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Executive Summary

The Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited is a year-long initiative based in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, run by a local education and training charity. The project supports adults facing rising living costs, low income and financial anxiety. It combines weekly group workshops, drop-in sessions and one-to-one support to build money confidence, improve wellbeing and strengthen links to local services. The project particularly reaches older people, disabled people, ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ people and others at risk of isolation or financial hardship.

Over the project period, 120 people benefited from the support, with 56 sessions delivered and 4 partnerships formed with other organisations. Evidence from participant feedback shows clear improvements in mental health, financial stability, digital skills and social connection.

Introduction

This report summarises the work and impact of the Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited, delivered between October 2026 and September 2027 in Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The project was developed in response to the ongoing cost-of-living pressures affecting adults in the local community, particularly those on low incomes, experiencing recent financial shocks or feeling anxious and overwhelmed by money matters.

The charity leading this project has a wider mission to improve wellbeing, reduce social isolation and increase access to support for adults. It works with a diverse range of people, including seniors, disabled people, ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ individuals and the general public. Activities are designed to be inclusive, welcoming and responsive to local needs, with a strong focus on building confidence, skills and social connections.

Within this context, the Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited aimed to provide practical, accessible help around budgeting, bills, debt, benefits and energy costs, while also addressing the emotional strain that financial difficulties can cause. This report is intended for funders, partners, community stakeholders and beneficiaries who wish to understand what has been achieved, what has been learned and how the project has contributed to mental health, economic participation and community engagement.

Project Overview

The Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited was a targeted response to the financial pressures facing adults in Shrewsbury. With a budget of £22,000, the project was delivered by a small team of three staff (22 staff hours per week) supported by eight volunteers contributing 35 volunteer hours. The charity's existing experience in community-based support and training provided a strong foundation for this focused initiative.

The project offered weekly group workshops and drop-in sessions covering budgeting, managing bills, understanding energy costs, dealing with debt, accessing benefits and knowing where to seek help. Alongside this, participants could access one-to-one support to review their financial situation, complete forms, set realistic budgets and develop simple money management plans.

Digital basics, such as using email and completing online forms, were also built into the support. The project targeted adults on low incomes, those affected by recent financial shocks and people who felt anxious or overwhelmed by money. It aligned with three main outcome areas: mental health and wellbeing; employment, education and economic participation; and social connection and community engagement.

Over the year, 120 people benefited, 80 took part in activities, and 50 engaged regularly in group sessions or support networks. The project also worked with four partner organisations and signposted people to a range of local services, including GP social prescribing, Jobcentre, benefits advice, adult education, housing advice and community wellbeing groups.

Methodology

The Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited was a targeted response to the financial pressures facing adults in Shrewsbury. With a budget of £22,000, the project was delivered by a small team of three staff (22 staff hours per week) supported by eight volunteers contributing 35 volunteer hours. The charity's existing experience in community-based support and training provided a strong foundation for this focused initiative.



One - to - one conversations

One-to-one appointments allowed staff and volunteers to work closely with individuals on their specific circumstances. This included reviewing bills and letters, completing benefit forms, carrying out benefit checks, setting realistic budgets and creating simple money management plans. Digital support was integrated into this work, helping people to use email, complete online forms and access online services such as benefits portals and GP systems.



Questionnaires

To understand impact, the project collected feedback through questionnaires and ongoing staff observations. Response numbers are recorded alongside each outcome area, for example 60 people responding on anxiety and worry, 55 on changes over six months, and 50 on mental health management. Quantitative data included counts of participants, sessions, skills gained and changes in income or debt, as well as average improvement scores and percentages.



Self reflection logs

Qualitative evidence came from staff reflections and case studies, such as Sam's story, which illustrate how changes in confidence, coping and social connection developed over time. Partnerships and referrals were also tracked to understand how the project linked people into wider support.

Theory of Change

The project’s theory of change is based on the idea that practical money guidance, delivered in a supportive community setting, can reduce financial stress, improve mental wellbeing and open up pathways to greater stability and participation. Many adults facing rising living costs feel overwhelmed by bills, debt and complex systems. This can lead to anxiety, avoidance and isolation, which in turn make financial problems worse. By breaking this cycle, the project aims to help people regain control and confidence.

