

Welcome to the latest edition of the Fuel Poverty Update. This edition highlights new and ongoing initiatives designed to help those in fuel poverty as well as information on recently published research and information on events related to fuel poverty.

As always, contributions for future issues would be very much appreciated and should be sent to:

[mark.Johnson@dti.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:mark.Johnson@dti.qsi.gov.uk)

## General News

### Government's Second Annual Report on Fuel Poverty

The Government's second annual report on fuel poverty will be published shortly after the Easter recess, alongside the Government's first annual progress report following the publication of the Energy White Paper last year. Updated indicators monitoring progress towards the fuel poverty targets will be published at the same time.

### Trade and Industry Committee

Following up its 2002 Report on Fuel Poverty (HC 814, published 10 September 2002) and the Government's response (HC 152, published 13 December 2002), the Committee invited the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group to provide oral evidence on progress in England. FPAG appeared before the Committee on 16 December 2003, and the proceedings can be viewed on the Committee's website:

[www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/trade\\_and\\_industry\\_reports\\_and\\_publications.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/trade_and_industry_reports_and_publications.cfm).

### DTI Design and Demonstration Unit

In May 2003 the Government announced the establishment of a Design and Demonstration Unit of private sector secondees, based in DTI, to take forward work in support of the Sustainable Energy Policy Network established by the Energy White Paper. The Unit has continued work begun by DTI

and Transco to map the distribution of deprived communities in non-gas areas and to refine the costs of providing gas connections to these communities. The Unit has also developed a number of pathfinder projects to provide connections to communities, drawing upon existing funding sources. The first of these, in Llay, North Wales, was completed in February 2004.

The Unit is also developing five pathfinder projects to assess the viability of community-based renewable energy programmes as a means both of tackling fuel poverty and of reducing carbon emissions among the nearly 9,000 communities without access to a gas supply, of which about half are outside the economic range of a gas main. These projects are expected to begin before the end of calendar year 2004. The Unit is also considering pilots to assess the benefits of domestic-scale combined heat and power ("micro-CHP") in tackling fuel poverty.

## News from England

### Fuel Poverty Advisory Group

The Fuel Poverty Advisory Group (for England) published its second annual report in February 2004. [www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel\\_poverty/fuel\\_adv\\_grp.shtml](http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/fuel_adv_grp.shtml)

The Group made 11 key recommendations relating to resources for fuel poverty, fuel poverty programmes, and better linkages within Government. The Government will respond to these recommendations in its Fuel Poverty Progress Report.

At the request of the FPAG the Government published a paper on the resources needed to tackle fuel poverty:

[www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel\\_poverty/tackling\\_fuel\\_poverty.pdf](http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/tackling_fuel_poverty.pdf)

### Public Accounts Committee

Following the publication of the National Audit Office report "Warm Front: Helping to Combat Fuel Poverty" (HC 769, published 25 June 2003), which criticised

Warm Front as not well targeted on fuel poor households (a group which overlaps with, but is not subsumed within, households in receipt of benefits), the PAC carried out its own inquiry. Oral evidence was taken from Defra and the Warm Front scheme agents on 22 October 2003, and the Committee's report (with the same title as the NAO one) was published on 3 February 2004. The Committee's main findings (echoing those of the NAO) were:

- That much of Warm Front funding does not help those most in need;
- Benefits health checks and local networks may provide a better way of identifying those most in need;
- Resources should be concentrated on the homes with the lowest energy efficiency;
- Some scheme rules resulted in poor value for money and sub-optimal forms of assistance;
- The Scheme offered little to "hard to treat" homes, such as those with solid walls and/or no gas supply;
- Over 50% of jobs exceeded target times;
- Defra's PSA target related to homes treated, regardless of whether that treatment resulted in significant benefit to the occupant;
- Defra should research whether Warm Front is moving people out of fuel poverty.

The Committee's report and transcript of the oral evidence can be found at:  
[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmpublic.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmpublic.htm)

The National Audit Office report can be found at:  
[www.nao.org.uk/publications/index.htm](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/index.htm).

