

## TCC Cost-of-Living Summit

### Summary report (issues, solutions, pledges)



#### Activities

The summit was hosted by We Are Plas Madoc on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, led by FDF Centre for Independent Living, Art & Soul Tribe, Flintshire City of Sanctuary, and supported by TCC staff and Building Communities Trust. TCC members from faith and community groups also attended.

The summit was run as a result of a listening exercise run by TCC and through involvement in conversations with a national Cost of Living Coalition, run by Community Organisers. We identified that the crisis affects many people differently; the idea of the summit was to share those experiences and come up with some local and national solutions that will benefit communities.

We held an exhibition of posters made by people reflecting their lived experience in their own words, a spoken word poem, readings, round table discussions, feedback and individual pledges. You can see the spoken word poem (by Natasha Borton) and a video of posters (Created by Art and Soul Tribe) from the exhibition here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSV0DeabiWo>

#### Attendees

- There were 60 attendees in person and 6 online. There was a diverse mix of people representing different experiences of the crisis.
- Elected representatives: Simon Baynes MP, Ken Skates AM, Caroline Thomas AM, Mark Isherwood AM (online). TCC Leaders also met with Mark Tami MP prior to the event.
- Council staff and councillors: Cllr Nigel Williams, Wrexham Lead member for economy and regeneration; Cllr John Pritchard, Wrexham lead member for adult social care; Cllr Dana Davies, Wrexham Labour group leader; Cllr Paul Johnson, Flintshire Cabinet member for



37 Kingsmills Road  
Wrexham  
LL13 8NH

01978 262588  
www.tcc-wales.org.uk  
office@tcc-wales.org.uk

Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement;  
Catherine Taylor, Principal Manager for Community Resilience (Denbighshire).

- Service providers from Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.
- Funders: The National Lottery Community Fund and Civic Power Fund.

## Summary of discussions

Each table held discussions on what the issues are and what the possible solutions are. This summary reflects the content of discussions on the day and is intended to describe the issues, ideas and pledges that came out of the event. Anything written is a result of the discussions and do not form the opinion or recommendations of TCC.

## Issues

- **People's health, mental health and wellbeing is suffering now:** e.g disabled people are worried that they won't be able to get out of bed due to costs in using equipment such as wheelchairs etc. Parents are worried that they will not be able to keep their children because they can't keep them warm and fed. Organisations have been supporting people who have taken their own life due to financial pressures.
- **The benefits system is adding to the crisis:** People with lifelong health conditions are being reassessed frequently for benefits and this is causing undue illness. Benefits are not in-line with inflation and people are receiving sanctions and losing essential money for things beyond their control.
- **People can't afford the basics:** People are budgeting but still can't afford Food, Fuel, Clothes etc.
- **There are barriers to accessing support:** Barriers include stigma, digital literacy/exclusion, time (for those working full time and with caring responsibilities) language.
- **Debt is increasing:** People are borrowing to pay for basics such as food and energy bills. Some are borrowing money to pay for medical treatment. Rent arrears are already an issue for some social tenants.
- **The lack of public sector funding, coordination and communication on cost of living is affecting people:** At present messaging is confused and uncoordinated. People feel like there is a lack of leadership on the crisis. Public sector services have been reduced over many years and face more cuts.

- **Childcare costs are an issue for some families (including carers):** The cost of childcare means that for some it's cheaper not to work. Others pay a large chunk of wages on childcare.
- **Accessing financial support remotely and online creates barriers and risks:** Universal credit, online banking etc. all require phones, data and online activity opens up risk to confusion and scammers.
- **School and education costs are putting extra pressure on people:** School uniform, transport costs, extras for cooking lessons, school trips are unaffordable for some.
- **There are pressures on frontline organisations who are providing support:** Organisations are getting more referrals to provide support (advice, food) but less money and donations.
- **Housing is a contributing factor:** Lack of social housing and rising rents in the private housing sector.

## Solutions

These have been grouped into national and local solutions after the summit for ease.

