



**Being Warm Being Happy:** Understanding disability, fuel poverty and energy vulnerability for adults with a learning disability

Fuel Poverty Research Network

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Speakup  
Self Advocacy



CLAHRC  
Yorkshire and  
Humber

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eaga  
charitable  
trust

# The project

## Background



- There is very little evidence of the nature and extent of fuel poverty in the disabled population, and virtually none at all for people with a learning disability.
- This is despite the fact that AWLD (adults with a learning disability) are at a greater risk of material deprivation than the general population, and therefore more likely to find it especially difficult to avoid living in a cold home.
- This mixed methods study addresses this evidence gap.

# The project



- **Phase 1: The household study.**
  - To understand and characterise the energy vulnerability from the perspective of AWLD.
- **Phase 2: The quantitative study.**
  - To estimate the prevalence of fuel poverty in households in which AWLD reside relative to the general population.
- **Phase 3: Co-production workshops**
  - To discuss implications for policy and practice from the findings and generate shared recommendations and solutions.

# Story so far



A summary from Speak Up...

[https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=eep4gQ0\\_T7k](https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=eep4gQ0_T7k)

# The Household Study



- **10** households between December 2017 – March 2018.
- Purposive sampling captured a range of characteristics in terms of age, gender, family situation, tenure and energy efficiency of the home.
- Researchers from the University and Speak Up jointly conducted the interviews.
- Topics discussed in the interview include energy use, barriers to maintaining safe home temperatures, payment strategies and support and resources available.
- Temperature monitors were left in the home for two weeks.



**Person 10**

Male  
28  
Years old

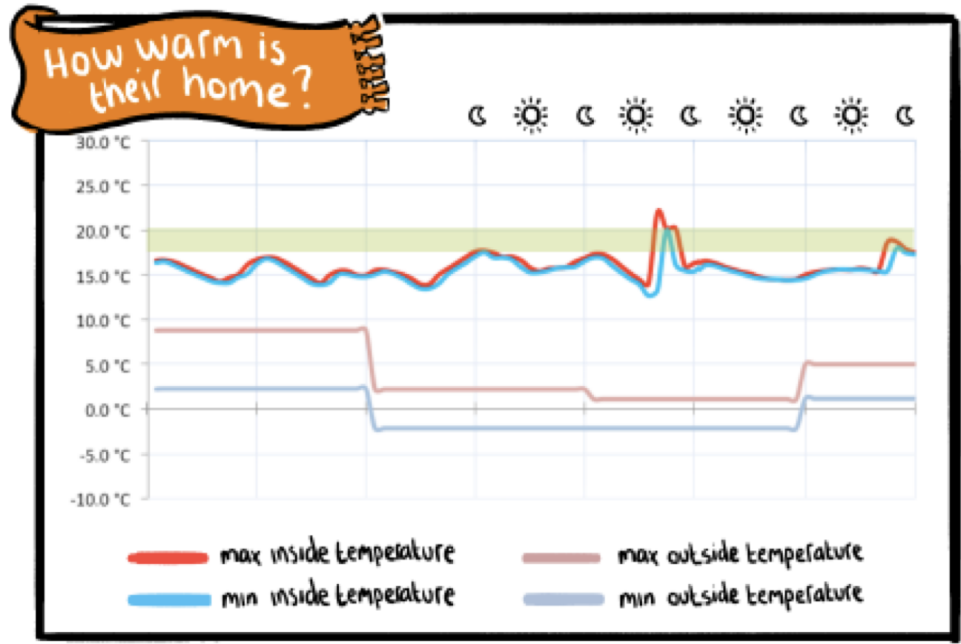
1970  
3 bedroom  
semi-detached

Privately owned

15  
Years

Post Office

No smart meter



# Analysis



# Co-production workshops



- Meaningful engagement using visual and creative methods
- Involvement of all key stakeholders - policy, practice, service provider and commissioning organizations (health, housing and energy), AWLD and related advocacy groups.
- *The first workshop* was used to develop a shared understanding of factors influencing FP and energy vulnerability for AWLD.
- The *second workshop* focused on developing implications of the findings for policy and practice.