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Review of Warm Zones

The second annual report of the independent evaluation of the Warm Zone pilot will be published in spring. The evaluation, conducted by CSE and NEA under the management of EST for Defra, assesses the impact and effectiveness of the five pilots during their second year of operation. Issues covered by the report include:

- Progress towards targets (to reduce fuel poverty by 50% and severe fuel poverty by 50% over the 3 year pilot period)
- Total impact of Warm Zones on fuel poverty, using a 'distance traveled' measure
- Zone success at mobilizing EEC, regeneration and other external sources of funds
- Analysis of the impact of funding levels, tenures targeted, depth and extent of fuel poverty and rurality on relative Zone success at meeting their targets

- Initial analysis of the impact of benefits advice on fuel poverty

## Benefits Health Checks - Warm Front

In Autumn 2003, Warm Front launched a new service offering Benefits Health Checks to help more vulnerable people qualify for assistance from the Scheme.

Households who apply for a Warm Front grant but are not in receipt of an eligible benefit, at the time of application, are now offered a free and confidential check. This may highlight that they could be eligible for a benefit they are not claiming.

This service is in its early days, but results are encouraging. Around 50% of householders, who were initially ineligible have qualified for a Warm Front eligible benefit following the check with an average extra amount they could claim of £18.87 per week. For further details contact Sarah Fairfax Communications Officer Eaga Partnership on 0191 247 3862, e-mail: [sarah.fairfax@eaga.co.uk](mailto:sarah.fairfax@eaga.co.uk) or Caroline Pennington, Stakeholder Manager on 01473 552961, e-mail: [caroline.pennington@powergen.co.uk](mailto:caroline.pennington@powergen.co.uk)

## News from Scotland

### Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) 2002

Since our last update the S.H.C.S 2002 has been published on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2003. The SHCS 2002 is the third national survey of house conditions. The previous Survey was published in 1996. It is the first survey to offer estimates at local authority level (report published on 21 November 2003). The Survey provides detailed information, gathered between January and October 2002, on tenure; compliance with Tolerable Standards; disrepair; repair costs; disabled access; energy efficiency and fuel poverty; and work done by occupiers.

The SHCS 2002 involved 20,000 dwellings. The total number of dwellings in Scotland is 2.192 million of which 38% are flats (60% of these are tenements). 19% of the stock was built pre-1919 and 66% after 1945. 84% of homes are in urban areas.

## Specific Headline Information

Communities Scotland has outlined a summary of findings under specific headlines:

### Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

The total number of fuel poor households using the 1996 definition has fallen from 738,000 (35%) to 262,000 (12%). Using the definition in the Fuel Poverty Statement (which defines net income more stringently) it is down to 369,000 (17%).

There has been an increase in the provision of central heating since 1996. 1.5 million dwellings (68%) have full gas central heating compared to 1.2 million in 1996 (56%). 250,000 (11%) have full electric central heating compared to 200,000 (9%) in 1996. 30% of dwellings with a loft have insulation of 150mm or more but 136,000 (6%) have none at all, down from 143,000 (9%) in 1996. Privately rented accommodation is the least likely to have loft insulation. Fuel poverty is less common in homes built after 1982, in urban areas, dwellings with gas central heating and in homes rented from Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). It is more common in households with no central heating, single pensioner households and the private rented sector. The housing stock is more energy efficient. Over 90% have full or partial central heating, 88% have some form of loft insulation and 87% have double glazing. 200,000 households indicated that 'draughty windows' was a reason for finding it difficult to heat the home.

### Tolerable Standard

20,000 (1%) of occupied dwellings failed to meet the Tolerable Standard. Overall this is the same proportion as 1996. The main reason for failure was the absence of adequate heating, lighting and/or ventilation (53% failing on this item compared to 25% in 1996). This is a change from 1996 when dampness was the main reason accounting for 33% of failures. 11% of Below Tolerable Standard in 2002 fail on dampness.

A full analysis of all figures can only happen after the release of the Survey's complete data set and the further report on fuel poverty, which will be produced by Communities Scotland in March 2004. The report on fuel poverty will provide details on the fuel poverty definition and how all Survey results were obtained.