National – short-term solutions	National – long-term solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar emergency response as Covid</li> <li>• Windfall tax</li> <li>• Cold weather payment for older people widened to all vulnerable people</li> <li>• More information on what support people can/will get and when</li> <li>• Cost of living taskforce across local/national authorities</li> <li>• Review benefits before April</li> <li>• Wipe off restrictive benefit rules /rent arrears</li> <li>• Support for people using lifesaving equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action on benefits process</li> <li>• Review of assessment process for long term health conditions</li> <li>• Welsh benefits system like in Scotland</li> <li>• More public sector spending</li> <li>• Less restrictive funding options</li> <li>• Coordinated resources</li> <li>• Review levels of eligibility for assistance – household income support for working families</li> <li>• Tackle myths and miscommunications</li> <li>• Employer opportunities for young unskilled persons at good wages with training</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that policies help people to stay in their own homes and with their families</li> <li>• More money/resource available for cost-of-living crisis support from funders and government</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Local short-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar emergency response as Covid</li> <li>• Communication network – top down – everyone can feed in</li> <li>• Central information hub – adding resource and info – can contact to get resource information</li> <li>• Community hubs have to be responsive (Caia Park Partnership/Mosque)</li> <li>• Slow cooker packs</li> <li>• Oil users discretionary fund £250 – increase proposal to £500</li> <li>• Training for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in financial crisis advice before credit cards/loan sharks</li> <li>• Info on Foodbanks where are they – how do they work, how frequently?</li> <li>• Reduce age range of luncheon clubs</li> <li>• Support for rural and older people</li> <li>• Cost of living/inequality taskforce across local/national authorities</li> <li>• Food café/hubs</li> <li>• Employers helping with food</li> <li>• More food banks. Can hubs do more?</li> <li>• Help with hair cuts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local long-term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sourcing healthy food at a local/regional level at affordable costs. Foodbanks are great but profits go to the supermarkets (out of the area)</li> <li>• Insulation programme</li> <li>• Energy generation schemes for off gas communities (Minera)</li> <li>• Produce our own energy and use any profits for community benefit – solar power/wind</li> <li>• Change school uniform policies</li> <li>• Quality food at a reasonable cost</li> <li>• More social housing</li> <li>• Better regulated landlords</li> <li>• Supply chain – sourcing good food from ethical sources for food bank</li> <li>• More cross-sector services/collaborations</li> <li>• Consistency in service delivery</li> <li>• Overhaul food support service</li> <li>• Review policies and procedures for any barriers to support</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniform exchange</li> <li>• Warm hubs</li> <li>• Digital support</li> <li>• Commit as individuals and organisations to maintaining non-digital channels and communication on savings and opportunities</li> </ul>	
--	--

## Pledges

In total 56 individual pledges were made at the end of the summit.

### Some pledges from decision makers:

- Simon Baynes MP: “I pledge to help everyone in Clwyd South with cost of living, benefits, health and other issues. Contact me on 020 7219 3709”
- Mark Isherwood MS: “Support people through benefit appeals, sees the main issue is assessment process and lack of understanding about lifelong conditions.”
- Ken Skates MS: “To press for Welsh Gov to do all it can to help people in crisis. To increase donations of food, clothes and children's toys.”
- Carolyn Thomas MS: “I will fight for public services to be properly funded again. I will collate grants and benefits available from Welsh Gov and help make them more available.

Other pledges were varied but we have grouped them into themes, people said that they would:

- **Share information:** Ensuring information about funding, food support, energy support is shared widely and with the people that need it.
- **Strengthen networks and partnerships:** People pledged to work together to tackle the crisis in informal ways and through formal partnerships.
- **Raise awareness/advocate/influence:** With elected leaders at all levels around a variety of issues such as the impact of the crisis on different groups such as refugees, carers, foster families, disabled people etc. As well as raising awareness in their groups such as churches and mosques.



37 Kingsmills Road  
Wrexham  
LL13 8NH

01978 262588  
www.tcc-wales.org.uk  
office@tcc-wales.org.uk

- **Continue/create support services and activities:** Providing food, warm hubs, support for young people, checking on wellbeing as well as providing other services, delegating a lead person for cost-of-living support.
- **Work on funding:** Sharing information on funding, getting funding for older adults, further funding from community councils, lobby for an increase in third sector funding, pledging funding to support a project, work for more funding for public sector.
- **Review existing policy/procedures:** around council communications, duplication of services, school uniform policy and around benefits.
- For more detail on discussion points and pledges please see the appendices below.

## Next steps

TCC community leaders will continue to work together to identify solutions that could be taken forward with the support from other attendees.