**Person 5**  
Male  
59  
Years old

1970  
1 bedroom  
Bungalow

Social Housing

2  
Years

**John 'Ringo' Jones**

Attitude to using energy:  
"I need to have the heating on a lot of the time because of my warm to stay well."

Attitude to paying for energy:  
"I've tried using a prepayment meter but found it too difficult. I feel confident about paying for energy using direct debits. I do this from a lovely lady who is my support worker and"

People would describe me as:  
John has poor eyesight. He is a helpful caring person who is careful and in control (because of support workers). He is an active person in his community and takes part in meeting his friends in the pub every week.

Things that are important to me:  
Health and needing to keep warm. Also his support workers, his cat (whiskers) and friends. Face to face contact with his friends and living near my mum.

Something I enjoy  
Being independent, having a cat as company, seeing my friends and living near my mum.

Something I dislike  
Being cold (Whiskers doesn't like being cold either). Meters (because he can't see them). Feeling alone and he isn't keen on computers and the internet.

**Person 9**  
Female  
31  
Years old

1970  
1 bedroom  
Bungalow

Social Housing

5  
Years

**Joanne**

Attitude to using energy:  
"We usually have the heating on for an hour and then turn it off for a lung condition so it's important he stays warm to stay well."

Attitude to paying for energy:  
"We tried using direct debits but it used to upset me that I did and I got very stressed about this. Now we put money on the go in the account."

People would describe me as:  
Joanne is careful and cautious, she is caring for her husband and is a worrier and is stubborn. They are planning a family, but they don't afford a bigger house. They don't understand what a smart meter is.

Things that are important to me:  
Keeping the home warm for her husband (within reason) and attend the advocacy group, visiting friends, inviting them next door - close to her mum. No other family nearby.

Something I enjoy  
Cooking, baking, walking, travelling - locally using the mobility pass for the train and bus. Her husband is at home as with his chest he is not as active, he stays at home (with the heating on) or wanders the allotment.

Something I dislike  
'on off' thermostat wars with her husband, with Tom about money.

max inside temperature  
min inside temperature

**Person 10**  
Male  
28  
Years old

1970  
3 bedroom  
Semi-detached

Privately Owned

15  
Years

Post Office  
No smart meter

**Bob Barley**

Attitude to using energy:  
"My parents decide when to have the heating on. Occasionally I ask them if we can switch it on when I'm cold but I usually just put an extra jumper on."

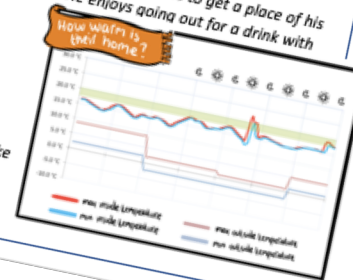
Attitude to paying for energy:  
"My parents take care of energy bills. I'm not sure how much they spend. I guess I don't need to worry about that grown up stuff until I move out."

People would describe me as:  
Tail and shy, he likes to cook. He is efficient and organized hard working and reliable, works in a café. Bob lives at home with his family. Marjorie his mum, who he describes as over protective / loving, a librarian. His younger sister Meg who he doesn't get on with as she is a teenager. Dave his dad who is the decision maker in the home, he is a poorly paid civil servant and is constantly worried about money and being in debt. The family bought the council house 15 years ago but have never had any money to 'do it up'.

Things that are important to me:  
Being warm, house is always cold. He would like a girlfriend, he would like to get a place of his own, but feels he has lots to learn about money and bills. He enjoys going out for a drink with his mates.