The report will also give information on what extent fuel price and income levels have affected fuel poverty figures.

It is important to remember that fuel poverty is caused by a combination of three factors: poor energy efficiency of the dwelling, household income and the price of domestic fuel. Fuel price and income levels will have had a major effect on the SHCS 2002 fuel poverty figures. However, EAS believes that a note of caution has to be outlined for both of these factors as both are subject to variability. The Scottish Executive has highlighted the problem of fuel price and stated that: 'Energy prices may go up in (the) next five years, so (there is) an ongoing challenge to meet targets'.

For further information, contact Energy Action Scotland Tel: 0141 226 3064 <http://www.eas.org.uk/>

## **News from Wales**

The initial meeting of the Wales FPAG met on 23rd February 2004, in Cardiff. The reference for the meetings will be the Fuel poverty commitment for Wales. The Wales group aims to be an advisory body and sounding board to comment and help steer activity on Fuel Poverty issues in Wales.

Issues affecting Fuel Poverty in Wales include "Hard to heat" homes, and alternative fuels, alternative insulation measures, and the identification of fuel poverty outside of benefit recipients. The implementation of the sustainable Energy Act in Wales will also impact on the issue."

## **News from Northern Ireland**

There are currently a number of schemes in Northern Ireland that demonstrate the benefit of the statutory organisations, the private sector and a range of voluntary and community groups working in partnership to tackle fuel poverty.

### **Cosy Homes**

Administered by Belfast Energy Agency, this 2 year programme is funded by NIE, Department for Social Development, Phoenix Natural Gas and the Energy Saving Trust. It recognises that about 7,000 Housing Association dwellings use electric heating systems that may not be best suited to the needs of the occupants. 532 grants are available to provide advice and grant assistance for Housing Associations to

replace Economy 7 (off peak) electric heating with energy efficient heating systems and upgrade loft insulation to current best practice standards.

### **No age to Golden Age**

This scheme is managed by a local charity, Bryson House, and funded by the Department for Social Development, Northern Ireland Electricity's Customer Levy and 11 District Councils. It complements the Warm Homes Scheme by providing heating and insulation measures in households with 50-60 year olds in receipt of benefits, or households with a child over the age of 16 in receipt of a benefit with a disability premium.

### **Near Benefits**

The aim of the scheme is to widen the scope of the Warm Homes Plus Scheme to ensure that people who miss qualification of income support by less than £20 can receive the same measures. This was introduced at the request of the Social Development Committee, which identified that many vulnerable people suffering from fuel poverty were not eligible for the Warm Homes Scheme, as they did not receive benefits. This assertion was supported by the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey. The scheme is funded by NIE's Customer Levy and the Department for Social Development and is supported by the Citizen Advice Bureau and the Association of Independent Advice Centres who will provide referrals.

**For further information contact:** Una McConnell at DSDNI Tel 028 90 910068 e-mail: [Una.McConnell@dsdni.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:Una.McConnell@dsdni.qsi.gov.uk)

## ***Projects Under Way***

### **The Home Health Project in West Cornwall (update)**

Community Energy Plus (CEP) has successfully bid for £500,000, Single Regeneration Budget Round 6 funding to roll out the award winning Home Health project to another 7 areas in West Cornwall.

Home Health links together funding raised by CEP with Eaga Partnership's Warm Front grants, British Gas EEC monies, and contributions by Social Housing Providers, and Local Authorities, to provide energy efficiency measures at no cost to the householder.

The five Home Health areas which are almost completed have provided over 1300 homes with insulation measures, and 28 homes have benefited from full or partial heating systems with 44 more planned. The project works in deprived wards and receives referrals from doctors' surgeries and a community network which includes members such as Age Concern and Surestart, which helps to target those most in need.

A new version of the project, called Home Health Plus, is to be launched utilising £1.62m Private Sector Renewal monies raised by CEP. Home Health Plus allows CEP to work with 5 of the 6 district councils in Cornwall to provide insulation measures free to the householder but also allow loans for heating and home repairs via the councils.