For any further information or to get involved please email:  
[amy@tcc-wales.org.uk](mailto:amy@tcc-wales.org.uk)



## Appendix 1 – Notes from discussions (grouped into categories)

### People's health, mental health and wellbeing is suffering now

- People are worried about keeping their children
- Can't afford to run health equipment – mobility chair meaning I will be forced to stay in bed
- Stress
- Suicide due to financial pressures
- Cold houses increase health issues
- Not being believed is awful, you feel like a criminal (benefits assessments)
- Fear, anger, worry
- How am I going to survive?
- I'm not going to survive
- Domestic violence
- Community wellbeing
- No honest conversations – what are the real problems
- No family support
- Constant cycle of hunger
- Heating as an option not a given in cold temperatures
- Communication – who to trust
- Anxiety and panic – unknown
- Unaware of what is going on (Those in early stages of dementia)
- Stress leading to domestic violence
- Single occupants' residents – more vulnerable and not visible
- Students having to think in larger scopes, they ordinarily wouldn't
- Anxiety, depression. Hopeless and despair – where to go for help?
- General stigma on mental health exasperated by the cost of living
- Exasperated isolation including young people and older people
- Stress of tribunals is huge, not being believed is awful, it makes you feel like a criminal. Its soul destroying and damages our already awful impairments.
- Vicious cycle
- It's a hostile environment
- Mental health



37 Kingsmills Road  
Wrexham  
LL13 8NH

01978 262588  
[www.tcc-wales.org.uk](http://www.tcc-wales.org.uk)  
[office@tcc-wales.org.uk](mailto:office@tcc-wales.org.uk)

- Emotion
- No security
- No clothes to feel better
- No life raft
- Equality of care
- Scared / Overwhelmed
- Affecting children's health and wellbeing

### **The benefits system is failing people:**

- Falling outside of benefit levels
- No uplift on benefit criteria
- Evidence demands for assessments are unrealistic e.g asking for a consultant letter when someone has a permanent health issue and may not have it
- My wife has to be assessed for PIP every 3 to 4 years - even though she has a condition that won't go away or change
- Benefits system is inflexible for working age people. I have undergone 15 tribunals of unfair descisions and won. The cost to government is huge, it's a false economy
- Benefits don't always apply
- Benefit caps not allowing financial incentives to be effective e.g carers allowance and covid top up
- Only £400 a month for 6 months, what about after that? Not enough for most vulnerable.
- People can't access what they are entitled to because of difficult system
- People using PIP to pay bills – this is not what it's for
- People who have been on benefits and switching to work are falling through gaps
- PIP assessment taking ages – people are relying on money and it's not coming through
- ESA application is difficult and takes ages – no support given when called
- Elderly affected by pension systems over 50+ years
- Stress with benefits applications is exacerbating health conditions
- On PIP, cant afford to use mobility vehicle as intended (going out, living life)
- Benefit sanctions due to lack of basic IT skills and complex systems
- Inaccessible and restrictive UC communications
- No ID is affecting my access to UC
- Want to work but it affects benefits/budget/lifestyle/responsibilities



- 5<sup>th</sup> biggest economy but a poor benefit system
- Who is eligible/who decides
- They keep changing thresholds
- Stress and anxiety due to UC/Gov systems and added pressure
- The stress of tribunals is huge, making people go to courthouse scenario and making them feel like criminals
- Evidence demands are unreasonable and people don't have the paperwork e.g consultants letters

#### **People can't afford the basics:**

- Not enough for survival
- Food poverty
- Lack of money
- Lack of food
- Skipping meals (affecting energy)
- Cost – no matter how much you cut back
- People are already budgeting efficiently and already on minimum
- Can't afford fuel to go to work
- Period poverty
- Can't afford minimum heating oil order
- Call to FDF, someone can't pay rent this month
- Food more expensive for less – processed food only available at most foodbanks

#### **There are barriers to accessing support:**

- Too many demands placed on people by support organisations
- Pride prevents people accessing benefits or support
- Stigma – barriers to engagement
- Stigma about owning 'luxury' items like a phone (when essential to claiming benefits)
- Being patronised over acknowledged costs – accessible options

#### **Debt is increasing:**

- Debt rising
- Borrowing

- Loan sharks
- Using credit cards to pay for weekly shopping
- In arrears with bills
- Borrowing money from family for hospital appointments/scans
- Rent arrears

**The lack of public sector funding, coordination and communication on cost of living is affecting people:**

- Danger of duplication of services
- Generic communications cause panic
- Pressure of NHS health service
- Lack on information and sign posting
- More groups affected – more numbers in poverty
- Care families opting out of providing care because of financial circumstances

