



**North East Combined Authority
Child Poverty Prevention Programme (North)
Pillar Three
End of Phase Two Project Summary**

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Introduction

As part of the then North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) Child Poverty Prevention Programme (CPPP) Pillar 3, Society Matters CIC was tasked to build upon the work completed in Phase 1 (2022) to provide employers in the North of Tyne area (Northumberland, North Tyneside, and Newcastle) with strategies to reduce in-work poverty within their workforces. By effecting the policies, procedures, and culture of the workplace with changes that go beyond pay and benefits, it was hoped that employees would enjoy more take-home pay, which could then be spent on experiences and materials to improve health and educational outcomes for children.

A Changing Environment

When this work was commissioned in Spring 2022, the 'Cost of Living Crisis' (CoL) had not yet taken hold of the economy, nor really entered the lexicon of the public. The 'Making Ends Meet' survey, which has been a pivotal tool to engage employers, allowed us to track the decline in people's standard of living and use this to highlight the precarious nature of in-work poverty. It also opened doors for us to speak with authority through our data and insight on the topic of in-work poverty. This empowered us to take the message of the project further into the region than simply the companies that have engaged with our process.

In the second year of the project, we have seen the effects of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis develop through the experiences of the workers of the North of Tyne, coupled with the impact on interest rates of the financial event following the budget set by Liz Truss's government. The results of the survey have created a 'live' exploration of the changing fortunes of these workers and now illustrates the degree to which some people have managed their finances: some have settled for a 'new normal' and others are still struggling.

We have also been able to work with a few early adopters from Phase 1 to retake the survey and compare results against their previous engagement. For all these organisations, we have seen improvements in the financial wellbeing of their staff, with the caveat that it is difficult to discern whether this was as a result triggered by our intervention and support with the business, or the impact of wider environmental and economic changes.

Targets

We were asked to engage with 45 organisations in the North of Tyne area to develop and implement strategies that would help to alleviate in-work poverty or deepen our existing relationship with them to further the work started in Phase 1. We were asked to influence the working conditions of more than 3000 staff in total.

In Phase 1 we tried to engage with a group of local schools, but we were unable to get the collective buy-in at the time to progress the survey. However, in Phase 2 we engaged with a parallel piece of work with a collective of Newcastle schools via their strategic partnership

board looking at employee satisfaction, recruitment, retention and financial wellbeing and resilience. This was a substantial additional piece of work (represented in Confidential Appendix 2) which provided a deep dive into a cross section of public sector staff. The findings of this schools report remain confidential until the point that the strategic partnership wishes to make it public knowledge.

Methodology

Once recruited onto the project, organisations progressed through the programme below:

1. Exploratory discussion with the Society Matters Social Action Manager.
2. The employer selected interventions that would be suitable for them from a list of suggestions and recommendations gauged from the exploration discussion, such as:
 - a. Deployment of the Making Ends Meet survey.
 - b. Comprehensive strategic report and subsequent options for next steps from our toolkit, briefed by our team.
 - c. Awareness-raising and learning sessions: Living Below the Breadline and In-Work Benefits.
 - d. Facilitated one to one problem solving or organisational developmental sessions.
 - e. Access to our Lifelink services, providing trusted advice for professionals on social welfare challenges that go beyond HR.
 - f. Further consultation and support tailored to the needs of the organisation.
 - g. Invitation to our 'Leaders for Change' exclusive peer learning and networking groups, attended and supported by other cross sector industry leaders.
 - h. Access pathways to other funded Employer focussed work by Society Matters.

Data & Findings

A full list of the employers involved are confidential and can be found in Confidential Appendix 1.

The findings of the work with Schools are also confidential and can be found in Confidential Appendix 2.

A full data set relating to the amalgamated findings of the Making Ends Meet survey can be found in Appendix 3 "Phase 2 Core Data & Findings".

A full data set relating to the comparative data can be found in Appendix 4 "Comparative Data & Findings".

Results

At the end of phase 2 of the project, we had finalised engagement with **45** organisations in the NTCA area with a total of **30,540** employees (**16,721** cited as living in the NTCA area).

Confidential Appendix 1 lists all employers engaged in the programme.

Cumulatively over the two phases, we have influenced the employment conditions of **34,334 unique employees**

Representation by Local Authority

Throughout phase 2 of the work, we engaged with a significant number of organisations who had multiple sites across the North East. For the benefit of this report, we have collected and split these organisations across each local Authority, providing multiple data points within one organisation. This means that the geography data is not compounded to total 100%, but instead is a percentage of all organisations and data points. Within the 'out of North of Tyne' section we have also counted organisations that may have a base outside of North of Tyne, but have significant (40%+) cohorts of staff who live or work in the North of Tyne.

