



Annual Review 2019

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

Chair's Report

In June 2018, THAW required matched funding for the 2nd year of the European Social Fund (ESF) WellBeing Orkney Project. Funding assistance from several sources including, Development Trusts, Community Councils, NHS Orkney, Orkney Islands Council, and OREF allowed us to fulfil the funding requirements. THAW is pleased that by the end of the project over 650 households have been assisted.

Securing further funding was a priority and THAW successfully bid to the British Gas Energy Trust (BGET) and Energy Action Scotland's coordinated ABC (Aiming Beyond Cancer) Project for funding. The ABC's project assisted clients with improved heating systems and new white goods. We are confident that this service will continue with further ABC funding.

THAW works in partnership with the Trussell Trust & the local Foodbank and by attending regularly we have been able to complement their service provision by supplying electricity vouchers for those in need.

With increased activity, THAW needed to recruit more staff and to move to new offices. In 2019 we moved to 2 West Tankerness Lane, recruited a Welfare and Support Officer and Development and Support Officer. THAW's clients can have complex problems and training has been arranged for the new staff. For example, Wiser Advisor and Advice UK training is planned. We have been able to open this training to Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau personnel.

THAW thanks its funders and partners for their contributions. Without them, THAW would not have been able to provide bespoke support to so many people in need. A huge thank you must go to all the staff and Board Members for their hard work and dedication. They are compassionate and able and all give their time willingly to allow THAW to grow and continue its services.

I have refrained from singling out individuals, but I must give special thanks to the Manager, Mr Peter Rickard who retires on July 12th. He was a founder member of THAW, serving as a board member until 2016 until he became interim manager, "for a very short time!" Through his commitment and expertise THAW has managed to develop into the organisation it is today. He has proved invaluable and we will miss his many talents.

However, THAW is pleased to have recruited Lindsey Johnson as the new manager. Lindsey comes from the Connect Project that grew in reputation and success under her charge. We welcome Lindsey to THAW and hope she will have a long, happy and bright future at THAW.



Janice Annal, THAW Orkney Chair



Service Provision and Statistics: A Partnership Approach

Aiming Beyond Cancer

THAW Orkney were able to assist households with a cancer diagnosis through referrals made by **MacMillan** and **CLAN Cancer Support** services. Funded by **Scottish and Southern Electric** and coordinated between the Orkney Islands and The Western Isles by **Energy Action Scotland**, and following a home visit by THAW, a new heating system and white goods were installed for those eligible.

Although the project had a delayed start due to Ofgem requirements and could not begin until late December rather than the scheduled early September, THAW's targets remained the same to install 26 heating systems and 22 white goods. This was exceeded with **30 heating systems** and **34 white goods** being installed.

A huge **thank you** also to the **local contractors and suppliers** who went the extra mile to install the heating systems and white goods within the tight deadlines we had to operate within.



WellBeing Orkney

After two years of service provision from July 2017 to July 2019, funded by The **European Social Fund** via **Orkney Islands Council** and the matched **Orkney Partnership** funding from: **4 x Development Trusts, 7 x Community Councils, 1 x Private, 2 x Public Sector, 4 x Not for Profit organisations, 3 x Charitable Trusts** and a formal agreement with **Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau**.

The **WellBeing Project** has achieved significant outcomes:

- **650+ households** assisted with energy advice and support
- **281 households** advised on tariff switching options
- **£30,197** saved annually through THAW staff supporting tariff switching; **£340 average** per household annual savings (*subject to the market collapse of individual utilities*).
- **180 households** advised on how best to use their heating / hot water systems
- **56 households** supported in Warm Homes Discount applications

As part of the holistic partnership approach to client household support and assistance, active referrals with continued support is made to several local and national agencies. The following is a snapshot of the referrals made:

