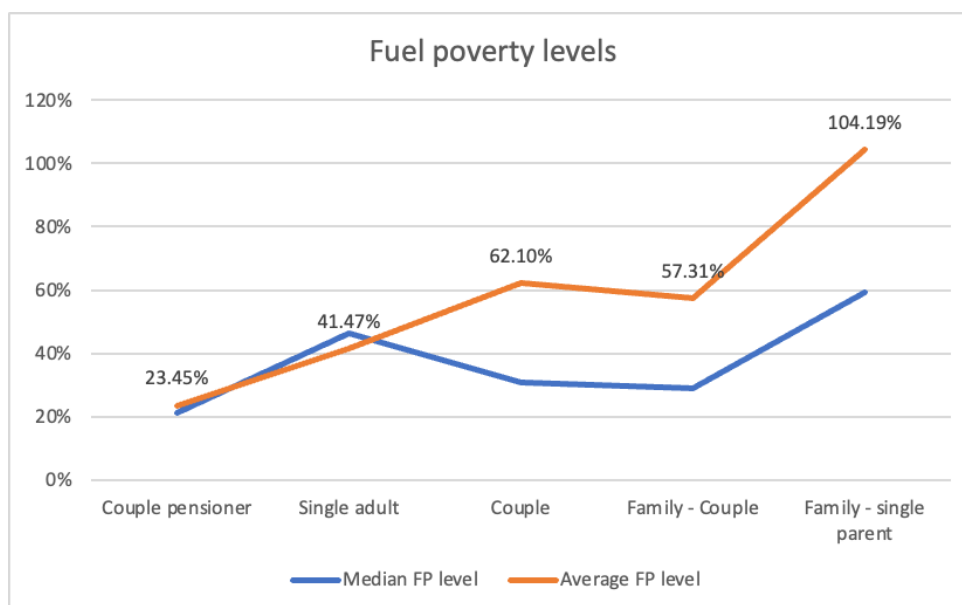


Additional statistics:

Fuel poverty levels in families (for THAW clients in 2022)

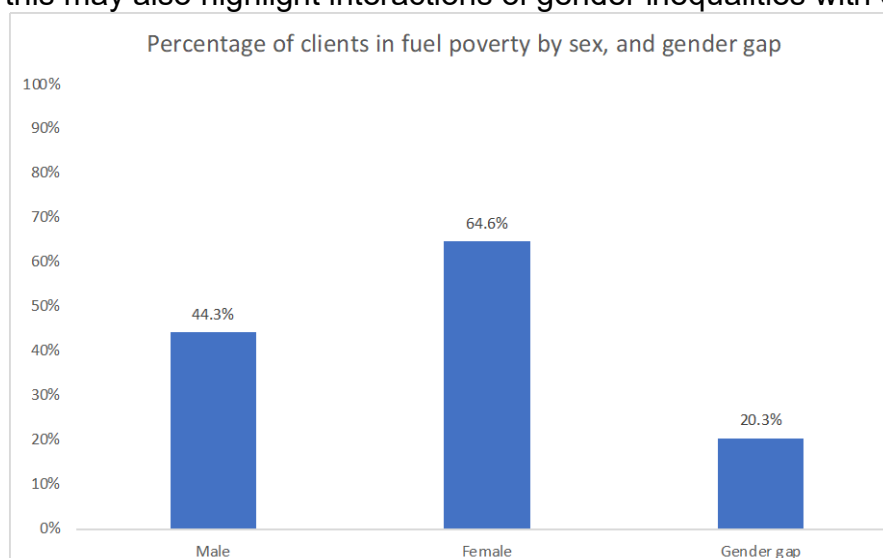
Of those clients assessed by THAW within 2022, the median fuel poverty level for a couple with at least one child is 30%, rising to 60% for single parent families.

However, there is great variance between clients, with a significant number of families at much higher levels of fuel poverty. This gives rise to an average fuel poverty level of 60% for couples and an average over 100% for single parent families. Greater than 100% means that a family would need to spend more than they earn (after housing costs) to adequately heat their home.



Gender gap (for all THAW clients in 2022)

The gender gap between male and female THAW clients is over 20%, meaning that female clients are on average 20% further in fuel poverty. Although taken across all clients, this may also highlight interactions of gender inequalities with child poverty.



Minimum income standard of families (for THAW clients in 2022):

Minimum Income Standard (MIS) is modelled annually by Loughborough University to provide an estimated minimum spend across multiple areas (food, energy, housing etc.) to achieve an acceptable living standard. The standard is written into the Scottish definition of fuel poverty, such that household must be below MIS in order to be deemed fuel poor. However, it also provides a method to assess gaps in income required to reach an acceptable living standard.

A rural MIS has been created to consider the additional expenses required in remote rural areas; this has not been used as it has not been updated since 2016, but also because income levels are already well below the national MIS.

Compared to the national MIS, both on average and as a median, single parents with two children are receiving £1600 less than the MIS and a couple with 2 children are receiving almost £1300 less than the MIS. None of the families assessed were earning enough to meet the MIS and only pensioners had a positive median income; however all demographics may be below MIS if a rural premium was included.

The MIS considers the income required to adequately heat households, so it is likely to be high locally due to high energy costs and low energy efficiency of properties.

