

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Living Without campaign highlights the true scale and impact of appliance poverty in the UK.

Too many people are living in houses without essential household items and facing the resulting financial, physical and emotional penalties. We want to support those already struggling and contribute to a long term solution.

This report concludes by setting out a series of recommendations to help get a fridge, freezer, washing machine and cooker into every home.

- ▶ Living without a washing machine, and using a launderette instead, is over 2,500% more expensive – this adds hundreds of pounds to an average family's washing expenses every year
- ▶ Living with faulty or inefficient white goods can add upwards of £100 to your energy bills every year

### PHYSICAL

- ▶ Impact on diet: "Unable to cook food, so rely on pre-packed sandwiches or similar types of food, which are not good for my diet, which has a direct effect on my health"
- ▶ Impact on people with illnesses and disabilities: "No washing machine has meant ages standing, doing it all by hand which is difficult with lymphedema in the legs, feet and ankles as they are swollen up like balloons"
- ▶ Impact on health and safety: "It is a worry, possible fire hazard and is totally inefficient"

### EMOTIONAL

- ▶ Our survey found that people living without have lower life satisfaction, feel less worthwhile, are less happy and have more anxiety
- ▶ Impact on mental health: "Stress and anxiety of being the guy in the wheelchair that smells"
- ▶ Impact on family life: "It's emotionally upsetting for myself that I cannot provide adequately for my son and it makes me feel so depressed that I work but still cannot afford basic essentials for my home"
- ▶ Impact on self-worth: "I smell dirty myself, I'm unclean and very unhealthy, very depressed it's like I'm in prison"

## IMPACT

The impact of living without essential household appliances can be broken down into three key factors; financial, physical and emotional.

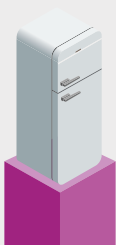
### FINANCIAL

- ▶ Living without a cooker, and relying on microwave meals, is twice as expensive as making home cooked meals – this adds £2,100 to a yearly family of four's food bill
- ▶ Living without a fridge/freezer, and therefore having to shop every day, is 43% more expensive – this adds £1,365 a year to an average family food bill

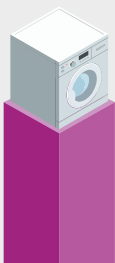
## SCALE

Over two million households – 4.8 million people – are living without at least one essential household appliance. Our research highlights that over:

900,000 people are living without a fridge



1.9 million people are living without a washing machine



1.9 million people are living without a cooker



2.8 million people are living without a freezer



While the national scale is staggering, certain demographics are considerably worse affected than others, such as:

- ▶ Private renters
- ▶ Households on incomes below £10,000
- ▶ Those living in London, the West Midlands, North East England and Yorkshire and the Humber
- ▶ Self-employed people
- ▶ Single adults

There are also a considerable amount of households living with broken or faulty goods that need replacing.

## CAUSES

In our report we highlight four specific causes that people with lived experience of appliance poverty consistently raised, these were supported by the charities we spoke to:



- ▶ The abolishment of the Social Fund in 2013 and the underfunded Local Welfare Assistance schemes that replaced it



- ▶ Housing: high private sector rents, lack of social housing places and the inadequacy of Local Housing Allowance rates



- ▶ Welfare benefit changes since 2010, including the introduction of Universal Credit, the benefits freeze and the benefits cap



- ▶ Low wages and high living costs

## CURRENT PROVISIONS

A number of organisations already do a considerable amount to tackle appliance and furniture poverty. In our report we highlight the support currently provided by some grant-making charities, housing associations, private landlords, local authorities and re-use schemes.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

This report presents a series of recommendations to solve the issue of appliance poverty, both immediately for those already living without, and in the long term, to stop this problem affecting more people in the future.

The recommendations are broken down for four key groups; parliamentarians to act on policy, the housing sector to pursue best practice, the charity sector to reinforce collaboration, and the private sector to increase support for customers and communities.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Bolster Local Welfare Assistance schemes
- ▶ Launch a Select Committee inquiry into Local Welfare Assistance schemes
- ▶ Raise awareness of alternatives to high-cost credit
- ▶ Raise the Local Housing Allowance rate to meet average rents

### HOUSING SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Review provision within housing associations
  - A. Policies on void properties that cause properties to be rented appliance free
  - B. Creating in-house grant funds for tenants
  - C. Implementation of appliance and furniture rental schemes
  - D. Increasing the provision of fully or part-furnished properties
  - E. Exploring partnerships with charities
- ▶ Private housing sector solutions

### CHARITY SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Reinforce collaboration between charities to share expertise and negotiate better prices for goods
- ▶ Create more specialist grants that tackle appliance and furniture poverty
- ▶ Explore opportunities for corporate partnerships with manufacturers and retailers

### PRIVATE SECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Promote affordability schemes
- ▶ New financial tools and products
- ▶ Working with local communities

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