**There is embedded inequality and misunderstanding between people:**

- Divide between rich and poor
- Why is money being given to richest? x
- The country is rich
- Community support infrastructure – community hierarchy
- Border discrepancies England/Wales
- Discrepancies in class experience

**Housing is a contributing factor:**

- Lack of affordable housing
- Mortgages not accessible
- People losing homes
- Increased waiting lists for social housing
- Rise in private rent increasing social housing need

**Childcare costs are an issue for some families:**

- Knock on effect on childcare – people pulling out jeopardizing viability
- Need to work longer hours to get universal credit – what is the impact on childcare?
- People need to take on more jobs – can't afford more childcare

- Childcare is expensive
- Foster carers obliged to provide food options which is expensive
- Care leavers without family support for daily living costs
- No economic options for fostering. I.e No 2<sup>nd</sup> hand clothes

#### **School and education costs are putting extra pressure on people:**

- School uniforms and school runs
- School run costs
- Pressure to supply what is needed for school
- Schools put pressure on parents and kids – people getting put in detention because parents can't afford uniform
- School uniform policies/Sew on badges
- Uniforms - We look like we are neglecting our children
- Parent pay system?
- Care leavers suffering with illiteracy and IT skills – stigma
- Opportunities for play!

#### **Accessing financial support remotely and online is creating barriers and risks:**

- Cyber crime
- Banking apps confusing
- Scams increasing
- Call waiting times for working people not viable
- Data poverty affecting social/education/benefits etc.

#### **There are pressures on frontline organisations who are providing support:**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> sector can't access funding but are picking up the bills. Food banks and benefit checks. Wrexham council charging for benefit checks?
- Fewer able to donate to foodbanks and business withdrawing support
- FDF un-indated with people approaching for benefits checks to find an extra £10
- Uptake in requests for foodbank vouchers
- Frontline groups – charities need to do more e.g feed children
- Help and support comes from volunteers – but they will get into trouble now – fatigue
- Increase in demand on foodbanks

- Dietary requirements – allergies, religious medical requirements
- Volunteers struggling to fuel cars to support
- Rural transport costs ‘dial a ride’ to hospital etc.
- Expenses for fuel for support workers
- Venues that used to be free now charge to cover bills
- Food bank supplies depleted
- Strained services/NHS

**People are concerned by the effects on business and the economy:**

- Christmas is supposed to help business – customers can't shop – business close
- Small business going under
- Expense of one-off shops/convenience
- Can't afford to go to work – staffing levels



## Appendix 2 – Solutions (grouped into area of influence and scope)

### National – short-term solutions

- Similar emergency response as Covid
- Windfall tax
- Cold weather payment for older people widened to all vulnerable people
- More information on what support people can/will get and when
- Cost of living taskforce across local/national authorities
- Review benefits before April
- Wipe off restrictive benefit rules /rent arrears
- Support for people using lifesaving equipment
- Ensure that policies help people to stay in their own homes and with their families
- More money/resource available for cost-of-living crisis support from funders and government

### National – long-term solutions

- Take action on benefits process
- Review of assessment process for long term health conditions
- Welsh benefits system like in Scotland
- More public sector spending
- Less restrictive funding options
- Coordinated resources
- Review levels of eligibility for assistance – household income support for working families
- Tackle myths and miscommunications
- Employer opportunities for young unskilled persons at good wages with training

### Local and short-term

- Similar emergency response as Covid
- Communication network – top down – everyone can feed in
- Central information hub – adding resource and info – can contact to get resource information
- Community hubs have to be responsive (Caia Park Partnership/Mosque)
- Slow cooker packs

- Oil users discretionary fund £250 – increase proposal to £500
- Training for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in financial crisis advice before credit cards/loan sharks
- Info on Foodbanks where are they – how do they work, how frequently?
- Reduce age range of luncheon clubs
- Support for rural and older people
- Cost of living/inequality taskforce across local/national authorities
- Food café/hubs
- Employers helping with food
- More food banks – can the hubs do more?
- Help with hair cuts
- Uniform exchange
- Warm hubs
- Digital support
- Commit as individuals and organisations to maintaining non digital channels and communication on savings and opportunities

### Local and long-term

- Sourcing healthy food at a local/regional level at affordable costs. Foodbanks are great but profits go to the supermarkets (out of the area)
- Insulation programme
- Energy generation schemes for off gas communities (Minera)
- Produce our own energy and use any profits for community benefit – solar power/wind
- Change school uniform policies
- Quality food at a reasonable cost
- More social housing
- Better regulated landlords
- Supply chain – sourcing good food from ethical sources for food bank
- More cross-sector services/collaborations
- Consistency in service delivery
- Overhaul food support service
- Review policies and procedures for any barriers to support