All of the above count towards meeting Cornwall County Councils PSA energy target which, once met, will then release reward money to continue the roll out of Home Health.

For further details please contact Alec Rice Tel: 01209 614971, e-mail: [alec@cep.org.uk](mailto:alec@cep.org.uk)

### **Heatstreets comes to London**

Powergen's Heatstreets programme has been running in Sunderland since February 2003, providing a street-to-street campaign in selected areas to install a range of energy-saving measures including cavity fill and loft insulation, plus a free benefits health check. Almost 4,000 Sunderland households have benefited so far; and other projects are running in Knowsley, Burnley, Ashfield, and Bolsover. Ultimately Powergen expect to spend over £100 million in half a million households across the UK by 2010.

On 2 March 2004, London Mayor Ken Livingstone launched his Energy Strategy for the city, including a partnership with Powergen to bring Heatstreets to the capital. Boroughs will be invited to apply for the Heatstreets treatment to improve energy efficiency and reduce residents' bills.

### **British Gas 'here to HELP' Programme**

The British Gas' three year 'here to HELP' programme has now been running for just over a year. It has already achieved more than half of its ambitious target to tackle fuel poverty and poverty more generally amongst 500,000 households in some of Britain's most deprived communities.

To date 531 'here to HELP' zones have been established, representing around 270,000 households, with over 55,000 home surveys now completed.

Set up in partnership with seven major charities and working with Social Housing Providers around the country, 'here to HELP' aims to improve housing conditions and individuals' quality of life by offering households a tailored package of free support.

This includes:

- energy efficiency measures
- a benefits assessment to ensure that people are receiving everything they are entitled to
- essential appliances, including fridges and adaptors
- home security measures
- free advice, services and grants from the charity partners for families, lone parents, older and disabled people, those with sight difficulties and people with debt problems.

For more information on the British Gas 'here to HELP' programme, please contact the 'here to HELP' team.

Tel: 0845 6000 832

Email: [help@centrica.co.uk](mailto:help@centrica.co.uk)

Web: [www.house.co.uk/HELP](http://www.house.co.uk/HELP)

## Hull Warm Zone (Update)

Hull Warm Zone (HWZ) is an impartial and independent government initiative, supported by Hull City Council and npower. They have assessed over 30,000 homes; identifying over 2,000 householders in

fuel poverty, referred over 3,500 onto Warm Front and delivered a £3 million investment to make homes in Hull more comfortable and affordable to heat.

## Hull Warm Zones Health Referrals

A Health referral scheme is also being piloted, which allows front line health professionals to refer their clients onto the HWZ, if they feel that they may be affected by fuel poverty. This provides a real opportunity for the Hull Warm Zone to reach the most vulnerable members of society.

If you would like further information on the Hull Warm Zone, please contact us on 01482 612908.

## The Vale Housing Association – Affordable Housing, Affordable Warmth

The Vale Housing Association has recently completed its Affordable Warmth strategy, aimed at helping its tenants to reduce their fuel consumption and lower their fuel costs. The Association, based in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, already has a history of working towards protecting the environment and improving quality of life and in 1999 was the first Housing Association to gain accreditation to the ISO 14001 standard. It now aims to build on this by including measures to address the difficulties faced by those for whom heating costs represent a high proportion of their income.

The Association has worked closely with the Vale of White Horse District Council on the strategy and has also been involved in the development of their Affordable Warmth Strategy. The work on both strategies was started by a joint Affordable Warmth Forum held in May 2003. Through this forum, links were also made with many other organisations working within the Vale of White Horse and surrounding areas. The Association feels that these links are an essential factor in achieving the aims of the strategy as Chief Executive, Mike Roberts, explains: "As in other areas many of the issues can best be addressed through partnerships with other agencies and we are keen to develop these."

The strategy can be viewed on the Association's website, [www.vale-housing.co.uk](http://www.vale-housing.co.uk). For more information, please contact Sian Llewellyn on 01235 536001 or by e-mailing [sian.llewellyn@vale-housing.co.uk](mailto:sian.llewellyn@vale-housing.co.uk).