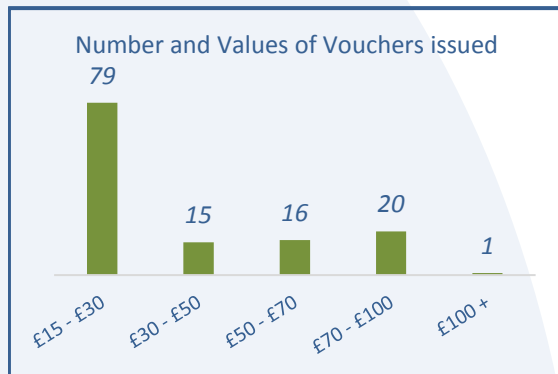
| | |
|--|----|
| Citizens Advice Bureau | 74 |
| HEEPS:ABS (<i>Firefly Energi</i>) | 87 |
| Warmer Homes Scotland (<i>Warmworks</i>) | 58 |
| Care and Repair | 39 |
| Other | 37 |



Service Provision and Statistics: A Partnership Approach

Electricity Vouchers

THAW Orkney, working with **The Orkney Foodbank** and funded by **Warmworks**, has been able to assist **131 client households** with immediate support to enable the heating and lighting to remain on.



Through making direct payments to the Utilities, THAW has been able to expand the service provision to not only mainland households with pre-payment meters, but to the outer islands and households with credit meters.

Within the **131** electricity vouchers provided, **17** of these have been to households with longer-term support needs.

Home Visits and Energy Cafés

As part of the proactive approach of THAW in which, whenever possible, we provide the services in a place where our clients are, along with 300+ initial home visits since April 2018 and subsequent follow-up visits, we have undertaken public drop-in Energy Cafés across Orkney mainland and islands in Stromness (twice), Shapinsay, Orphir, Birsay, Sanday, Evie & Rendall, Rousay, St Margaret's Hope. The schedule for the forthcoming year is underway.

A New Client Household Support Service

In order to provide an enhanced bespoke in-home support service for fuel poverty clients THAW Orkney has embarked on a significant expansion of its service provision to include a Welfare Support Officer (WSO). Funded by the **British Gas Energy Trust** through **Charis Grants**, the WSO has been undergoing the Wiser Adviser Training provided by Money Advice Scotland and since inception in January 2019 has assisted **46** households: **18** with benefits and **5** with debt management.

The full service will be operational by late Summer 2019.

Cosy Home Packs

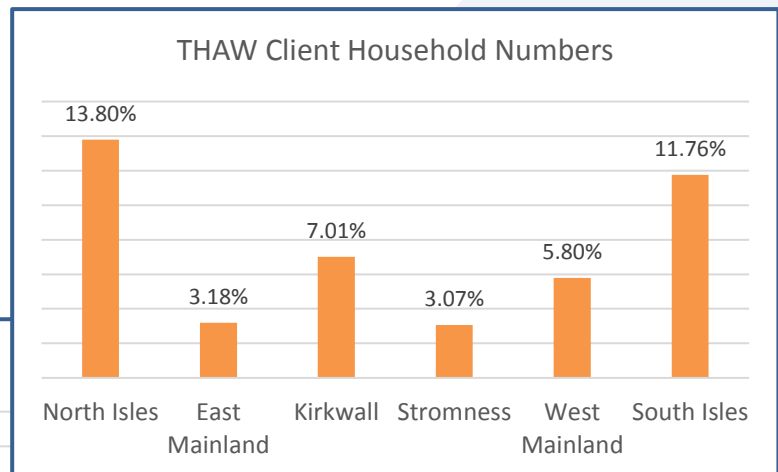
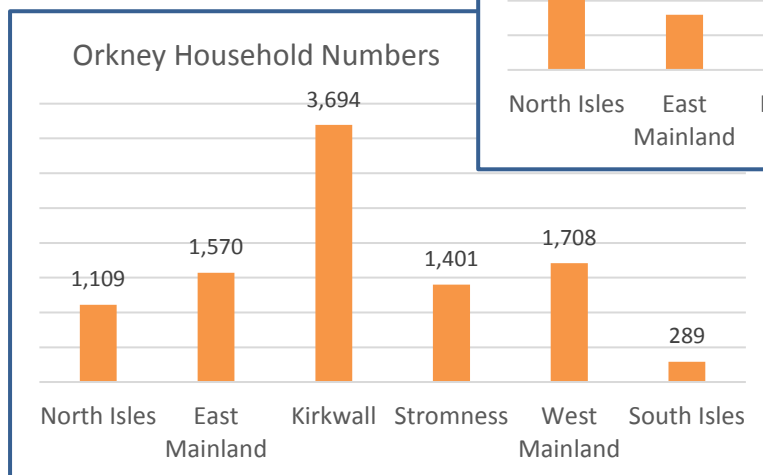
THAW Orkney's unique initiative to provide thermal clothing and energy saving items in Cosy Home Packs (CHPs) has proved very effective in assisting those households in fuel poverty. **288 CHPs** have been distributed including **3,363** individual items.

