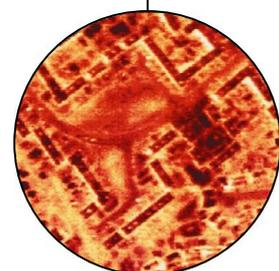


A Review of English Local Authority Fuel Poverty Reports and Strategies



Final report presented to
Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust



**Impetus Consulting and
The Association for the Conservation of
Energy**

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ABBREVIATIONS

CFL	Compact Fluorescent Light bulb
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECA	Energy Conservation Authority
EEAC	Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
EEC	Energy Efficiency Commitment
EST	Energy Saving Trust
EU	European Union
HA	Housing Association
HAZ	Health Action Zone
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation
HECA	The Home Energy Conservation Act
HRA	Home Repairs Assistance
LA	Local Authority
LASP	Local Authority Support Programme
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NEA	National Energy Action
NHER	National Home Energy Rating
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PV	Photovoltaic
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
SLP	Strategic Local Partnership

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In January 2003, Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust commissioned Impetus Consulting, working with the Association for the Conservation of Energy, to conduct a review of the fuel poverty reports and strategies produced by English Energy Conservation Authorities (ECAs). Although ECAs have been required to submit reports on their fuel poverty activity alongside their annual Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) reports since 2000, this was the first such review to be conducted.

The objectives of the evaluation were to ascertain:

- ❑ The extent to which ECAs are engaging with the issues around fuel poverty;
- ❑ Areas of best practice;
- ❑ The extent to which performance varies between ECAs; and
- ❑ Whether ECAs are making progress towards meeting local and national targets.

Two activities preceded evaluation of the reports:

1. A brief review of other work being carried out in this area was undertaken to provide some context for this work; and
2. A Steering Group was appointed to review the evaluation methodology and dissemination plan. This comprised representatives from Eaga Partnership, the Energy Saving Trust, the Department of Trade and Industry, NEA, the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

DEFRA granted us permission to look at all the 329 (out of a possible 360) fuel poverty reports which had been submitted by April 2003. The researchers also wrote directly to all 360 ECAs to request copies of their fuel poverty strategies, if they had one. 68 strategies were received, representing a total of 101 local authorities.

An evaluation and scoring methodology was devised to measure the quality of each report, looking in particular at the extent to which authorities are identifying fuel poverty in their areas, tackling housing, seeking funding, setting up internal and external partnerships and whether they have set local targets.

An Access database was designed to record information about each fuel poverty report/strategy, following the evaluation guidelines agreed with the Steering Group. This was used to compare and analyse reports, bearing in mind that ECAs do not have to follow any set structure.

Results

Extent to which ECAs are engaging with the issue

Of the 329 ECAs for which reports and strategies were available, it was found that:

- ❑ The vast majority - 86% - are taking some kind of action to tackle fuel poverty;
- ❑ 54% have developed strategies with a further 17% developing or planning to develop a strategy. Those with strategies are marginally more proactive than those without, but not as much as might be expected;
- ❑ 78% are offering energy efficiency advice – 60% to both the public and private housing sectors;
- ❑ 75% are funding the installation of energy efficiency measures – 53% to both the public and private sectors;

- ❑ Just 7% are explicitly tackling 'hard to treat' properties (typically those with solid walls or off the gas network), although 12% reported involvement in 'innovative' measures to tackle fuel poverty (such as solid wall insulation and solar water heating), which are probably tackling 'hard to treat' properties;
- ❑ 4% stated they were tackling fuel poverty in Houses in Multiple Occupation and only 1% said they were tackling the issue of under occupation; and
- ❑ More encouragingly, 34% are tackling the private rented sector, with 13% offering financial assistance to landlords and 8% having set up energy efficiency accreditation schemes.

However, the 31 local authorities which had not submitted HECA reports (and which therefore were not included in this research) are likely to be doing little in this area, with the result that overall actual figures may be up to 8.5% lower than the values presented above.

Identifying the fuel poor

There is a great deal of variation in how authorities identify the fuel poor in their districts. Case study visits confirmed that there are differences of opinion regarding the degree to which it is useful to spend limited resources trying to identify a constantly 'moving target'. 17% showed no evidence of attempts to identify their fuel poor. At the other end of the scale, 8% scored full marks on this, demonstrating that they were linking data across departments e.g. stock condition survey data with welfare and income data.

Targets

A similarly large variation was found in terms of targets. 'Hard' targets, which would depend on accurately identifying fuel poverty, were quite rare. Just 4% had set themselves a target of completely eradicating fuel poverty by a certain date. Another 11% had set some kind of quantitative target relating to achieving a minimum energy efficiency rating or Decent Homes Standard. Another 4% had set 'soft' targets: for example, targets relating to the number of households provided with energy efficiency advice or Warm Front grants.

Partnerships

An impressive 88% were making at least some attempts to forge external partnerships to tackle fuel poverty, with 21% scoring top marks in this area, indicating well-formed partnerships with training for partners. 59% reported working actively with the health sector. The number reporting on forming internal partnerships was lower (only 71% making some efforts) and case study visits confirmed that even some very proactive authorities had a lack of internal partnerships.

Funding

The degree to which authorities are accessing funding to tackle fuel poverty also varied greatly. 18% of authorities had neither accessed any funding nor had any plans to do so. However, 63% had ring-fenced funding from within the authority to fund fuel poverty work. 36% reported accessing Energy Efficiency Commitment funding, while 13% had utilised regeneration funding and 7% reported obtaining funding from the health sector.

Variation in performance

There was considerable variation in performance, with the average scores spread quite evenly from 0 up to 9.8 out of a possible 10.

Good practice

Visits to 10 exemplar authorities found a marked difference in approach in terms of partnership and funding, particularly amongst authorities with limited officer resources. The

most successful seem to be those where the officer's time is concentrated on forging partnerships and leveraging in resources, and then using these resources to pay a third party to implement often large-scale and highly effective schemes. This is in contrast with those where the officer's limited time is focused on setting up small-scale schemes using the very limited council resources that are available.

Case studies

The evaluation uncovered numerous examples of interesting or innovative practice. 10 case studies were chosen covering 8 different areas as follows:

- ❑ Identification of fuel poor households – Amber Valley District Council;
- ❑ Those undertaking a 'corporate' approach to fuel poverty (i.e. with senior officer support and good linkage with other council strategies) – London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham;
- ❑ Partnerships to tackle fuel poverty – a consortium of Gloucestershire councils and East Lindsey District Council;
- ❑ Tackling fuel poverty in 'hard to treat' homes – North East Derbyshire District Council;
- ❑ Tackling the private rented sector – Sheffield City Council;
- ❑ Hard to reach groups – Brighton and Hove City Council;
- ❑ Working with the health sector to tackle fuel poverty - South Cambridgeshire District Council and Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council; and
- ❑ Levering in funding to tackle fuel poverty – Leicester City Council.

Conclusions and recommendations

Research

Guidance and further case studies would be useful in 3 areas: how ECAs are measuring and identifying fuel poverty; how best to tackle fuel poverty with limited officer's time; and how to set up and manage external partnerships to lever in funding.

Policy

In terms of their annual reports on HECA and fuel poverty activity, authorities currently receive only cursory feedback on their HECA reports (from the Government Offices) with little encouragement for those who are doing good work. There is only very limited guidance or support for those seeking help with completing their forms.

Clear feedback on fuel poverty reports would confirm Government support for this activity. Such feedback would be easier and more objective if reports were submitted in a standard template, with specific questions that DEFRA need answered. This would also enable more accurate scoring than was possible in this research with the variation in formats and standards of reports evaluated.

Some kind of recognition for those doing the best work is recommended, possibly with mentoring time funded for other councils (as with the Beacon Councils' scheme, the fuel poverty theme of which has now ended). Linked to this it is suggested that a 'self-assessment' online questionnaire is developed, where officers can score their own performance and then link directly to relevant case studies guiding them on areas where they are under performing.

Funding

Finally, it is recommended that both the Energy Efficiency Commitment framework and the Warm Front programme become more flexible, offering a bigger range of measures to enable targeting of particular streets with the objective of eradicating fuel poverty in those

streets. This will make it easier for ECAs to manage and integrate with renewal and regeneration schemes. Warm Front should allow follow-up installations and joint funding with other programmes. Additionally, Ofgem should provide more incentives for energy suppliers to tackle hard to treat homes, as installed measures with these are less cost-effective.

Guidance

Guidance on the following would be useful:

- ❑ How best to tackle fuel poverty with limited officer time, or “How to eradicate fuel poverty in your borough on two days a week”;
- ❑ Setting up and managing external partnerships and leveraging in funding; and
- ❑ Local performance indicators relating to fuel poverty – e.g. setting a minimum Standard Assessment Procedure energy rating for dwellings, rather than an average.

1. BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

Tackling fuel poverty is currently a high priority for the Government, with a target of ending the blight of fuel poverty for vulnerable households by 2010.

Local authorities have been identified in the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy as having a key role to play in achieving this target. English Energy Conservation Authorities (ECAs) are required to submit a report 'on policies, strategies and achievements in tackling fuel poverty...alongside and as part of the annual reporting process under the Home Energy Conservation Act'¹. They are not required to complete this part of their report according to any set structure; instead, they are provided with a blank sheet of paper to fill in.

A number of ECAs have developed fuel poverty or affordable warmth strategies. Many of these are submitted alongside these reports and some have been compiled by a consortium of ECAs. To date there has been no detailed review of these reports or strategies. The aim of this project was to undertake such a review, and in doing so to ascertain:

- ❑ The extent to which local authorities are engaging with the issues involved;
- ❑ Whether there are areas in which good practice exists in isolated examples rather than generally (and hence there is a need for dissemination);
- ❑ The extent to which 'performance' varies across local authorities (and thus the degree to which comparative feedback could be of assistance in encouraging more activity in this area); and
- ❑ Whether ECAs are making significant progress to meeting local and national targets.

This project involved analysing the English reports only, since:

- ❑ English ECAs are required to report annually. The most recent reports (covering the period up to March 2002) were required to be sent to DEFRA by the end of August 2002 (in practice many are late, but by the end of December 2002 280 out of 360 reports had been received);
- ❑ The most recent Scottish and Welsh HECA reports are a year older (2000/2001), because Scottish ECAs have to report only every 2 years, and Welsh ones, although they have to report annually, weren't asked to report on fuel poverty in their most recent reports (due to the development of the Welsh Fuel Poverty strategy); and
- ❑ The Scottish ones have already been evaluated to some extent by Energy Action Scotland.

Phase 1 – Planning and development

Steering Group

Representatives from the key government departments (DEFRA, DTI & ODPM) along with other relevant organisations and groups (Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes, EST, NEA, EAGA Partnership, the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group and the Oxford Environmental Change Institute) were all invited to take part in the Steering Group.

The secretariat for the Fuel Poverty Action Group were also contacted and it was agreed that, since many of the members were already represented on the Steering Group (directly and indirectly through organisational affiliation) and involved in the project, it would not be necessary for this group to be an active part of the Steering Group.

¹ HECA 95, DETR guidance for ECAs: Tackling Fuel Poverty - A Local Well-Being Issue: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/heca95/circulars/fpguide.htm

The individuals that agreed to take an active role in the Steering Group were:

- ❑ Gordon Angus, Eaga Partnership Limited;
- ❑ Liz Kelly, Eaga Partnership Limited;
- ❑ Samantha Kennedy, EST & The Home Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme;
- ❑ Lesley Petrie, DTI;
- ❑ Peter Sumbly, NEA & The Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes – Fuel poverty group;
- ❑ Pam Wynne, DEFRA; and
- ❑ Zoltan Zavody EST & The Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes – Fuel poverty group.

Steering Group observers were:

- ❑ John Clough, Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust; and
- ❑ Lynne Ebdon, DEFRA.

The group members were asked to use their various expertise in the area of fuel poverty to assist with:

- ❑ The definition of key policy questions which the work should have in mind;
- ❑ The criteria against which the fuel poverty reports and strategies should therefore be evaluated; and
- ❑ The dissemination plan.

In all cases, the project team led the process, requesting feedback and additional ideas from the Steering Group. Discussions with the Steering Group are summarised in Annex 1.

Request for strategies/permission

DEFRA was keen for this work to be carried out and assisted by giving the research team access to the reports submitted to them. However, not all authorities had sent copies of their fuel poverty strategy with their report, so we also wrote to all ECAs (using data supplied by DEFRA) requesting copies of strategies where they had one.

Review of other work in this area

In addition to this, a brief review of other work being carried out in this area was undertaken to provide a full context for this work (e.g. Beacon Councils, DEFRA's review of energy efficiency activity in ECAs and EST's review of LA activity on hard-to-treat homes.) This helped to ensure that a more rounded view of general local authority activity on fuel poverty was obtained. The full results of this review can be found in Chapter 2.

Phase 2 – Evaluation of reports

An initial desk evaluation of the most recent fuel poverty reports submitted to DEFRA was carried out, based on criteria developed by the research team, in consultation with the Steering Group.

DEFRA granted us permission to look at all the 329 (out of a possible 360) fuel poverty reports which had been submitted by April 2003. The researchers also wrote directly to all 360 ECAs to request copies of their fuel poverty strategies, if they had one. 68 strategies were received, representing a total of 101 local authorities. (Six of these strategies represented a consortium of authorities.)

The objectives of the evaluation were to ascertain:

- ❑ The extent to which ECAs are engaging with the issues around fuel poverty;
- ❑ Areas of best practice;
- ❑ The extent to which performance varies between ECAs; and

- Whether ECAs are making progress towards meeting local and national targets.

An Access database (see below for a sample report format) was designed to record information about each fuel poverty report/strategy, following the evaluation guidelines agreed with the Steering Group (see Annex 2 for full details). Scores out of 10 were given for 5 different areas:

- Identification of fuel poverty;
- Tackling housing;
- Internal partnership;
- External partnerships; and
- Funding.

In each case, a score of zero means that there is no evidence of any work in that sector, while a score of 2 indicates little evidence of activity, or evidence of awareness but no attempt to address. At the other end of the scale, a score of 10 indicates, for example on tackling housing, that action is being successfully taken and the result will be that fuel poverty is eradicated. On funding, a score of 10 implies that funding from both within the local authority and more than one external source are successfully being used to tackle fuel poverty (see Annex 2 for a complete copy of the scoring methodology).

Please note that the research team did not necessarily have access to a complete record of each council's fuel poverty activity. In particular, it was only possible for the researchers to look at question 5 of the HECA reports (the question that relates specifically to fuel poverty). The team was not given access to the other sections of the HECA reports, which may have contained relevant information. Similarly, it is likely that some councils that have developed fuel poverty strategies did not send a copy to the team.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Access database form with the following sections and fields:

- Organisation:** A dropdown menu for 'Organisation' and a text field for 'Author'.
- Tackling Housing:**
 - Overall Score: A numeric input field with a value of 0.
 - Offering advice: A dropdown menu.
 - Installing Measures: A dropdown menu with a value of 0.
 - Innovative measures used: A text area containing 'None'.
 - HMD: A checkbox.
 - Financial assistance in partnership: A checkbox.
 - Hard to treat: A checkbox.
 - Underoccupation: A checkbox.
 - Private rented sector: A dropdown menu.
 - Primary targets: A checkbox and a text area for 'Details'.
 - Secondary targets: A checkbox and a text area for 'Details'.
- Internal Partnerships:**
 - Overall score: A numeric input field with a value of 0.
 - Training for staff?: A checkbox.
 - Who Instigated: A text field with a value of 'NA'.
 - Why Instigated: A text field with a value of 'NA'.
- External Partnerships:**
 - Overall Score: A numeric input field with a value of 0.
 - Who Instigated: A text field with a value of 'NA'.
 - Why Instigated: A text field with a value of 'NA'.
 - Other partners: A text field.
 - Training: A checkbox.
 - Health: A checkbox.
 - Warmfront: A checkbox.
 - Utilities: A checkbox.
 - Voluntary: A checkbox.
 - HA: A checkbox.
- Funding Sources:**
 - Overall score: A numeric input field with a value of 0.
 - Ring-fenced-Private: A checkbox.
 - Regeneration funding: A checkbox.
 - Health Authority funding: A checkbox.
 - EST funding: A checkbox.
 - EEC funding: A checkbox.
 - Transco funding: A checkbox.
 - Other: A text field.
- Overall:**
 - Strategy: A dropdown menu.
 - Examples of good practice: A text area.
 - Potential case study: A checkbox.
 - Strategy not seen: A checkbox.
 - Identification of fuel poor households: A numeric input field with a value of 0.
 - Drivers for action: A text area.
 - General comments: A text area.

The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Record: 329 of 329' and 'Form View'.

2. POLICY CONTEXT & OTHER ACTIVITY

Government Policy

UK Fuel Poverty Strategy

The Government's first Fuel Poverty Strategy for the UK was published in the autumn of 2001. It included a target for England of ending fuel poverty in vulnerable households and non-vulnerable households living in social housing by 2010 and ending fuel poverty in other households by November 2016. A secondary target involved helping 800,000 households through Warm Front by 2010.

Progress on implementing the strategy is due to be reported annually, and the first annual progress report was published early in 2003. This included information on the following:

- ❑ There are various evaluations of the Warm Front programme underway and planned, including an evaluation of the health impact being carried out by EST;
- ❑ An independent evaluation of the Warm Zones is being carried out by EST (see below);
- ❑ Fuel poverty in rural areas is being addressed by a working group has been formed to investigate extension of the gas network; a pilot scheme to test the practicalities of extending the network should be developed; DTI is working with Transco to develop a list of clusters of 50 or more households that do not have mains gas, to try to identify likely areas where the costs of extending the network may be justified for the purpose of alleviating fuel poverty;
- ❑ A pilot scheme to examine the potential of alternative technologies to alleviate fuel poverty, particularly in rural areas and hard to treat properties, is planned. DEFRA has funded a scoping study to consider potential technologies to trial and locations for pilot projects. The report is currently being considered by DEFRA and the DTI; and
- ❑ Trials to assess the potential impact of micro-CHP in tackling fuel poverty are still under consideration.

In addition, a Fuel Poverty Advisory Group was convened to report on progress annually. Its first progress report was also published early in 2003. The Group's key recommendation in this report was that the Government should now, about 15 months after the publication of its Fuel Poverty Strategy, start to review systematically the adequacy of existing policies for meeting its fuel poverty targets. It seems that welcome progress is being made, but it is the Group's judgment that an increase in current programmes of perhaps 50% is needed. However, there are a lot of uncertainties about this, which underlines the importance of a more thorough assessment by Government departments.

The Energy White Paper

Published in February 2003, the Energy White Paper introduced a new aim that 'as far as reasonably practical', nobody in Britain should be living in fuel poverty by 2016-18. It also states that the DTI will explore options for pilot projects on extension of the gas network (details are provided above).

House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee review of fuel poverty activity

This report, published in the autumn of 2002, assessed the issue of fuel poverty in the UK, the contributing factors, and the response that is needed by Government. In reviewing the problem of the energy efficiency of the UK housing stock, the report covers key issues including the question of how best to address the private rented sector; Decent Homes

standard falling below the current standard of most social housing; and the issue of 'hard to heat' homes requiring comparatively expensive measures. The general tone of the report's recommendations suggests that these problems should be tackled even though they are difficult and possibly expensive. Otherwise, the report suggests that, the fuel poverty target will fail and the environmental benefits accruing from energy efficiency generally will be lost. It specifically comments that if the only options for hard to heat homes are costly, then "the nettle must be grasped". The report also recognises that lower fuel prices can no longer be relied on as a way to get people out of fuel poverty.