## Health Through Warmth – Partnership working at its best

Anybody working in the front line of health and social care could give a first hand account of the deadly link between poor housing and ill health. Yet more than 20 years after the publication of the Black Report, *Inequalities in Health*, which looked at the link between socio-economic factors and health, those inequalities remain.

However, partnerships between those connected to housing and health are proving to be a possible sustainable solution.

One such partnership that has helped deliver real health benefits to one family in Wolverhampton is called Health Through Warmth, an innovative scheme

from energy supplier npower, the NHS and national charity, National Energy Action (NEA).

The scheme works by npower training NHS staff to actively identify households most in need whilst on home visits. Those homes are then referred back to npower who with local installer and council partners, facilitate urgent warmth installation measures and help access grant aid to finance it. For those not eligible for financial aid, an npower crisis fund exists to catch them.

In August last year, npower received a referral from a health visitor, stating that a family in Wolverhampton had no fireplace, no form of heating in property, paper stuffed into cracks in the window, rising damp in walls, and they had to live with their in-laws for fear of the house worsening their one year old's health problems.

The child was born with a blood vessel tumour in his chest. He had chronic lung disease and was at risk from frequent chest infections. He had been hospitalised many times and has a home oxygen supply.

From receiving the referral, Health Through Warmth obtained an Affordable Warmth Grant through Wolverhampton City Council for a full central heating system, the Family Trust Fund gave a grant of £700 which was used to buy a gas fire, HTW crisis fund paid for the fitting of the fire and npower community relations, donated a fridge freezer.

The Health Through Warmth team all worked towards getting these measures installed urgently and before Christmas 2003 – delivered by effective partnerships.

Said Phil Kear, npower's Head of Energy Services and Social Action; " Health Through Warmth is about delivering real action, quickly, and where it is really needed....possible only by our great partnerships.

For further details please contact Helen Marshall, Project Co-ordinator Health Through Warmth Tel: 01905 332437 e-mail: [helen.marshall@npower.com](mailto:helen.marshall@npower.com)

### **Soothing your Hard to Treat Homes (HTTH) headaches**

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) has launched an online resource that provides practical solutions to help housing managers develop effective refurbishment strategies for Hard to Treat Homes, which constitute 36 per cent of UK housing stock.

The easy-to-use matrix will help local authorities and housing associations reduce fuel poverty in the housing stock they manage, and help achieve Government targets of eliminating fuel poverty among vulnerable households by 2010.

At the click of a button, the matrix provides a range of refurbishment options for a variety of housing stock that are difficult to treat with staple energy efficiency measures. Three key areas are addressed: heating, ventilation and insulation, and technical information on a wide range of measures is also available.

For further information, visit: [www.est.org.uk/bestpractice/hardtoreat](http://www.est.org.uk/bestpractice/hardtoreat) or call 0845 120 7799. For general information and support available from the EST, contact Practical Help ([www.practicalhelp.org.uk](http://www.practicalhelp.org.uk)) on 0870 241 2089.

### **GPs & Warm Zone work together - Northumberland**

One of the biggest problems facing rural communities is in the remoteness and sparsity of the population centres. The problem affects health, due to the communication and transport problems facing care workers, of wealth due to a lack of employment opportunities. Not only that but the problems with communications are often due to the vast areas of countryside with very few inhabitants and also where very few of the mobile phone companies are willing to invest large sums of money with often-limited returns. The result of this is large rural areas with little or nothing in the way of telephone links especially in winter conditions.

One such area in rural Northumberland is in Rothbury. Rothbury is a small country ward of 2500 most of whom live in the town of Rothbury (2000) of people in the area 35% are over 60 and there is heavy demand on care services. The problem in servicing those needs are multi-faceted and Warm Zone and the area GP's are working on a project to try more preventative methods to reduce demands and improve health. Northumberland Warm Zone have been working closely the Northumberland Care Trust in developing schemes whereby Warm Zone go in to vulnerable households and wherever possible they get grant help or otherwise to assist residents into a warmer, healthier home. Sometimes this can be Warm Front grants or accessing local council schemes or even Zone sponsor npower who provide 100% schemes to the fuel poor.

