

Cost of Living Marketing Campaign 2022/23: Evaluation Report

December 2023

Cost of Living Marketing Campaign - October – November 2022 - Evaluation Report

1. Background

The UK is facing a cost of living crisis – a combined result of factors including the conflict in Ukraine, an increase in trade barriers with the European Union following Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and a continued fall in real incomes as inflation and prices continue to rise.

In summer 2022, as costs continued to rise, it was clear that the audience of people who might benefit from financial support was growing. People who had previously considered themselves to be moderately comfortably off found themselves struggling to make ends meet, and those already in financial difficulty experienced further pressure.

Communications had an essential role to play when it came to increasing awareness of the support available, but also to motivate and prompt action among the population to increase uptake of that support and help tackle the known stigma that serves as a barrier to benefit uptake for many.

To consolidate activity across multiple policy areas and create a joined up approach to increasing awareness of the wide range of support available, a new website and accompanying marketing campaign were planned. The website provided information about all benefits, support and grants in one place. [The campaign website can be viewed here.](#)

The wider target audience for the campaign was **socio-economic groups C1C2DE in Scotland** – with a particular focus on those facing the most financial difficulties.

The campaign ran from September to November 2022 across multiple channels.

2. SMART marketing objectives

A range of objectives were set for the campaign to achieve by November 2022, among the target audience including:

- **Awareness:** Achieve 59% campaign awareness after prompting
- **Reassurance:** Achieve 50% agreement among those who had seen the advertising that it makes them feel okay about seeking support if they need it
- **Understanding:** Achieve 50% agreement among those who had seen the advertising that they have a better understanding that help and support with the cost of living is available for people who need it
- **Action:** Generate 40% claimed action in response to the campaign (among those who saw it)

3. Target audience

The overall target audience was **socio-economic groups C1C2DE in Scotland**.

Within this, the primary audience was low income households with little or no savings. This is the group of people most likely to be worst affected by increases in the cost of living. This includes renters needing to know their rights, lower income families (specifically the family types identified as most likely to be experiencing child poverty) and the fuel poor (often C2DE home owners).

The secondary audience was those who had not traditionally considered themselves in need of financial support. This audience consists of people who have one or two wage earners in the household, may also have children and who previously found themselves with surplus income at the end of the month but now find their bills have grown out of proportion to their income.

4. Campaign development and delivery

As the campaign was required urgently to help those who needed support and also required a cost effective approach, the existing Money Support campaign creative route, which ran successfully in late 2021 to early 2022, was repurposed.

This creative route was informed by insight gathering research¹, which found that the pandemic had affected all life stages, and the emotional toll of financial stress is something shared by all.

It also showed that social stigma around claiming welfare support can be a direct challenge to people's sense of identity. Acceptance that the situation is serious enough to require external help can be difficult. Whilst people are under stress and financial pressure, it's easy to deflect the issue.

The Money Support creative route therefore made clear that many people feel exactly the same way and helped to reduce the associated stigma by showing that they are not alone, while reassuring people that help is available. This route was found in research² to deliver the right blend of clarity, resonance and motivation to act.

The call to action was to seek information and advice on the support available by visiting the newly created website www.gov.scot/costoflivingsupport or by contacting recommended support agencies by phone or in person.

As part of the communications approach, a unifying badge was created and used across all paid-for-media, content and stakeholder communications.

¹ Fieldwork was conducted between 29 June and 7 July 2021 by the research agency Trinity McQueen who were working for the Union advertising agency. All participants were newly financially struggling due to the pandemic and qualified as 'squeezed' using the Money Advice Service segmentation. It consisted of 8 online focus groups and 12 remote Zoom interviews across four core audiences: Young adults; families; older/pre-retired; positive deviants.

² Research conducted in October 2021 by Trinity McQueen for the Union across a broad range of target audiences including young adults (non-students), families, older/pre-retired, people with caring responsibilities, single parent families, minority ethnic families, young families, and disabled household.