Beacon Councils

Five 'Beacon Councils' on fuel poverty were appointed in 2002/3: London Borough of Camden, Blyth Valley Borough Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council, Luton Borough Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Borough Council.

These councils have held various networking days to share best practice information, and case studies have been published by the Improvement and Development Agency. Moreover, it is planned that a toolkit based on Beacon Council best practice (part-funded by the Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust) will be launched at the 2003 NEA fuel poverty conference. This research project has therefore focused on uncovering good practice in non-Beacon authorities.

Warm Front

Warm Front is the main government-funded programme aimed at reducing fuel poverty in England. Various evaluations are being undertaken to assess its impact. These include a 3 year study evaluating the health impact of the programme, overseen by EST on behalf of DEFRA, DTI and the Department of Health. It aims to assess the impact of Warm Front on householders' quality of life, mental and physical health and the risk of cold-related death. The study will also investigate the impact of Warm Front on utilisation of health care services. The study is being conducted by a consortium led by Sheffield-Hallam University, under the management of EST. Results are expected in mid to late 2004.

Warm Zones

Warm Zones is a joint initiative between government, local communities and the private sector. The main aim of the project is to make all homes in Warm Zones warm, healthy and energy efficient. There are 5 Warm Zones, demonstrating effective local partnerships in 5 regions of England.

The first annual report of the independent evaluation of Warm Zones, conducted by EST, was published in April 2003.

Key findings from the report are as follows:

- ❑ Following initial delays in some Zones, Warm Zones have achieved an estimated 2.4% reduction in fuel poverty compared to a three-year target of 50%. There is considerable variation in performance between the Zones;
- ❑ The Warm Zones have adopted a range of approaches. The full control approach in Stockton has been most effective thus far but remains somewhat short of target;
- ❑ Local authorities have a critical role to play both at a strategic and operational level. The commitment and availability of funding from local authorities varies between Zones;
- ❑ The position of a single fuel company as Zone sponsor may be limiting the ability of the Zones to use the full range of EEC funds and is considered to be a factor limiting the provision of tariff advice;

- ❑ The Zones have identified lower than expected levels of fuel poor households eligible for assistance through existing programmes such as Warm Front and priority EEC; and
- ❑ It is too early to make any recommendations regarding rollout of the pilot due to limited data availability and the fact that not all Zones are sufficiently established for evaluation of the different approaches being piloted. The evaluation does identify lessons for the operation and organisation of any future Warm Zones.

The final results of the evaluation will be published in Autumn 2005.

NEA – health sector champion

NEA is running a programme to identify and train an Energy Champion in the health sector in different areas of England. The aim is to instill the issues of energy efficiency and fuel poverty in the health sector since health professionals are in a good position to advise their patients on where to get help with improving their home insulation, heating and so on. NEA has run a pilot scheme in Portsmouth.

Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes

Two groups within the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes have commissioned relevant work in the last year:

- ❑ A review of local authority activity on fuel poverty in 'hard to treat' homes was commissioned by the Fuel Poverty Strategy Group and a report was published in April 2003. This review found limited activity by local authorities to tackle fuel poverty in 'hard to treat' homes, with most local authorities focusing their resources on 'easy to treat' properties.
- ❑ A review of sustainable energy integration at a local authority level was commissioned by the Local Authority Operational Group, with results due in Summer 2003.

National Heart Forum toolkit

In Spring 2003, a "fuel poverty toolkit" for primary care organisations and public health and primary care professionals was launched. Written by health professionals for health professionals, this document details the links between fuel poverty, cold homes and ill health, and outlines ways that health professionals can help to eradicate the problem. This was produced by the National Heart Forum, Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust, the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Help the Aged and the Meteorological Office.

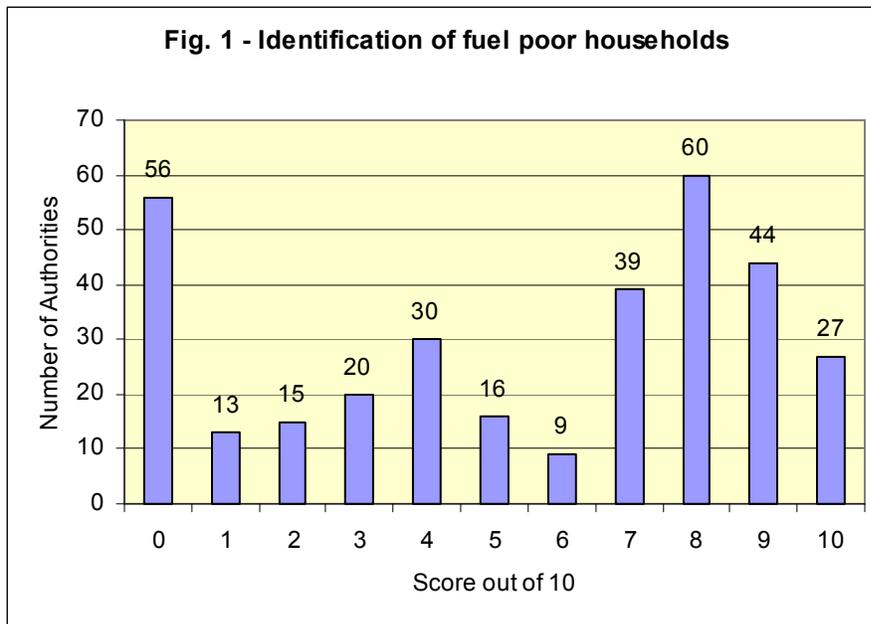
3. EVALUATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTIVITY

Introduction

329 out of a total 360 local authorities returned HECA and/or fuel poverty/affordable warmth strategies for review, and strategies representing 101 of these 329 were also received.

The following data are based only on these 329. It is likely that the 31 who had not returned anything are doing very little in this area and therefore it is not unrealistic to assume that the overall figures can be as much as 8.5% (of the percentage value) lower than the values presented.

Identification of fuel poor households



Precise identification of fuel poor households in a particular district is essential if fuel poverty is to be tackled effectively. Figure 1 shows the degree to which local authorities have attempted to identify their fuel poor. A scoring system was devised as part of the evaluation methodology whereby, for example, a score of zero indicates that there was no information contained in the report/strategy, and no plans in existence to gather information. A score of 4 indicated limited information but with plans to improve, while a score of 10 indicated that detailed information is held regarding the extent of fuel poverty and where it occurs, linking information on stock condition with income data. (Please see Annex 2 for full details of the scoring methodology.)

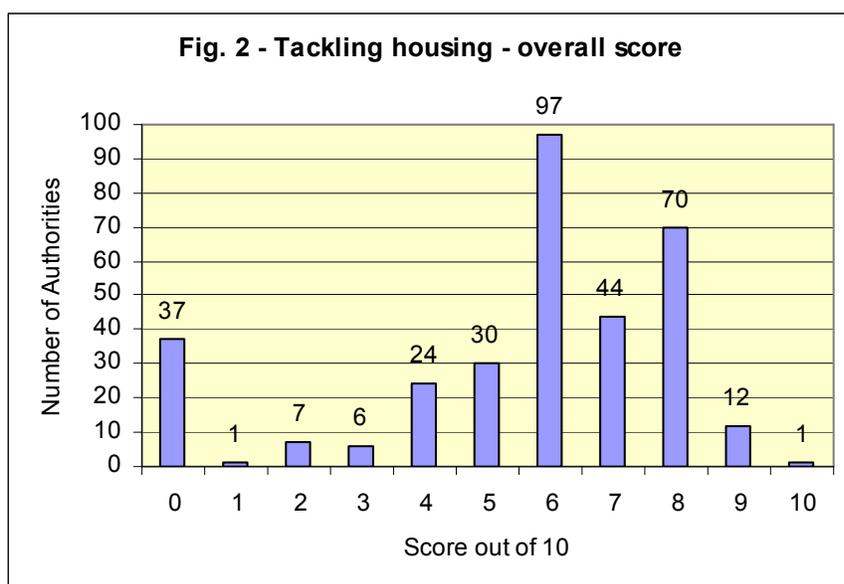
The average score was 5.4. Whilst 17% of authorities have made no attempt to identify fuel poverty in their region, 40% scored 8 or above implying a good understanding of fuel poverty issues using at least SAP or NHER ratings as a basis. 8% scored a 10 showing that they linked data across departments from welfare and social services to health and energy data.

However, for those with a strategy, the average score was much higher at 6.9. This indicates that those authorities going through the formal process of developing a strategy are taking time to work out how to identify their fuel poor households first.

Work to tackle housing

Figure 2 shows the degree to which local authorities are actively tackling housing in their district to reduce fuel poverty. A score of zero indicates no evidence of any activity, while a score of 4 indicates that the issue is incorporated into a strategy, but no action is defined. At the top end, a score of 8 indicates that action is being taken and the results evaluated, while 10 indicates that action is being taken that will eventually eradicate fuel poverty. (However, it should be noted that councils could score 8 while undertaking a relatively small amount of work.)

The average score was 5.6 but in fact 64% of authorities scored between 6 and 8 on tackling housing. This shows that most authorities have recognised the need to tackle fuel poverty and are either taking or planning to take action. Overall 11% of authorities scored zero and produced no evidence of awareness of the need to tackle fuel poverty.



Target sectors

Within this, we looked at the numbers of authorities tackling typically challenging sectors, and found the following:

- ❑ 111 (34%) are tackling fuel poverty in the private rented sector, of which 38% are offering some kind of financial assistance and 24% have set up energy efficiency accreditation schemes;
- ❑ Only 24 are tackling fuel poverty in 'hard-to-treat' homes (typically those with solid walls and/or off the gas network);
- ❑ Only 13 are tackling fuel poverty in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); and
- ❑ Only 4 are tackling underoccupation.

Innovative measures

We also investigated to what extent local authorities were considering the use of innovative measures (i.e. not standard insulation or gas heating measures) to tackle fuel poverty. 12% reported using some kind of innovative measure. The most common 'innovative

measures' were heat-recovering ventilation and external solid wall insulation (both mentioned by 12 authorities), followed by solar water heating (6) and micro-CHP (5). Dry lining, PVs, wind turbines and ground source heat pumps were each mentioned by 3 or fewer authorities.

Energy advice

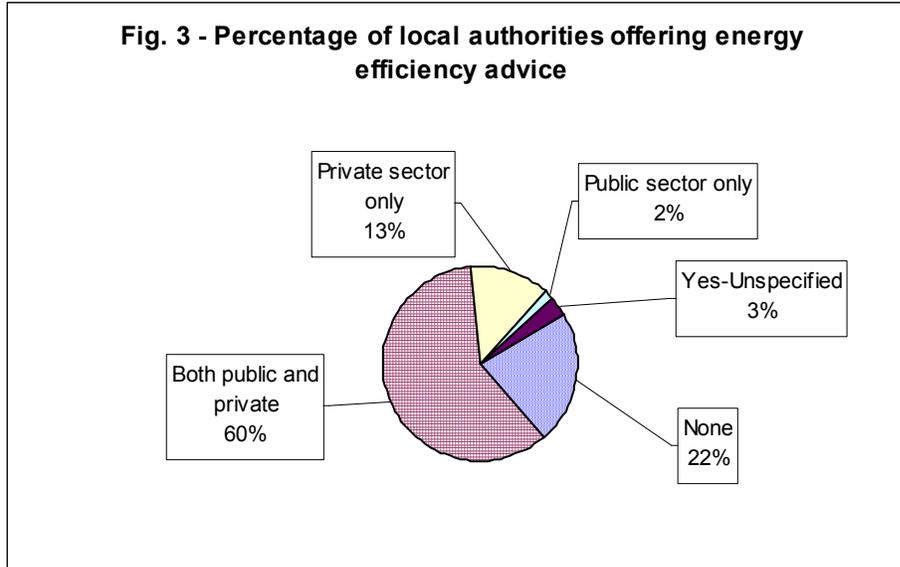


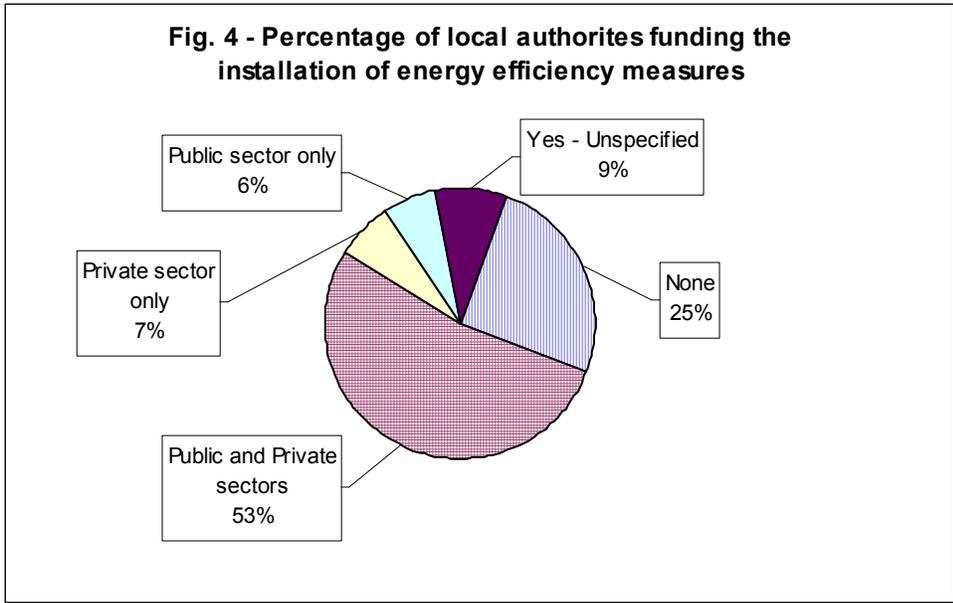
Figure 3 shows that most authorities are offering some form of energy efficiency advice to their householders, with 60% offering advice to both public and private sector householders. However, 22% are not offering any kind of advice, although it's possible that they are working with another organisation, e.g. an EEAC, to offer advice to their householders, and have not reported this.

Correlation between identifying and addressing fuel poor households

We looked at whether the degree to which authorities are identifying fuel poverty relates to the amount of work they are taking to tackle it. Those scoring above average on tackling housing (i.e. 6 or above) scored an average of 6.5 in terms of identifying fuel poverty, compared to an overall average of 5.4, which implies that some kind of identification is necessary before significant action can be taken. (Only 4 of the 85 authorities scoring 8 or more on tackling fuel poverty scored below 5 on identification of fuel poverty.) However, we found that a few ECAs scoring highly on identifying fuel poverty scored very low on tackling fuel poverty. It is possible that these authorities are only just beginning to tackle fuel poverty and are, quite wisely, starting by identifying the problem in their area before they take any action.

Funding of measures

Figure 4 shows that the majority of local authorities are funding the installation of energy efficiency measures, with more than half funding measures in both public and private sectors.



Setting targets

Part of the evaluation involved assessing targets relating to the reduction of the incidence of fuel poverty.

64 local authorities (19%) were identified as having set themselves at least one quantitative target with respect to tackling fuel poverty. The targets of these 64 have been divided into two main categories:

- ❑ Explicit or overarching fuel poverty reduction targets; and
- ❑ Implicit or underpinning targets.

Explicit or overarching fuel poverty reduction targets

13 ECAs have set themselves the highest possible target: eradicating fuel poverty by a specified date. Another one has this aim without a deadline. A further 4 have reducing fuel poverty as a target outcome.

Target applies to		Total	Of which have completion date
Eradication of fuel poverty	Vulnerable households	4	4
	All households	10	9
Reduction of fuel poverty		3	3
Part eradication and part reduction		1	1
Total		18	17

Implicit or underpinning fuel poverty reduction targets

Targets in this category all pertain to activities that contribute to the reduction of fuel poverty.

Targets of SAP or other energy efficiency ratings are the most widespread in the sample. These ratings can be measured objectively and are broad indicators of fuel poverty as far as it relates to energy efficiency.

Target applies to		Total	Of which have completion date
SAP/NHER ratings of	Council dwellings	10	6
	All dwellings	9	8
Total		19	14

Targets for energy efficient refurbishments have advantages similar to those of SAP targets, as progress is relatively easy to measure.

Target applies to		Total	Of which have completion date
Public sector housing	General EE refurbishment	6	3
	Decent Homes standard	6	6
Private sector housing		3	3
All housing		1	1
Total		16	13

Information provision and grant take-up:

Target applies to	Total	Of which have completion date
Information/advice provision	8	6
HRA and Warm Front grant take-up	6	4
Both of the above	1	1
Total	15	11

Other targets:

Target applies to	Total	Of which have completion date
Domestic energy efficiency improvement (% terms)	4	4
CO ₂ emissions reductions	4	3
Training of frontline staff	2	1
Health improvement	2	1
Achieving Beacon Council status	1	1
Staff resources devoted to FP	1	1
Transfer of council housing to HA	1	1
Heating cost of public sector housing	1	0
Total	15	11

It was not made clear how certain targets, such as CO₂ emissions and stock transfer, were relevant to fuel poverty reduction. On the latter, it is possible that a fuel poverty target was included in the stock transfer agreement.

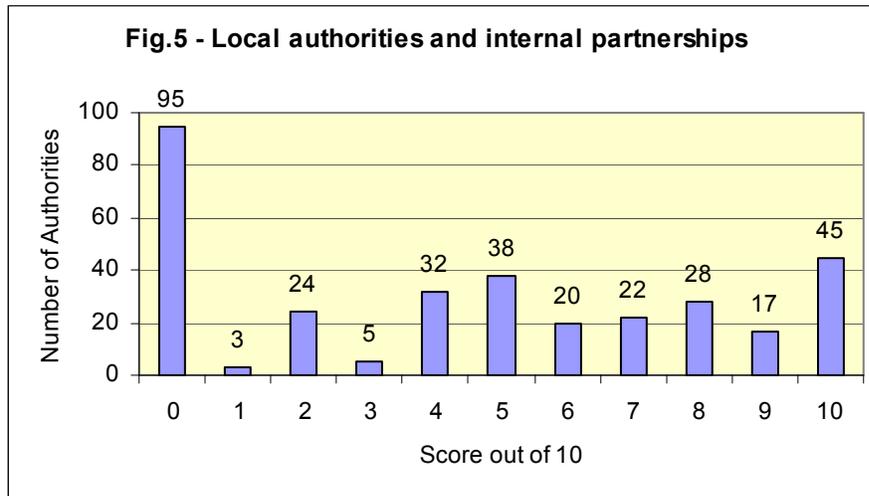
Partnerships to tackle fuel poverty

The next stage of data analysis involved analysing the extent to which authorities have formed partnerships to tackle fuel poverty.

Internal partnerships

The average score was 4.5. Figure 5 shows that 29% of authorities produced no evidence of setting up internal partnerships to tackle fuel poverty. However, 27% of authorities showed internal networks to be functioning, with plans to train people across departments in some of the issues surrounding fuel poverty. 40% were offering some kind of energy efficiency training to internal partners.