- 64% of organisations have bases in Newcastle
- 45% of organisations have bases in North Tyneside
- 30% of organisations have bases in Northumberland.
- 32% of organisations have bases out of North of Tyne

Representation by Sector

71% of organisations are in the third sector, with 4,637 employees, 1,956 of which are valid for NTCA inclusion.

16% of organisations are in the public sector (20%), with 20,596 employees, 11,500 of which are valid for NTCA inclusion.

13% of organisations are in the private sector (24%) with 4,307 employees, 3,265 of which are valid for NTCA inclusion.

Creating a Movement

Within the original tender specification there was an ask to ‘create a movement’. Positively, we have been able to mobilise our networks of likeminded employers, who have gone on to be seen as community leaders and advocates for the work that we do, as well as clear advocates in the actions to tackle in work and child poverty.

To enable this Society Matters has used ‘North East Leaders for Change’ as the vehicle. The network naturally formed a cross-sector leaders peer group that meets quarterly. Over the **last 12 months** we have held **3 events**, with **126 attendees** from across **61 individual organisations**. Whilst attending the group, the leaders have openly and honestly spoken with their peers about challenges, successes and aspirations. We have also invited members who have taken part in elements of CPPP to speak about their experience, sharing insight, best practice and learnings they have gained from the work. This developed into further learning opportunities for organisational experts to speak to the group and share some simple actions they can take away and implement within their own organisations, on topics such as pensions, mental health, and sustainability.



Engagement Beyond Making Ends Meet

We have extended our engagement model to include more ways for organisations to work with us to tackle in-work poverty, having:

- Hosted **29** sessions of our In-Work Benefits seminar, increasing the skills and knowledge of HR, Finance and Decision makers. We have also delivered **11** sessions of our 'Living Below the Breadline' seminar to Senior Leaders and Decision Makers. **Over 170 attendees to workshops.** We hosted a further **20** hours of tailored awareness sessions on topics such as Debt, Mortgages, Childcare and Income Maximisation.
- Provided **59** hours of 1-2-1 support to **21** organisations, discussing their options and strategies to reduce in-work poverty.
- Delivered **30** free Financial Wellbeing sessions to **151** staff across **14** organisations, increasing staff awareness of good budgeting and financial planning.
- Worked with **7** organisations to provide specialist advice supporting **29** employees.
- **126** attendees from across **61** organisations attend Leaders for Change events, a collective **1134 hours** sharing best practice with their peers and discussing ways that we, as a region and employers, can react to our challenges.

We have also taken both our interim survey results and secondary research into in-work and child poverty, to round tables, industry leaders, briefings and other gatherings around the region. This has promoted the programme, while also prospecting potential new employers to engage in the work. Some of these groups and activities include:

- Wellbeing at Work
- Quorum Business Park HR Forum
- Quorum Health and Wellbeing Forum
- Newcastle Living Wage City Group
- Northeast Employers Network
- Vistage Group
- Cobalt Business Park HR Managers
- North East Chamber of Commerce Local: North
- North East Chamber of Commerce Local: Central
- North East Chamber of Commerce Local: South
- North East Chamber of Commerce Exchange Events
- North East Chamber of Commerce Partner Events
- North East Chamber of Commerce Round Table Events
- North East Chamber of Commerce Publications and Reports
- Northeast Expo
- Kraken Networking
- The B2B Network
- North East Child Poverty Commission
- The Tyneside Rotary Club
- North East Leaders for Change Events
- Advanced Northumberland
- Advanced Manufacturing Forum
- Durham Business Club
- Ramside Hall Showcase Events
- Newcastle Work and Thrive
- Northumberland Employability Network
- Working Well North Tyneside
- The Mussel Club
- Association of Manufacturing
- Rise and Design
- Design Network North
- Sullivan Brown HR forum

Impact

The impact of our work for CPPP Pillar 3, is measured by the changes that our relationships with employers have made to their employees. If the employer engages with our recommendations to make effective changes to the workplace policy and practice, employees will see a reduction in the cost of working and increases in take home pay. As a result, the time and money they have available to spend with their children increases. Below are examples of the impact from a small proportion of the businesses who have engaged with us and made substantial changes within their organisation. There are many more who are engaged with us, but we recognise that for many organisations – especially larger ones – change can take time, and seeing the effects from change can take even longer.

A large local charity has chosen to communicate the full results of the survey to their staff and then, as a direct result of the findings, employed a dedicated Financial Inclusion Officer as a single point of contact for everyone within the organisation. They have initiated staff drop-in sessions, changed staff induction processes and provided mental health training. The charity has joined Leaders for Change to share their experiences and best practice.