5. Final creative approach

The campaign film can be viewed here [Scottish Government - Cost of Living](https://www.gov.scot/costoflivingsupport)



Out of Home examples - Digital 6 sheets:



Find out about a range of payments you may be entitled to, ways to reduce energy and household costs, managing your rent, and support for families at gov.scot/costoflivingsupport



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Find out about a range of payments you may be entitled to, ways to reduce energy and household costs, managing your rent, and support for families at gov.scot/costoflivingsupport



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

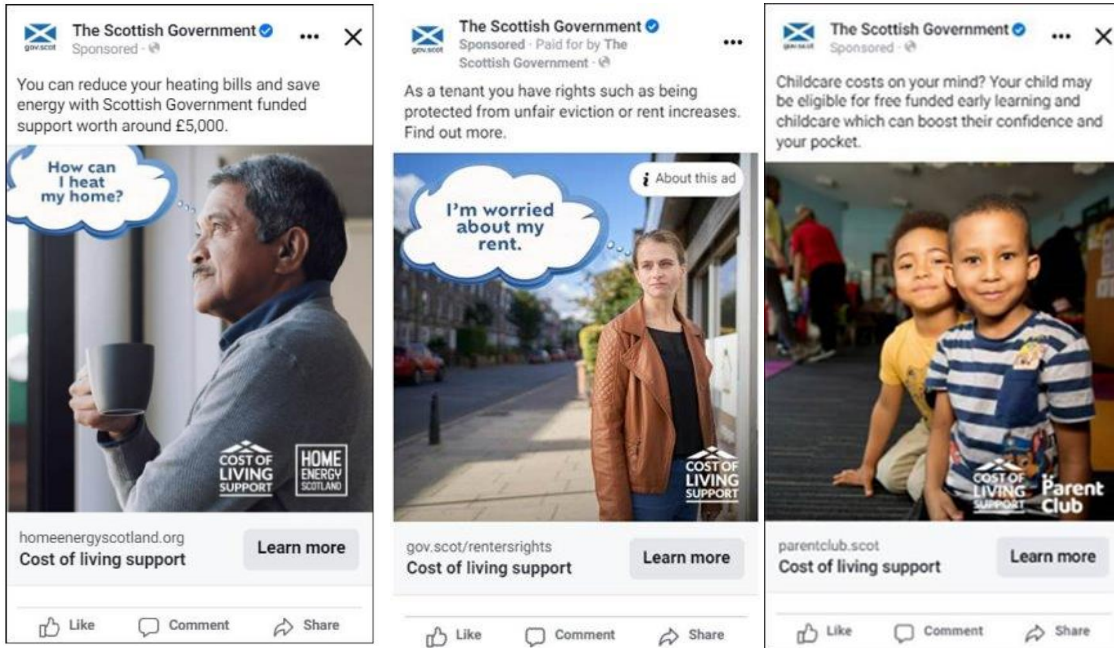


Find out about a range of payments you may be entitled to, ways to reduce energy and household costs, managing your rent, and support for families at gov.scot/costoflivingsupport



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Example social posts



Cost of living badge



6. Paid-for-media

The paid-for-media campaign ran from 28 September to 22 November across TV, Out of Home, Radio, Digital and Local Press.

Media research confirmed that the majority of the target audience prioritised TV and broadband like an everyday utility, so these broadcast mediums formed the backbone of the campaign. Within this a media-first solus spot in News At Ten was secured. The core advert also appeared in all episodes of The Martin Lewis Money Show Live across the campaign period.

To ensure those who used digital channels less were reached, outdoor media was used across the most deprived areas of Scotland, including phonebox kiosks and

roadside posters. Digital posters at supermarkets, up-weighted in ASDA stores, caught shoppers already thinking about budgets as they went for their weekly shop.

Radio adverts built additional reach and cost-effective frequency with up-weights during school runs to target parents, alongside the inclusion of Ethnic Minority radio stations.

Digital creative executions, delivering targeted messages to each of the lower income family, fuel poor and renter groups, were timed and placed to reach those audiences at moments when they were most receptive.