Instigation of partnerships



In terms of who instigated the partnership, 62 out of 329 authorities studied had internal partnerships started up by a specified person/group/sector, as follows:

- ❑ 23 by housing staff;
- ❑ 12 from a HECA group;
- ❑ 12 from energy staff;
- ❑ 10 from a consortium;
- ❑ 2 from a local authority-funded Energy Efficiency Advice Centre;
- ❑ 1 from a Health Action Zone;
- ❑ 1 from an environmental health officer; and
- ❑ 1 from a councillor.

The reasons why partnerships were set up were not explicit in most reports. Where reasons were cited, the most common included:

- ❑ Desire to offer energy awareness training to key staff and/or promote take-up of Warm Front (cited by 66 authorities);
- ❑ Taking forward the council's affordable warmth strategy – mentioned by 42 authorities;
- ❑ Desire to involve welfare/benefits and/or social services departments (cited by 24 authorities).

External partnerships

Figure 6 shows the equivalent scores for setting up external partnerships. Perhaps rather surprisingly, more authorities had attempted to form external partnerships than internal, with the average score being 6.2. (However, it is possible that internal partnerships are perceived as less 'special' and therefore less likely to be reported.) Moreover, almost half of all authorities (49%) have offered some kind of energy efficiency training to their external partners, most commonly to enable them to refer their contacts to receive energy efficiency advice and grants. (Again, it's interesting that this is a higher proportion than the number offering training to internal partners.)

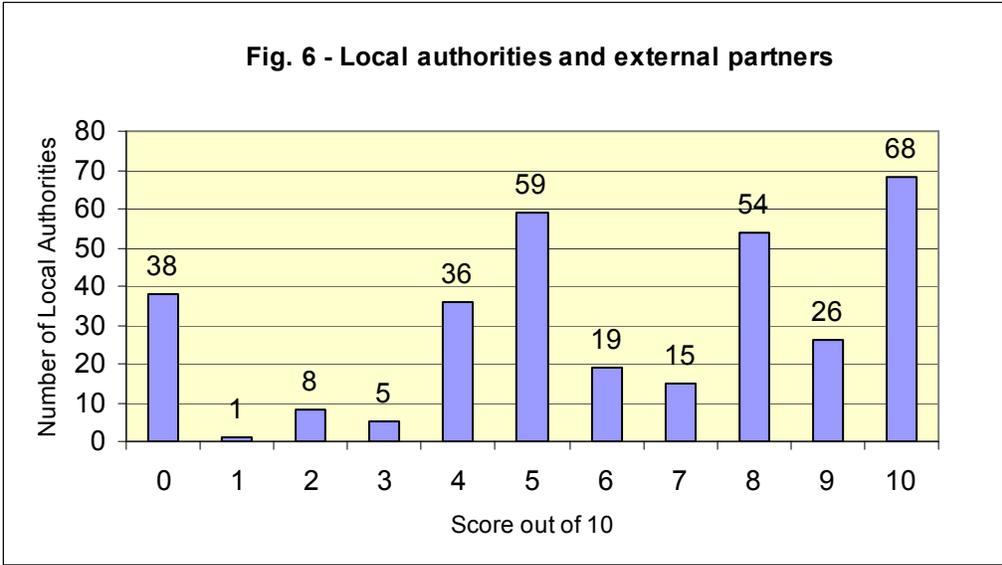
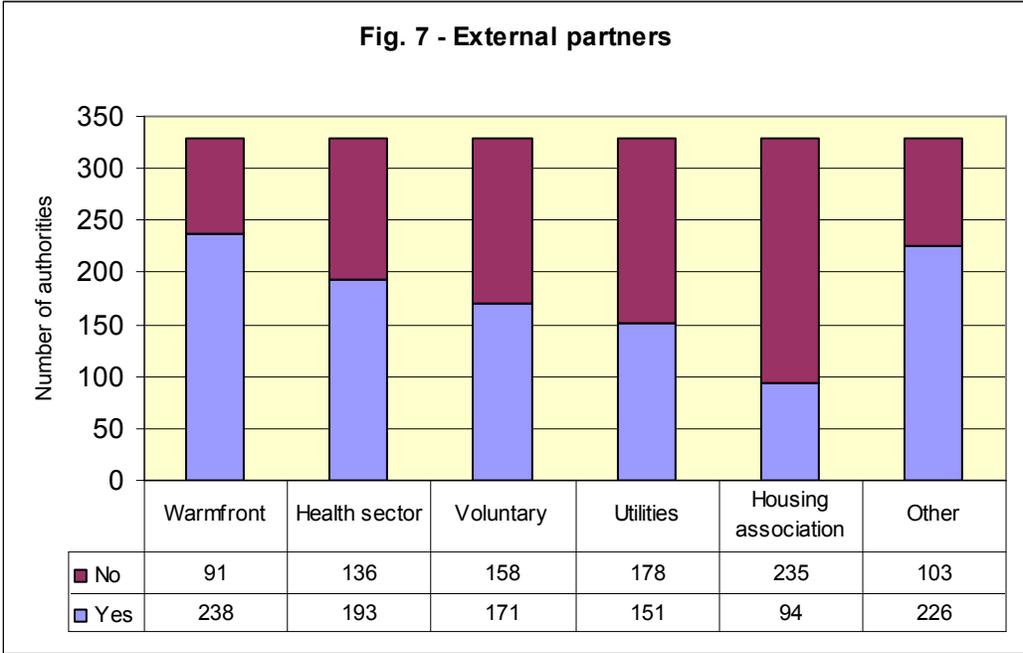
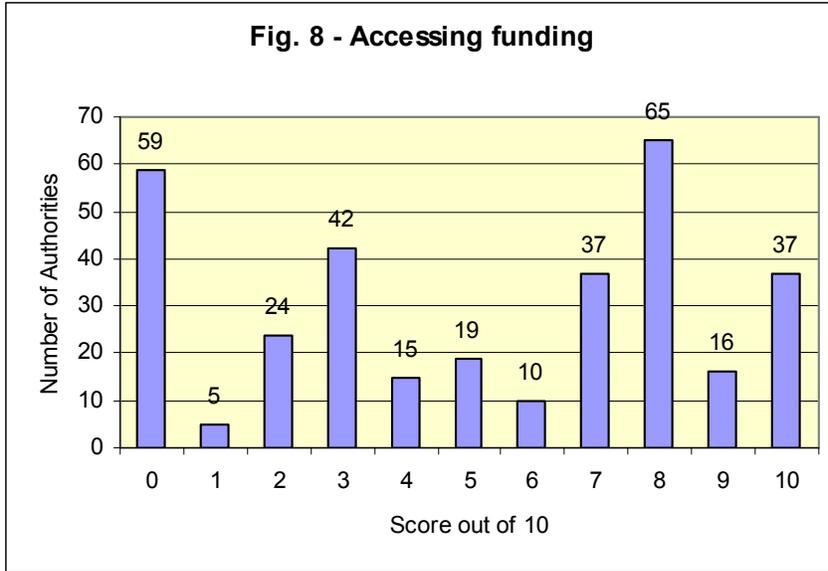


Figure 7 shows the most common types of external partner. Not surprisingly, Warm Front agents head the list. An encouragingly high proportion of authorities have formed partnerships with the health sector – 59% of all authorities.



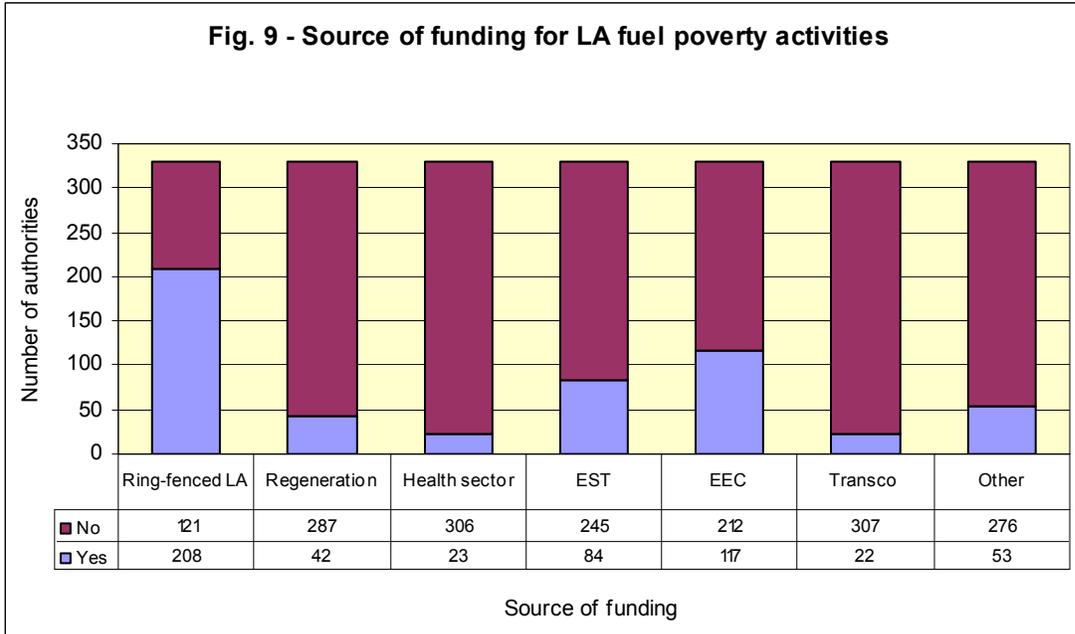
Utilising funding

Figure 8 shows that 18% of local authorities have no evidence of using funding sources to tackle fuel poverty. Half the authorities scored 5 or under showing that they have not accessed any funding although may be looking into it. 20% of authorities showed evidence of having acquired at least one source of funding (score of 8) with a further 16% showing evidence of acquiring funding from 2 or more sources.



Sources of funding

Figure 9 shows the number of local authorities accessing different funding sources. The average score was 5.1. The most common form of funding is from within the local authority itself. These often come in the form of top-up grants for additional measures not covered by the national grants programmes or for people who, despite their need for affordable warmth, fall outside of the eligibility criteria on national programmes.



The second most commonly accessed fund was through the energy suppliers' Energy Efficiency Commitment, with more than a third of authorities utilising this fund. There were 18 other sources of funding mentioned. The main sources of 'other' funds used were through the EU and through Health Action Zone funding.

Some authorities received funding from energy suppliers to write their affordable warmth strategies. For the purpose of this analysis, it is assumed to be EEC funding.

Other funding sources (see Figure 9) included:

- ❑ EU funding (6);
- ❑ Health Action Zone funding (4);
- ❑ Warm Zone funding (4);
- ❑ Housing association (3);
- ❑ NEA (3); and
- ❑ The Private Finance Initiative, the New Opportunities Fund and the Coalfield Regeneration Fund (each mentioned by 1 or 2 authorities).

Levels of activity overall

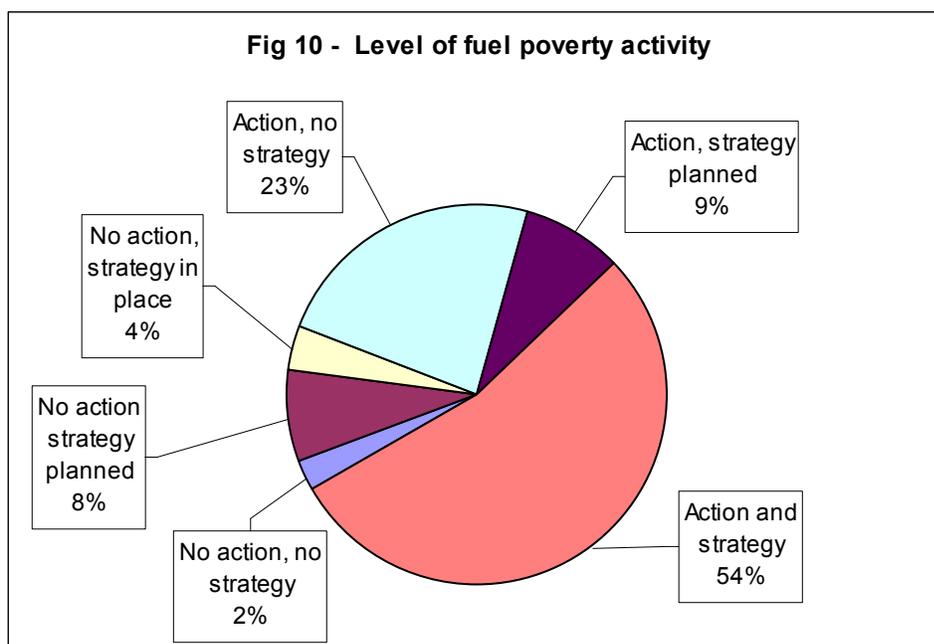


Figure 10 shows that only 2% of authorities have no strategy and have taken no action. The vast majority (86%) have taken some kind of action to tackle fuel poverty. Almost a quarter are taking action but have not produced a strategy. Since producing a strategy requires considerable resources, we investigated whether it seems to affect the degree of activity taken by a council. For those councils with a strategy, the average score on 'tackling housing' was 6.3, compared to the overall average of 5.6 – a smaller difference than might be expected. It would therefore seem at first sight that, while a strategy may be useful in helping to obtain corporate commitment and focus ideas, it doesn't make an enormous difference to the level of activity undertaken. However, this could be explained by the fact that affordable warmth strategies are relatively new and have not had sufficient time to develop activity.

Drivers for action

Overall, of the 329 ECAs evaluated, 181 (55%) cited a clear driver for action, and of these 74 ECAs were taking action on fuel poverty prompted by more than 1 driver. 148 (45%) did not outline any obvious drivers for their activity in tackling fuel poverty.

Unsurprisingly, the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) was cited as the main driver for action on fuel poverty; 18% of ECAs stated that this was one of their primary drivers for action. Health issues and related health inequalities were also key drivers, with 10% of ECAs concerned about the health impacts of fuel poverty and cold, damp conditions.

The following drivers were cited as reasons for taking action of fuel poverty:

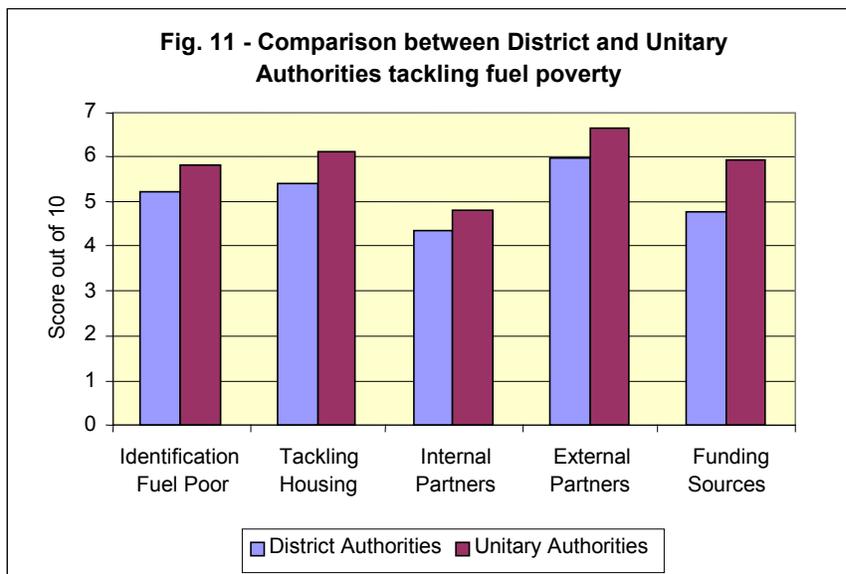
- ❑ HECA 18%
- ❑ Health impacts 10%
- ❑ The need to meet Decent Homes standards 9%
- ❑ LA housing policies and strategies 7%
- ❑ Local or regional group (e.g. NEA fora, LASPs etc) 7%
- ❑ Acting on stock condition surveys/housing census data 3%

Local Agenda 21 and Community Plans were also mentioned as drivers by 2 or fewer authorities.

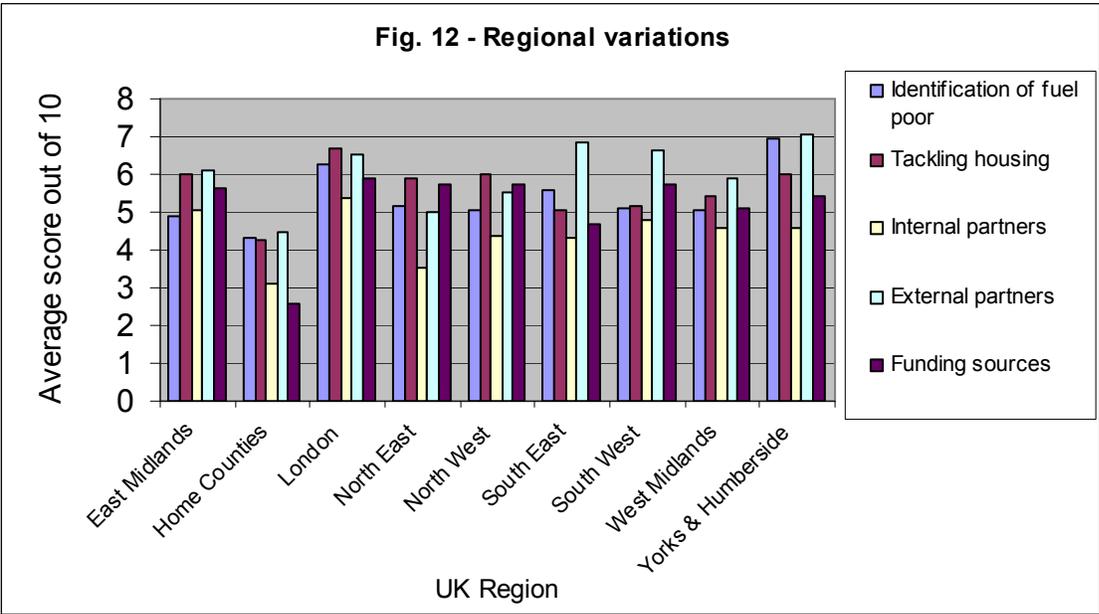
The overall trend in the drivers for action on fuel poverty is that there is no trend. ECAs are reacting to a number of different stimuli from a variety of sources. There does not seem to be any single, clear signal that is promoting work in this area.

Differences between types of authority and regions

Figure 11 shows the comparison between District/Borough and Unitary Authorities in their attempts to tackle fuel poverty. The graph shows that on average Unitary Authorities have done marginally more to tackle fuel poverty than District/Borough Authorities in every area identified.



Finally, we looked at regional variations between the authorities' performance – see Figure 12. Some regions are clearly performing better on average than others – for example, London scores higher on all areas than the Home Counties. Other regions can be seen to be excelling in one particular area, such as external partnership. We have not been able to draw any firm conclusions regarding the reasons behind this, although a longer history of consortium working in certain regions may help to increase that region's overall scores.



4. CONCLUSIONS

Extent of engagement

The vast majority of the local authorities we looked at are taking action to tackle fuel poverty in their areas – 86%. However, there were an additional 31 ECAs who had not submitted reports or strategies and it could be concluded that these are quite likely to be undertaking no action, so the real figure may be closer to around 79%.

Please note also that this analysis is based only on what was reported in the fuel poverty section of the HECA report and/or in their strategies. Some relevant activities may have been mentioned in other sections of the report but would not have been included in our review.

