



## Investing in Community Leadership

October courses and workshops via Zoom and face to face are now open for registration.

### Community Profiling using NINIS/NISRA Data

Participants will learn about some of the basic concepts underpinning area-based statistics and how data available on NINIS can be used to benefit their groups / organisations and have a better understanding of the place they are working in or of the group / community they are working with.

**Wednesday 12th October**

**Time: 10 am – 12:30pm**

**Location: Omagh Enterprise Centre**

**Facilitator: Aidan Campbell RCN**

To register click [here](#).



### Rural Needs Act Workshop

This workshop will give you a better understanding of the Rural Needs Act and its key elements. It will explore the Rural Needs Impact Assessment Process and discuss key points stakeholders should look out for when scrutinising a rural needs impact assessment.

**Wednesday 19th October**

**Time: 10 am – 12pm**

**Location: Omagh Enterprise Centre**

**Facilitator: Aidan Campbell RCN**

To register click [here](#).

## NICVA Cost of Living Survey

RCN along with NICVA and other organisations are engaged with the Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey who has re-established an Emergencies Leadership Group.

To ascertain the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on organisations, NICVA recently completed a survey with all heads of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector member organisations in Northern Ireland.

To view a summary of the findings of this survey please follow the link below:

<https://www.nicva.org/article/cost-of-living-crisis-survey-summary>

## Cost of Living Support

Rural groups we have been talking to recently have been asking us about support for vulnerable people with energy bills and the cost of living more generally.

### Income related benefits

If you are in receipt of income related benefits and are eligible you will automatically receive the low income cost of living payment (1 in July, 1 in October) up to £625 in total. Click [here](#) for details. No need to apply – it should be paid automatically through your benefits.

### Disability benefits

If you are in receipt of disability benefits you may get a lump sum of £150 if eligible - click [here](#) for details. Payment expected in October. If you are in receipt of any of the above income related benefits you may be eligible for low-income COL payment also.

### Pensioner support

Pensioner households will receive an additional £300 payment on top of their winter fuel payment. It should arrive with your normal winter fuel payment in November this year - click [here](#) for details.

If you think you are entitled to the low income cost of living payment but can't see it in your bank/credit union account you can report it [here](#).

### Help for all households with energy costs

For people who aren't eligible for these payments, help towards energy bills worth £400 to all households was announced back in June. Details of how this will work in England, Scotland & Wales are [here](#). In short the money will be deducted from customers' energy bills at source.

Because Northern Ireland's energy market is very different, and because this is a new payment to all households, it requires a separate scheme to be devised. This is further complicated by absence of the Assembly.





## Cost of Living Support (Cont.)

Discussions are ongoing between NI caretaker ministers, Westminster Ministers and officials. This [article](#) says that the £400 energy discount confirmed for NI households but no certainty on when – possibly November but could be February.

In September the new PM announced the “Energy Price Guarantee” which limits the amount suppliers can charge for every unit of energy – click [here](#) for more details. The scheme is also intended to provide “equivalent” help to households not on mains gas and electricity such as those homes who use home heating oil. This is vital in NI where its estimated over 80% of rural homes are heated by oil.

There will be an additional £100 payment for households who use oil <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-62974316>

### **Businesses, Charities and Schools**

Businesses, charities, schools & other organisations will also receive help under the Energy Price Guarantee – the government says they will get “equivalent help” for the next six months. Details on the Energy Price Guarantee have yet to be finalised and arrangements for how it will work in Northern Ireland are unclear. For people in poverty in rural communities facing into winter help is needed now.

### **Useful Links**

**The Affordable Warmth Scheme** addresses the effects of fuel poverty and energy inefficiency. The scheme is directed at low income households with an annual gross income of less than £23,000.

<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Housing-Help/Affordable-Warmth-Boiler-Replacement/Affordable-Warmth-Scheme>

**Housing  
Executive**

## Cost of Living Support (Cont.)

**The NI Consumer Council** has a Cost of Living section to help provide support on a range of topics including your food shop, home energy bills, transport and more. <https://www.consumer council.org.uk/costofliving#section-4131>

**Advice NI** is an independent advice network, providing advice to those who need it most. They have a Freephone advice helpline and can be contacted via email. [Click here to visit the Advice NI website.](#)

**Helplines NI** is a membership-led organisation consisting of over 30 different helplines and support services operating across Northern Ireland. [Click here to visit the Helplines NI website.](#)

**National Energy Action** is the national fuel poverty charity, working to ensure that everyone in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is warm and safe at home. [Click here to visit National Energy Action's website.](#)

**Make the Call** to make sure you are getting the benefits, services and support you're entitled to.

To 'Make the Call' you can phone 0800 232 1271; text ADVICE to 079 8440 5248

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/unclaimed-benefits>

### **Scams**

If you receive a suspicious text or email, or see a suspicious online ad, you can report these for free to help others.

Forward texts to 7726

Forward emails to

[report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

Report ads to @ASA\_UK



More information at

<https://www.consumer council.org.uk/scams/how-to-report-a-scam>

