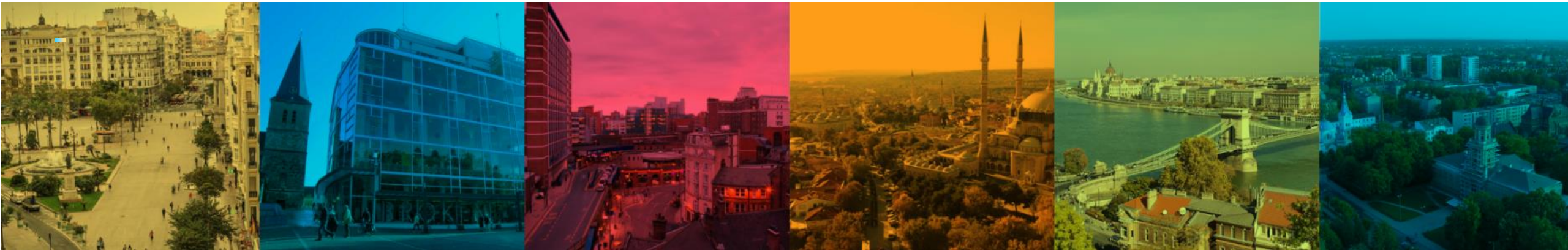


Wellbased - 2nd Capacity-building Webinar

What is like to live with energy poverty? Experiences from
Leeds



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 **WELLBASED**



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Today



- The qualitative work in WELLBASED
- The WELLBASED project in Leeds

- Preliminary results: How is energy poverty affecting wellbeing?
- The experiences

- Take home messages

The qualitative work in WELLBASED



- What are we doing with our qualitative work?
 - We want to learn about their **experiences** with **paying for and using energy** at home, and whether this has changed recently.
 - Energy uses: when we talk about using energy in the home, we mean heating and cooling their home, heating up water to wash, cooking, lighting, washing and drying clothes and using electrical appliances.
 - During the interview we asked about these **experiences**, and **how they manage to access adequate energy to meet their needs.**
- **We will test intervention schemes addressing energy poverty in 6 different pilot cities** in Europe: Valencia (Spain), Heerlen (The Netherlands), **Leeds (UK)**, Edirne (Turkey), Obuda (Hungary) and Jelgava (Latvia)

The qualitative work in WELLBASED



- **About the house/home/household and you**
 - How did you come to live in this house?, Can you explain how each person uses the house in a typical day?
- **About energy use in your home**
 - How easy is it to keep your house at a good temperature?, How affordable are your energy bills?
- **What you do in your home to make it work?**
 - How do you manage to keep the electricity bill affordable?
- **Wider effects**
 - What are the effects of [cold/heat/damp/electrical access] on your social life?
- **Intervention**

