

## **Highlights from the updated cost of living pack produced by the population health hub.**

The Population Health Hub published a data pack in response to the sudden increase in the cost of living in 2022/23. The pack outlined the links between reduced household finances and changes in health status.

This year's updated report is due to be published online shortly, as we are still awaiting some data from partners.

HWBB are provided with some content highlights.

### 1. Cost of everyday purchases is still a challenge for many.

The consumer prices index including owner occupied housing costs was set at 3.5% in November 2024, far lower than previous years, indicating a slow-down in the rise of the cost of everyday goods, services, and housing. Even so, national evidence from Healthwatch, and results from the Opinions and Lifestyle survey published in November 2024 describe that many people are still impacted by higher cost of living.

### 2. Use of Foodbanks is still high and rising.

The Trussell Trust report a 120% increase in foodbank usage in York between 2018-2024. There were 8846 emergency food supplies distributed over financial year 2023/24; a 20% rise from the previous financial year.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Access to Dental Care remains a financial challenge

A lack of local access to NHS dentists is a recognised barrier to accessing dental care for those on lower incomes. Oral health inequalities have particularly been highlighted amongst vulnerable groups such as Gypsy and Traveller communities, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as those using temporary accommodation and food banks.

The consequences of poor oral health are far-reaching and significantly impact directly on tooth decay and indirectly on mental health, heart disease, and diabetes. There is a project currently underway delivering evidence-informed prevention programmes for children and a few schools in York.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Fuel Poverty and respiratory health.

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<sup>1</sup> [York Foodbank](#)

<sup>2</sup> *Dental Care Report*, Humber & Yorkshire ICB

The difficulty keeping a home warm is amongst the most commonly reported issues with rising cost of living. In York, 14% of households are thought to be in fuel poverty meaning their homes are difficult to heat based on their income. Homes that are poorly insulated or poorly heated are prone to damp and mould and are linked to respiratory illness and mental ill health especially in young children and the very old.

Whilst there is more work to do, the rates of COPD exacerbations in York have fallen in 2024 compared to 2023. This promising trend is largely attributed to respiratory social prescribers who are working with COPD patients to manage their symptoms, become more active, make use of support, and set their own goals.