Paid search activity meant those actively seeking advice would be directed to the cost of living website.

| Media | September | | | | October | | | | November | | | | |
|--|-----------|----|----|----|---------|----|----|----|----------|---|----|----|----|
| | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | 31 | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 |
| AV | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Linear: STV/C4 Scot/ITV Breakfast Scotland | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BVOD: STV Player, All4, ITV HUB, Sky VOD | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sky Adsmart | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Short Form VOD | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OOH | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 sheets, D6s, Phone Kiosks, Bus interior panels | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RADIO | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bauer Scotland Network | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Stations | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DIGITAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Paid Social / Display / PPC | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

In addition, press activity ran across 67 local titles in Scotland during w/c 24 October.

7. Supporting activity

The campaign was supported by PR, organic social via Scottish Government social channels, news and Stakeholder partnerships, extending its reach.

PR activity focused on securing in-depth features and opinion pieces in national, regional and trade publications helping to share key messages with target audiences both online and in print. This activity included quotes and advice from key campaign partners such as Citizens Advice Scotland, Age Scotland and Disability Information Scotland.

Four short social videos were filmed featuring Citizens Advice Scotland, Social Security Scotland, Home Energy Scotland and Age Scotland encouraging people to visit the campaign website.

A stakeholder toolkit and partner assets were developed and shared with 629 public and third sector contacts, resulting in 220 downloads of the stakeholder toolkit and 1,064 asset downloads in total.

A leaflet was produced to reach those people who may have barriers to accessing information online, featuring information and key phone numbers. The leaflet was translated into seven languages, as well as British Sign Language, Easy Read and Audio versions. 300,000 leaflets and 6,500 posters were distributed via Public Health Scotland to GP surgeries, libraries, community centres and leisure centres.

ASDA and Scotmid were secured as retail partners. ASDA's support included in-store radio and an email communication to its Scottish database. Scotmid featured the campaign on its social media channels, in-store radio and staff intranet, as well as displaying co-branded posters on community boards and distributing co-branded leaflets to customers through online orders.

A partnership was also secured with BEMIS to ensure information could be shared to those directly supporting minority ethnic communities across Scotland. Two events were attended by 24 community and third sector leaders where 400 translated leaflets were distributed, and information was included in the BEMIS weekly newsletter for four weeks.

8. Evaluation

An independent research agency was used to carry out a pre and post campaign evaluation, with online interviews conducted both before (21-28 September 2022) and after (23 November - 3 December 2022) the paid-for-media campaign. Interviews were conducted with adults in socio-economic groups C1C2DE, with 510 interviews in the pre wave and 613 in the post wave. Through these interviews the specific audiences within the primary target audience (renters, C2DE homeowners and lower income (C2DE) parents) were captured as part of the wider sample.

In addition, a face to face survey was conducted with adults in the most deprived SIMD quintile, who identified themselves as financially struggling. The interviews with this audience took place after the campaign (16-30 November 2022) and total of 216 interviews were achieved.

9. Results

Evaluation results

Campaign performance against its objectives is shown below, both for the overall audience of adults in socio-economic groups C1C2DE and the specific target groups within the primary audience:

| SMART Objective | Target set | Achieved (post campaign) | | | |
|--|------------|--------------------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | C1C2DE adults | Renters | C2DE homeowners | C2DE parents |
| Prompted awareness of the Cost of Living marketing campaign | 59% | 66% | 69% | 66% | 73% |
| Agreement among those who had seen the advertising that it makes them feel okay about seeking support if they need it | 50% | 78% | 85% | 76% | 88% |
| Agreement among those who had seen the advertising that they have a better understanding that help and support with the cost of living is available for people who need it | 50% | 59% | 66% | 57% | 78% |
| Reported action as a result of the campaign among recognisers | 40% | 77% | 83% | 81% | 85% |

As shown above, the campaign met or exceeded all SMART objectives among all audiences. Action taken and tackling the stigma that exists (agreement that the campaign makes them feel okay about seeking support if they need it) was even higher among the core audiences of renters (at 66% and 85% respectively) and lower income parents (78% and 88% respectively) than overall.