The WELLBASED project in Leeds



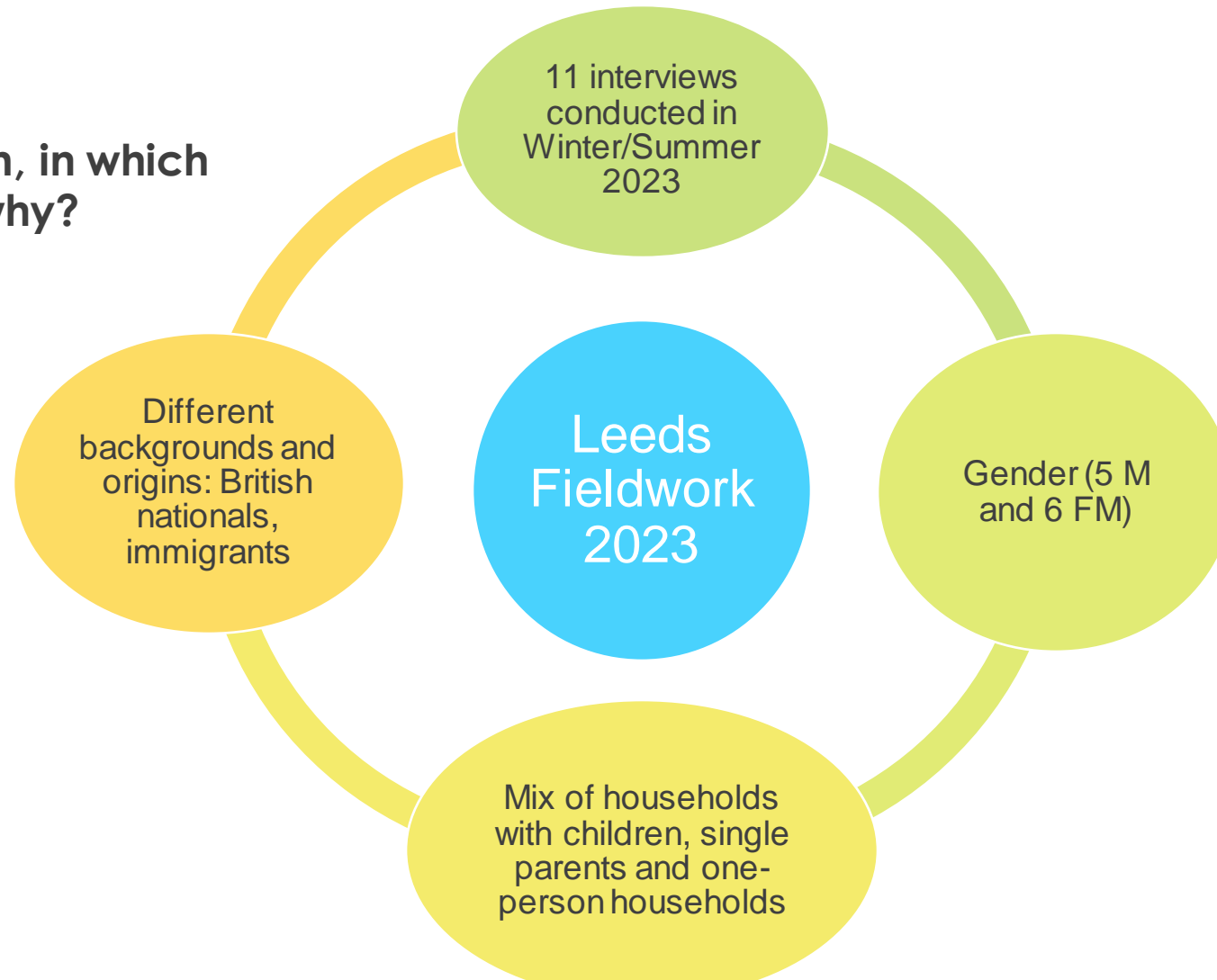
Energy poverty in Leeds:

- We see households in Leeds that are failing to heat, or having to choose between heating and eating. Food bank use has been increasing in the past five years, with a 24% increase in use between 2018 and 2019
- 'low income, high cost' measure has 10.3% of households experiencing fuel poverty in Leeds in 2018

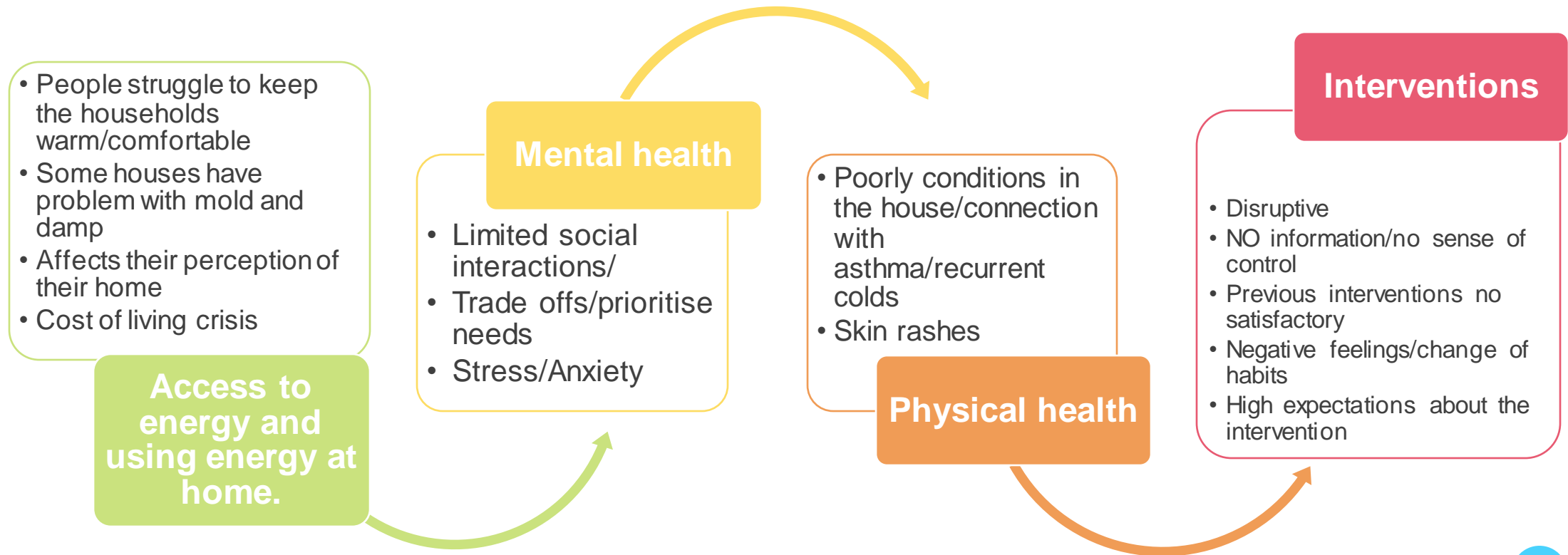
- In our research we focus on **high-rise housing**, built during the 1960s and owned by local councils, rented out for social housing. Some of these high rises are **now insulated using external cladding**.
- We compare experiences of residents in similar blocks, some of which have been insulated and some of which have not.
- We work with the tenant relations team to identify and visit the relevant households, as well as signposting people to additional energy saving advice available through council funded services