A firm favourite with the children is the 'Doggie' Wheat Bag Warmer. Popped in a microwave for a minute they act like fur-covered hot water bottles but more 'cuddlier'!



Where our Clients are from

The outer isles continue to represent a higher percentage of THAW's clients in relation to the number of households (*as outlined in the adjacent two graphs*), for example, of the 1,109 households



in the North Isles, 13.80% (153) are THAW clients.

Kirkwall also continues to be the highest number of household clients in a particular area at 259, 7.01% of the 3,694 are THAW's clients.

Fuel Poverty

Around 17% of householders who have approached THAW for assistance are not experiencing fuel poverty. However, the majority of our clients who are dealing with fuel poverty, are experiencing levels so high there is not a definition except that anything above 20% is considered 'extreme'.

| Level of Fuel Poverty | Percentage of all clients |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Not in fuel poverty | 17.00% |
| 10%-20% fuel poverty | 7.00% |
| 20%-30% fuel poverty | 11.00% |
| 30%-40% fuel poverty | 36.00% |
| 40%+ fuel poverty | 29.00% |

The current Scottish Government's definition of fuel poverty is: 'A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would require to spend more than 10% of its income on all household fuel use. If over 20% of income is required, then this is termed as being in extreme fuel poverty.'

The Scottish Household Condition Survey 2015-17 highlights **57%** of Orkney households are in fuel poverty (30.7% national average) and **23%** are in extreme fuel poverty (8.3% national average)

From all of the householders advised by THAW:

- **3 in 4 householders** (76%) are experiencing **extreme fuel poverty**
- **1 in 3 households** (29%) are experiencing **40%+ fuel poverty** (ie needing to spend more than £4 from every £10 of their income on fuel)



Case Studies and Comments on our services:

Client 'A' was referred to THAW by the Foodbank.

She was 17 years old at the time, vulnerable, living alone in emergency accommodation, estranged from her family and found it difficult to engage with other organisations for support. She had no electricity and no income.

THAW provided the client with immediate support by assisting her with a cosy home pack, set up her electricity account with her supplier in order to be able to access emergency electricity credit and were able to award a £100 electricity voucher over two months. In addition, we undertook a joint visit to the Citizens Advice Bureau for assistance with a Universal Credit application.

Thank you so much for that huge box of goodies. I never expected so many super and useful things. I've had a great afternoon trying it all out. The kettle is plugged in and working a treat, the bulbs are in, and the heater has been warming my feet, I'm cuddling with the blanket around me. Socks and hat will be used very soon and the micro wave neck warmer too will be cosy around my old neck. It was lovely to see you, hope to see you again just for a cuppa. Thank you again.

'The heating is on for an hour and the house is boiling. I can't believe the difference it has made!'

The client was successful with her benefits application, is in permanent accommodation, has electricity and a more positive outlook towards her future.

Clients 'B & C' approached THAW because they believed their electricity usage was unusually high.

'...appreciate your great concern for those who need energy saving tips. I certainly needed advice. I had no idea how to work the storage heaters I have!!'