37 Kingsmills Road  
Wrexham  
LL13 8NH

01978 262588  
[www.tcc-wales.org.uk](http://www.tcc-wales.org.uk)  
[office@tcc-wales.org.uk](mailto:office@tcc-wales.org.uk)

**General:**

- We need to work together, not adversarial
- More information about access to funds, money, help
- Bring back old school community spirit
- Tips and tricks – e.g fill in a flask of boiled water
- Clarity of options, assistance
- Crisis triage resource
- Change minds, change policy, stop blame culture!
- FLVC – Two-way communication bridging gaps
- Info leaflet, Warm hubs, asset map
- TCC – Do mapping?
- Entering information into social consciousness
- Robbie can cook CIC



## Appendix 3 – Pledges made at the summit (grouped into themes)

### Sharing information:

- Share experience and awareness of funding opportunities
- Share experience and local knowledge of what is 'out there' Funding, Food network, Cost of living initiatives – TNL
- Coordinate information on warm spaces in Flintshire – communicate this to those who support vulnerable people.
- I pledge to continue to grow and maintain connections with communities and local organisations to grow a sense of trust, understanding and support.
- Continue to build connections with support networks whilst working on the ground with local communities so I can help people access support. Push the realities of the situation to the forefront of the public mind as the more people who know what's happening the more we can campaign for change.
- Raise awareness to those in need, let's make a difference

### Strengthening networks and partnerships:

- Continue to promote and work in partnership to share resources, ideas and skills with a focus on 'bottom up'
- Wrexham Foodbank – Raise awareness of reasons why our clients seek help and work towards greater connectivity with other agencies and political leaders in seeking resolutions. More towards a changing minds approach.
- Art and Soul Tribe. Link in with Carolyn AM, Lottery and TCC to share best practice for community mapping and info sharing (Better Ways)
- Keep listening to people – Kelly
- I pledge to help my neighbors as much as I can
- I pledge to check and help my neighbours
- Speak to FLVC/SPOA
- Offer personal time to the local community task forces – wherever is best placed. Lobbying.
- Communities for work, Wrexham – To promote collaborative partnerships with other organisations within the county of Wrexham
- I will continue to provide opportunities for community engagement and have difficult conversations and find solutions



- Speak to FLVC / SPOA and keep developing FCC's response to the crisis
- Join up the dots.
- Work towards building strong partnerships in our communities to signpost services in the local area

#### **Raising awareness/advocating/influencing:**

- Write to MP, Speak to Church group
- Raising awareness of issues, Guiding the Afghan and other refugee families with finding support
- I pledge to keep raising the perspectives of communities into all policy discussions and advocacy on behalf of BCT – BCT
- To raise issues with my local councilors/community councilors and collectively write to parliament
- I pledge to empower individuals in my community to write letters to their local councilors, MP's and the Senedd
- I pledge to continue working/supporting/advocating for people in my community. I will do all I can to demonstrate and fight for a fairer society
- Meet with Simon Baynes MP re crisis in fostering
- I pledge to help those in need and to increase the knowledge to facilitate this.
- Share discussions with Llangollen councilors
- Engage with decision makers at all levels.
- I pledge to write to the MP about doing a benefit review before next April.
- To raise the question again with WG/MP (Simon Baynes) in regard to carers allowance. Why is it counted as income against means tested benefits. (NEWCIS)
- Lobby MP's and MS's to look into supporting community buildings with heating and electric.
- To press for Welsh Gov to do all it can to help people in crisis. To increase donations of food, clothes and children's toys.
- Keep trying to share our perspectives with decision makers – Write, invite, share.

#### **Continue/create support services and activities:**

- I will maintain breakfast and brews and help – with my workplace ensure we help wherever possible.

- Foster carer: will continue to do my best for the 3 young people I care for under increasingly difficult circumstances I pledge
- I will continue to assist residents in the community and youngsters, especially those who require help
- My pledge is to ensure CPP'S buildings are available to a wider age range and range of users as a warm, social and food providing space.
- To create an accessible space where people can access a range of support services. To be an active member of different support networks. – Wellbeing Hub.
- Check with my participants about their household wellbeing, rather than focus entirely on what the purpose of my project is
- Appoint a contact person in the Mosque who can sign post members needing help.

