

Thousands of adults in Midlothian can't afford to turn on the heat

Up to 21,000 adults living in Midlothian cannot afford to turn on the heat in their homes to keep warm or eat a balanced meal, according to a new report.

The figure comes from an independent study which was ordered by the local authority's [Cost of Living Task Force](#) which was set up last summer.

Among the report's initial findings, it estimated that between 17,000 and 21,000 adults cannot afford to turn their heating on to keep their home warm; 21,000 cannot afford to eat balanced meals; 8,000 went hungry due to lack of money in the last month; 8,000 missed a priority payment over the last three months and 16,000 have had their mental health/ health negatively affected.

Between 28,000 to 34,000 adults also admitted to being worried about energy bills.

Midlothian has the highest growing population in Scotland, with the 2021 figure of 94,680 adults and children expected to rise to more than 103,000 in the next five years.

The findings of the study are included in a report which goes before councillors next week.

The report looks for the go ahead to create a 'cost of a school day' policy, looking at ways to further support families struggling to cope.

It will also include a school meal debt policy, with officials

seeking permission to write off £32,000 of unpaid school meal fees in the face of the ongoing cost of living crisis.

The report lists the actions already set up by the Cost of Living Taskforce using £1.36m of Covid Recovery Funds to support people struggling to cope.

They included establishing a Heat and Eat fund for those unsuccessful in Scottish Welfare Fund applications, warm and well hubs providing warm space, hot drinks and soup, funding Woodburn Pantry and supporting other foodbanks or similar projects.

A report setting out more recommendations, actions and next steps for dealing with the cost of living crisis will be brought back to the taskforce in the next few months.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

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Midlothian Council leader Kelly Parry (left seated) at the launch of one of the Warm and Well hubs set up to help tackle the cost of living crisis in Midlothian. Pic Midlothian Council