A regional representative body has embraced the poverty prevention plan by using it as a springboard for their own wellbeing action plan. This has resulted in an increase in paid time off for staff through a gifted birthday day off to promote family time and self-care, the creation of a subsidised staff pantry and breakfast provision, and the company taking the responsibility for celebratory gifts – removing ‘whip-rounds’. The organisation has become a well-regarded advocate for the Pillar 3 programme of work.

A large public sector organisation has used the results of the survey to develop a Strategic People Action Plan, affecting over 9000 staff. We have given them; 1-2-1 support to create a trusted environment to brainstorm ideas, support with approaches to process changes, and shared best practice from other large organisations. They have revised their communications to better explain their Employee Assistance Programme, ensuring less ‘sales’ style communications so that wellbeing messaging is clear to see. They are in the process of developing career pathways that give clarity for those on lower salaries looking for progression and reviewed their travel expenses policy to speed up reimbursement.

A large local charity who has completed the survey twice used it to inform their pay award structure and accelerate plans to become a Good Work pledge organisation. As a direct result of the results, they reworked their salary structures to reflect the increased cost of living and introduced a swathe of initiatives in the workplace to reduce the transactional cost of working. They also advocated for the project with other similar organisations.

A large commercial organisation has developed their Poverty Reduction Plan into a working action plan. Multiple teams of staff have attended Living Below the Breadline and In-Work Benefits workshops. Clearer career paths have been designed and communicated, and the presentation of their Employee Assistance Programme has been revised. They have been matched with a local financial services company which has resulted in staff receiving free pension advice sessions and they are pursuing providing expert advice directly to staff through Society Matters.

A local education provider engaged with the full suite of activities we provide and as a result have developed, with our support, their own financial wellbeing toolkit for staff. Direct action from our work with them includes: increasing the pay award staff received this year, planning and pension advice sessions for their teams, and enabling access to a dedicated advice service for staff.

A national financial services provider has engaged with the full range of support options, highlighting challenges in their recruitment and induction processes that may have acted as a barrier to staff and acting in conflict with their inclusive recruitment plans. They have developed an entirely new employability project on the back of our discussions and awarded an enhanced pay settlement for their staff as a direct result of their survey results. They are also an advocate for Pillar 3 and are regularly involved with Leaders for Change.

A national telephone services provider used the results of the survey and our support to set up subsidised food and drink provision, host lunchtime financial wellbeing Q&A sessions, put a wellbeing action plan into place and advocate for Pillar 3 with similar employer. Presented shared learning as part of Leaders for Change.

A regional arts organisation has engaged with the full range of support options, and as a result altered their induction process to ensure all staff undertake a benefits check and have undertaken a programme of learning to keep staff informed of the issues around in-work poverty. They have also joined Leaders for Change.

A local charity held staff wellbeing sessions and social events, as well as introducing a staff rate at their on-site café. The evidence from the survey was used to make the case for a higher pay award this year. The charity have shared their experiences with Leaders for Change and committed to be involved with Pillar 3 as they evolve their strategy.

A local education provider has developed an internal action plan based on our recommendations and the results of the survey. This has resulted in the creation of a quiet space for staff to contact advice services and access wellbeing information, subsidised food is now provided in all staff kitchen areas across all locations. They have engaged with wider training to upskill relevant staff in the impact of in-work benefits and engagement with Leaders for Change.

More examples of our impact can be seen in the CPPP Pillar 3 Phase 2 video case studies will be available on [the North East CA website](#) and [the Society Matters Website](#) in due course.

The ‘Making Ends Meet’ Survey

Methodology

The participating organisation distributed the survey through an anonymous SurveyMonkey link via email. The staff were given a generous window to complete the survey, and in some cases, the organisations were prompted to resend the link if the number of respondents was low. Surveys were then analysed and reported back to the organisation. Due to the sample sizes, very few were able to sustain a ‘sub sample’ for comparative analysis.

Purpose

The survey has served two specific purposes within the project:

First is its planned purpose – to allow us to pinpoint the specific interventions that would be best served for the organisation to undertake. By understanding the people and their issues, we have been able to give an informed insight to leaders and discuss the possible reasons and implications of the results. This has formed the core of our feedback strategy and been universally well-received by leaders.

Second, its unintended purpose, was as a window into the Cost-of-Living Crisis for business leaders in the Northeast. We are one of the few bodies locally carrying out and reporting on live, ongoing research into this area, and thus our expertise has opened doors for us in terms of meetings, forums, and other speaking opportunities. This has, in turn, allowed us to spread the message about the CPPP programme and the other pillars in operation.

Changes to Phase 1 Survey

The Schools Question: Without a doubt, the most divisive question we were asked to include in the original survey was about identifying the schools that the participant’s children attended. This generated several particularly aggressive comments about invasive questioning. This question was removed from the survey.