Of those undertaking action:

- ❑ 78% are offering energy efficiency advice, with the majority of this being to both the public and private sector;
- ❑ 75% are funding the installation of energy efficiency measures – again, mostly in both sectors;
- ❑ Very few are targeting 'hard to treat' properties (7%) and similarly, only 12% reported involvement in 'innovative' measures to tackle fuel poverty (which might be associated with 'hard to treat' properties), such as solid wall insulation and solar water heating. Most are concentrating on the 'easiest to treat' properties first, where they can get the greatest impact for lowest cost.
- ❑ However, quite a high proportion (34%) are tackling the private rented sector – a difficult sector when it comes to encouraging investment in energy efficiency. This may be due partly to the Energy Saving Trust's HECAAction programme focusing on this sector in its 1999 funding round. However, grants policies for local authorities are currently being reviewed and case study visits found that many are finding it increasingly hard to get approval for private landlord grant programmes, so this situation may soon change.
- ❑ 4% are targeting HMOs, and only 1% stated that they were tackling the issue of underoccupation, one of the causes of fuel poverty.

Case study visits confirmed that isolated pockets of good practice do exist in some councils. For example, one council may be undertaking an excellent programme to tackle one particular sector, while failing to work cross-departmentally internally and thus extend the remit of good work.

Identification

The degree to which authorities are attempting to identify the fuel poor in their areas differs immensely, with a significant number making no attempt to identify them at all. Identifying fuel poverty is challenging: people's incomes can change, families can move house, and so the location of fuel poor households is constantly changing. Some authorities have concluded that their limited resources would be best used not in attempting this challenge but instead on implementing programmes. Conversely, we found that a few councils that scored highly on identifying their fuel poor are so far taking no action actually to reduce the problem.

Partnerships

Interestingly, more authorities are proactive in terms of external partnerships than internal partnerships, at least in terms of what is reported. 29% showed no evidence of setting up

internal partnerships at all. Housing or HECA officers most commonly instigated internal partnerships, with one authority reporting that a councillor had instigated the group and another reporting that the Health Action Zone was the instigator.

Almost 88% of authorities were making at least some efforts to establish external partnerships to tackle fuel poverty, with an impressive 21% scoring the highest possible in this area, indicating well-formed partnerships including training for partners. Not surprisingly, the most common external partner was those involved with Warm Front – 72% of authorities reported partnerships of this kind. The second most common was the health sector, with 59% reporting health partners. This may also be a result of the 2001 HECAAction funding round, which specifically encouraged applications from authorities that planned to set up partnerships with the health sector.

Case study visits revealed that the councils able to achieve most in their health sector partnerships are those which can effectively demonstrate to their partners how they might benefit from the partnership, e.g. through access to other council activities such as education programmes. The same is true for all partners – councils need to recognise their partners' objectives and think creatively about how fuel poverty activity can help meet these objectives (which won't necessarily be directly related to fuel poverty). Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) provide a potential opportunity to further encourage joint working. Case study visits revealed examples of officers getting involved in providing briefing papers to the LSP Steering Groups, which include senior representatives from both the council, the health sector and other key stakeholders in the region (e.g. police and fire services, major voluntary organisations, etc).

Case study visits also revealed that some councils choose to pay an officer's wage purely to pursue external funding partners and to lever in resources. Others instead focus on implementing projects using the council's own limited resources. In our experience, the former proves to be much more effective.

Funding

The degree to which authorities are accessing funding to tackle fuel poverty also varied enormously. 18% of authorities studied had neither accessed any funding nor had any plans to do so. However, a high proportion (63%) had ring-fenced funding from within the authority to fund fuel poverty work. Perhaps surprisingly, only 36% reported accessing EEC funding for fuel poverty. 13% had utilised regeneration funding, while 7% reported obtaining funding from the health sector, which is encouraging. Other funding sources, cited by a minority, include the Private Finance Initiative, New Opportunities Fund and the Coalfield Regeneration Fund. These indicate that there is additional funding available, but that only a minority of authorities either know about it or have time to submit applications.

In terms of the main funding sources designed to tackle fuel poverty, case study visits revealed a general opinion that:

- ❑ Too many utilities are still focusing their EEC funding on simple and often not very effective schemes such as provision of CFLs; and
- ❑ Warm Front is too inflexible, particularly for areas with high numbers of hard to treat properties (e.g. properties off the gas network or with solid walls etc).

Progress in meeting targets

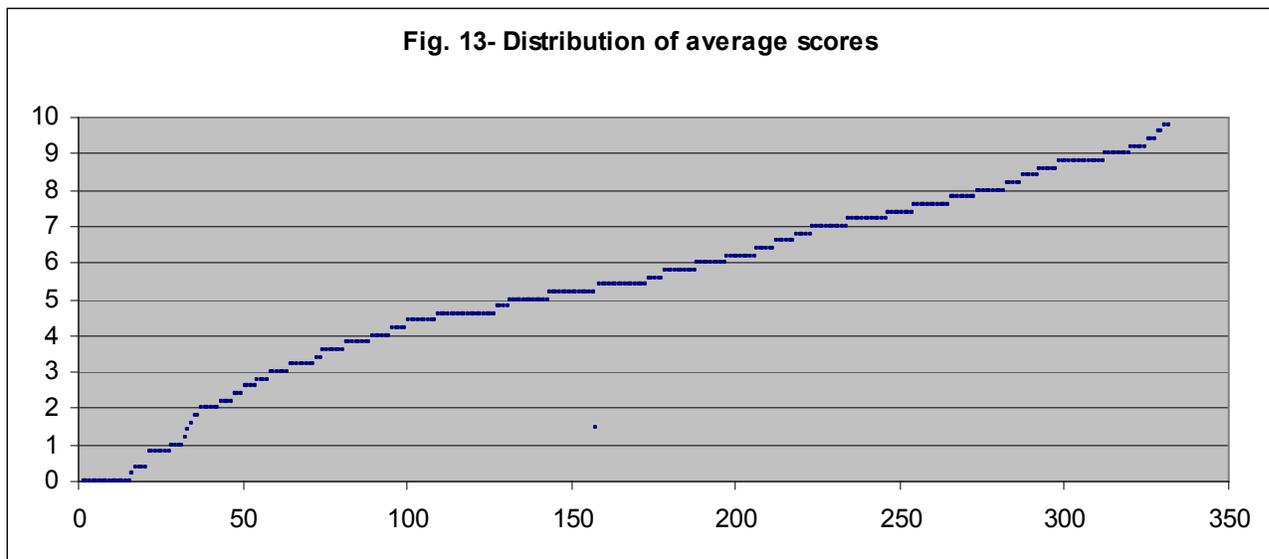
Unlike energy efficiency generally, where local authorities have been urged by government to set a target of a 30% improvement between 1996 and 2006/2011, for fuel poverty there is no central government guidance on targets for local authorities. As a result, the degree

to which authorities have set targets varies immensely. We found that 19% had set some kind of quantitative target, with 4% setting themselves a target of eradicating fuel poverty by a specified date. Where others had set targets, they related mainly to achieving a minimum SAP or energy efficiency rating, or achieving the Decent Homes standard by a certain date. Others related to numbers of households provided with advice, figures on grant take-up and numbers attending training courses.

It is important to note that having quantified targets implies a lot about a LA's fuel poverty activities. Targets imply that there is likely to have been a baseline assessment of the incidence of fuel poverty in the LA's jurisdiction, used as a basis for setting the targets in the first place. More importantly, setting targets, especially targets that have dates by which they are to be achieved, demonstrates transparency, accountability, and commitment to reducing fuel poverty. Targets can be both an indication and a stimulus towards good practice.

Variations in performance

There was considerable variation in performance between authorities. Figure 13 shows how the average scores are distributed across the 5 areas for which scores were assigned. It shows a fairly even spread in scores, with several authorities scoring zero and the highest



scoring authority achieving 9.8.

Best practice

Numerous examples of good or interesting practice were identified and the research team shortlisted around 25 schemes that we felt looked interesting. These were divided into 8 different categories to ensure that the case studies represented a range of good practice, and the schemes were divided according to priority. After speaking to those running schemes some felt that their plans were insufficiently developed to form the basis of a case study; others were simply too busy to meet us within the required timeframe. The result was a series of 10 case studies (see Annex 3 for the full text).

Identification of fuel poverty

- Case study 1: Amber Valley Borough Council. In 1999, the publication of Amber Valley's Public Health report coincided with the production of the results of the district's 1998 House Condition Survey. The two reports pointed to a direct

correlation between poor quality housing and ill health, and sparked a process, which culminated in the launch of the council's Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2001. This case study outlines the council's activities in tackling fuel poverty, focusing particularly on how the house condition, public health profiling and economic data were used to pinpoint the location of those in the borough suffering most from fuel poverty.

Corporate approach

- ❑ Case study 2: London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. A Best Value review of Private Housing Sector activities in 1999 confirmed fuel poverty as an area for action in the Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Specifically it identified the inequalities in the private rented sector and amongst the elderly and vulnerable in the borough as a key area for work. This has initiated a top down approach to tackling the problems posed by fuel poverty. Underpinned by the aims of the existing Council Community Strategy, the overarching Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing Strategy have identified key areas of need and prioritised action accordingly. A series of quantitative local performance indicators have been developed to monitor and review activity. Figures are published on a monthly and quarterly basis and are reviewed annually to characterise progress and identify priority areas to drive action forward.

Partnerships

- ❑ Case study 3: East Lindsey District Council. This council is a largely rural authority, with few major towns and a dispersed population, over 25% of which are elderly. A recent house condition survey estimated that the average SAP of homes in the area was 38. However, homes in the most deprived wards were likely to have a lower than average energy efficiency rating. In addition, these wards were also likely to be in remote rural areas and off the mains gas network. Tackling the rural fuel poor, in particular the elderly and those off the gas network, is a key issue for East Lindsey. Use of internal partnerships within the Council to reach out to vulnerable groups has been key for driving forward action on fuel poverty. By taking a joined up approach to tackling the problem, frontline staff across the Council, from the Benefits Office to the Planning Department, have all been involved in meeting the challenges of reducing fuel poverty in the region.
- ❑ Case study 4: Gloucestershire partnership. The Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire Strategy 'Action for Affordable Warmth' was the first joint, multi-local authority strategy to tackle fuel poverty in the country. The local authorities involved in the Partnership are Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, Cotswold, Stroud and Forest of Dean District Councils, Gloucester City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. As the Partnership has successfully involved dozens of external organisations in tackling fuel poverty in the region, this case study focuses in particular on the Partnership's approach to building and maintaining external partnerships.

'Hard to treat' homes

- ❑ Case study 5: North East Derbyshire District Council. In 1998, this Council became one of eight authorities to win Government approval and acquire pathfinder status for a Private Finance Initiative for the refurbishment of Housing Revenue Account dwellings (i.e. existing council housing). The scheme covers 3 former coalfield towns that have properties constructed in the early 1950s of pre-cast reinforced concrete and are classed as defective and unmortgageable. This case study focuses in particular on how the Private Finance Initiative was used to tackle fuel poverty and under-occupation in hard to heat non-traditional homes.

Private rented

- ❑ Case study 6: Sheffield City Council. In 1999, a major survey of domestic properties in Sheffield revealed that at least 11 percent of households were having difficulty in finding money for their heating bills. This figure rose to 15.1 percent for households in the private rented sector. Although this was an improvement on the previous survey in 1994, it was clear that fuel poverty in the private rented sector still posed a considerable challenge to the council. A series of initiatives are now operating within the Council. These are designed to tackle the problem of fuel poverty in the private rented sector and integrate it with their existing work on raising minimum standards over a range of other issues. The Houses in Multiple Occupation Registration Scheme, the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme (voluntary) and the Sheffield Responsible Landlord Scheme are all helping to address fuel poverty in this notoriously difficult to tackle audience. Ongoing liaison with The Sheffield and District Landlord Association helps to ensure emerging standards are fully discussed, particularly in relation to voluntary schemes.

Hard to reach groups

- ❑ Case study 7: Brighton and Hove Council. Brighton and Hove City Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy was adopted by the Council as policy in November 2002. With a diverse population, including a large number of students and high proportion of Houses in Multiple Occupancy, the strategy includes various actions specifically aimed at 'hard to reach' groups.

Health

- ❑ Case study 8: South Cambridgeshire. In 2001, as part of the work towards the Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan, the Cambridgeshire Health Authority (now the Strategic Health Authority) produced a series of datasets illustrating the geographical distribution of health inequalities throughout the county. It revealed countywide pockets of deprivation and a north-south divide of poverty. To address the causes of these health inequalities, it was necessary for the health sector to work in partnership with the local Councils to achieve genuine change. Collaborating through the South Cambridgeshire Health Improvement Partnership and supported by the Local Strategic Partnership, the South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust and the District Council have succeeded in developing a series of joint objectives to tackle the causes of health inequalities, incorporating action on fuel poverty.
- ❑ Case study 9: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council. The Council's Cabinet approved Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2002 following consultation with key partners. It aims to abolish fuel poverty across all sectors in Calderdale by 2016 with 3 five-year plans. This case study looks at the activities taken by the Council to tackle fuel poverty, focusing in particular on how the Council is working with the health sector.

Funding

- ❑ Case study 10: Leicester City Council. The Council published 'Tackling Fuel Poverty: a local Well-Being Issue Report for Leicester 2000' in August 2000 as a response to a requirement for all Energy Conservation Authorities to report on policies, strategies and achievements in tackling fuel poor households in the local area. The Council is looking into the possibility of writing a fuel poverty strategy with NEA and Eaga Partnership within the next 12 months. This case study looks briefly at the activities taken by the Council to tackle fuel poverty, focusing in particular on how the Council is identifying fuel poor households and funding to address fuel poverty.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Research

Guidance and further case studies on the following would be useful:

- ❑ How ECAs are **identifying and measuring fuel poverty**. Potentially, this could be produced by the Energy Efficiency Best Practice programme;
- ❑ How best to tackle fuel poverty with limited officer time (or “How to tackle fuel poverty in your borough on 2 days a week”); and
- ❑ Setting up and managing external partnerships and levering in funding.

Policy

At present, Local Authorities receive only cursory feedback on their HECA and fuel poverty reports, with no encouragement when they are doing good work and no guidance when they are struggling, or even information when they are filling in their report incorrectly. Some authorities even ask explicitly for help and guidance in their reports and get no response to this.

Detailed feedback would help to encourage good performers, and could act as a ‘stick’ for those under performing in this area. We propose that the Government Offices are in the best position to provide this feedback; although we realise that these offices have limited resources and this is a relatively time consuming process. If reporting on fuel poverty were required to follow a more standard template, the provision of accurate feedback would become much easier. It would also enable accurate identification of the top performers, who could usefully be recognised for their work, perhaps through a utility-sponsored awards scheme presented at the NEA annual conference.

It is recommended that an **evaluation of the reports is carried out each year** in order to track progress over time.

Funding

Some targeted ‘pump-priming’ funding would be useful, to help establish best practice in areas where there is currently limited activity. The Energy Saving Trust’s HECAAction funding programme (which is no longer awarding grants) specifically encouraged authorities to tackle the private rented sector and to work jointly with the health sector. This research found that there is still considerable activity in these areas. The HECAAction programme was replaced with the ‘Innovation programme’, focusing on innovative methods of reducing carbon emissions. This programme could potentially focus on particular areas identified as being neglected, such as ‘hard to treat’ homes or under occupation.

Finally, it is recommended that both the **EEC framework and the Warm Front programme become more flexible**, offering a bigger range of measures to enable ‘blitzing’ of particular streets. This will make it easier for ECAs to manage and integrate with renewal and regeneration schemes. Warm Front should allow follow-up installations and joint funding with other programmes, and should be expanded to allow ‘hard-to-treat’ homes to be tackled. Additionally, Ofgem should provide more incentives for energy suppliers to tackle ‘hard to treat’ homes, as the installation of measures in ‘hard to heat’ homes is less cost-effective.

Guidance

The lack of targets is a direct result of Government guidance. Therefore, it would be useful for the Government, perhaps through the Improvement and Development Agency as part of its ‘Local Performance Indicators’ programme, to **suggest targets** for local authorities to

adopt and realistic means of measuring these. These could range from 'soft' targets - e.g. the number of households provided with advice, the number of partners trained - that would be intended to be a starting point, with authorities graduating onto 'hard' targets such as the number of measures installed, and minimum SAP rating.

Annex

ANNEXES

Annex

ANNEX 1 – STEERING GROUP REPORT

Representatives from the key Government departments (DEFRA, DTI & ODPM) along with other relevant organisations and groups (Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes, EST, NEA, Eaga Partnership, the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group and the Oxford Environmental Change Institute) were all invited to take part in the Steering Group.

The secretariat for the Fuel Poverty Action Group was also contacted and it was agreed that since many of the FPAG members were already represented on the Steering Group (directly and indirectly through organisational affiliation) and involved in the project, it would not be necessary for the FPAG to be an active part of the Steering Group.

The individuals who agreed to take an active role in the Steering Group were:

- Gordon Angus Eaga Partnership
- Liz Kelly Eaga Partnership
- Samantha Kennedy EST & The Home Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme
- Lesley Petrie DTI
- Peter Sumbly NEA & The EEP for Homes – Fuel poverty group
- Pam Wynne DEFRA
- Zoltan Zavody EST & The EEP for Homes – Fuel poverty group

Steering Group observers were:

- John Clough Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust
- Lynne Ebdon DEFRA

Steering Group tasks

The group were asked to use their various expertise in the area of fuel poverty to:

- Assist in the definition of key policy questions which the work should have in mind;
- Input into the criteria against which the fuel poverty reports and strategies should therefore be evaluated; and
- Input into the dissemination plan.

Evaluation and key policy questions:

Using email as the main forum for discussion, the draft evaluation methodology and some key questions for consideration were circulated to all the group members. Members were asked to send their comments back to the group co-ordinator, who then compiled all the feedback and re-circulated it to the group for further comments and responses.

No additional comments were received from the group, so the final methodology was developed according to these initial comments from the group.

Input into the dissemination plan:

Consultation of the Steering Group on this issue commenced once the report and recommendations were produced.

Summary of Steering Group Comments

1. Characterising the approach of the LA:

- Should more emphasis be put on what is stimulating action in the first place?

Annex

- ❑ Can we characterise the local factors that have been responsible for stimulating action?
- ❑ Should we have a heading looking at the success of the approach that LAs have taken?
- ❑ Is there scope for finding out what approaches haven't worked as well as those that have?

It has been noted that HECA is not necessarily going to be the only catalyst for much of the work on fuel poverty. Many LAs may be undertaking this kind of work under ongoing programmes in, for example, housing and refurbishment. Therefore, just looking at HECA returns (that do not necessarily stimulate action on fuel poverty) may miss some important activity. This being the case, is there scope to include housing strategies and/or housing inspectorate reports in the review?

If this is not possible – perhaps some note could be made where there is the indication that fuel poverty work is happening under the auspices of some other drivers (e.g. housing)

The success of these different approaches to tackling fuel poverty could also be measured

Question: *Can we easily characterise different "approaches" – i.e. housing and refurbishment, social equity, care for the elderly – that have led to tackling of fuel poverty? And will we be able to glean this information from looking at the Fuel Poverty Strategies/Reports alone?*

- *Any suggestions for approaches that we might want to include?*
- *And how we would characterise success in these areas?*
- *Should we spend more time on our initial characterisation of each local authority (currently we are noting the type of authority, and its involvement in large government schemes e.g. WarmZones etc)? Are there more factors that we could take note of early on that would help us to characterise activity?*
- *Or any other comments as to whether this is an appropriate inclusion?*

Currently, we do not have the resources to look at anything apart from the fuel poverty reports contained within the HECA reports and any additional fuel poverty strategies that we have obtained.