#### **Funding:**

- AVOW – Continue to provide funding advice and direct link to funders. Encourage and provide partnership links to encourage a collective approach.
- I pledge to keep looking for funding to help older adults heat their homes sufficiently and to create warm spaces in my community for the older generation.
- Task community council to increase financial support – Estate office funding crisis events
- Lobby MP's for central government to increase funding to the third sector
- Through TCC we will fund a project that builds partnerships and tackles the root /challenges power and builds sustainable community power – Civic Power Fund
- I will fight for public services to be properly funded again. I will collate grants and benefits available from Welsh Gov and help make them more available.

#### **Review policy/procedures:**

- To review councils' letters to ensure tenants engage, not feel afraid
- Dangers of duplication and gaps in services and support – looking into Flintshire services county council and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector
- Cllr Dana Davies – Ensuring my work on WCBC mitigates against exasperating poverty through properly assessed impact assessment and actively changing policy where this does occur. I.e school uniform policies.
- I pledge to help everyone in Clwyd South with cost of living, benefits, health and other issues.



37 Kingsmills Road  
Wrexham  
LL13 8NH

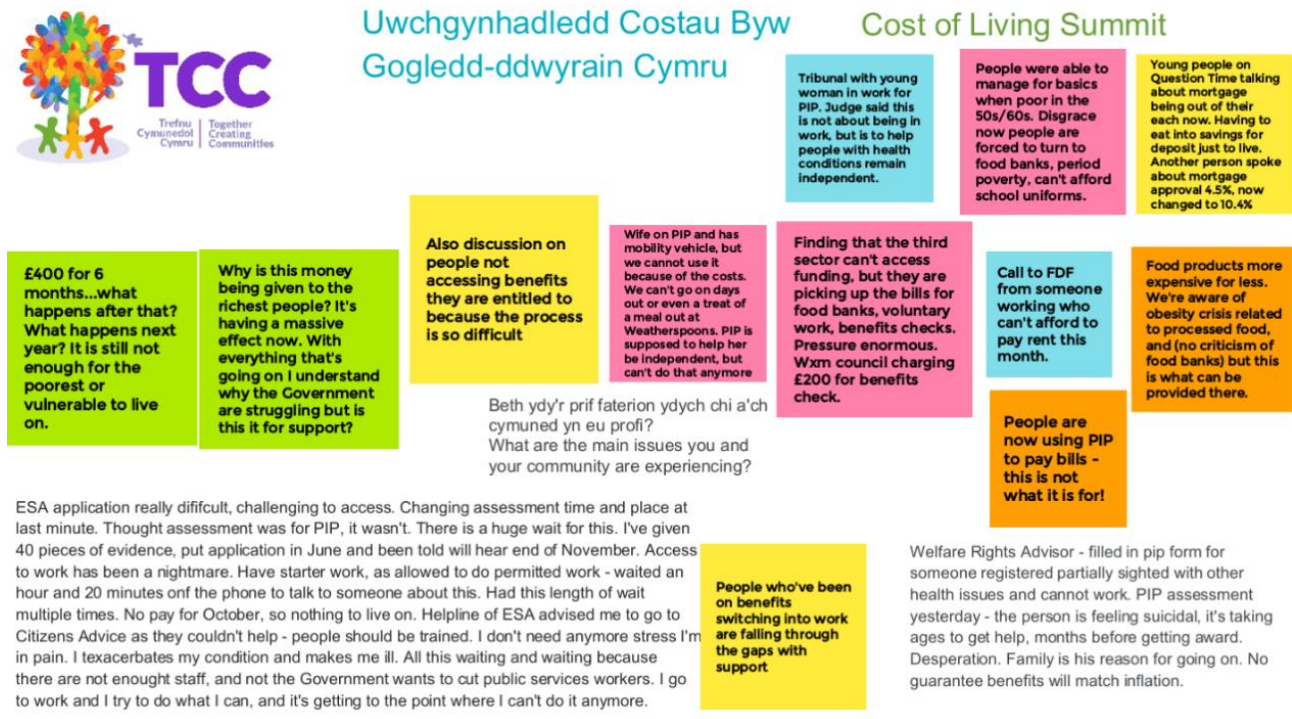
01978 262588  
[www.tcc-wales.org.uk](http://www.tcc-wales.org.uk)  
[office@tcc-wales.org.uk](mailto:office@tcc-wales.org.uk)

**General:**

- Feedback on digital exclusion to Ambition North Wales
- Not pay my gas and electricity because I can't afford it
- I pledge to exist in a joyful manner despite how the Conservative government would prefer I didn't
- Welfare rights, community buildings to be welcoming and break down barriers/stigmas. All ages are in crisis. Down to up approach.



