

YMCA WORCESTERSHIRE

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Impact of cost of living crisis on young people

Aims

1. To give a brief overview of YMCA Worcestershire's work and mission
2. To develop a better understanding of the cost of living crisis on our young people
3. To consider how, as a church, we might respond.

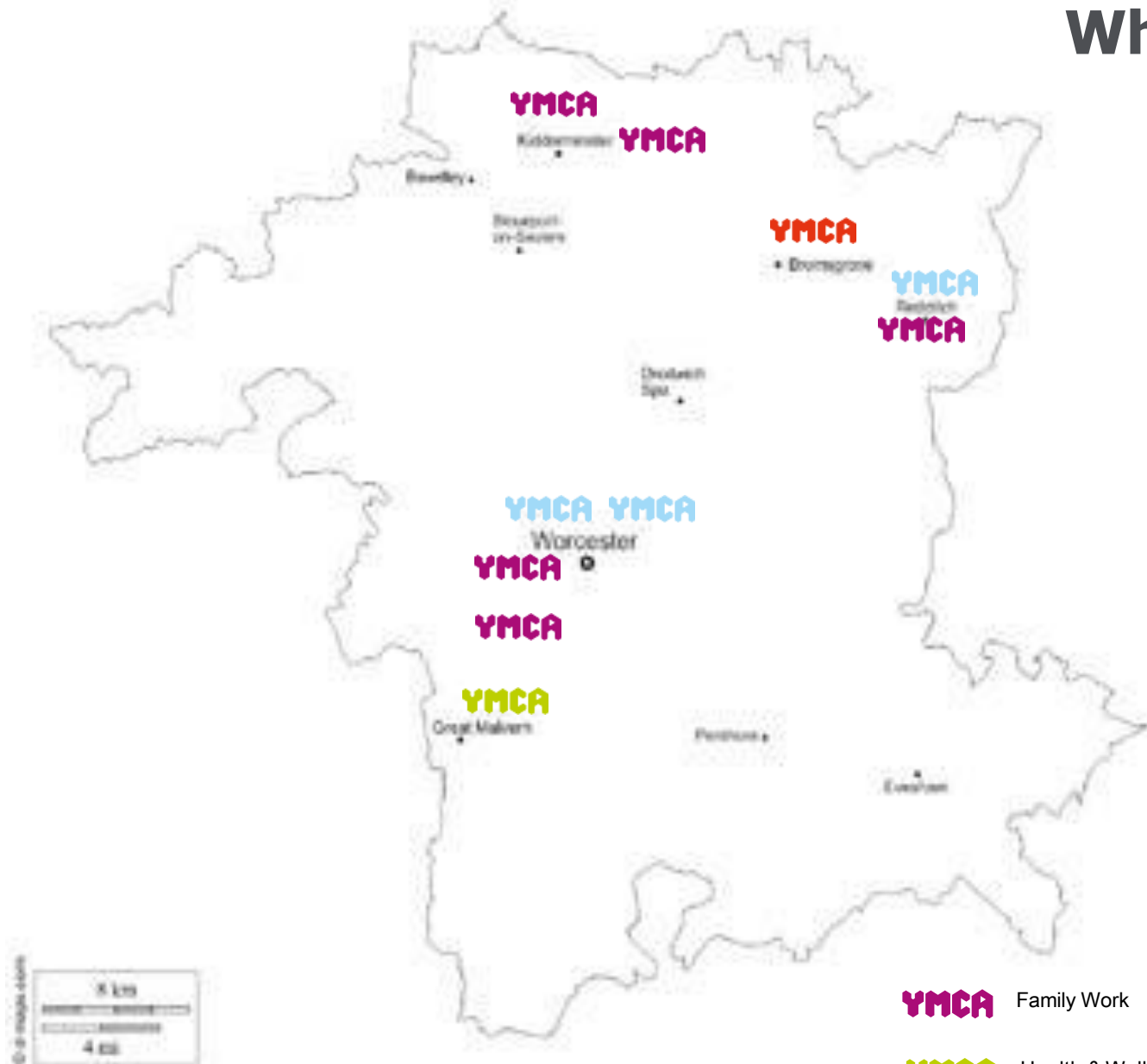
Our Mission

YMCA Worcestershire enables people to live, learn and share to build a brighter future in mind, body and spirit.

Our Values



Where are we?