Other removed questions: We also removed questions about the cause of changes to financial situation and the way that respondents paid for their fuel bills. These had not gathered meaningful data in the first phase, and we wanted to simplify some parts of the survey.

Changed Question on Disability and Long-Term Health Condition: We have received several queries about the wording of this question – how could we be sure how the respondent viewed a long-term health condition? If it was, for example, mild high blood pressure which did not affect their work and was treated with daily medication, it would count as a long-term health condition but was not debilitating. Towards the end of the phase, we added an additional question asking for the degree to which the disability/LTHC impacted their work in line with similar questioning from Government surveys.

Increasing wage scales: The Phase 1 survey had an upper wage bracket of £30,000+ as we were initially focused on the issues faced by those on lower wages. However, as interest rate changes created increasing and long-lasting issues for mortgage owners, we increased the wage scales to allow us to differentiate between more well-remunerated workers.

Headline Statistical Findings

The following headline findings are based on the statistics shared in Appendix 3.

- **19% of workers in North of Tyne (NoT) cannot afford essentials each month.**
- **53% of workers in NoT said they can afford essentials each month, but it's tight.**
- **20% of workers in NoT have nothing left each month after paying for essentials.**
- **36% of workers in NoT have £50 or less for the month, after paying for essentials.**
- **16% of workers claim that they are not 'making ends meet.'**

- **Generally, the workers in NoT are settled into their financial position but are worried and lack confidence in the future.**

Society Matters CPPP Pillar 3 Phase 2: Headline Findings

Wider insight

Within the survey there was opportunity to explore how spending habits had changed within the sample workforce. While it is not surprising that many have changed their spending habits, the next highest percentages of using savings, borrowing money, and applying for credit to afford their day-to-day essentials is alarmingly high and indicates a fragility within the sample.

- The most common methods workers have used to afford their **day-to-day essentials** are: Changed Spending Habits (58%), Used Savings (50%), Borrowed Money (27%) and Applied for Credit (23%).
- **24%** of workers in NoT **cannot afford** to take part in **social or leisure activities**.
- **49%** of workers in NoT have **reduced** their **social and leisure activities**.
- **46%** of workers in NoT feel that their **financial situation is neither safe nor secure**, and an additional **14%** **'Don't Know.'**
- The most problematic essential payments to meet are: Buying new clothes and footwear (36%), paying for a motor vehicle (33%), paying domestic fuel bills (28%) and paying other bills (25%).
- In addition, **13%** of workers find it **difficult to feed their families**.

Society Matters CPPP Pillar 3 Phase 2: Essential Areas of Difficulty

As an economic case, the survey data reveals underlying vulnerabilities in the workforce's financial stability, reflecting broader economic pressures. The reliance on savings and credit to meet daily needs suggests that wages may not be keeping pace with the rising cost of living, eroding disposable income and limiting economic participation. This financial strain not only affects personal well-being but also has wider economic implications, such as reduced consumer spending, which can stifle economic growth. The data points to a need for economic policies that address wage stagnation, inflation, and access to affordable credit, thereby strengthening the financial resilience of the workforce.

Through the promotion of the work, we have commonly referred to the compounding insight that the statistics have been able to provide, namely in those who are not currently showing external signs of being in increasingly difficult financial situations. This is particularly evident when comparing total numbers of people sharing that they are using savings, with the high number of people reporting they are unable to save for the future. With confidence we can say that this is not sustainable for the individuals, and they will reach a point where they are no longer able to use savings to pay for essentials. This is a similar picture for those borrowing money and applying for credit when compared against difficulty to make repayments. When considering these changes in spending habits, and the challenges in making repayments, it paints a stark financial future for some of the sample size who within their organisation and on the surface are 'managing'.

- The most problematic discretionary payments to meet are: Adding to savings (67%), taking a holiday (59%) dealing with unexpected expenses (57%), socialising with friends and family (50%), and eating out (50%).
- Workers also highlighted as difficult to afford: Gas/Elec (28%), Credit Repayments (20%) Rent/Mortgage Repayments (16%).
- **22%** of workers in NoT say that their financial situation is **affecting their work**. Additionally, **16% don't know** whether it is or not, and **7% would prefer not to say**. In this instance, **only 55% can positively say it is not**.