One such example of the close collaboration between npower sponsored Northumberland Warm Zone and the Northumberland Care Trust has been that which Alan Milburn, Zone operations director developed and agreed a ground breaking partnership in assessing energy needs of households.

GP's in Rothbury (a rural part of Northumberland), will trawl through their patients lists, link this with their personal knowledge of the patient and write direct to those who would benefit medically from a warmer home. They would be advised that subject to there approval Northumberland Warm Zone would contact them and arrange a visit from trained assessor to ascertain whether or not they need, or can get help with energy efficiency measures through various grants including npower EEC grants. The client would be given useful help and advice on energy efficiency and grants and hopefully have a warmer and healthier home leading to a reduced demand on Care Trust services.

The idea is only one of a range of partnership schemes being brought together to more effectively target a range of services available which help tackle the issue of fuel poverty and the direct link to health and reducing winter deaths. Northumberland Warm Zone have been working for nearly three years and have become very adept in getting the energy efficiency message across in rural parts. The old adage "one size fits all" certainly does not apply to large rural areas such as Northumberland. Innovative and new ideas are being tried by Warm Zone on a regular basis to make sure our clients in the bleak but beautiful countryside don't miss out on the opportunities and benefits presented by warmer homes.

For further details contact Dave Stephens, Network & Communications Manager, Northumberland Warm Zone Tel: 01670 356642 Email: [daves@warmzones.co.uk](mailto:daves@warmzones.co.uk)

### **New projects funded by Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust**

Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust has recently awarded grants to two key projects. The first project is to be undertaken by the Association for the Conservation of Energy and focuses on an update on earlier research on hard to heat homes, also funded by Eaga-PCT. *Affordable Warmth in Hard to Heat Homes: finding a way forward* (available at [www.ukace.org/pubs/reportfo/affwarm.pdf](http://www.ukace.org/pubs/reportfo/affwarm.pdf)) was published in February 2002 and gave an overview of the extent and problems of fuel poverty in hard to heat

homes. 'Hard to heat' was defined as those without cavity walls, off the gas network or both. The project recommended a route map of work, covering policy, technology, knowledge sharing, best practice and marketing, in order to make progress. In the two years that have elapsed, both fuel poverty and hard to heat (or treat) homes have received much attention, but how much progress has been made? This project will review the evidence and interview the original and new stakeholder groups to provide up to date information.

The second project will investigate the degree to which Community Planning is addressing fuel poverty. Findings from a recent study, commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, identified knowledge and skills gaps in local authorities on community engagement and partnership working - key elements in developing Community Plans. This project will identify which approaches are suitable for different scenarios through interviewing local authorities proactive in this field. The results will be presented as a toolkit for practitioners on how Community Planning can tackle fuel poverty through engagement and partnership techniques.

Two further projects recently funded are: *Review of English local authority fuel poverty reports and strategies – additional dissemination* ([www.impetusconsult.co.uk/projects/current.html](http://www.impetusconsult.co.uk/projects/current.html)) was commissioned by Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust and published in September 2003. This project will add value to the Review by adding three routes of dissemination for the report's findings. First, a 'self-assessment' webpage will be created where local authority officers can compare their efforts to tackle fuel poverty with 'average' levels of local authority activity in the UK and follow generated links to the most appropriate best practice case studies from the Review report. Each case study addresses a different aspect of tackling fuel poverty. The second and third additional routes of dissemination will include articles written for professional publications and the production of 'glossy' .pdf versions of the ten case studies.

Further details can be obtained from Pedro Guertler, Researcher, ACE – [pedro@ukace.org](mailto:pedro@ukace.org)

*Tackling the health implications of cold and damp housing – case studies*. This project, which is supported in conjunction with NHS Scotland, seeks to illustrate through a series of case studies the different ways that the health sector in Scotland is responding to the problem of fuel poverty and its health implications.