It should also be noted that we will have the opportunity with the 10 case studies to explore motivations for action in more detail. The case study investigations will enable us to draw out the exact LA situation and present a case study that will enable other local authorities to see synergies in their own experiences.

2. Scoring methodology

- ❑ From a scoring perspective, evidence seems to suggest that using 1-5 leads people to a middle ground though 1-4 pushes for a decision.
- ❑ Using a scoring scale of 0-5 doesn't allow for enough variation between the LAs. Might a scale of 0-10 be more appropriate? Using such a small scale could lead to a very crude comparison.
- ❑ It is very important to differentiate between LAs that have made plans but done nothing and those that have actually taken action.

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Question: *Are there any other hard and fast opinions on the scoring methodology?*

- *Should we go for more or less points?*
- *If we should use more points does anyone have any comments on how we should distinguish LAs on this level of detail?*
- *Are there any other opinions on using an even or an odd scoring methodology?*

The chances are that people will be split on this issue but we will try and consider all your views before we come up with the final scoring matrix.

3. Partnerships

- Finding out why partnerships were initially put together and who first stimulated action would be very useful in terms of passing on good practice and how to get the ball rolling. This relates back to the earlier question of how can you characterise the local situation and show others how to move their own situation forward.
- It could also be of use to establish the reasons behind the forging of particular partnerships, as this may lead to some best practice solutions.
- Under 'Internal Partnerships' there needs to be a better delineation of the kind of training offered to staff that will be scored.

Question:

- *Are there any additional areas under internal & external partnerships that we should add in to try and reflect these thoughts? Perhaps this is a level of detail that is better served by the case studies?*
- *It is likely to be difficult to decipher exactly why partnerships came about, but where there are clear reasons for putting together a partnership we could mention this in note format, and perhaps follow it up in the case studies. Would this add extra value – considering that it is difficult to make it into the same format as the other areas for review (i.e. given a score, or simple Yes/No answer)?*

4. Other issues

- Is it possible to use the report to continue to highlight the scale of barriers to addressing fuel poverty such as 'hard to treat' homes? I.e. showing that most of the government help is currently being directed towards those that are easiest to treat.

The report is going to include a review of all work currently happening in the area of fuel poverty. This will take in the work recently carried out by Impetus Consulting into activity by LAs on tackling 'hard to treat' homes. This work preceded the current review of fuel poverty reports, and also used the HECA reports to illustrate the scope of activity in the 'hard to treat' area. We are hoping that the fuel poverty review will also help to bolster these results.

ANNEX 2 - EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Tackling housing

- Overall score out of 10:

Score	Tackling housing
10	Action to address issue successfully taken; result is/will be that fuel poverty eradicated in this sector.
8	Action to address the issue taken and results have been/are being evaluated.
6	Action defined but not yet taken, or is being taken but not yet evaluated.
4	Issue incorporated into a strategy but no action defined
2	Awareness but no attempt to address
0	No evidence of awareness

- Offering advice: drop down list
- Installing measures: drop down list
- Offering financial assistance in partnership with other partners e.g. EEC, Warm Front, Health Authority: Y/N
- Tackling hard-to-treat homes (solid walls or off the gas network) Y/N
- Tackling under occupation: Y/N
- Tackling the private rented sector: drop down list
- Using innovative measures: free text, use the following codes: SWH (solar water heating); PV (photovoltaics); GSHP (ground source heat pump); SWI-E (solid wall insulation - external); SWI -I (solid wall insulation - internal); PR (pitched roofs); HRV (heat recovery ventilation); Other (type in names)
- Primary target (i.e. no. of fuel poor households, or no. of measures)? (details)
- Secondary target (e.g. no. of households provided advice)

Internal partnerships

- Overall: score out of 10:

Score	Internal partnerships
10	Steering Group (or equivalent) to oversee work. Relevant staff trained in energy awareness. Fuel poverty strategy integrated into other initiatives.
8	Good networks. Some attempt to integrate fuel poverty into other areas. Some training done/planned.
6	Reasonable networks with plans to develop training.
4	Some evidence of networks and/or plans to develop these
2	Little evidence of networks
0	No evidence

- Who set up the partnership? Free text
- Why was the partnership established? Free text
- Offering training to staff? Y/N

External partnerships

- Overall score out of 10:

Score	External partnerships
10	Highly developed networks. Training offered to staff of relevant organisations. Mechanisms for disseminating info.
8	Good networks with some training done/planned.
6	Reasonable networks with plans to develop training.
4	Some evidence of networks and minimal external consultation. No apparent plans to develop.
2	Little evidence of networks or consultation.
0	No evidence

Annex

- Who set up the partnership? Free text
- Why was the partnership established? Free text

For the following: yes if established/v. close to establishing:

- Offering training to partners in providing energy efficiency advice? Y/N
- Partnership with health authority? Y/N
- Partnership with Warm Front? Y/N
- Partnership with utilities? Y/N
- Partnership with voluntary organisations? Y/N
- Partnership with housing associations? Y/N

Funding sources

Yes if secured or very close to securing (no if just identified):

- Overall score out of 10:

Score	Utilisation of funding sources
10	Funding sources both from within the LA (e.g. HRA funding) and external sources successfully used to tackle fuel poverty.
8	Funding from LA and at least one other external source secured.
6	LA funding and applications for external funding being put together.
4	LA funding and/or some plans in place to seek out funding form external sources.
2	Some awareness of funding sources but no proactive attempts to secure.
0	No evidence of awareness

- Ring-fenced LA funding for private sector e.g. HRA/home improvement grants: Y/N
- Utilising e.g. regeneration funding for fuel poverty Y/N
- Health authority funding Y/N
- EST funding Y/N
- (Utility) EEC funding for joint schemes Y/N
- Transco Affordable Warmth programme funding Y/N
- Other: free text

Identification

Score	Identification of fuel poor households
10	Detailed information regarding extent of fuel poverty and where it occurs. Pro-active collection of info re: income, and linking of stock condition data with benefit data
8	Detailed information (e.g. SAP or NHER rating) but based on energy efficiency only.
6	Very limited energy related data (e.g. whether a dwelling has central heating or not) and no plans to improve.
4	Limited information but plans to improve this
2	No information but plans to gather information
0	No information and no plans in existence to gather

Overall

- Strategy: Drop down list
- Drivers for action: free text
- Identification of fuel poor households, score out of 10:
- Areas of good/innovative practice: free text
- Potential case study? Y/N

ANNEX 3 – CASE STUDIES

Case study 1

Amber Valley Borough Council: targeting those in fuel poverty through health and house condition data

Introduction

In 1999, the publication of Amber Valley's Public Health report coincided with the production of the results of the district's 1998 House Condition Survey. The two reports pointed to a direct correlation between poor quality housing and ill health, and sparked a process that culminated in the launch of the Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2001.

This case study outlines the Council's activities in tackling fuel poverty, focusing particularly on how the house condition, public health profiling and economic data were used to pinpoint the location of those in the borough suffering most from fuel poverty.

Corporate objectives

The Council has a number of senior officers who are knowledgeable and proactive on environmental issues. They have been able to support other staff and the Council is a member of a number of strategic partnerships that share resources to promote energy efficiency in a consistent and focused way. External partnerships include the Local Authority Energy Partnership, which comprises 19 local authorities. This consortium funds a mobile energy efficiency advice centre. Internal or cross service activity is co-ordinated through an internal working group which has representation from Housing, Development Control, Environmental Health and Property Services. This is a long-standing group that has been meeting for a number of years.

Aims & objectives

The primary aim of the strategy is to target and reduce the incidence of fuel poverty in the Borough. Success is measured via processing referrals to the local energy efficiency advice centre in Buxton and a target has been set of referring 250 people a year. Overall savings in energy are measured annually by a borough-wide telephone survey

As part of the Best Value regime, indicators 63 (average SAP rating of local authority dwellings) and 70 (average annual change in average SAP rating of local authority dwellings) have enabled the energy efficiency of the Council stock to be closely monitored.

Who's involved?

- ❑ Amber Valley Borough Council, which commissioned the Public Health report in 1999. The Council has an Energy Officer whose commitment has been crucial in the success of promoting energy efficiency and fuel poverty. This officer's role includes drawing in resources from other departments and partners.
- ❑ The Amber Valley partnership, which is made up of private, public and voluntary sector partners to share resources and co-ordinate action on issues.

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- ❑ Amber Valley Primary Care Trust. Front line professionals in this PCT are aware of energy issues and are able to refer vulnerable customers to AVBC for grant assistance in appropriate cases.
- ❑ Walbrook Care and Repair, which is a Home Improvement Agency for private sector administers renovation grants targeted at low income, elderly and vulnerable households.
- ❑ Powergen, npower, Warm Front, and Staywarm, which are all active partners in promoting energy conservation within the Borough. They provide advice and energy saving materials (light bulbs, hot water cylinder jackets, energy efficient fridges and freezers etc.) that are mainly distributed to the fuel poor at energy awareness sessions and initiatives organised by the Council.

The approach

Identifying the fuel poor

Following the publication in 1999 of the Government's White Paper 'Saving Lives - Our Healthier Nation', Amber Valley commissioned and published a Public Health Report to support its drive to co-ordinate Council services to address health and well-being issues in the district. The report incorporated the outcomes of the recently completed House Condition Survey, and showed a direct correlation between areas of housing disrepair or unfitness, low incomes and debilitating health conditions for young and old.

The information was presented at ward level and identified areas with:

- ❑ A high concentration of older people;
- ❑ Excess winter death rates in older people;
- ❑ Low benefit take-up by the elderly; and
- ❑ Low-income households with young children living in poor quality housing.

The Strategic Partnership

The report became the basis of the Local Strategic Partnership's (formerly the Amber Valley Partnership) 'Towards a Healthier Amber Valley'. This is a strategy and action plan for the improved health of people within the Borough.

Direct action on fuel poverty, below standard housing, debilitating health conditions and mortality was to be targeted at the wards in the east of the Borough. In addition, there would be a general contribution to improving well-being and health.

Training for health professionals

Awareness-raising seminars have been organised for primary care, community health and social services staff on housing energy grants and benefits advice. This enables them to identify potential energy efficiency grant-funded measures whilst performing their normal duties. The residents are referred to the Council's Energy Officer who then refers them to the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. This allows a more thorough service to be provided to the resident whilst minimising home intrusion, which can be confusing for elderly or at risk people.

Data from the Census and from the welfare and benefits department has enabled leaflets and information on grants schemes, light bulb offers etc. to be targeted at those people receiving benefits.

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Winter Warmth

The Council also organises a 'Winter Warmth' campaign. This involves a road show going to town centres, community clubs and health centres to raise awareness of grants, energy saving, diet, welfare benefits and security measures. Council staff work in partnership with primary care, social services and welfare rights workers as well as the police on this initiative.

The campaign also involves the production of an annually updated 'Winter Warmth' booklet which has advice on how to keep warm in winter, including recipes for cheap, warming and nutritious meals, advice on gas, fire and fuel safety, useful telephone numbers, energy saving advice and information on current grants and benefits. The booklet is distributed regularly to partners along with pharmacies and the voluntary sector. An inter-agency referral protocol has been established to ensure householders receive all measures available to them under all schemes. This booklet has been particularly successful and is now in its fourth edition. The initial format of the booklet has been developed to address the potential problem of information becoming out of date. The solution was to create an A4 sized 'living document' that has individual information sheets inside, colour-coded for ease of identification. These sheets can then be updated on a regular basis as new information becomes available and the old sheets replaced. This avoids the need to reprint an entire booklet and enables packs to be tailored for targeted events such as mother and toddler groups.

Advice

Advice on energy efficiency is distributed widely, including:

- ❑ Targeted advice offered to vulnerable householders via the benefits section's mailshots;
- ❑ Advice offered via the Council's Town Centre Offices in each of the main towns; and
- ❑ Sessions on energy conservation and keeping warm held at special events, including talks at day clinics (releasing patients from hospital), at over 60's groups, Bridge Centre and breakfast clubs. Free energy saving bulbs are normally available at these events due to support from the energy suppliers (npower and Powergen). Health co-ordinators are often involved with identifying potential groups for presentations and will hand out Winter Warmth packs at these events.

Surveying householders

In 2001 a telemarketing company was employed at a cost of more than £2,000 to carry out a survey, based on HECAMON software, across all tenures in the authority, with the aim of determining the household percentage spend on fuel. The survey targeted people through a random selection in the phone book, with a target of recording data from 500 households. This method avoids contacting people who are not in the phone book or who have a telephone preference service. The data collected has proved to be good value for money and the survey was carried out again in 2002, with plans to commission the survey again in 2003. Collected data shows which energy improvements have been most popular in relation to property and tenure type.

The data collected has been used to draw a year on year comparison of energy usage and has been particularly useful for gathering information on the private sector. The approach has been a success with over 400 referrals made to the EEAC in the first few months of 2003, well ahead of target.

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Council stock

The Council's housing stock is mostly 1930s semi-detached properties, with the majority of flats being transferred over to Housing Associations as part of a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer. The stock is well maintained, although 60% of council tenants are on benefit and the authority has used SAP ratings to target the worst of the stock on which to concentrate their efforts. The Council has a variety of ongoing schemes to enhance energy efficiency in their stock. The improvements are funded by the Single Regeneration Budget, the Major Repairs Allowance and top-ups to Warm Front grants, along with mainstream funding in the Housing Investment Programme.

Private sector

Grant availability and other special initiatives are regularly discussed at the Council's Private Sector Housing Forum, which is also attended by Registered Social Landlords, private landlords and special interest groups.

Improvement of private sector housing, through incorporating energy efficiency into the renovation grant programme and through working with the Home Improvement Agency, Walbrook Care and Repair, has resulted in a steady increase in SAP ratings. Renovation grants are available only in ward areas identified as having the highest levels of unfit, poor quality and energy inefficient housing, occupied by people on low incomes. The majority of renovation grants include energy efficiency measures in the specification. In 2001/02 over £600,000 was spent on renovation and Home Repair Assistance (HRA) grants, targeted at low income, households in target ward areas and for over 60s on means tested benefit, incorporating over £100,000 of specific energy saving work. HRA is administered by Walbrook Care and Repair, which works closely with the Warm Front team, to achieve maximum financial benefit and minimum disruption to clients.

Achievements

Over £1.5 million has been invested in the energy efficiency measures in the Council stock since 2001, with the average SAP rating of the Council stock increasing by nearly 1% per year for the last 5 years (in 2001/02 it stood at 48.35). More than 250 Council dwellings a year have benefited from the installation of major energy efficiency measures. Private sector achievements include a steady increase in the average SAP, as demonstrated by the results of a commissioned telephone survey.

Monitoring

The Council has not published a further Public Health Report but has continued to refine and develop the statistical information available to inform current and future initiatives. The telephone surveys on household energy consumption are due to be carried out again in 2003.

Next steps

Along with continued work on the Winter Warmth campaign, the Council plans to develop further its crosscutting service approach to targeting the fuel poor. It will do this through, for example, linking the fitting of smoke alarms and door chains to health and energy efficiency installations and ensuring take-up of due benefits and grant measures.

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There are plans to update the Council's website to include a home energy check service as well as relevant information on energy efficiency and links to a wide range of energy related organisations and companies.

A further Borough-wide house condition survey will be carried out during 2003/04.

Lessons learned

The combination of health and house condition data proved invaluable in the identification of fuel poverty in the Borough and enabled the Council to target action in an effective way. The Winter Warmth booklet has been a resounding success with a growing range of organisations committed to contributing on issues relevant to fuel poverty. Most importantly, it is valued and used by residents.

Further information

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Case Study 2

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham: local performance indicators for measuring action on fuel poverty

Introduction

A Best Value review of Private Housing Sector activities in 1999 confirmed fuel poverty as an area for action in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Specifically, it identified the inequalities in the private rented sector and amongst the elderly and vulnerable in the borough as a key area for work. This has initiated a top down approach to tackling the problems posed by fuel poverty. This approach is underpinned by the aims of the existing Council Community Strategy, the overarching Housing Strategy, and Private Sector Housing Strategy that have identified key areas of need and prioritised action accordingly. A series of quantitative local performance indicators have been developed to monitor and review activity. Figures are published on a monthly and quarterly basis, and reviewed annually to characterise progress and identify priority areas to drive action forwards.

Corporate objectives

Hammersmith and Fulham was the first council to adopt a mayor-cabinet system of governance. Although this is not unique to the Borough, it does facilitate a greater level of decision making at a strategic level. In particular, having a Housing Deputy (an elected member with specific responsibility for housing) has contributed to faster and more effective decision-making on housing issues.

The Council's Community Strategy sets out its overarching corporate objectives based on three (corporate) themes:

- Promoting a clean, green borough;
- A fair chance for all; and
- Delivering quality services.

At a senior level, support for fuel poverty work is achieved by framing the problem in terms of two of these themes ('A fair chance', 'A cleaner, greener Borough'), as well as other corporate priorities (e.g. private sector affordability and homelessness).

More specifically, most fuel poverty work falls under the Borough's Private Sector Housing Strategy, which was recently reviewed as part of the Best Value process. The resulting plan for action identified fuel poverty and poor energy efficiency in the private-rented sector as a priority, as well as helping the elderly in the borough who are most at risk from the ill health effects of cold homes.

Aims & objectives

The Borough's objective is to reduce levels of fuel poverty with a long-term aim of eradicating it. This overarching aim covers all households in all housing sectors through ensuring that they all have the opportunity to achieve affordable warmth, and that energy costs do not contribute to problems of housing affordability.

The Council intends to meet these objectives by increasing energy efficiency and reducing fuel costs for those in greatest need. Specific targets and performance indicators are outlined in the section entitled 'The approach' below.

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Who's involved?

The housing team began developing the Housing Strategy, Action Plan and complementary Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) following a Best Value Review. The Strategy and Action Plan were both developed in terms of the Council 's corporate aims. All of the activity areas are characterised in terms of the corporate objective they will assist in fulfilling.

The Strategy and Action Plan were developed through extensive consultation. Sixty organisations and groups were consulted including, the local Care & Repair agency, Creative Environmental Networks, Eaga Partnership and British Gas. A series of presentations were given to various groups including the police, local Housing Associations, Primary Care Trusts, landlords, tenants and owner-occupiers in the Borough.

It was difficult to gather the responses of landlords, tenants, and owner-occupiers. Consultation questionnaires were sent out to tenants and owner-occupiers who had had contact with the Housing Services Department in the past, and where they existed tenants groups were consulted. Landlords posed more of a problem. Historically the Council have had an adversarial relationship with this group. However, following the adoption of the Strategy, a different approach has been instigated and a Landlords Forum has been created to promote discussion on a partnership basis.

The approach

The Private Sector Housing Strategy is a 10-year plan for the improvement of all private homes in the borough. The stated objectives of the strategy are to reduce:

- The number of premature winter deaths;
- The domestic production of carbon dioxide; and
- Fuel costs for those on low incomes.

To achieve these objectives some key structural changes had to take place in the housing department. Prior to the Best Value Review, the Borough's housing services tended to be reactive and teams operated on a geographic basis dealing with all issues (as and when they arose) in a designated area of the Borough. The introduction of the action plan has changed this. The service has undergone considerable restructuring such that each team/officer now takes responsibility for a specific issue (rather than geographic area) e.g. private rented sector and owner occupied housing. This allows them to take a more focused, goal-oriented and proactive approach to meeting the demands of the action plan.