## Appendix 4 – Screen shots of discussion from online table



**Uwchgyhadledd Costau Byw Gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru** Cost of Living Summit

**TCC** Trefnu Cymunedol | Together Creating Communities

**£400 for 6 months...what happens after that? What happens next year? It is still not enough for the poorest or vulnerable to live on.**

**Why is this money being given to the richest people? It's having a massive effect now. With everything that's going on I understand why the Government are struggling but is this it for support?**

**Also discussion on people not accessing benefits they are entitled to because the process is so difficult**

**Wife on PIP and has mobility vehicle, but we cannot use it because of the costs. We can't go on days out or even a treat of a meal out at Weatherspoons. PIP is supposed to help her be independent, but can't do that anymore**

**Finding that the third sector can't access funding, but they are picking up the bills for food banks, voluntary work, benefits checks. Pressure enormous. Wxm council charging £200 for benefits check.**

**Call to FDF from someone working who can't afford to pay rent this month.**

**Food products more expensive for less. We're aware of obesity crisis related to processed food, and (no criticism of food banks) but this is what can be provided there.**

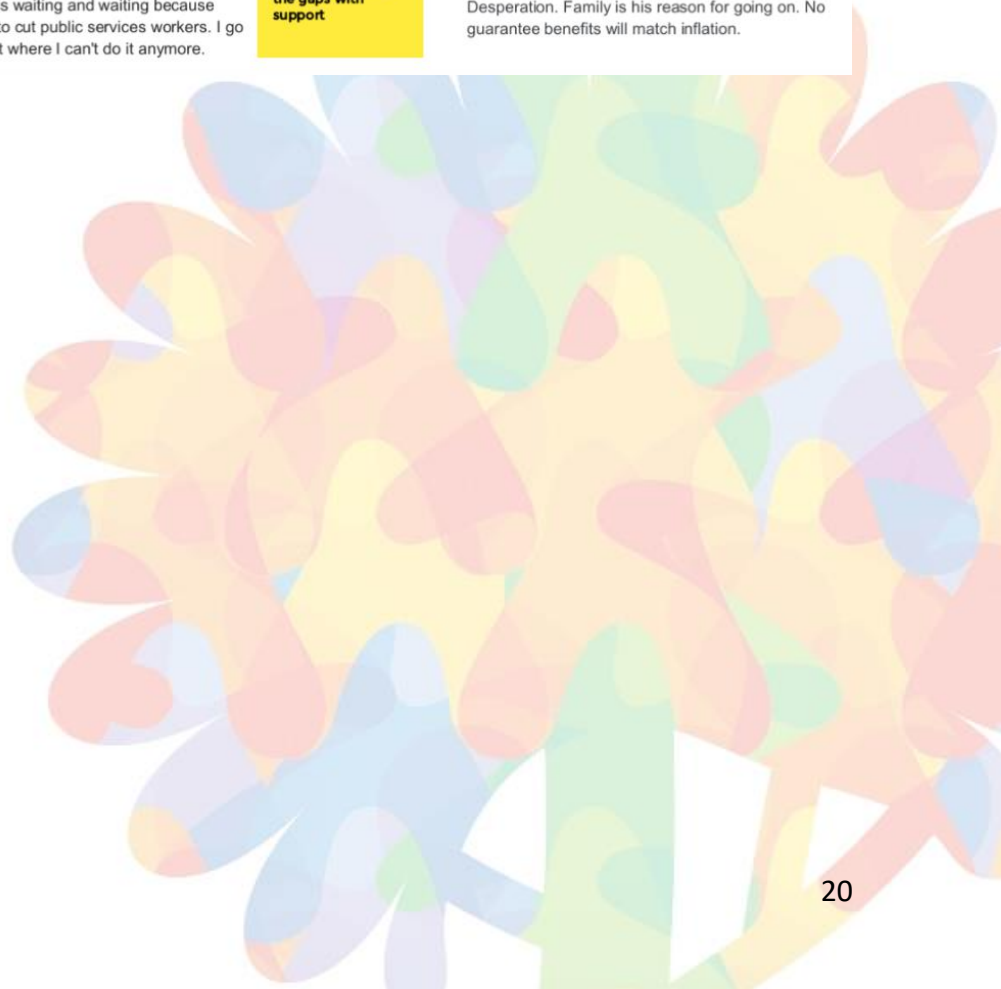
**People are now using PIP to pay bills - this is not what it is for!**

Beth ydy'r prif faterion ydych chi a'ch cymuned yn eu profi?  
What are the main issues you and your community are experiencing?