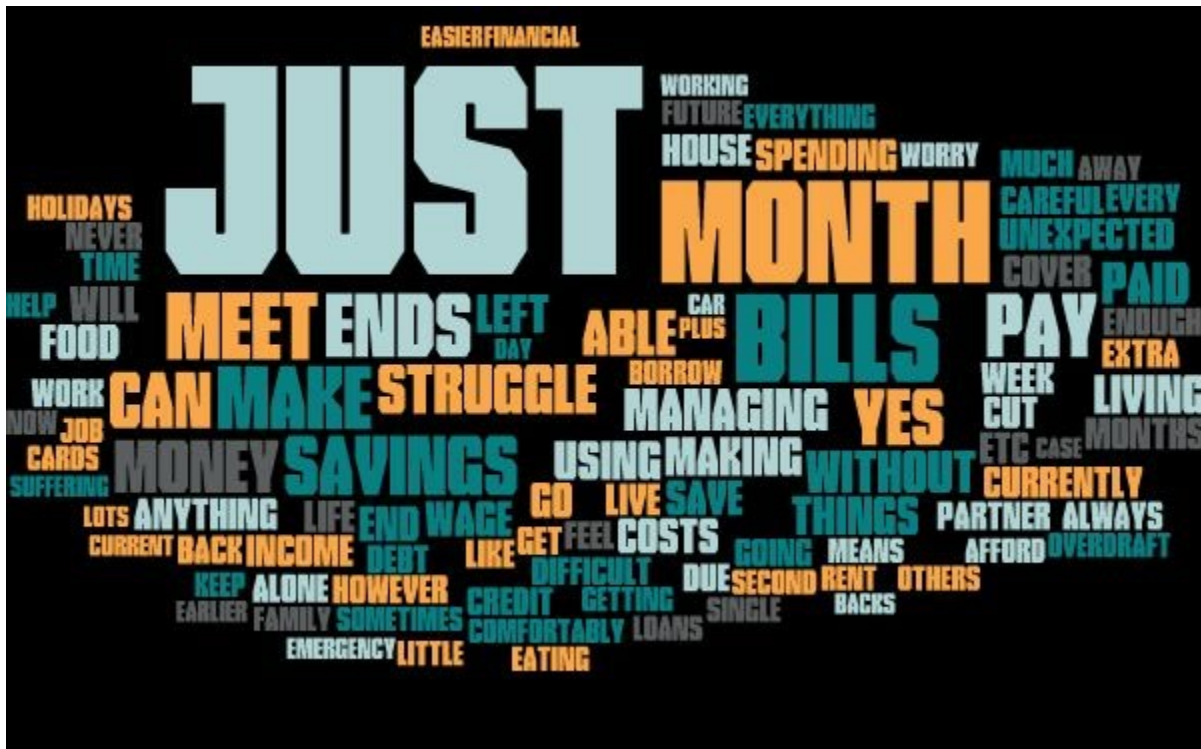
Society Matters CPPP Pillar 3 Phase 2: Discretionary Areas of Difficulty

The high number of responses within the sample that have reduced in socialising with friend and family poses a yet unseen developmental and socialisation challenge within schools and wider child development. As we know from COVID, lack of social interaction and meaningful societal engagement caused a wave of developmental differences in young children, causing irregularity of preparedness for school, or causing increases in mental health challenges such as anxiety.

- **50%** of workers struggle to pay for socialising with **friends and family**.
- **15%** of workers have difficulties paying for **children's activities**.
- **19%** of workers in NoT say their **financial situation is affecting children**.

Society Matters CPPP Pillar 3 Phase 2: Effects on Children

Explain about your ability to 'make ends meet.'



I am just surviving, I am on my own so it's very isolating, I'm not eating healthy nutritious food as I should as it's cheaper not too, I very rarely have the heating on now and will go to bed early (sometimes as soon as I come in from work) to stay warm

Only because we are living tightly and using my partners savings in desperate situations. I have no money left at the end of every month and have no savings

As long as I can pay mortgage and pay bills and buy food, I consider this to be managing. If I have anything left after this, it's a bonus

I don't really feel like I am, I'm only JUST getting by each month, I live on a single person's wage, I rent a room at my house, but I am now supplemented by any single person's allowances etc, due to having a lodger but this doesn't cover all short fall. Heating is never on, so my health is also slightly suffering.

Making ends meet, but like i said earlier, never have any back up cash for holidays or if the boiler broke, I'd be knackered.

Comparative Findings

Introduction

Comparing the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 allows us to track the changing financial fortunes of the workers from the North of Tyne. We have observed anecdotal trends across the work since 2022, with variations based on comparison of different organisations and sectors, but this direct comparison allows for a more generalised picture of marginally improving financial wellbeing – with hopefully the expected knock-on effect on child poverty.

There is an obvious caveat to this particular comparison – we cannot draw a causal line between the improvements made between the Phases and the work we have done with the organisations. Not only are these figures snapshots of the situation before our interventions, but there are several economic and governmental factors – lowering utility prices, Government assistance schemes, the lowering of the rate of inflation and the impact of rises in National Living Wage and other pay awards – that will also have had an impact.

Results comparing Phase 1 and Phase 2

Across the board there is very little difference between the results of Phase 1 (P1) and Phase 2 (P2) which lie outside any likely margin of error within the results.