Delivery of the Action Plan is taking place through a series of frontline projects. Council grants are now better targeted, for example, towards vulnerable homes at risk from fuel poverty. Energy efficiency works are routinely carried out as part of grants for general renovation and repairs. Partnership working is also central to delivery of the action plan. The council is working with CEN to promote the 'Coldbusters' scheme (a one stop shop for assistance with funding energy efficiency measures that incorporates Warm Front, EEC funding and Home Repair Assistance funds), and the Energy Action Partnership (a discounted heating and insulation scheme). Private landlords have also been involved through the 'PLEASE' scheme that offers grants and interest free loans to install energy saving measures in private rented properties. Finally, a programme of energy advice and presentations to raise the profile of fuel poverty issues and target help has also been orchestrated across the borough.

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The achievements of all these initiatives are continually monitored against the targets set in a series of Local Performance Indicators (LPI) that run from 2002/2003 until 2007/2008. The key indicators are:

- ❑ Provide 160 energy improvements to owner occupied households;
- ❑ Provide energy advice to 1000 households; and
- ❑ Remove 50 tenanted households from fuel poverty.

All the LPIs are quantitative measures that are continually updated. On the whole, they represent a direct measure of performance of the housing service teams, and an indirect measure of the reduction in the incidence of fuel poverty.

All officers with responsibility for reporting on specific indicators keep detailed records of all their energy efficiency activities. "Although it can seem excessive, recording your activity is really important. Having a detailed breakdown of every action that has been taken means that we can really see where and how our help is being targeted", says John Davies, the Principal Private Housing Officer at Hammersmith & Fulham. "It's an important factor that has made us realise how reactive our work used to be – just addressing the easy to tackle areas, and not working where the real problems lie".

Progress against all indicators is reported quarterly. Three key performance indicators (KPI) are also provided monthly in a briefing to elected members. The use of these KPIs has allowed council members to understand and scrutinise activities as well as following the progress of the Plan, thus ensuring their continued support. Also, it contributes to the local auditing process and helps to fulfil Best Value statutory requirements. The KPIs are reviewed annually to assess overall achievements against the Housing Strategy targets; if necessary, the Action Plan for the following year is adjusted to reflect areas that require more effort or to include issues that have become council priorities since the last Plan. KPI feed back into the Strategy and Action Plan process, and the flexibility of the ongoing Plan, has been an important factor in driving activity forward, as well as ensuring that fuel poverty remains an issue that coincides with overarching council priorities.

Achievements

After the first year of working to the Action Plan and reporting on all progress, the team had made significant progress. However, the review process did illustrate that some of the targets they had set initially were quite high and that the private-tenanted sector still needed further efforts. Achievements over the year 2002/2003 were as follows:

- ❑ Energy advice given to private sector households: 71% of target achieved (706 households given advice);
- ❑ Number of owner occupied households benefiting from energy efficiency improvements: 84% of target achieved (135 homes); and
- ❑ Number of tenanted properties removed from fuel poverty: 24% of the target was achieved.

Next steps

The whole approach to tackling fuel poverty in London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is one of continual review. The Housing Strategy, Action Plan, and KPIs all form a flexible framework within which specific fuel poverty schemes have room to develop. A forthcoming housing condition survey, in conjunction with the ongoing results from the KPIs, will continue to shape their approach, as will the development

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of further partnerships with local stakeholders such as the Local Primary Care Trust and other frontline health professionals.

Lessons learned

- ❑ Using the Best Value Review process, and tying all activities in with the wider Council objectives, has enabled the Housing Team to gather high-level support for their work and maximise the impact of the Housing Strategy;
- ❑ Council Members need to be made to grasp from very early on that meeting housing goals is important in the achievement of corporate priorities. Even with the assistance of the Housing Deputy, the Housing Team felt that support from elected members could have been secured earlier;
- ❑ A willingness to be flexible in the structure and working of the Council team is essential. In this instance the internal reorganisation was crucial to tailoring the service to meet customer needs and take a proactive approach to tackling fuel poverty;
- ❑ LPIs have helped to clarify the issues surrounding fuel poverty in the Borough. Identifying indicators has enabled links to be made with other activities, in turn stimulating widespread support for the Strategy and Action Plan; and
- ❑ LPIs have increased the focus on priority areas and ensured that fuel poverty work is proactive in its targeting of the most vulnerable groups. Because activity has been broken down into priority areas, fuel poverty no longer seems like an insurmountable problem. David Ireland, Private Housing Services Manager, is the officer responsible for developing the KPIs. He noted that, "Taking action on fuel poverty can initially appear a hopeless task. By going through this process, we have been able to break everything down into manageable chunks that we can actually deliver on."

Further information

- ❑ John Davies, Principal Private Housing Officer (with responsibility for HECA reporting), E: john.davies@lbhf.gov.uk, T: 020 8753 1237.
- ❑ David Ireland, Private Housing Services Manager, E: david.ireland@lbhf.gov.uk, T: 020 8753 1286.

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Case study 3

East Lindsey District Council: inter-departmental partnerships to tackle fuel poverty

Introduction

East Lindsey District Council is a largely rural authority, with few major towns and a dispersed population, over 25% of which is elderly. A recent house condition survey estimated the average SAP of homes in the area at 38; however, homes in the most deprived wards were likely to have a lower than average energy efficiency rating. In addition, these wards were also likely to be in remote rural areas and off the mains gas network. Tackling the rural fuel poor, in particular the elderly and those off the gas network, is a key issue for East Lindsey. Use of internal partnerships within the council to reach out to vulnerable groups has been key for driving forward action on fuel poverty. By taking a joined up approach to tackling the problem, frontline staff across the Council, from the Benefits Office to the Planning Department, have all been involved in meeting the challenges of reducing fuel poverty in the region.

Corporate objectives

East Lindsey District Council has developed a series of corporate objectives that underpin its daily operation. Of these the objective 'to sustain and enhance the environment' is the key trigger used for driving action on fuel poverty in the District.

Developing this Council priority, the East Lindsey Environmental Policy 'Your Environment? A Sustainable Future for East Lindsey' was produced as part of the Council's efforts under Local Agenda 21. The policy, formally adopted by council members in August 2000, includes a section on energy with the overall goal to 'promote energy conservation and efficiency, while maximising the use of renewable energy'. Three key objectives contribute to this goal: promoting affordable warmth in social housing; improving energy efficiency in private sector housing; and encouraging sources of renewable energy. Each of these has a series of associated action points that identify the key players in the Council responsible for delivery of the plan. In February 2002 this activity was augmented with the adoption of the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy that further develops their commitment to eradicating fuel poverty by 2010.

Policy making (and scrutiny) within the Council is done through 'Review Groups' of elected members that are briefed through reports prepared by Officers on key topics for discussion. They evaluate proposals such as the Affordable Warmth Strategy and make recommendations for their adoption (or otherwise) by the Council. The Review Group system could be used as a proactive tool to review upcoming issues such as the impact of the Energy White Paper on the District, where comments from Officers across departments have been sought and could be used to inform other Officers and Elected Members alike. Overall decision-making within the Council is made through an Executive Board.

Rurality is a key consideration in East Lindsey, and one that influences action taken on fuel poverty, primarily because of lack of access to mains gas for around 50% of the population. Many of the fuel poor in the district who are eligible for assistance from government programmes such as Warm Front do not benefit fully from the programme. This is because it doesn't install first-time heating measures suitable for those off the gas network. In 'hard to heat' homes, for example, there is no provision for first-time oil central heating.

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The Council also has responsibility for running the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) for the region. The Lincolnshire EEAC receives external funding from the Energy Saving Trust but is run from the Council headquarters. Staff provide free, impartial and locally relevant energy efficiency advice and resources to the seven other district councils in the county and the two unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. The Centre is currently being run by the East Lindsey Energy Efficiency Officer, who spends half his time in each role.

Aims & objectives

The aims and objectives of the Council for tackling fuel poverty are set out in the Affordable Warmth Strategy, developed in February 2002. The overarching aim of 'Reducing the causes of fuel poverty where at all possible ... so that fuel poverty in vulnerable houses is eradicated by 2010 and healthy fuel poor households thereafter' is underpinned by a series of objectives:

- ❑ To reduce the number of at risk fuel poor households;
- ❑ To establish 'at risk' areas by ward within the District;
- ❑ To reduce the number of cold related illnesses and excess winter deaths;
- ❑ To raise awareness of and the need for energy efficiency;
- ❑ To ensure that those people who live in fuel poverty are given the best possible advice and claim what they are entitled to; and
- ❑ To create partnerships with organisations to investigate ways to reduce fuel poverty and implement measures targeted at the fuel poor.

Progress in achieving the above objectives is monitored through a series of indicators. The indicators used and progress towards the targets is outlined in the 'Monitoring' section below.

Who's involved?

Work on tackling fuel poverty has been initiated by the East Lindsey Energy Efficiency Officer who works full time on promoting energy efficiency (and related issues such as eradication of fuel poverty) in the District and who developed the Affordable Warmth Strategy. The ultimate aim of the Strategy is to develop an inter-departmental working group on fuel poverty that co-ordinates action throughout the Council. Currently the group is operating on an informal basis; it is held together by the Energy Efficiency Officer who liaises with each group as appropriate, bringing departments together for specific projects. "When everyone has a busy schedule it can be difficult to bring people together to work on issues that they don't immediately see as part of their core work," says Darren Adams, Energy Efficiency Officer at East Lindsey. "An informal group seems to work better at the moment; people get involved in specific projects and don't have to spend too much time attending meetings they don't think are relevant".

Departments involved in the group are:

- ❑ The Chief Executive's Department: a long-standing relationship between the Agenda 21 Officer and the energy efficiency section has been useful for promoting aspects of energy efficiency and fuel poverty as part of the wider sustainability discussion in the Council.
- ❑ The Environmental Services Department: Grants Officers are responsible for correct allocation of the Home Repairs Assistance (HRA) energy efficiency grant as well as signposting residents to additional help from other sources. They have been keen to ensure that all help they give out is tied in with assistance offered for energy efficiency and especially that targeted to vulnerable households (such as Warm Front grants). All grant applicants

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have to complete a Home Energy Check questionnaire. These questionnaires are processed by the EEAC, which then issues a Home Energy Report to each applicant. The Housing Enabling team are responsible for re-housing residents. They are dealing with vulnerable members of the population, often those most at risk from fuel poverty. Frontline staff in this section have been particularly keen to get involved with the fuel poverty work to ensure that they can offer their clients the maximum help at a difficult time.

- The Planning and Regeneration Department: due to a focus on renewables in the region, it has been important to involve the planning department in aspects of tackling fuel poverty. Planning is often a major hurdle preventing the implementation of renewable technologies. Within the Council, cross-departmental working on numerous projects has allowed common goals to be realised.
- The Finance Department: the Benefits team has been involved in an ongoing initiative, helping to promote energy efficiency to those on benefits. The team see it as a good opportunity to be seen in a more positive light. Although helping vulnerable residents to improve their homes is not a priority, the Benefits team feel that taking some proactive interest in this area has improved the image of their team in the local community.
- Elected Members: through the Community and Environment Review Group, the elected members are being kept aware of the issues surrounding fuel poverty and its importance for meeting Council objectives.

The approach

Work on tackling fuel poverty through inter-departmental partnerships has been carried out in a series of individual projects. The overall aim of all these projects is to ensure that, where possible, consideration of fuel poverty is included as the norm in the day-to-day operation of other departments.

Grant allocations and enquiries

The Energy Efficiency Officer has developed a schematic for the allocation of Warm Front grants, for use by staff in the grants section. A flow diagram takes the Officer through a series of questions that can determine whether the client may be eligible for assistance from Warm Front, or other ring-fenced council grants specifically for energy efficiency measures. The schematic is also distributed to the EEAC staff to ensure that those enquiring are directed to Warm Front or other Council grants if their circumstances are suitable. All grant applicants have to complete a Home Energy Check questionnaire, which is passed to the Lincolnshire EEAC for a Home Energy Report to be sent out.

Benefits checks and energy efficiency

Since March 2003 the Benefits section has been helping to promote energy efficiency to all those receiving benefits re-assessment forms. A DIY Home Energy Check (DIYHEC) and a leaflet offering four free CFLs is now sent out with every re-assessment form. Those who return a completed DIYHEC and CFL application form receive tailored energy efficiency information and a letter that they can take to their local council office to claim their free CFLs. The scheme has helped with targeting assistance and advice to vulnerable households in the area, as well as increasing the uptake of grants and building up the Council's energy database (to help with targeting of help in the future). The CFLs are provided by Powergen as part of their Energy Efficiency Commitment scheme. Because the information is sent with regular Benefits mailings, there are no complications with data protection. Also, as the mailings are sent out every week on a rolling basis, the number of responses that

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come back to the EEAC are always manageable, ensuring a quick response. This prevents a backlash on the Benefits Office for slow delivery of CFLs. To date the scheme has been very successful, with over 900 DIYHECs returned and processed in a period of just 10 weeks, all from priority households.

Re-housing and energy efficiency

The Housing Enabling section has responsibility for finding accommodation for the homeless in the area. Individuals being helped in this way are usually on very low incomes and for many this will be their first experience of living in their own home. Frontline staff in this section help vulnerable individuals to settle into their new homes by offering advice and assistance in finding furniture, paying bills etc. Many of these individuals will obviously be at risk from fuel poverty, so as part of this package everyone re-housed by the team receives 4 free CFLs, plus information on how to use the bulbs, and a leaflet containing 99 simple no-cost energy saving tips. To supplement this work, a training programme is under development for all frontline staff in Housing Enabling. The training will provide them with the skills to offer energy advice to their clients, as well as specific information on how to use appliances (e.g. boilers, heating systems etc) more efficiently and prevent problems such as damp and condensation.

In addition to these specific projects, the issues surrounding fuel poverty are also highlighted to every new employee starting work at the Council. As part of the induction course for all staff, the issues surrounding energy efficiency in the home, fuel poverty and where to go for grants and additional help are all highlighted in a short talk. The emphasis of the induction is to brief all staff on the basics of energy efficiency and fuel poverty, and to make sure that they know the officer responsible for these issues and where to refer clients for further help. Further in-depth energy training is also available for frontline Council staff that need additional information on how to identify those at risk and offer energy efficiency advice and information.

Achievements

Overall the achievements in the area have been significant. During the year 2002/03 funds levered in through Warm Front increased by approximately 30% to £380,000, and £30,000 of HRA funding was secured for energy efficiency measures in the district. Results from specific indicators of success are detailed below.

Monitoring

The impacts of the Affordable Warmth Strategy are being monitored through a series of performance indicators and targets. The headline results for 2001/02 were as follows:

- ❑ Average energy efficiency of housing stock: improvement of 7.48%;
- ❑ Total number of households receiving Home Energy Reports: target = 2250, actual = 1524;
- ❑ Number of fuel poor receiving Warm Front & Warm Front Plus grants: target = 700, actual = 821; and
- ❑ Number of fuel poor receiving an East Lindsey District Council grant for energy efficiency: target = 170, actual = 204.

Next steps

Further work is planned with the elected members of the Council for the coming year. Briefings on fuel poverty and the importance of energy efficiency are planned (in association with NEA). Training sessions will be promoted to all frontline staff in the Council.

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Outside of the Council work will also begin in earnest on developing links with stakeholders in the community, starting with the Health Sector. Contacts highlighted by the Health Improvement Section (within the Council) will be used to target the health professionals in the local Primary Care Trust and re-launch a healthy homes initiative.

Lessons learned

- ❑ In developing inter-departmental partnerships persistence is vital! It is almost a lobbying exercise to keep raising the issues of fuel poverty at any opportunity to other officers, senior managers and elected members.
- ❑ It is important to keep the issues of fuel poverty in the context of other departments. Staff need to have a reason for taking part, so if work on fuel poverty can help them with key areas of their work (e.g. Best Value Performance Indicators or other areas of scrutiny) it is important to highlight that.
- ❑ Promoting your projects and the help you can offer at every level can help to get the message across. Promoting training sessions directly to frontline staff can be useful if you can illustrate how it will benefit their work.
- ❑ Don't take on too much. It's important to build on work gradually. By showing partners that initiatives are here to stay they are more likely to stay on board and keep remembering to include fuel poverty in their daily operations.
- ❑ Try to maintain a high profile. It's important to let people know who you are and to make sure that your contact details (or the EEACs) are well known within the Council.

Further information

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Case study 4

Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire: tackling fuel poverty in partnership

Introduction

The Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire Strategy 'Action for Affordable Warmth' was the first joint, multi-local authority strategy to tackle fuel poverty in the country. The local authorities involved in the Partnership are Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, Cotswold, Stroud and Forest of Dean District Councils, Gloucester City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. As the Partnership has successfully involved dozens of external organisations in tackling fuel poverty in the region, this case study takes a particular focus on the Partnership's approach to building and maintaining external partnerships.

Corporate objectives

The authorities of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire Council, having taken a partnership approach to tackling fuel poverty, had to be flexible in the development of the strategy as each authority within the Partnership has different corporate objectives and organisational structures. However, all the authorities involved do have their Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) commitments in common. Therefore, at the broadest level, fuel poverty work conducted by the Partnership fits into the respective corporate objectives to which HECA work contributes at the individual authority level. More specifically, the Partnership Strategy has as one of its own objectives the securing of support for affordable warmth issues through each authority's housing strategy. Partnership decisions are made by the Affordable Warmth Steering Group, which consists of the HECA officers from the seven authorities, representatives from the relevant Primary Care Trusts, Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire Social Services, NEA, Severn Wye Energy Agency and voluntary groups. The Partnership has a Chair (currently a representative from South Gloucestershire Council) and Secretary (currently a representative from Stroud District Council), who set up and co-ordinate the Steering Group meetings. Sub-groups deal with particular issues separately. Currently, there are two official sub-groups, dealing with referral networks and monitoring and reporting.

At the individual authority level, support for affordable warmth activities varies due to differences in budget and staffing arrangements. Authority commitment to domestic energy issues also varies across the Partnership, from one authority employing a HECA officer full time to another effectively only having a HECA officer for less than one day a week. To increase the awareness and profile of affordable warmth issues across all of the Partnership authorities, key individuals at decision-making level (i.e. councillors) have received the Strategy and subsequent updates. The goal of seeking councillor commitment is to strengthen the integration of affordable warmth at the authority corporate level and in particular to integrate this issue into the authorities' Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Plans. This implicitly increases financial and other support for the authorities' and hence the Partnership's affordable warmth activities.

Aims & objectives

The overriding aim is 'All homes should be warm homes by 2016'. This is best achieved by working in partnership with key relevant local and regional organisations. On partnerships themselves, the objective is to work towards

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integrating affordable warmth into the everyday practice of organisations that come into contact with fuel poverty, beginning with those that form the Partnership.

Who's involved?

After attending an NEA seminar on affordable warmth strategy development in London, the HECA Group (consisting of HECA officers from the Gloucestershire authorities) decided it would be beneficial to work on producing a joint strategy, in order to take advantage of the many countywide initiatives already in place. The Group subsequently contacted NEA for advice to carry forward the idea of developing a joint strategy. NEA understood the need to involve local organisations and identified the not-for-profit Severn Wye Energy Agency. Severn Wye Energy Agency is one of a network of European energy agencies that was set up to stimulate the development of sustainable energy through local and regional action for energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy resources. It is an ideal body to take a lead role in the joint strategy development process. The HECA Group and the Energy Agency, which also runs the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, then worked together to take forward this process.