ESA application really difficult, challenging to access. Changing assessment time and place at last minute. Thought assessment was for PIP, it wasn't. There is a huge wait for this. I've given 40 pieces of evidence, put application in June and been told will hear end of November. Access to work has been a nightmare. Have starter work, as allowed to do permitted work - waited an hour and 20 minutes on the phone to talk to someone about this. Had this length of wait multiple times. No pay for October, so nothing to live on. Helpline of ESA advised me to go to Citizens Advice as they couldn't help - people should be trained. I don't need anymore stress I'm in pain. I exacerbates my condition and makes me ill. All this waiting and waiting because there are not enough staff, and not the Government wants to cut public services workers. I go to work and I try to do what I can, and it's getting to the point where I can't do it anymore.

**People who've been on benefits switching into work are falling through the gaps with support**

Welfare Rights Advisor - filled in pip form for someone registered partially sighted with other health issues and cannot work. PIP assessment yesterday - the person is feeling suicidal, it's taking ages to get help, months before getting award. Desperation. Family is his reason for going on. No guarantee benefits will match inflation.





37 Kingsmills Road  
Wrexham  
LL13 8NH

01978 262588  
www.tcc-wales.org.uk  
office@tcc-wales.org.uk



## Uwchgyhadledd Costau Byw Gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru Cost of Living Summit

Pa atebion lleol a chenedlaethol fyddai fwyaf effeithiol i chi a'ch cymuned?  
What local and national solutions would be most effective for you and your community?

**This is not a local issue!**

Not being believed is bloody awful... as someone's else said it makes one feel like a criminal. It is soul destroying... and damages our already awful impairments

winfall tax on companies.

Some energy providers give free electric blankets

energy provides to give support - enquire with yours

**You know the winter fuel payment that elderly have? (forgot the actual name of that) why can't it also be paid to vulnerable disabled people to lp them keep warm?**

The Hostile Environment

All Private Companies! think it's running at 70 something % for tribunal wins. So that the private companies make money...

FDF has supported person who took their own life, and had experienced massive distress through assessments and trying to access benefits.

Find system very inflexible with benefits, utter frustration with assessment process for working age people. 15 tribunals of unfair decisions won. Cost to the government huge - false economy

Why do people have to go through this stress every through years, when they have medical evidence of conditions? It's a waste of money. Fighting the same battles 10 years on. Why is there no improvement?

There are some really good health care professionals assessing, but it's so variable. Assessment process needs to be looked at.

Agreement with yellow post its- my wife has to be assessed for PIP every 3 or 4 years, even though she has a condition that won't go away or change.

The stress of tribunals is huge - making people with disabilities go to a courthouse type scenario, making them feel like criminals for tribunals is obscene.

Evidence demands are unrealistic. e.g. asking for consultant letter when someone with permanent disability of health issue may not have this.



## Uwchgyhadledd Costau Byw Gogledd-ddwyrain Cymru

### Cost of Living Summit

Comment on low attendance at online room - why don't people care about disabled people?

Do we think people are tired after covid?

How can warm people get to warm hubs? Will they fit in?

People are at end of tether - beyond desperate?

take action on benefits assessment process

TCC - share report with everyone. Ask Mark isherwood if any actions need taking. (LA asked if he can share info about benefit devolution and new assessment process in Scotland)

We need a change the UK Government

Mark will send info about warm home assistance to FDF/TCC

Cost of assessment for working age people- why do we have to assess? cos of gov and taxpayers, and stress and impact. change this.

**We need to work together -not adversarial. Any Government could not have foreseen Covid /Ukraine and would have struggled. We need to be united and help each other as so powerholders see that**

Gweithredu y byddwch yn ei gymryd  
Action you will take

**Mark I raised the idea of benefit assessment being devolved as in Scotland? Partial welfare devolution in Scotland - their new assessment process was designed with PPLE with lived experience and third sector.**

**Mark has met committee in Scotland. As MS Mark has supported many people through benefit appeals and sees the main issue is assessment process, and lack of understanding of lifelong conditions.**