



## **Stirling CAB Energy Advice Service – 2020 campaign launches**

### **“Local People Urged To Get Advice on Fuel Bills, Fuel Debt Advice, Cheaper & And Energy Efficiency Measures.”**

The Energy Advice Service at Stirling CAB is a new and innovative approach to helping vulnerable Energy consumers in the Stirling Council Area.

Project coordinator and lead Advice Officer Azra Tabassum is directly reaching out to people who need help. Telephone advice & support is currently available from 07498 988993 & [Azra.Tabassum@StirlingCAB.casonline.org.uk](mailto:Azra.Tabassum@StirlingCAB.casonline.org.uk), (9 – 5 Monday to Friday).

When COVID19 restrictions are lifted she will be present at food banks, community events, Hanover Sheltered Housing and conducting home visits to ensure that as many vulnerable people as possible are helped.

The aim is to guarantee that individuals at a financial disadvantage, those who are frightened to turn their heating on, use their energy are aware that there is a service who can assist directly.

Azra Tabassum says:

“We should not live in a society where people are living in cold, unheated and inefficient homes. The goal is to significantly reduce fuel poverty in Stirling by assisting one person at a time. We want to reach out to people in rural and isolated areas who are unaware that there is help available to them.

We are very grateful to the Energy Redress Scheme who are funding the project, the scheme allows us to assist people financially when in dire straits as well as facilitate the installation of small energy saving measures, using our partner ‘handyman’ scheme.”

The idea behind the project is to



Provide trusted energy advice



Provide support to switch to cheaper gas & electricity deals



Provide 2<sup>nd</sup> tier support to frontline Stirling CAB advice services and to support partner agencies.



Fund & install low cost energy efficiency measures



Engage with people encountering problems with their suppliers and those experiencing short and long term financial crisis.

We are extremely concerned at the numbers of people we are contacting CAB who are in financial difficulty because of COVID19. With incomes falling and energy prices rising, and the benefit system changing beyond all recognition, we have to help more and more people every day who are struggling just to get by. We are also concerned that, with a third of the population living in rural Stirling that we are merely addressing the tip of the iceberg.

CAB Manager Craig Anderson further added –“our CAB **Energy Advice Service** is here for you to help save money, sort out fuel crisis and assist with issues relating to Fuel Poverty, Energy Advice and Energy Efficiency and Money and budgeting. This vital work would not be possible without the support of The Energy Redress Scheme.

No matter what a person's financial circumstances are, nobody in this day and age should have to suffer problems paying for vital services like gas & electricity. Get in touch and we can help”.

For further information, or if you would like to discuss a problem or for help to switch to a cheaper deal please call Azra Tabassum on 07498988993 or [Azra.Tabassum@StirlingCAB.casonline.org.uk](mailto:Azra.Tabassum@StirlingCAB.casonline.org.uk)

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Note to Editors

### **Case study**

A client contacted CAB looking for a food bank referral; they had mental health problems and were in debt. Out of the £73.10 of benefits they were entitled to, after social fund and council tax deductions they only received £48.23 per week to live on. The client had a prepayment meter for both their gas and electricity, and both were in emergency credit.

The client was given a food bank referral and their gas and electricity was re-established by the **Energy Advice Service** to deal with their immediate crisis. Following on from this, with the help of the **Energy Advice Service** and Food Bank advice worker, the client's debt repayments were reduced to £3.66 and their energy supplier agreed to provide the client with £100 credit on their gas and £50 on their electricity.

"I felt like a total let down to my kids as it's my job to make sure they have their basic needs met. It doesn't bear thinking about where I'd be if it wasn't for the CAB"

Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau is your local charity which is here for you in your time of need, whenever that may be. However, to be able to run the service, we need financial support to allow us continue to help others. By making a donation, you help us to keep our doors open.

All donations of any size make a real difference so please help us now by donating at: [www.stirlingcab.org.uk](http://www.stirlingcab.org.uk)

You can also support CAB every time you shop online by registering with [www.easyfunding.org.uk](http://www.easyfunding.org.uk) and selecting Stirling District Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd as your chosen cause. It won't cost you a penny but we will receive a donation when you shop online.