1

Inputs

Inputs include trained staff, committed volunteers, a welcoming community space and partnerships with local services such as GP social prescribing, Jobcentre, benefits advice, adult education and housing support.

2

Activities

Activities focus on group workshops, drop-ins and one-to-one sessions covering budgeting, bills, debt, benefits, energy costs and digital basics. Participants also engage in job-readiness activities such as CV writing, interview skills, online job search and confidence building.

4

Outcomes

The expected short-term outcomes are improved understanding of money management, increased awareness of support services, reduced anxiety and greater confidence in using digital tools. Over time, these lead to more stable finances, increased income or reduced debt, better mental health, stronger social connections and improved readiness for work or training.

3

Outputs

Outputs include the number of workshops, drop-in and one-to-one sessions delivered, and the number of participants supported. This covers attendance at money and debt sessions, benefits and energy guidance, digital skills support, and job readiness activities such as CV writing and interview preparation.

Project Impact Summary

1

Engagement & Reach

The Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited has delivered meaningful benefits across mental health, financial stability, skills development and social connection. A total of 120 people benefited from the project, with 56 sessions delivered and 80 people actively participating in activities. Of these, 45 were engaging with the organisation for the first time, and 50 returned repeatedly, showing strong ongoing engagement.

2

Benefit to people

Mental health and wellbeing improved for many participants. Out of 60 respondents, 42 reported reduced anxiety or worry. Among 50 respondents, 38 felt more able to manage their mental health, and staff observed people sharing earlier, speaking more openly and asking for help sooner. Social isolation also reduced: 50 people participated regularly in group activities, and 35 out of 40 respondents reported feeling less lonely than six months earlier.

3

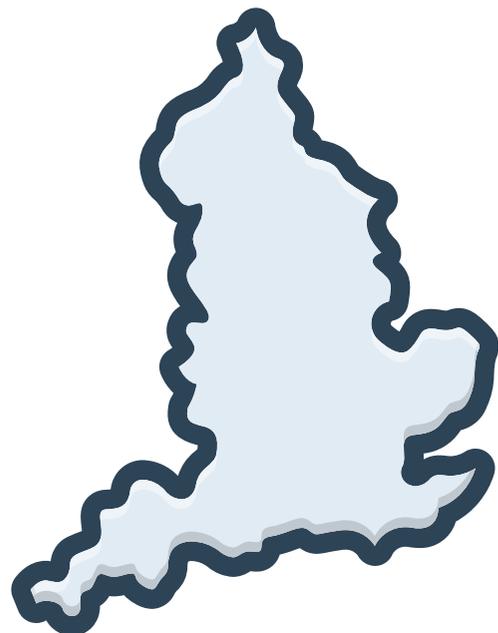
Outputs and impact

Economic and skills outcomes were also positive. Staff estimate that benefit checks and related support secured an additional £28,000 in income. Six people started a job, 10 started a course and 4 began formal training. Seventy people learned new skills, including budgeting, digital basics and job search skills. Digital confidence increased, with 48 out of 60 respondents now able to create documents, send emails with attachments, use online job platforms and complete online forms. The project also strengthened community links, with 20 people signposted to other services and a 15% increase in active volunteers.