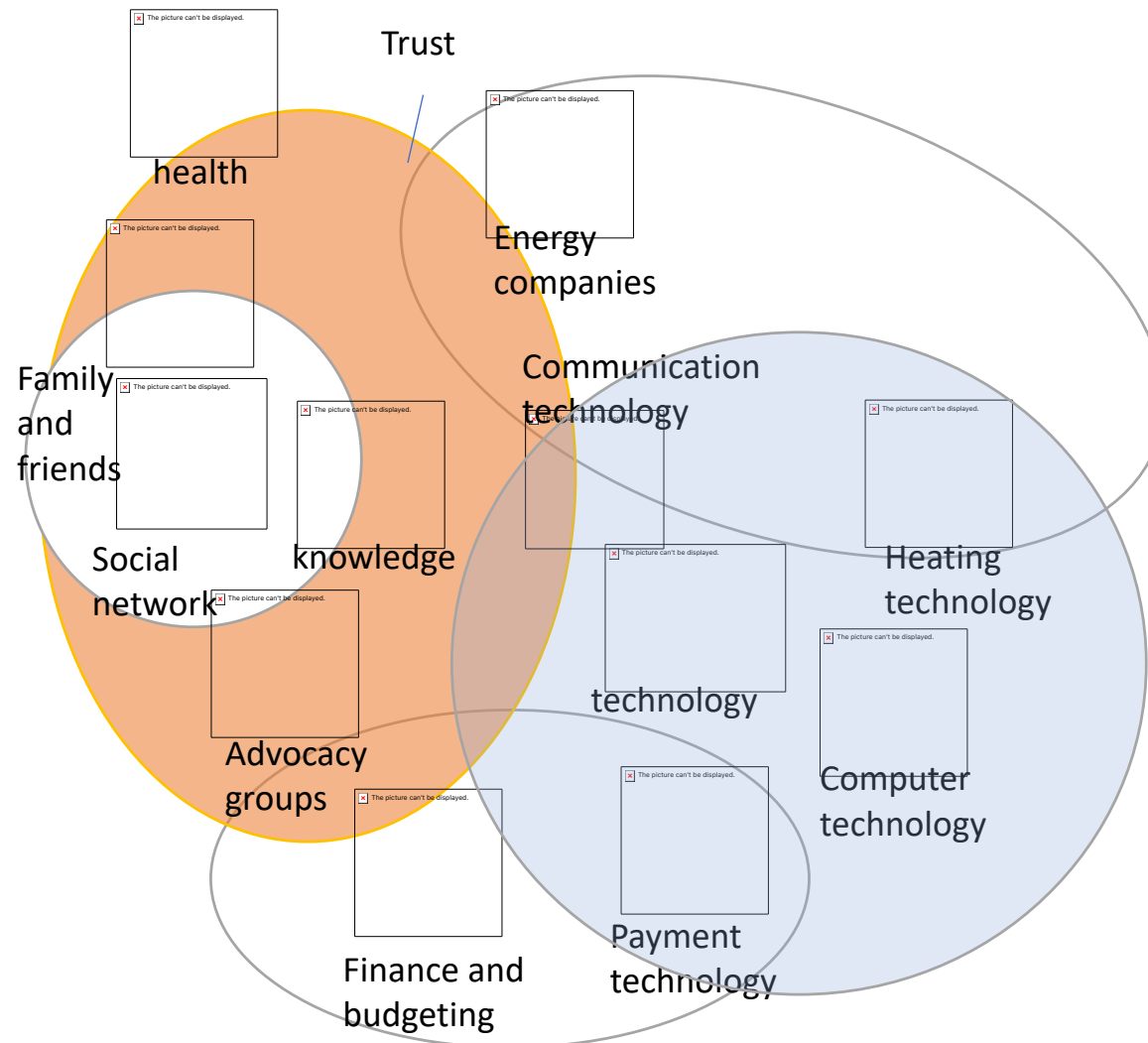
Something I enjoy  
He likes video games, likes numbers, going to the movies and he is a football fan.

Something I dislike  
He doesn't like the fact it's cold at home, he doesn't like Bananas, Glitter, spiders, Christmas jumpers and jelly in that order.



# Practical challenges

- Bills
- Smart meter / pre payment meter screens or design (sound)
- Raise profile of Priority Service register (PSR)
- How do we deliver best value for money for people regardless of their approach to, or trust of, payment and heating technology?
- The interaction between people and energy companies
- How can we make the service offered by energy companies more responsive to an individual's needs?
- How can we deliver trusted information to people?
- How can we deliver face to face communication without being face to face?
- How do we demystify heating technology?



Thank you for listening.

<https://beingwarmbeinghappy.org/>

Any questions?