The project follows on from the publication of the *Health Implications of Cold and Damp Housing* – a

training resource in June 2003. Almost one hundred health staff and health academics attended the training of trainers events associated with the resource and the case studies will describe how these participants have incorporated the resource in their area of work. The case studies will highlight aspects of good practice as well as potential barriers.

The case studies will be published in June 2004 to coincide with the first annual updates of the training resource. Like the updates, the case studies will be available completely free of charge to all front line health staff throughout Scotland.

Further details can be obtained from Trevor Davison, Employment and Training Consultant  
[trevord@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:trevord@globalnet.co.uk)

For further details of these projects and information on other work supported by Eaga-PCT, please contact the Trust Manager Naomi Brown on tel: 01768 210132, e-mail: [eagact@aol.com](mailto:eagact@aol.com).

## **Research Published**

### **Research Shows Poverty is Main Cause of Scottish Elderly Deaths in winter**

Poverty is the main cause of premature death among the elderly in Scotland and the chances of premature elderly death are highest in Glasgow. These deaths could be prevented if measures were to be taken to keep pensioners warm in their homes during the winter months. These are the conclusions of research carried out by fuel poverty charity Energy Action Scotland and the University of Strathclyde. The findings were made public on January 22 - on what is traditionally the coldest day of the year.

Energy Action Scotland Director, Ann Loughrey said: "Having established a link between poverty and excess winter deaths for the elderly, we wanted to identify the main cause. Factors such as climate, housing and access to facilities do contribute but poverty - or multiple deprivation - was found to be the main cause. We need to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and the effect this has on health."

For further information contact:  
Elizabeth Gore, PR/Information Officer, Energy Action Scotland on tel. 0141 226 3064 or mobile. 07764 212564.

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## **Information on Events Related to Fuel Poverty**

### **The Heat Is On!**

The Hull Warm Zone (HWZ) continues to organise events to provide benefit, financial and energy efficiency advice across the City. Individuals have specifically requested this advice as part of the door-to-door fuel poverty assessments.

By March 2004, seven events will have already been held in Hull. Partners including Welfare Rights, who offer full benefit checks, energy efficiency advisors, the CAB, Pension Service, Age Concern, Local Taxation Service, Energy Watch and npower are actively involved. These organisations are able to provide detailed, personal advice on a one-to-one basis, leading to over £101,000 additional annual benefits take up identified over the first four events. Client attendance has steadily increased, with over 1,000 visiting the last three The Heat Is On dates. The Pension Service alone gave advice to over 90 people in one day. New partners are also getting involved, including Job Centre Plus and Heros, which provides health related advice to the people of Hull. Four free npower energy saving light bulbs worth £35.92 (rrp £8.98 per bulb) are also provided to all qualifying visitors.

### **Hull Warm Zone Final Stakeholders Event**

The Hull Warm Zone Final Stakeholders Event will take place on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2004 in room C1 at The Guildhall, Hull starting at 11.30am.

For further information contact Helen Williams on 01482 612908 Email: [Helen.Williams@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Williams@hullcc.gov.uk)

### **Warm Homes Week**

Warm Homes Week, NEA's annual awareness campaign to reduce excess winter deaths and cold-related illnesses amongst low-income households, took place between 28 November and 8 December 2003.

Activities centred around visits by Members of Parliament, Members of the Scottish Parliament and Members of the Welsh Assembly to householders in their constituencies who have had heating and insulation measures installed through energy-saving grants from Government schemes such as Warm Front.

Warm Homes Week was supported by npower and Defra and targets were successfully met with more than half of the visits drawing media coverage, including two slots on BBC Breakfast. This helped get the message across to as wide an audience as possible, particularly the more vulnerable members of society targeted by NEA.

A total of 86 MPs, MSPs and AMs took part, including 14 Westminster ministers including the Rt Hon Andrew Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; Stephen Timms, Energy Minister; and the Rt Hon Hilary Armstrong, Government Chief Whip.

Feedback from MPs suggest Warm Homes Week activities are highly regarded for the long-term benefit to their constituents.

For more information on Warm Homes Week, contact Zoe Bradford, NEA, on 0191 261 5677.