

The food or petrol dilemma

Christine Antoniou

LOW-INCOME Manningham families are struggling to put food on the table with escalating petrol prices cutting into their budgets.

Doncare spokeswoman Christine Ellerton said that since fuel prices skyrocketed, the number of people asking for help had risen.

"People are telling us the rising cost of petrol is a real strain for them," Ms Ellerton said.

"We can help people with petrol money but a month's worth of funds runs out in just two weeks.

"Petrol prices are creating an extra burden on people who have a fixed income but they are still required to get the kids to school or get to work."

Petrol prices were particularly an issue for people living in transitional accommodation, Ms Ellerton said. "People might be living in Manningham but their accommodation may not be close to where they work or to their kids' schools," she said. "Then something has to give and it is usually food or people juggle their money ... they might use

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CHRISTINE ELLERTON

some rent money for petrol, which then puts more pressure on down the track.

"Food and petrol are often budgeted for last and, as costs increase, it becomes harder and harder to find money at the end of the week."

Ms Ellerton said the non-profit organisation had seen an increase in the number of people needing financial help for basic living costs in the past two years.

"It may not be necessarily linked to petrol but it's just another one of those costs that makes it harder for people."

■ How are petrol prices affecting your budget? Write to the *Manningham Leader*, 160 Whitehorse Rd, Blackburn, 3130, or email manningham@ldr.newsltd.com.au.

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