

'Warm banks' spread in UK as heating costs rise

15th August, 2022



Creative Commons 2.0
via Toshiyuki IMAI on flickr.com

The U.K. is one of the world's richest countries, but people are finding it increasingly difficult to pay energy bills. Electricity and gas bills could rise fourfold by the winter. Even people on good salaries are feeling the pinch. Lower-paid workers and those

who have retired may soon be faced with a stark choice of heating or eating. Local governments have devised a makeshift solution. They are converting communal areas like libraries into spaces where people can go to stay warm for free. These are called "heat banks". Money-saving expert Martin Lewis said he is dumbfounded by the idea of warm banks in a supposedly wealthy country. The U.K. already has hundreds of food banks for those who struggle to afford to eat.

Britons are already taking drastic measures to avoid skyrocketing energy costs. One woman has disconnected her refrigerator and is storing perishable goods in cold water. A man has turned off his electric kettle and is drinking water instead of hot coffee. Last winter, an older lady used her free bus pass to sit on a warm bus all day instead of sitting at home in the cold. Many people are furious with the government and fossil fuel companies. Giant oil companies are making record profits, and the government is reluctant to implement a one-off "windfall tax". The U.K.'s National Energy Action group said that each year, around 11,400 deaths are caused by cold weather. They predict this figure will rise further this year.

Sources: metro.co.uk / ladbible.com / energylivenews.com

Writing

The need for 'warm banks' is a disgrace in wealthy countries. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

difficult / energy bills / electricity / gas bills / winter / feeling the pinch / wealthy / drastic measures / energy / refrigerator / electric kettle / fossil fuels / profits / tax

True / False

- 1) The U.K. is the world's richest country. T / F
- 2) People on good salaries in the U.K. won't notice the rises in energy bills. T / F
- 3) Some people in the U.K. may have to decide whether to heat or eat. T / F
- 4) The U.K. has hundreds of food banks for people who have no food. T / F
- 5) Britons are measuring drastic and skyrocketing energy bills. T / F
- 6) A woman is keeping some of her food in cold water to save energy. T / F
- 7) The U.K. is not going to tax the huge profits of energy companies. T / F
- 8) It is predicted that over 10,000 Britons will die from the cold this year. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. richest | a. shared |
| 2. makeshift | b. irate |
| 3. communal | c. have money for |
| 4. dumbfounded | d. easily spoilt |
| 5. afford | e. temporary |
| 6. measures | f. hesitant |
| 7. perishable | g. wealthiest |
| 8. furious | h. forecast |
| 9. reluctant | i. amazed |
| 10. predict | j. actions |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Have you ever taken drastic measures in your life?
- c) How can we avoid skyrocketing costs?
- d) Would you disconnect your fridge to save energy?
- e) Would you drink water instead of hot drinks to save energy?
- f) What do you think of giant oil companies?
- g) What does 11,000 deaths because of cold say about the UK?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the U.K. government?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. gas bills could rise | a. by the idea |
| 2. be faced with a stark | b. goods |
| 3. he is dumbfounded | c. afford to eat |
| 4. a supposedly | d. her refrigerator |
| 5. those who struggle to | e. choice |
| 6. Britons are already taking drastic | f. wealthy country |
| 7. One woman has disconnected | g. off "windfall tax" |
| 8. perishable | h. fuel companies |
| 9. fossil | i. fourfold by the winter |
| 10. reluctant to implement a one- | j. measures |

Discussion – Student B

- How rich is your country?
- Are your bills increasingly difficult to pay?
- When was the last time you felt the pinch?
- Have you ever had a stark choice to make?
- What do you think of people in the UK having to heat or eat?
- What do you think of the idea of 'warm banks'?
- Why does a rich country like the UK have warm banks?
- How bad would it be if you struggled to eat?

Spelling

- gas bills could rise ruffolod by the winter
- be faced with a atsrk choice of heating or eating
- devised a aksmiheft solution
- he is ombdunufded by the idea
- in a oppsudesly wealthy country
- those who tusggrle to afford to eat
- Britons are already taking sartdic measures
- storing rhiseabple goods
- sfsoil fuel companies
- the government is lcuetrnat
- eplimemnt a one-off "windfall tax"
- They epidrct this figure will rise

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. a	4. i	5. c
6. j	7. d	8. b	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Exercise

You think exercise is the best thing for keeping warm. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): extra clothes, a blanket or drinking hot tea.

Role B – Extra Clothes

You think extra clothes is the best thing for keeping warm. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): exercise, a blanket or drinking hot tea.

Role C – A Blanket

You think a blanket is the best thing for keeping warm. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): extra clothes, exercise or drinking hot tea.

Role D – Drinking Hot Tea

You think drinking hot tea is the best thing for keeping warm. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): extra clothes, a blanket or exercise.

Speaking – Staying warm

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to stay warm in the cold winter at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Exercise | • Extra clothes |
| • Hot bath | • Blanket |
| • Go to McDonald's | • Sit under the sun |
| • Hug someone | • Drink hot tea |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 T	7 F	8 T
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.