Where we have seen changes, they have signalled a move towards small numbers of people moving back into social activity, financial stability, and security. There have been notable drops in the number of people struggling with utilities and bills in general, which reflects falling energy prices, Government support, falling inflation and for some, generous pay settlements. However, this has been accompanied by an increase in those using their savings, and similar smaller increase in credit use.

We have also seen a predictable drop in those requiring advice and a marked increase in the number of workers who are claiming benefits. However, this has been accompanied by a dramatic increase for the relative few respondents who are paid hourly, in their hourly rate – shifting it towards the Real Living Wage.

Every single index result – financial situation, worry about finance, confidence in the future, ability to access advice and manage benefits – have moved in a positive direction. Whilst some are still lower than average, they are progressing in the right direction.

Resurveyed Organisations

At the end of Phase 2, 4 organisations have, as part of their deepening engagement with the project, resurveyed their staff with the Making Ends Meet questionnaire. This allows us the chance to look at the comparative shifts between their starting position in Phase 1 to their current position within Phase 2 after our support, interventions and their workplace changes.

Clearly this is not an exact resurvey as changes in and number of participants may be different. It is noteworthy that comms strategies that are used by the organisations to implement the survey will have matured.

Through the reengagement we can gain some indication of the impact that the Pillar 3 work has contributed towards in these places.

Charity Variation Key

RED	Worse result and beyond whole sample Phase 2 variation
ORANGE	Worse result but less than Phase 2 variation
WHITE	No variation between company and Phase 2 variation
YELLOW	Better result but less than Phase 2 variation
GREEN	Better result and beyond whole sample Phase 2 variation

Transitional Results

One point to contemplate when reading the results is the variance on the questions where we may have people transitioning from one result to another – i.e. from there being a “gap” in their finances” to their finances being “tight”. When considering these, we have to consider that staff may be following a pathway from Gap >> Tight >> Comfortable, and similarly when considering money left after essentials, we would look for a pathway of Zero >> '<£50' >> Over £50.

We cannot categorically state that people are moving through these pathways. Therefore, where we have shaded the cells for variance, we have assumed the worst case scenario, although there is a likelihood that where, for example, those with a ‘gap’ in their budgets has fallen and those finding it ‘tight’ has risen, this represents people passing from one category to another.

Large Charity (Out of Region Base with Substantial North of Tyne Workforce)

Question	Answer	Survey #1	Survey #2	Company Variation	Phase 2 Variation
Afford day-to-day	Tight	54%	56%	+2%	-4%
	Gap	22%	17%	-5%	-1%
Money left?	Zero	26%	20%	-6%	-2%
	<£50	50%	34%	-16%	-7%
Social/Leisure?	Less	55%	53%	-2%	+3%
	No	23%	20%	-3%	-5%
Stable/Secure?	No/DK	56%	59%	+3%	-4%
Making Ends Meet	Yes	70%	79%	+9%	+7%
Affecting Work?	Yes	36%	17%	-19%	+1%
	DK	32%	18%	-14%	-1%
Index: Financial Situation	High Good	5.5	5.7	+0.2	+0.3
Index: Financial Worry	Low Good	6.8	6.2	-0.6	+0.3
Index: Confidence	High Good	3.0	4.3	+1.3	+0.5
Index: Advice Confidence	High Good	7.6	7.8	+0.2	+0.5

Observations:

- A shift away from being unable to afford essentials in excess of the Phase 2 pattern.
- Sizeable positive changes to the money left after essentials, in excess of the Phase 2 pattern. **Reducing the transactional cost of work is one of the key outcomes of the project.**
- A slight shift towards more social activity, but roughly in line with the Phase 2 pattern.
- A worse result for Stability and Security than the overall Phase 2 pattern, possibly due to staff awareness of voluntary sector funding patterns.
- The increase in people 'Making Ends Meet' is in line with the Phase 2 pattern.
- There is a decrease in people stating that their financial situation is affecting their work, which is **substantially better** than the Phase 2 pattern. **The organisational business case for reducing in-work poverty is embodied in this statistic.**
- Staff are less worried about their finances and confident about the future to a greater extent than the Phase 2 pattern

Medium Charity (North Tyneside)

Question	Answer	Survey #1	Survey #2	Company Variation	Phase 2 Variation
Afford day-to-day	Tight	58%	53%	-5%	-4%
	Gap	35%	31%	-4%	-1%
Money left?	Zero	13%	16%	+3%	-2%
	<£50	45%	29%	-16%	-7%
Social/Leisure?	Less	43%	53%	+10%	+3%
	No	43%	26%	-17%	-5%
Stable/Secure?	No/DK	75%	67%	-8%	-4%
Making Ends Meet	Yes	58%	68%	+10%	+7%
Affecting Work?	Yes	28%	29%	+1%	+1%
	DK	28%	22%	-6%	-1%
Index: Financial Situation	High Good	4.7	4.9	+0.2	+0.3
Index: Financial Worry	Low Good	7.8	7.2	-0.6	+0.3
Index: Confidence	High Good	3.3	3.6	+0.3	+0.5
Index: Advice Confidence	High Good	6.6	7.3	+0.7	+0.5