Severn Wye Energy Agency organised two development workshops in 2000, which were attended by more than 130 people including key decision makers such as Councillors and MPs. This meant that a large pool of skills and experience from around the County could be drawn upon in contributing to the Strategy. The information gleaned from the workshops was then refined and grouped into aims and tasks, from which the Energy Agency developed specific objectives and a detailed action plan. The HECA Group has the task of taking the Strategy forward locally, delivering on specific aims within their authority area and working in partnership with county functions, where appropriate.

The Gloucestershire HECAAction funded advice and referral network project, 'Warm & Well', was a direct result of the development of the joint Strategy. Launched at the same event as 'Action for Affordable Warmth', 'Warm & Well' has become instrumental in delivering on many objectives of the Strategy. The Energy Agency is the managing agent of Warm & Well and the project was a key tool in increasing the pool of available partners and funding both for delivering this specific scheme and for the Strategy as a whole.

The approach

The Steering Group meets regularly to discuss progress on all activities and the next steps to be taken. All partners are welcome to attend the meetings, which take place approximately quarterly. External speakers are frequently invited to Steering Group meetings to bring in outside expertise and maintain a high level of interest in the issues surrounding fuel poverty. A planning session involving the Chair, Secretary and the Energy Agency takes place prior to each Steering Group meeting to ensure all attendees find the meeting beneficial and effective.

As mentioned before, sub-groups take specific actions forward. However, they are also designed to keep the finer details of affordable warmth activities separate from Steering Group meetings, in order to avoid them going into a level of detail which might prove unnecessary for some partners. Furthermore, the sub-group structure is flexible, fairly informal and thus there is the possibility to set up a new sub-group at any time, for instance to take advantage of a new funding opportunity.

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Steering Group members also attend a range of other meetings with organisations that can have an impact on levels of fuel poverty through their sphere of work, but where fuel poverty is not their main area of concern. For example, PCT meetings where local delivery plans are discussed. Such meetings provide opportunities to identify and develop ideas about potential partnerships, for instance on identifying householders at risk of ill-health (useful in targeting potentially fuel poor households). Attending other meetings provides the chance to raise awareness proactively of how tackling fuel poverty can contribute to a host of objectives held by different agencies.

Dissemination of activities and successes is important, both in order to share experiences with other authorities through talks and seminars and to 'celebrate' the Partnership's achievements. The experience of the Partnership to date has been disseminated through national and regional fora including the NEA national conference, the NEA regional fuel poverty fora, the DEFRA fuel poverty road shows, the NEA seminar series 'Dying to be Warm' and a Government Office South West event.

The 'Warm & Well' HECAction project was set up by the six Gloucestershire authorities led by Cheltenham Borough Council. South Gloucestershire Council joined the two-year-old project in its second year. 'Warm & Well' is managed by the Energy Agency and it refers eligible householders to either Warm Front, authority Home Repairs Assistance grants, or bulk discounts (funded under suppliers' Energy Efficiency Commitment schemes). Primarily it relies on referrals from health and social care professionals. These frontline workers are briefed by Severn Wye Energy Agency or South Gloucestershire Council and are provided with 'Warm & Well' referral packs, which are designed to be as easy to use and as non-obstructive to the professionals' primary work as possible. The Energy Agency is also able to carry out home visits for vulnerable people where further assistance in completing the referral form is required. Though people with health problems are the priority for 'Warm & Well', the Energy Agency engages in general public awareness raising activities to maximise coverage. For example, it uses BBC Radio Gloucestershire as a medium. The scheme has met all of its HECAction targets and has become financially self-sustaining in management cost terms. Over £1 million of energy efficiency improvements have been installed in almost 2,000 homes, with 5,000 people receiving advice through the scheme.

'Warm & Well' has received additional funding from two of the Gloucestershire Primary Care Trusts and valuable in-kind assistance from South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust. This is due to these organisations' realisation of the contribution that the project can make to their own objectives. This funding has been used for heat recovery ventilation systems in households with asthma sufferers. Furthermore, awareness raising with other frontline organisations highlights that their objectives could be well served by successfully referring their own clients to the various sources of funding available through Warm & Well. It is as if the grants were available to the organisations themselves. According to Kaye Welfare of Severn Wye Energy Agency, this makes 'Warm & Well', "An ideal tool for connecting with on the ground agencies", and highlights why the project is instrumental in achieving many of the 'Action for Affordable Warmth' Strategy's partnership objectives.

Maggie Cornock of Care & Repair Stroud, who regularly attends the Steering Group meetings, cites the example of a property with, "hollow clay walls, an outside loo, no drains and no insulation" with a SAP rating of 1. The agency would not normally be

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able to provide sufficient funding to facilitate the required refurbishment. According to Maggie, the Steering Group meetings are, "putting agencies in touch with one another," and enabling, "the exchange of ideas for plugging gaps in grant provision". As a result of joined-up thinking of the affordable warmth partners and 'Warm & Well' in particular, Care & Repair Stroud will be able to go ahead with refurbishing this property using a full Warm Front grant.

'Joined-up thinking' is the philosophy behind the approach adopted to tackle fuel poverty in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. Essentially, the Partnership and Warm & Well act as a conduit for relaying information between organisations that encounter households that may be suffering from fuel poverty. The information relayed is twofold in nature. First, potential partner organisations become mutually aware that measures to provide affordable warmth not only reduce fuel poverty, but can and do reduce health inequalities, reduce excess winter deaths, alleviate social deprivation, improve academic performance, lower CO₂ emissions, and more. This establishes the basis of the partnership: that the same measures can contribute to organisations' varying objectives and reduce fuel poverty. Second, through Warm & Well, partners are empowered to access and encouraged to provide resources that enable the provision of affordable warmth to their clients. By doing so, every partner is in some way contributing to everyone else's objectives. This acts as the incentive, while simultaneously reducing the incidence of fuel poverty.

Timeframe

Major strategy reviews are scheduled for 2005 and 2010.

Achievements

Apart from the ongoing work of the Partnership and the Warm & Well project, landmark achievements have included:

- ❑ A high profile combined launch of 'Action for Affordable Warmth' and 'Warm & Well', attended by over 100 people including MPs, Councillors, senior authority officers and health and social care professionals;
- ❑ Severn Wye Energy Agency securing funding for a countywide Local Authority Support Programme from the Energy Saving Trust. This enabled further supporting work to take place including:
 - The development of a suite of maps indicating levels of fuel poverty at ward level, produced by Centre for Sustainable Energy; and
 - The organising, in partnership with the Local Pensions Service and the Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, of a series of 'Boiling Benefits Roadshows'. As well as promoting energy efficiency, these were also designed to ensure that those eligible for benefits are receiving them. This approach is likely to be replicated in the Avon and Somerset areas.
- ❑ Securing the support of the County NHS Local Strategic Partnership manager Ian Anderson, who is proving crucial to organising partnerships between the Primary Care Trusts at County level;
- ❑ Continued support from NEA, including attendance at Steering Group meetings;
- ❑ The Energy Agency giving talks about the Partnership's work at local and national events;
- ❑ Other authorities looking at the work in developing partnerships to tackle fuel poverty, with the aim of using relevant experience to make successful links;

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- ❑ Contact being made through the Partnership with social housing providers who are now required by the Housing Corporation to consider affordable warmth strategies;
- ❑ The Energy Agency aiding Wiltshire and Swindon's development of their joint affordable warmth strategy.

Monitoring

The Partnership produces a clear and concise annual report on the progress of strategy implementation. It also includes a list of Partnership contacts, useful for further enquiries. In addition, the reporting sub-group, mentioned above, is in the process of establishing a database to monitor progress on all affordable warmth activities. A website providing up to the minute information is under development. This will significantly contribute to the important task of keeping all partners, as well as the general public, informed and will hopefully invite new participants to the Partnership's work.

Next steps

The Partnership is continually looking for new project opportunities, amongst them:

- ❑ Severn Wye Energy Agency is working hard to obtain funding to set up a 'crisis fund'. The idea is to be able to provide grants to Warm & Well clients whose needs cannot be sufficiently met by currently available sources. The criteria for using the crisis fund would be at the Agency's discretion.
- ❑ 'Country Homes Energy Advice Partnership' is a feasibility study being conducted by the Energy Agency and funded by the Energy Saving Trust's Innovation Programme. It is examining the possibility of setting up an installer network to deal with hard-to-treat homes in Stroud District Council and Cotswold District Council. If feasible, it would ideally be extended to the whole of Gloucestershire.

Lessons learned

- ❑ Early stages of strategy implementation would have been easier had there been continuity of membership of the Steering Group, particularly in the health and social care fields.
- ❑ For a few months after the Strategy launch, Steering Group meetings lost some of their focus. When working intensively on strategy development and roll out, it is important not to forget to work just as hard to plan the first implementation steps.
- ❑ It is important to realise that with a long-term strategy it takes time to build the partnerships that will facilitate the implementation of new projects and services that will result in the aims and objectives being met. Patience is necessary in order to avoid feeling unnecessarily disappointed. Furthermore, a strategy should always be a working document and remain realistic.
- ❑ Authorities have to function well together as a partnership in order to engage successfully with outside organisations to tackle fuel poverty in a cohesive and effective manner.

Further information

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Case study 5

North East Derbyshire's Private Finance Initiative to tackle 'hard to heat homes' and under occupation

Introduction

In 1999 North East Derbyshire became one of eight authorities to win Government approval and acquire pathfinder status for a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for the refurbishment of Housing Revenue Account dwellings (i.e. existing council housing). The scheme covers the three former coalfield villages of North Wingfield, Pilsley and Danesmoor, which have properties constructed in the early 1950s of pre-cast reinforced concrete and are classed as defective and unmortgageable.

This case study outlines the Council's activities in fuel poverty and, focuses on how one of the outcomes of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was to tackle fuel poverty and under occupation in hard to heat non-traditional homes.

Corporate objectives

The Council's corporate objectives include commitments to improve housing provision and maintenance and to promote equality of opportunity for all residents. Their Affordable Warmth Strategy was released in April 2002 following the formation of a Steering Group in 2000, which was instigated by the health programme. It has also produced a Community Strategy in conjunction with Chesterfield Borough Council, which includes fuel poverty as part of the wider objectives of healthy communities and well being, and homes and neighbourhoods.

External partnerships include the Local Authority Energy Partnership, which comprised 19 local authorities. This consortium funds a mobile energy efficiency advice centre which visits outlying villages.

Aims & objectives

North East Derbyshire has identified four key aims of the affordable warmth strategy, underpinned with objectives detailing key tasks, targets and timescales:

- ❑ To facilitate good partnership working between agencies;
- ❑ To raise awareness of energy efficiency and affordable warmth;
- ❑ To ensure that socially isolated people have access to advice, information and benefits with which to address fuel poverty; and
- ❑ To progress towards housing which is energy efficient and provides affordable warmth.

One of the objectives of the PFI scheme was to reduce the incidence of fuel poverty and specifically to:

- ❑ Reduce the amount of under-occupation of houses in the specified areas;
- ❑ Increase the SAP rating for all properties in the areas from 45 to 75; and
- ❑ Make the remaining stock mortgageable.

Who's involved?

North East Derbyshire Council instigated the PFI initiative as part of a wider regeneration strategy. Village Homes was the appointed consortium which finances and manages the project, as well as undertaking the renovations.

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The approach

The PFI

In 1999 North East Derbyshire became the third council in the country to submit an Outline Business Case for Private Finance Initiative for the refurbishment of Housing Revenue Account dwellings (i.e. existing council housing). The Council successfully pressed for a change in guidance to the Housing Revenue Account to enable the scheme to proceed, with PFI payments being defined as capital expenditure. (For details on PFI schemes in the Housing Revenue Account visit the following webpage www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/local/hsg/hram/11.htm). In a Housing Revenue Account PFI scheme the stock remains the property of the local authority and tenants remain local authority tenants. The main benefit to the Treasury of choosing this route is the transfer of financial risk to the private sector.

PFI Drivers

The Council identified areas in the District where the properties were classed as being defective and unmortgageable due to the poor quality pre-cast reinforced concrete construction. These construction types include Unity, Reema, Wates and Dyke. The Council also has a commitment to meeting the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010, even for hard to heat homes. Also identified by the Council was a surplus in housing stock in the three villages, with an over-supply of three bedroom council houses. As part of rationalising the council stock, it was decided to demolish 25% of the properties. The remaining 75% (approximately 520 homes) received a comprehensive set of measures to increase the energy efficiency of the stock.

The process of demolishing 25% of the stock involved the relocation of tenants to properties that were more suited to their needs. There were many elderly couples living in three bedroom houses and they were offered the opportunity to move to a bungalow. During this process approximately 200 families were rehoused to accommodation that best suited their needs, thus reducing the level of fuel poverty caused by under-occupation.

The PFI contract

The Council advertised in a European journal for expressions of interest in the project. Seven replies were received and following a competitive tendering process a consortium named Village Homes was appointed as the preferred partner. The consortium comprises private finance group Carillion, Dexia Public Finance Bank, Lovell Construction and Leicester Housing Association (repairs and maintenance).

The PFI was originally administered by the former Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and was taken on by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) after the departmental reorganisation. Village Homes borrows to finance the deal and the Council pays this back to the consortium over a 30-year period through Government PFI Allowance.

There are various performance-related clauses in the contract to ensure consistency and quality of build and to incentivise the operator. The two main standards are the availability standard and the performance standard. The availability standard includes a SAP rating of the property increasing at specified rates. The overall aim for the project is to increase the SAP rating to 75 for all the homes in the villages within three years. This improvement will be gained through the installation of loft insulation and gas central heating, UPVC doors and windows and an external

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cladding in the form of a brick wrap that enables a cavity to be built which can then be filled with cavity wall insulation. A full programme of internal repairs and refurbishment will also include new doors and windows, the installation of new central heating and electrical systems and new kitchens and bathroom.

For every property that fails to meet the standard specified by the agreed date, a deduction will be made in the repayments until these properties reach that standard.

The second standard, the performance standard, is based on services provided. There are a number of categories and each has a time limit in which the contractor must come and fix or replace the faulty item. The target time varies from the same day to 60 days depending on the fault, in line with the Council's repairs and maintenance responsibility. If the targets are missed, financial penalties apply. Once again, these are based on the nature of the problem.

Tenants will remain Council tenants throughout the life of the 30 year contract, with rent levels still being set by the Council.

Other considerations

Leaseholders on a property for which the Council owns the freehold, purchased through the right-to-buy scheme, are liable to contribute to necessary works done to the property. However, under the 'Mandatory Reduction of Service Charge Directions 1999' the amount that can be recharged for the PFI works is limited to £10,000 in any five year period. Leaseholders are entitled to a loan from the Local Authority to help repay this. Currently the Council is considering securing some private sector funding to help tackle this problem and to enable residents to pay. Certain rights of the leaseholders are retained under sections 19 and 20 of the Housing Act 1985. These sections protect the residents from unreasonable costs, and ensure that they are consulted properly.

Next steps

If the scheme is successful the Council will consider replicating it and using another PFI to tackle more hard to heat homes in the area.

Lessons learned

The Pathfinder process for North East Derbyshire District Council has been a long and arduous process. As a Pathfinder scheme, obstacles have been encountered that have taken time to be overcome. These have included a requirement to change the law, changes in scheme guidance and changes to the subsidy delivery mechanism. With Housing Revenue Account PFI being a developing market, problems are to be expected and the lessons learned in undertaking this scheme should enable future projects to be completed more quickly. The PFI deal will be signed in 2003, with services and modernisation works commencing soon afterwards.

Monitoring

Monitoring against the performance regime commences from day one of the contract. As the properties are modernised and meet the availability standard, Village Homes will receive an increased unitary payment. The unitary payment is subject to deductions should Village Homes not perform services or the properties fail to meet the specified levels.

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Further information

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Case study 6 Sheffield City Council: tackling fuel poverty in the private rented sector

Introduction

In 1999 a major survey of domestic properties in Sheffield revealed that at least 11% of households were having difficulty finding money for their heating bills. This figure rose to 15.1% for households in the private rented sector. Although this was an improvement on the previous survey in 1994, it was clear that fuel poverty in the private rented sector still posed a considerable challenge to Sheffield City Council. A series of initiatives are now operating within the Council designed to tackle the problem of fuel poverty in the private rented sector, integrating it into its existing work on raising minimum standards over a range of other issues. The HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) Registration scheme, the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme (voluntary) and the Sheffield Responsible Landlord Scheme are all helping to address fuel poverty in this notoriously difficult to tackle sector. Ongoing liaison with The Sheffield and District Landlord Association helps to ensure emerging standards are fully discussed particularly in relation to voluntary schemes.

Corporate objectives & drivers for action

The Council's corporate vision is:

- ❑ To be among the best managed councils, providing the best quality services in the country; and
- ❑ To work in active partnership with the community to regenerate Sheffield and improve the quality of life for all its residents.

Underpinning this vision is a corporate plan that considers: national agendas, the city strategy, local area plans and the fulfilment of ten corporate projects (which include developing better housing). Social inclusion and regeneration are key themes that run throughout the corporate aims of the council, as well as meeting targets on Best Value.

In this context, the drivers for action on fuel poverty come from two areas, both responding to a broader national agenda. Firstly, the Home Energy Conservation Act requirement to achieve a 30% improvement in domestic energy efficiency by 2010 has been heavily promoted by the Council's Capital Resource Management Team to all relevant teams in the Council. These teams have subsequently incorporated aspects of promoting energy saving into their work. Secondly, the requirement to meet the Decent Homes standard is also driving forward action on meeting minimum standards of energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. This has been particularly pertinent for homes under Council ownership, but has also been used as a yardstick for action in the private rented sector.

The housing teams within the Council cover three distinct remits: public sector, owner occupied and private rented housing. Each has its own work plan and targets and each is responsible for delivering energy efficiency improvements under HECA, as well as meeting Council targets on Decent Homes and maintenance of basic standards. The private rented team has been further broken down into a proactive and a reactive team. The reactive team undertakes the traditional role of responding to complaints and carrying out standard enforcement duties on private landlords in the area. The proactive team was developed to enforce standards in a range of private rented accommodation (principally HMOs) and to develop voluntary schemes.

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This more holistic approach has developed and has built real and effective partnerships with landlords, helping them to maintain warm, safe and well-managed properties.

Aims & objectives

For private sector housing there is an overarching aim to, "Improve the conditions of housing in the private sector, both owner occupied and private rented using a range of interventions and advice. In the owner occupied sector there are grants available to individual occupiers and, on a more strategic basis, to larger groups within the same area or street". The key objectives (all of which contribute towards reducing the incidence of fuel poverty) are to:

- ❑ Help stabilise the housing market;
- ❑ Reduce the number of unfit and obsolete houses;
- ❑ Promote and encourage the quality and management of private rented housing;
- ❑ Promote confidence in communities and encourage owners to invest in their own properties and neighbourhoods; and
- ❑ Help and enable people to live in decent housing.

At a team level each of the programmes addressing the private rented sector has quantitative targets, set through an annual work plan, that are monitored on a monthly basis. Both the Responsible Landlord Scheme and the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme must meet a target of 50 new landlords signed up each year. The HMO registration scheme already includes most HMOs in the area, so targets here are on enforcement of regulations and re-registration where appropriate.

Who's involved?