Preliminary results: How is energy poverty affecting wellbeing?

What works, for whom, in which circumstances and why?



Preliminary results: How is energy poverty affecting wellbeing?



Their experiences...

Single man

Access to energy and using energy at home.

- *Because it's just me living here, the hot water tank is big enough for me to have a shower and then the only other hot water I use in the day is mainly for washing up and that's obviously not very much water at all. If I had other people staying here or if there was more than one person in the house, then yes that would become quite a big problem*

Single mother

Mental health

- *They tried to give me antidepressants to help with my anxiety to try and calm me down and just to sit down and relax but it's only me and him so I feel like I need to get it all done, otherwise if I leave the damp and mould, we are going to get poorly and I don't want us to get asthma and stuff and prolong that so I'm forever cleaning to keep up to it because I don't want us to get poorly from that or Jayden touching damp and stuff*

Single man

Physical health

- *The more I thought it was cold, but then the more bedding I put on and things to keep me warm, the worse it got. It just felt like circulation, just pains in my arms and that. I don't know what it is, but it lessened when I got the wallpaper up, so I'm assuming it's something to do with the way the building is built.*

Their experiences...

Mother with 3 children **House conditions and health**

- *Exactly. Now I can't even sleep in my room because it's wet. My clothes have mould. My shoes have mould. My blankets. It's just everything. I just live there and I sleep here because I have got my own health problems and I can't risk going there and sleeping there the whole night.*

Mother with children **Asking for support**

- *Yeah, we always tell them, each time we call them, they will never ever turn up on time. You've got to lie sometimes, I do lie, I'm such a good liar with them, like, "Oh my god, the flood, my house is going to be full of flood", and things like this, and they will put it as emergency. Otherwise if you tell them really what's happening, honestly if you tell them, they won't come. They will tell you, "In two weeks, three weeks", by then something will happen, so you've got to lie. I lie with them.*

Mother with children **House conditions and thermal comfort**

- *Expensive, really this winter it's not warm in my house. Some people come to my house because my niece living here, she is living in a house and she has a gas radiator, not, when me and my daughter are going to her house, "Mummy please, her house is very warm!" but when we come back, I say you are living, "We are living in Siberia," you know? Really cold. We can't warm my house.*

Take home messages

Most repeated issues

- Struggling with paying energy bills and how the cost of living crisis is affecting them
- Poor house conditions
- Mental and physical issues
- Lack of control of their situation
- How, when and whether they ask for support

Energy Interventions

- Complaints about the intervention: planned, management, implementation
- People have positive expectations about the impact of the intervention on their lives

Key Messages

- Trade-offs/consequences of the cost-of-living crisis more acute in family households
- People are aware of the connection between good living conditions/appropriate dwelling and health
- People are energy literate (e.g. which electric appliances are of higher costs)

Take home messages

Final thoughts

- Families are forced to make difficult decisions: food, clothes, reduce energy use. Families are stuck.
- Revisit the current system of benefits and look at reducing energy- poverty, and inequality
- Energy poverty affects well-being (resignation and life satisfaction)
- Broadening the scope of health expenditure could help address adverse health outcomes caused by energy poverty
- Some groups with less economic power suffer from access and meeting their basic needs.
- Whom should we target? Groups with social fragility/rethink how we understand inequality

Thanks

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