YMCA Family Work

YMCA Accommodation

YMCA Health & Wellbeing

YMCA Support & Advice

Housing

Prison
Work

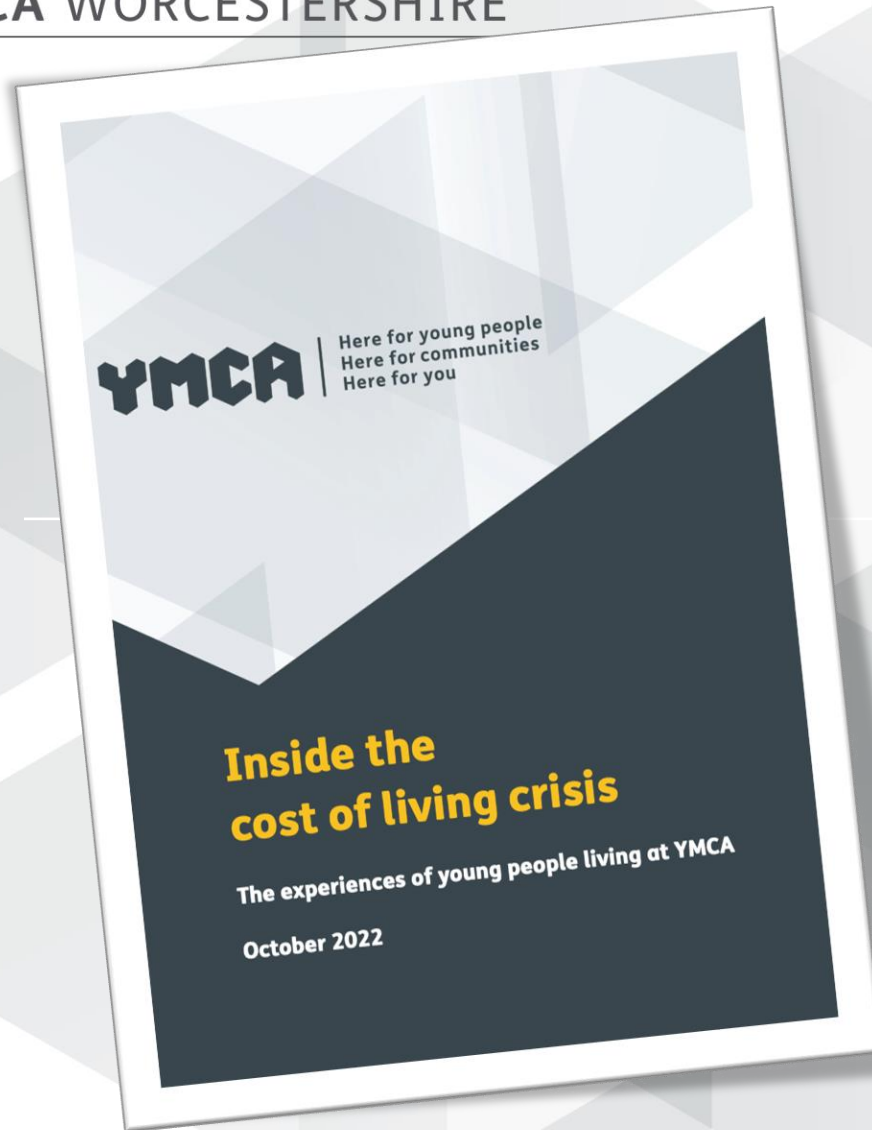
Community
Centres

Youth Work

Employability
programmes

Family
work

Mental Health Counselling



*Top 5 impacts
on young people*

Research by
David Bridson
**Head of Policy &
Campaigns at YMCA
England & Wales**

<https://www.ymca.org.uk/end-the-cost-of-living-crisis>

1. Food is the first to be cut when times are tough

Young people who are on benefits are skipping meals, turning to food banks and making more unhealthy choices because of the lack of money they have.



"Most people here live on one meal a day. If they're lucky. Like you can hear my friend over there... he hasn't had anything to eat in the last three days."

2. Energy bills are rocketing, especially for those on prepayment meters

Young people are already making tough decisions to go without heating in order to save on increasing energy costs, long before winter sets in. Others who have their bills included in their personal service charge will go without Government interventions, such as the £400 energy rebate, as living in supported accommodation is not seen as a “household”, even though they are required to make a personal contribution to the cost.



"During the winter months nobody has their heater on because it's far too expensive to run at all and because energy prices have gone up so much now and they keep going, keep going up the people in the [location] project are going to be freezing. It's going to be a very rough winter."

3. Low levels of financial resilience; leaning on friends and family

For those who have support networks, young people are increasingly relying on family and friends for financial support. However, many do not have these networks and have no one to turn to. Young people worried that with everyone's costs increasing, they would no longer be able to get this additional support.

Financial resilience amongst young people on benefits is low and many of them are already in high levels of debt.



"I've got nowhere to turn."

4. Mental health worsening

Young people's mental health has declined as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Many of them can no longer afford to do anything social or even travel anywhere because all they could afford to do is survive.

The worry has also led to increased levels of depression and anxiety.



"My biggest worry? Being homeless again. Yes, because some of us, as soon as we got, as soon as we're in here, we either have family to go to or no one. Most of us in here have got no one. It's not fun."

5. Aspiration halted

Young people who had planned to move on from supported accommodation no longer wanted to take that risk. They did not know if they would be able to afford the bills, and worried about the insecurity of the private rental sector if they fell behind.



"My plan was to move out by the end of the year and when I calculated the prices of living on my own, with gas and electric for the next 18 months, it's not beneficial to me to move out at all. It will be cheaper for me to stay here"

Current extra efforts to support our residents



Food pantry & local supermarket drop offs



To discuss

How can we respond as a church?
What would Jesus do?

What are the barriers? How can
we overcome these?

What could my own personal
response be right now?

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Matthew 25: 35-36

What would help?

If you have time,
write to MPs

Prayer

- And be aware that these needs are in your parishes too; be alert to local need

Donations/Fundraising

- Lots of different levels and options available

We really need good trustees who can help to steer us through this challenging time

Advocacy & PR

- Government and local MPs
- Talk about us and promote / signpost our work
- Use our community centres

Time & Expertise

- Corporate social responsibility e.g. help to redecorate an area
- Chaplaincy support
- Volunteering on projects
- Become a trustee **

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