Observations:

- A shift away from being unable to afford essentials in excess of the Phase 2 pattern.
- Sizeable positive changes to the money left after essentials, in excess of the Phase 2 pattern. **Reducing the transactional cost of work is one of the key outcomes of the project.**
- A substantial shift towards more social activity compared with the Phase 2 pattern.
- A better result for Stability and Security than the overall Phase 2 pattern.
- The increase in people 'Making Ends Meet' is in line with the Phase 2 pattern.
- The decreases in people unable to positively state their financial situation is not affecting their work is similar to the Phase 2 pattern.
- Staff are less worried about their finances than the Phase 2 pattern as a whole.

Large Charity (Northumberland)

Question	Answer	Survey #1	Survey #2	Company Variation	Phase 2 Variation
Afford day-to-day	Tight	56%	64%	+8%	-4%
	Gap	18%	20%	+2%	-1%
Money left?	Zero	24%	12%	-12%	-2%
	<£50	53%	38%	-15%	-7%
Social/Leisure?	Less	44%	55%	+10%	+3%
	No	29%	20%	-9%	-5%
Stable/Secure?	No/DK	53%	59%	+6%	-4%
Making Ends Meet	Yes	73%	69%	-4%	+7%
Affecting Work?	Yes	19%	13%	-6%	+1%
	DK	16%	16%	0%	-1%
Index: Financial Situation	High Good	5.3	5.2	-0.1	+0.3
Index: Financial Worry	Low Good	6.6	6.6	+/-0.0	+0.3
Index: Confidence	High Good	3.9	4.0	+0.1	+0.5
Index: Advice Confidence	High Good	6.1	6.1	+/-0.0	+0.5

Caveat – this organisation has informed us that they enabled an alternative method of distributing the survey and response collection. This enabled more participation from the lowest paid areas of the organisation which they did not hear as strongly from in the first survey. This may have affected the results when comparing the two sets)

Observations:

- A rise in those who cannot afford essentials and those finding it tight. In this situation it is difficult to assume that there has been an overall improvement.
- Sizeable positive changes to the money left after essentials, in excess of the Phase 2 pattern. **Reducing the transactional cost of work is one of the intended key outcomes of the project.**
- A substantial shift towards more social activity compared with the Phase 2 pattern.
- A worse result for Stability and Security than the overall Phase 2 pattern and the previous survey
- The decrease in people 'Making Ends Meet' is out of line with the Phase 2 pattern.
- The decreases in people unable to positively state their financial situation is not affecting their work has fallen slightly.
- Staff attitudes towards finances and advice have varied little.

Lessons Learned: This result underpins the importance of deepening the relationship between ourselves and the organisation. By digging into the previous results, we were able to model the employees who undertook the initial survey and realised that there was a sizeable cohort

who were not represented. For the employer this identified a large gap in internal communication channels which Society Matters was able to support with. When the resurvey took place, these employees have delivered a very different set of results. It may require a third survey in 2025 to get a true picture of the whole organisation. However, this attention to detail has allowed the charity to take further actions specific to these workers.

Medium Charity (North Tyneside)

Question	Answer	Survey #1	Survey #2	Company Variation	Phase 2 Variation
Afford day-to-day	Tight	63%	48%	-15%	-4%
	Gap	15%	14%	-1%	-1%
Money left?	Zero	20%	20%	0%	-2%
	<£50	50%	36%	-14%	-7%
Social/Leisure?	Less	48%	44%	-4%	+3%
	No	25%	20%	-5%	-5%
Stable/Secure?	No/DK	59%	48%	-11%	-4%
Making Ends Meet	Yes	76%	81%	+5%	+7%
Affecting Work?	Yes	17%	8%	-9%	+1%
	DK	13%	21%	+8%	-1%
Index: Financial Situation	High Good	5.3	5.7	+0.4	+0.3
Index: Financial Worry	Low Good	7.0	5.8	-1.2	+0.3
Index: Confidence	High Good	3.3	4.8	+1.5	+0.5
Index: Advice Confidence	High Good	6.0	7.2	+1.2	+0.5

Observations:

- A shift away from being unable to afford essentials in excess of the Phase 2 pattern.
- Sizeable positive changes to the money left after essentials, in excess of the Phase 2 pattern. **Reducing the transactional cost of work is one of the intended key outcomes of the project.**
- A substantial shift towards more social activity compared with the Phase 2 pattern.
- A better result for Stability and Security than the overall Phase 2 pattern.
- The increase in people 'Making Ends Meet' is in line with the Phase 2 pattern
- The decreases in people unable to positively state their financial situation is not affecting their work is better than the Phase 2 pattern although there is some increased uncertainty.
- Staff are substantially less worried and more confident about their finances than the Phase 2 pattern as a whole.