Other results to highlight include:

- Prompted awareness of all channels used was good, with the TV ad driving overall campaign awareness:
 - 50% awareness of the TV ad
 - 29% awareness of digital / social media adverts
 - 29% awareness of the posters
 - 27% awareness of the radio ad.

- Engagement metrics showed that the campaign performed particularly well in terms of understanding, motivation, trust and credibility:
 - 75% agreed they have a better understanding that help and support with the cost of living is available for people who need it
 - 70% agreed that the advertising encourages them to seek help and support with the cost of living if they need it
 - 70% agreed that they believe what the advertising says to be true
 - 70% agreed that the advert makes them think that seeking financial help/support is something that they can do.
- The campaign communicated its messages well, with 96% describing a campaign message when asked:
 - 65% mentioned help/advice/support is available
 - 39% encouragement/signposting/where to get help.
- The campaign also helped to drive initial changes in attitudes:
 - An increase from 74% to 78% in agreement that they would be happy to make use of sources of financial support if they need to
 - An increase from 20% to 27% who said that the level of support being provided by the Scottish Government was about right
- Awareness of Scottish Government websites as a source that provides information, advice or support increased from 50% to 60%.

In terms of actions taken as a result of seeing the campaign:

- 31% of recognisers had visited a Scottish Government website that offers support and help relevant to the cost of living
 - 19% the cost of living website specifically,
- 27% took action to reduce their outgoings
- 21% said they looked into what payments they might be entitled to.
- 16% talked to others about the adverts / shared the adverts on social media / WhatsApp.

The key results from the face-to-face boost among those in the most deprived SIMD quintile who identified themselves as struggling financially were:

- **Awareness:** 70% were aware of the Cost of Living campaign, with posters performing particularly well for this audience
- **Reassurance:** 74% of those who had seen the campaign agreed that it makes them feel okay about seeking support if they need it
- **Understanding:** 69% of those who had seen the campaign agreed that they have a better understanding that help and support with the cost of living is available for people who need it
- **Action:** 39% of those who had seen the campaign took action as a result

The multi-channel media plan reached around 97% of C1C2DE adults with 26 opportunities to see or hear the campaign (higher than the planned figures of 87% and 23 opportunities to see/hear).

The campaign generated over 130,000 visits to the website over the campaign period. People spent on average nearly one and a half minutes looking at over 3 pages on average. And with over 44,000 visits coming from direct referrals, it was the clear the impact the campaign had on driving awareness of the website.

Supporting activity results

PR activity delivered a combined number of opportunities to see of 15.3 million and the films were viewed over 24,000 times with an engagement rate³ of 5.2% (versus target of 2%).

Together, ASDA and Scotmid's support delivered 13 million opportunities to hear the audio ad and over 500,000 opportunities to see posters.

Partnership activity with BEMIS provided over 1,400 opportunities to see among trusted voices for this priority audience.

10. Conclusions

Overall the campaign was successful in its four key targets of increasing awareness of the support available, providing reassurance and understanding and encouraging action amongst the main target audience.

Evidence of the action taken was not only provided by the evaluation research but also by the number of direct referrals to the website.

However, the campaign succeeded not only in telling people where to go for help and support and prompting people to take action but also to feel okay about doing so.

The paid-for-media strategy was successful in reaching all audiences, and there were good levels of multi-media recognition with two in five C1C2DE adults recognising two or more channels.

Key campaign messages were successfully communicated, with awareness of Scottish Government websites increasing pre to post and high confidence that there is financial help and support for people who need it recorded.

The campaign was also very successful in encouraging action for the majority of audiences. However, those in the most deprived SIMD quintile who were financially struggling were less likely than the core audience to take action as a result of seeing the campaign. This group was also less likely to agree that they have the confidence and knowledge to get financial help and support, suggesting that this audience may benefit from more targeted support such as services that provide one to one advice.

³ This is the proportion who engage with the advert in anyway (watch, click, share, comment, like)



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