**Preface**  
Fuel poverty remains a critical and growing challenge. In 2024, 36.3% of UK households (8.99 million) spent more than 10% of their income on domestic energy, with projections indicating this will rise to 11.2% in 2025[[1]](#footnote-1). This underlines the need for sustained, well-targeted VCMA funding to deliver interventions that address vulnerability in depth, not just in scale.

1. We support the continuation of the VCMA framework and the proposed UIOLI mechanism, recognising their unique role in enabling projects that other funding routes cannot deliver. To maximise impact, both should prioritise **holistic, case-managed interventions** that address multiple, interconnected vulnerabilities — including income, energy efficiency, Priority Services Register registration, carbon monoxide safety, and net zero engagement.
2. **Mass-reach tools and signposting** are valuable for awareness and self-help and should be linked to **high-quality, individual human support** for households with complex needs. This integration ensures that those most at risk receive tangible, completed interventions that measurably improve resilience, safety, and affordability.
3. **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** should remain the core evaluation method, capturing both financial and non-financial benefits, and enabling a blend of local and national projects to meet regional needs while delivering strategic outcomes.
4. **AI should be encouraged** as a back-office enabler to reduce administrative burden, improve data quality, and accelerate case handling — freeing skilled advisers to focus on empathetic, tailored support. The human front end must remain central to ensure trust and effectiveness.
5. The **scale of VCMA funding should be increased** to reflect growing vulnerability and complexity. Sustained, higher funding levels will support long-term, high-quality programmes and enable investment in innovation, workforce skills, and cross-sector collaboration.

**Key Recommendations**

1. Prioritise holistic, integrated interventions over isolated measures.
2. Link online tools to in-depth human support for complex needs.
3. Retain SROI as the evaluation standard for blended local/national impact.
4. Incentivise AI to enhance efficiency while maintaining a skilled human front end.
5. Increase funding to meet rising vulnerability and complexity.

About **Make Life Better**

**Make Life Better** is a UK-based enterprise working alongside regulated utilities, charities, and health organisations to support households facing vulnerability. Every day, we see the difference that tailored, person-centred help can make — from improving a family’s safety and comfort to easing the financial pressures that undermine well-being. By combining skilled, compassionate casework with innovative tools, we aim to remove barriers, restore dignity, and create lasting positive change for the people and communities we serve.

**Mark Abrams**

**Co-founder and Chief Executive**

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1. Annual fuel poverty statistics report:2025 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-report-2025> Published 27 March 2025 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)