Project Impact Details

Geographical context

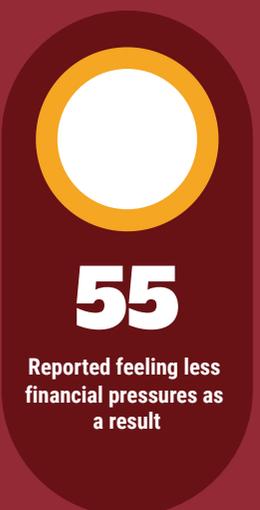
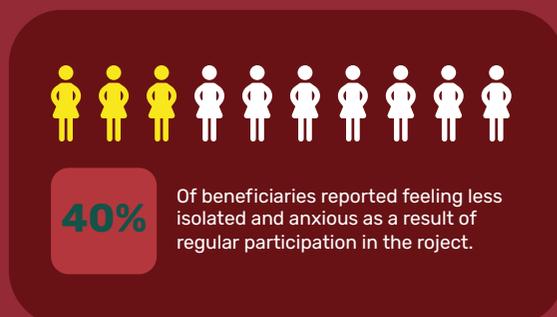
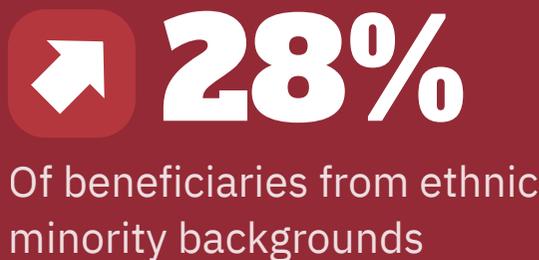
Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire, a largely rural county in the West Midlands with a mix of historic market towns and more deprived neighbourhoods. The town serves as a hub for surrounding villages, with residents relying on it for work, education, health services and shopping. Like many areas outside major cities, Shrewsbury faces challenges linked to relatively low wages, rising housing and energy costs, and limited public transport for those living on the outskirts.



These pressures can be particularly acute for older people, disabled residents and those from minority communities who may already experience barriers to work and services. National data shows that the cost-of-living crisis has hit lower-income households hardest, with essentials such as food and fuel taking up a growing share of income. In this context, people in Shrewsbury who were just about managing can quickly find themselves in difficulty when faced with unexpected bills or changes in income. Local charities and community groups play a vital role in filling gaps, offering practical support, advice and social connection to help residents stay afloat and maintain their wellbeing.

Impact on people and communities

Within this context, the Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited is making a tangible difference to adults in Shrewsbury. Over the project period, 120 people are benefiting from 56 sessions focused on money confidence and cost-of-living support. The project is reaching a diverse group, with around 30% of participants from ethnic minority communities and 22% identifying as LGBTQ+, alongside men and women from the wider community. Feedback from 60 respondents shows that 42 people reported reduced anxiety or worry, indicating that the project is easing the emotional strain of financial hardship. Among 55 respondents, 38 reported improvements over the last six months, suggesting that the support is contributing to better overall wellbeing and stability.





Case Study

Sam is in his late 40s and lives alone in Shrewsbury. Before joining the project, Sam was struggling with rising living costs, debt worries and anxiety about managing day-to-day finances. He had recently lost confidence after a period of unstable work and felt overwhelmed by letters, online forms and changes to benefits. Sam described feeling “stuck”, isolated and unsure where to turn for help.

Engagement with the project

Sam joined the project after being referred by a local advice service. He began attending weekly group sessions focused on money confidence, wellbeing and practical skills.

The relaxed, non-judgemental environment helped Sam feel comfortable asking questions and sharing concerns.

Over time, Sam became more involved in group activities and started arriving early to help set up sessions, something he said gave him “a reason to get out of the house and feel useful again”.

“

Before this, everything felt overwhelming and I didn't know where to start. Coming here helped me slow things down, understand my situation and feel like I wasn't on my own. I'm not panicking like I used to, and I feel more hopeful about the future.

”

UN Sustainable Development Goals and Social Return On Investment

Conclusion

The Money Confidence & Cost-of-Living Support Project Revisited is a focused and timely response to the financial and emotional pressures facing adults in Shrewsbury. Working with a modest budget and a small but committed team of staff and volunteers, the project has reached 120 people through 56 sessions, offering practical money guidance and a supportive environment. The charity's inclusive approach ensures that older people, disabled people, ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ people and others at risk of isolation can access help that is respectful and relevant to their needs.

The available data points to meaningful positive change. A clear majority of respondents report reduced anxiety or worry and improvements over the last six months, suggesting that the project is helping people feel more in control and less overwhelmed by their financial situation. Practical outcomes, including people starting jobs and courses and the training of local coaches or mentors, indicate that the project is also contributing to longer-term resilience and opportunity.



Thank You

This project has been made possible thanks to the generous support of our funders and donors, whose contribution has helped us deliver vital activities and achieve positive outcomes.

Support Us

Our work is made possible through the generosity of funders and supporters. If you are interested in supporting this project or our wider work, we would welcome a conversation.

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