Their supplier had disconnected their dual tariff meter and replaced it with a single tariff meter supplying both domestic and heating usage. We installed a 'smart monitoring meter' to understand the usage and recorded regular meter readings. We identified that, in fact, the heating meter, which was thought to have been disconnected by the supplier, was still recording usage but had not been captured for several years due to an error by the supplier.

'Thank you for all your help with changing our power supplier. Working out a lot cheaper, so your help is much appreciated'

THAW Orkney have advocated on the client's behalf to clear the outstanding amount owed and provide ongoing support as well as advising on behavioural changes in order to help reduce their energy usage. The client adopted the behavioural change advice with the result of a reduction from an average of 68kWh per day to 28kWh a day usage. This represents an estimated but significant annual saving of over £2,400 a year.

Client 'D' was referred through the ABC (Aiming Beyond Cancer) project as he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer.

I feel I should write and thank you all for helping me to get the heaters installed, it has been a huge support and I appreciate it very much.

He was in rented social accommodation with storage heaters which he found very difficult to control. We were able to assist with the installation of new high-retention storage heaters which were more efficient and easier to control, a tumble dryer as he was drying clothes inside his home and a Cosy Home Pack.



Not only were we able to install the heating system and tumble dryer within two-weeks of the initial referral thanks to the dedicated local contractors we worked with, the client tells us he is warmer, more comfortable and his quality of life has improved through this assistance.

Governance and Staffing 2018-19

THAW Orkney Staffing

Kate Fereday-Eshete, Project Administrator *(to September 2018)*
Michael Butler, Development and Support Officer *(to February 2019)*
Stephen Walters, Development and Support Officer *(from January to February 2019)*
Billy Groundwater, Development and Support Officer *(from January to May 2019)*
Gill Couper-Swanney, Facilities and Administration Officer *(from October 2018)*
Lorraine Campbell, Welfare Support Officer *(from January 2019)*
Michelle Koster, Development and Support Officer *(from April 2019)*
Stacy Johnston, Senior Development and Support Officer
Peter Rickard, Manager
'WellBeing Orkney' OCAB staffing Fiona Bradley / Catherine Hine, WellBeing Support Advisers *(to July 2019)*

Trustees

Janice Annal *(Chair)*
Caroline Butterfield *(co-opted September 2018, Treasurer)*
Erik Firth
Ian Garman
Mark Hull
Adele Lidderdale
Imogen Sawyer *(Vice Chair)*
John Ross Scott
Doreen Sinclair
Rhoda Walker
(Peter Rickard - Secretary)

Organisations we have partnered during 2018-19



Thank You:

Our grateful thanks to all those who have contributed to THAW Orkney this year without whom we would not have achieved so much:

- The **British Gas Energy Trust / Charis Charitable Trust**
- The **European Social Fund / Orkney Islands Council**
- The local partnership of **matched funding organisations**:
National Health Service Orkney, The Robertson Trust, The Ronald F Slater Charitable Trust, Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre Development Trust, Sanday Development Trust, Stronsay Development Trust, Shapinsay Development Trust, Orkney Housing Association Ltd, Orkney Renewable Energy Forum, Orkney Micro-Renewables, Firefly Energi, Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau, St James Place Foundation, and the Community Councils of Papa Westray, Evie & Rendall, Kirkwall & St Ola, Orphir, Graemsay, Hoy & Walls, Sanday and Westray
- The **Warm Homes Fund / Orkney Islands Council**
- **Scottish and Southern Electric / Energy Action Scotland**
- **Warmworks**
- **Cooke Aquaculture**
- **Laura Watts** who kindly donated the royalties from her book '**Energy at the End of The World: An Orkney Islands Saga**'
- And **Individuals** who have generously made **personal donations** to further THAW's work of tackling fuel poverty and social and financial inclusion

Further information:

Further copies of this report can be obtained from THAW's website:

<http://www.thaworkney.co.uk/>

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