Observations

These results show that, in the main, those organisations who have resurveyed have seen impacts above and beyond the whole sample numbers for Phase 2.

- Staff appear to be progressing to afford their essentials more frequently
- Staff have more money left after essentials.
- Staff are returning to social and leisure spending
- Staff feel that their work is being less impacted by their finances
- Overall attitudes to financial wellbeing and advice have improved

However

- There are questions around financial stability and security still for many.
- There appears to be a section of those who are having the most problems that are finding it hardest to move out of in-work poverty

Conclusion

Building on the previous Phase 1 report, we should repeat that CPPP Pillar 3 did not set out to prove child poverty exists in the North of Tyne area, nor did it set out to provide broad one-size-fits-all recommendations. The routes that working people can take to lift themselves and their children out of poverty are complex. The story told by our Making Ends Meet survey is one of a very slow recovery, that leaves thousands of North East workers still living below the breadline and unable to give their children the quality of life they deserve. Things are, undoubtedly, getting better but at a pace that will condemn a further generation of children in our area to the crippling outcomes of growing up in poverty – unless prolonged commitment is made, and action is taken. We hope the recently announced North East Child Poverty Reduction Unit will produce a clear strategy on how to challenge In-work poverty as a root cause of child poverty.

Our work shows that **employers across the North of Tyne area will act with passion to discuss, explore and contribute to tackling in-work and child poverty**. The creation of Leaders for Change, and the energy and enthusiasm shown by its members to tackle this issue shows that there is a desire to end child poverty through the reduction of in work poverty.

Encouragingly, through the comparison of data collected with organisation that have done the survey multiple times, we are beginning to see the **evidence that engagement with the Society Matters team to explore and introduce in-work poverty prevention solutions is having an impact**. We aim to continue this multi survey approach in Phase 3, which will provide further evidence required for an ongoing, long-term business case for working with employers of all sizes to continue tackling in work poverty as a key route to end child poverty in the region.

Lessons Learned

Targeting: Organisations in the third sector were far more open to being part of the process and were far more familiar with the challenges faced by colleagues. They therefore placed more importance and urgency on the work when engaged, one going as far as to recruit to a position to focus on our recommendations in one large VCS organisation.

While we have had very positive responses from the private sector organisations who engaged with the survey, for many others there were competing priorities and other heightened demands caused by increased costs of operations.

Public sector organisations: Public sector organisations (including education, health and local authority) were difficult to engage with in Phase 1, but with tenacity, the support of advocates who had completed the process, and the successes from Phase 1 we have been able to engage with several large public sector employers. As this sector is such a large employer throughout the region, this was a breakthrough and better served to illustrate a fuller picture of the position of all workers. These are, however, extremely slow-moving organisations, and we have learnt that engaging to the point of completion over 12 months is almost impossible unless working with strategic subsections of large public bodies.

The attitude to new projects: A key lesson learnt and point of contention between organisations is the differing attitude to new projects. What is being referred to within the business community as ‘the flavour of the month projects’ within events, the nature of continual short term (12 months or less) funding is showing that **employers are starting to become fatigued with the inconsistencies of availability from other support**. This is unsurprising when considering the timeframes required for the employer to engage, to then escalate to decision makers or governance, and subsequently receive the support - for some organisations taking part in our phase 2 work this has been an 18 month process. This rings especially true if the organisation has taken the time to seek approval and the project has either finished, not been renewed, or has a different supplier whilst they were in the process.

Shift in attitude to Pillar 3: We are noting a shift in attitude to our work where **organisations are beginning to approach us**, due to the project being delivered to a consistently high standard over multiple years, and promoted to them by the advocate organisations we have created through high levels of employer satisfaction.

Engagement Techniques: One of the results of increased engagement with medium and large organisations has been the need to accommodate the needs of a more geographically diverse set of workforces, where staff members do not necessarily have access to a work PC or allocated time to access online resources. We have worked with employers to develop appropriate ways for such staff to access the survey, so that their voices can be heard in the wider work.

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I would like to thank all staff, past and present, for consistently going above and beyond to deliver outstanding work and consistently bring new ideas to the table. Thank you for your hard work to help create a meaningful impact to employees throughout the region.

I would also like to thank our organisations and organisational advocates who speak so passionately about the work we do with them, and those who support and challenge us to evolve.



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