The development of the Accreditation Scheme was initiated with the outcome of a court case in 1995. The Barnes vs. Sheffield City Council case removed shared student housing occupied by up to five people (later extended to six) from the definition of a House in Multiple Occupation. This left the majority of shared student housing outside the definition and thus with no minimum standards. This situation was unacceptable and new steps had to be taken to ensure that these dwellings were being adequately maintained to a safe and healthy standard.

This led to the development of the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme, a set of voluntary standards developed by the Council to ensure that accredited homes meet above average standards in safety, amenities, security requirements and energy efficiency. The scheme involves collaboration between the Council's capital resource management team (that has responsibility for HECA reporting) and the private rented housing team led to the securing of a HECAAction grant in 1996. This grant pump-primed this initial work with private landlords by providing a source of funding for the energy efficiency works to be carried out. The Private Rented Energy Saving Scheme (PRESS) identified a range of energy measures suitable for typical terraced houses let to students.

From this initial partnership a number of other organisations were drawn in to assist with the development of the Accreditation Scheme and, more recently, the Responsible Landlords Scheme.

- ❑ From an early stage the accommodation centre at the Sheffield Hallam University has been an active partner. Involved in getting the initial HECAAction funding, the Centre could see direct relevance and benefits for the

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- students of the University in having a recognised accreditation scheme that provided safer, warmer homes for students.
- ❑ The University also involved their School of Construction, which trained surveyors to carry out energy audits of all properties.
 - ❑ In addition, the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme was developed through consultation with other groups, including the University of Sheffield Housing Services, Sheffield Hallam and the University of Sheffield Student Unions, the Fire Service, South Yorkshire Police, National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting, the Health & Safety Executive, Community Initiatives Programmes and People United Against Crime. This broader Steering Group is still contacted on a sporadic basis when consultation on scheme development is required.
 - ❑ Landlords and tenants were also involved in the consultation on the Accreditation and Responsible Landlord Scheme. Recently the landlords group has been formalised with the development of the Sheffield and District Landlords Association. Launched in 2003, a committee of around ten landlords meet on a regular basis to discuss a range of issues.

The approach

The Student Housing Accreditation Scheme is a set of voluntary standards developed by the council to ensure that accredited homes meet above average standards in safety, amenities, security requirements and energy efficiency. Landlords wishing to be accredited under the scheme must meet all the standards set out in an accreditation checklist and the property has to be inspected by a housing officer.

As a result of this initial scheme, further initiatives in the private rented sector have been developed in order to assist relevant members of the non-student population, especially the more vulnerable in society who often have a greater propensity to be fuel poor. In February 2002 the Council held the first Landlords Forum for the region. This was a well-publicised evening event where high profile local councillors and representatives from the National Federation of Landlords were brought together to speak to landlords in the region. Over 400 landlords attended the event. The Forum was used as a platform to promote the Sheffield and District Landlord Association, to recruit a committee to lead the group and to show landlords that the Council was willing to become actively involved in their concerns. Maureen Lawless, Senior Housing Officer, proactive team, noted: "Landlords are really beginning to appreciate that we are actually getting involved and doing something to help. They see us as part of the solution now, not just a show of PR!"

Since then the Sheffield and District Landlord Association has been holding regular meetings that are attended by a representative from the Council. The Association is seen as a key part of the proactive work that the private rented team is trying to develop. "Moving away from simple reinforcement of standards and taking a more proactive approach to helping Landlords has made a big difference in the way we are perceived", says Gez Myers, Team Leader of Sheffield City Council's HMO Registration Scheme. Landlords in the area are becoming more open to suggestions for improvement from the Council because they feel that the relationship is no longer a one-way street, with the Council simply imposing rules and regulations. This partnership arrangement is clearly something that is responsible for the success of private rented sector schemes in the area.

Launched in February 2003 at the second Landlords Forum, the Responsible Landlord Scheme is open to all landlords in the region. It was developed in consultation with

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the Sheffield and District Landlord Association and other key stakeholders and has been designed to address those homes not covered by the Student Housing Scheme. It does not require such high standards as the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme but the energy efficiency standards do go beyond those required by the Decent Homes Standard. The private rented team is hoping that once significant buy-in from landlords in the area has been achieved, these standards can then be slowly ratcheted up to be in-line with the Student Accreditation Scheme.

Achievements

By May 2003, fifty landlords had been accredited under the Student Housing Scheme. The Responsible Landlord Scheme, launched in February 2003, already has thirty landlords (covering around fifty properties) on its lists, with considerably more expressing an interest in joining as the incentives are developed. Using the NHER energy modelling system, an average 28% reduction in carbon emissions has been identified in all houses brought up to accreditation standard. As regards the HMO Registration Scheme, it is calculated that an 18% improvement will be achieved.

Monitoring

In addition to the monthly monitoring of performance targets, further promotion of the Student Housing Accreditation Scheme is also planned for 2003. A full audit of all landlords who have expressed an interest in the Scheme (whether or not they have since gained accreditation) will be carried out. This is designed to establish what standards landlords are already working to and whether or not they wish to apply for accreditation standard. This data will then be used to develop the accreditation schemes according to the areas of need in the sector.

Next steps

Central Government has now given local authorities greater flexibility in the ways they can offer assistance in the private sector. As such, the Council now no longer offers private landlords grant assistance for renovation and upgrading of their properties. This has a knock on effect for the accreditation schemes, which cannot offer grant packages as incentives to work to improve energy efficiency and promote other standards. Without this incentive, previous schemes have shown that there is far less interest in the accreditation schemes, so there is a need to find alternative sources of funding.

In association with the South Yorkshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, the private rented team is hoping to develop a signposting information system for possible sources of external funding for both tenants and landlords. On a more strategic level, the Council is researching the possibility of upgrading energy efficiency in a pre-identified group of private rented houses, using funds from a bid to the energy suppliers.

Lessons learned

Engaging with landlords is a long process; successful involvement of individuals requires a number of factors:

- Keep good records and databases. Make sure that information on landlords gathered through daily contact is retained and maintained in a comprehensive database. This makes all marketing exercises much simpler;
- Have a named point of contact for all enquiries from landlords: "It's important to talk to landlords face-to-face, to show that you are accountable and to give them an identifiable point of contact. It makes the council much more credible" says Jacqui Morgan, Acting Senior Housing Officer;

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- ❑ Organising a high profile event to bring stakeholders together can emphasise the importance of the issues, and will often encourage higher attendance; and
- ❑ Use other contacts in the region to access landlords e.g. universities, property agents etc.

Getting the accreditation schemes right can be an iterative process that develops gradually. "It's important to keep the scheme simple but not simplistic," says Gez Myers, Team Leader of Sheffield City Council's HMO Registration Scheme. Top-heavy administration for allocation of grants or application for accreditation can put people off; forms should be easy to fill in and straightforward. Operating in the private rented sector is a complex task. Over-simplifying areas such as eligibility criteria will just create more questions.

Developing internal partnerships is crucial; "Working closely with others such as the HECA Officer and the local EEAC can be very fruitful for housing departments" says Chris Goodacre, Assistant Unit Manager, Capital Resource Management Team. EEACs and HECA Officers will often have access to information on funding to address fuel poverty that housing staff just aren't aware of. Using contacts in as many areas as possible can help to lever in more funding for addressing fuel poverty and other related issues.

Further information

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- ❑ Student Housing Accreditation Scheme: Maureen Lawless, Senior Housing Officer E: maureen.lawless@sheffield.gov.uk
- ❑ Sheffield Responsible Landlords Scheme & SADLA: Jacqui Morgan, Acting Senior Housing Officer E: jacqui.morgan@sheffield.gov.uk
- ❑ HMO Registration Scheme and other enquiries: Gez Myers, Team Leader (Proactive Team) E: gerard.myers@sheffield.gov.uk

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Case study 7

Brighton and Hove City Council: taking on hard to reach groups

Introduction

The population of Brighton and Hove is very diverse, with a relatively high proportion of students and a large number of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Brighton and Hove City Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy was adopted by the Council as policy in November 2002 and it includes various actions specifically aimed at hard to reach groups.

Corporate objectives

In January 2001, Brighton and Hove City Council formally adopted a comprehensive Home Energy Efficiency Strategy covering all housing sectors. This strategy was developed by the Home Energy Efficiency Subgroup of the Brighton and Hove Private Sector Housing Forum (PSHF). They felt that it was appropriate to consider reviewing and updating the fuel poverty objectives of the HEE Strategy, particularly in light of government advice to local authorities to focus on this issue.

Therefore, two affordable warmth/fuel poverty workshops were held in the early part of 2001. Three aims were successfully achieved:

- ❑ The development of a fully comprehensive and up to date Action Programme which covers all housing sectors in Brighton and Hove;
- ❑ The PSHF's Energy Efficiency Subgroup was strengthened by including new members with the ability to make significant impacts in the drafting and implementation of the Strategy and Action Programme; and
- ❑ The workshops have assisted the development of effective local networks, without which the Action Programme could not be delivered.

In addition to the Home Energy Efficiency Strategy, the Community Plan also includes a target to reduce fuel poverty by spending £5 million per year on the provision of home energy efficiency measures (including the provision of energy efficiency heating systems) to the homes of low-income and vulnerable people in all housing sectors.

Aims & objectives

The strategy has one single aim, to eradicate fuel poverty in Brighton and Hove by 2010. It also includes an action programme that incorporates specific objectives, actions and timescales. The objectives relate to four main areas: education; information, advice and campaigns; measures to Council housing; and private sector renewal. Targets applicable to hard to reach groups include:

- ❑ Establishing an initiative with the specific aim of tackling fuel poverty affecting pupils and students living in Brighton and Hove;
- ❑ Providing information and advice to those living in ethnic minority communities through support/religious organisations according to demand;
- ❑ Providing home energy efficiency information and/or advice in languages other than English according to need;
- ❑ Establishing, promoting and implementing appropriate arrangements to encourage and enable energy efficiency measures in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), which should be included in the Council's HMO Registration Scheme; and
- ❑ Providing grant information for energy efficiency measures via Neighbourhood Watch groups.

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Who's involved?

The Energy Efficiency Subgroup of the PSHF has partnerships developed from its previous activities. The development of the Affordable Warmth Strategy has provided the Council with the opportunity to develop new relationships with a wider range of organisations. Key partners are detailed below:

The EnergyCare Network

The Network trains people in the community to identify 'hard to reach' householders vulnerable to fuel poverty and refer them to the Network. The programme is funded by SEEBOARD ENERGY Limited and covers South East England, including Brighton and Hove. The programme offers advice and a 100% grants on home insulation measures for those residents claiming means tested benefits. It also offers heavily discounted home insulation to those not in receipt of benefits.

The programme utilises the power of local networks to raise awareness of the help available amongst their client groups and refer them to the network. The network of frontline staff that has received training includes Council officers from the Housing, Housing Benefit and Social Services departments and the anti-poverty team, in addition to external partners such as midwives and health visitors, representatives from GP practices, and the community and voluntary sectors.

"Through training, The EnergyCare Network can reach frontline staff enabling them to refer vulnerable clients to the appropriate grant schemes", says Andrew White, EnergyCare Network Manager.

"We work with our partners to overcome issues of trust, and we hope that this will be most beneficial in the future through our newly formed partnership with the local Primary Care Trust", says Philip Wingfield, Home Energy Efficiency Officer, Brighton and Hove City Council.

Surrey and East Sussex Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

The Energy Efficiency Advice Centre provides general energy efficiency advice to householders and refers clients to appropriate grant agencies, such as the Energy Care Network and Eaga Partnership to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

AES Consulting Limited

AES is a specialist project management consultancy that works largely in the energy efficiency and environmental management fields. AES has worked closely with the authority for over three years, mainly in the public housing sector. This has included introducing and utilising a range of initiatives to help eliminate fuel poverty. For example, it has secured over £2m for direct use in over 9,700 insulation measures for homes in which its occupants were considered to have been living in fuel poverty.

Eaga Partnership Ltd

Another key partner is Eaga Partnership Ltd, the managing agent for the Government's Warm Front scheme that provides heating and insulation measures to individuals in receipt of qualifying benefits. Eaga Partnership has been crucial in improving links with the health sector. In November 2002 Brighton and Hove City Council and Eaga Partnership's Network Liaison Officer jointly arranged a Fuel Poverty seminar. Key speakers at the event included local MP and sponsor of the Home Energy Conservation Bill, Des Turner, and Peter Wilkinson, Public Health Consultant for the local Primary Care Trust. The aim of the event was to establish

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links with, and bring together, those in the health service, social services and the Council's Anti Poverty Team.

In Autumn 2002 this new partnership working between the PCT, local GPs, Eaga and the local authority was demonstrated. A joint mail out was sent to householders eligible for free flu jabs from their GP. To qualify for the vaccination, recipients had to be over 60 and therefore possibly eligible for Warm Front grants. A total of 52,000 letters were sent out, resulting in 1,000 households receiving Warm Front grants to date.

"Brighton and Hove City Council and the Primary Care Trust are working to improve the health and well-being of those in vulnerable groups in the local community, so it makes sense for the Warm Front Team to work in partnership with both of these organisations", says Corinne Thompson, Network Liaison Officer, Eaga Partnership Ltd.

Brighton and Hove Older People's Council

The Older People's Council was elected in 2001 and is the first of its kind in the UK. Its aim is to lobby on older people's issues. Each member of the Council has a separate portfolio; the housing portfolio is currently assigned to Joan Moorhouse. Joan is also a member of the Home Energy Efficiency Subgroup of the PSHF.

As a result of the Fuel Poverty Seminar, the Home Energy Efficiency Officer for Brighton and Hove, Eaga Partnership Ltd and other Home Energy Efficiency Subgroup partners attended the Older People's Council Annual General Meeting. Energy efficiency, affordable warmth and grants were promoted to members. Members were also provided with leaflets to disseminate amongst their networks, such as community and pensioners' groups.

Joan also held an event in conjunction with the Pensioners Association, offering low energy light bulbs in exchange for completed Home Energy Checks questionnaires.

"Being a member of the Home Energy Efficiency Subgroup helps me to keep older people informed of what's available to keep warm and healthy. At the same time, I'm able to inform the subgroup of the issues and challenges that older people encounter", explains Joan Moorhouse, Brighton and Hove Older People's Council.

Brighton and Hove City Council – Private Sector Housing

The local authority is already organising workshops and road shows at local universities, promoting energy efficiency in the home to students. They are also working with the Council's Sustainability Team on educational events with local schools.

The approach

To increase its knowledge the Council purchased a National Home Energy Rating stock database to collate and input energy efficiency measures.

Council Housing

For a considerable time, Brighton and Hove City Council has been committed to achieving dramatic improvements in the energy efficiency SAP ratings of their housing stock. Action has been taken to install cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing, heat recovery ventilators and efficient heating systems in thousands of their own properties.

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Private Sector Housing

The Council funds a Home Energy Efficiency Officer's post to tackle fuel poverty in the private sector and to improve the well-being and health in the community. The Council makes full use of partners' resources, such as marketing, literature, personnel and existing promotional activities (detailed above in the section 'Who's involved?').

As well as promoting the Government's Warm Front and Warm Front Plus grants, which offer insulation and heating measures for householders in receipt of qualifying benefits, Brighton & Hove also refers householders to a number of energy supplier schemes that offer insulation measures to the over 60s.

The Council is working in collaboration with all the local authorities in the East Sussex area on the Heat and Sun project which offers grants to all households for cavity wall and loft insulation, as well as solar water heating. The scheme was awarded £180,000 from the Energy Saving Trust's HECAction programme in 2000. It offers larger grants to those in receipt of an income-related benefit.

Until February 2003 Brighton and Hove also offered Home Repair Assistance Grants to owner occupiers and leaseholders of flats aged 60 or over who were either ineligible for Warm Front or Warm Front Plus grants or eligible for these grants but in need of top up funding to obtain all heating and insulation measures. The Council also offered Renovation Grants to owner-occupiers and leaseholders of flats living in properties unfit for habitation. The grant was means tested and measures included a gas-condensing boiler if the existing boiler was beyond repair, central heating, window replacement, upgrading of heating controls and loft and cavity wall insulation.

These grants have been suspended pending a complete review of Brighton and Hove's grants system. Therefore, none of the Council's own grants are currently available. The result of this review will be known in late June 2003 and the new grants policy will be in place in July 2003. One of the aims of the new Housing Renewal Policy will be to ensure not only that the disadvantaged residents of Brighton and Hove obtain maximum benefit from Warm Front and the Energy Efficiency Commitment, but also that these schemes are supplemented to fund additional energy efficiency measures in the homes of low income households.

The Council has operated two match grant schemes providing insulation measures to the over 60s. One scheme has closed, the other scheme was launched in 2002 and received £100K 'first round' match funding from SEEBOARD.

In addition, the Council has recently embarked on a new publicity campaign promoting energy efficiency and the take up of grants through local Neighbourhood Watch group leaders. The Council has provided editorial for group newsletters and attended the local annual neighbourhood watch 'open day'. Furthermore, the Council has also promoted Warm Front Grants with a campaign on BBC Southern Counties Radio.

Timeframe

The Council adopted the Affordable Warmth Strategy as policy in November 2002, with the aim to eradicate fuel poverty in Brighton and Hove by 2010.

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Achievements

Although the Affordable Warmth Strategy was only adopted as policy during November 2002, the Council has already achieved a number of aims including:

Public Sector Housing

In the past twelve months alone several thousand loft 'top-ups', where insulation is increased from 100mm to 250mm, have taken place, some 300 condensing boilers with modern control systems have been installed and a large programme of draught proofing undertaken.

To allow such a large-scale programme to take place the Council has looked, and continues to look at, innovative ways to gain funding over and above the Council's own funds. There have been a number of large grants received via the utilities' Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) funding. For example the Council has received a total of almost £500,000 in the last twelve months alone.

The result of these efforts can be seen by the dramatic improvement in the SAP rating of Brighton & Hove's stock. This is currently 66, and when compared to the national average of around 44, it is clearly an excellent achievement.

Private Sector Housing

In the private sector, achievements include:

- ❑ Embarking upon a registration scheme for HMOs. During registration, HMO landlords are being provided with home energy efficiency information, details of grants for which their tenants might be eligible and low energy lightbulbs for tenants.
- ❑ A mailshot promoting Warm Front Grants to approximately 6,700 private sector households in receipt of Housing or Council Tax Benefit with occupants aged 60 or over, or who have children under 16.
- ❑ As part of the development of partnership working with the local health authority, 52,000 households in Brighton & Hove with occupants eligible for free flu vaccinations also received a mailshot promoting the take up of Warm Front grants. To date, this has resulted in more than 1,000 households being made warmer through grants.
- ❑ A mailshot promoting Warm Front was also sent to all local GP surgeries and chemists. This included a sample supply of Warm Front leaflets and a letter inviting requests for further leaflets and posters to be displayed in surgeries and stores.
- ❑ In conjunction with the Energy Care Network, the Council has set up and is running a programme of free fuel poverty awareness training for appropriate front line staff. Those trained so far include staff from the Council's Anti Poverty and Housing Benefit Teams as well as social workers and community midwives based at the Brighton & Hove University Hospital NHS Trust.

Monitoring

The Home Energy Efficiency Subgroup of the PSHF monitors progress of the implementation of both the Home Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategies. The Home Energy Efficiency Officer is continuously carrying out monitoring against strategy targets.

Next steps

The Council has now set itself targets to achieve further improvements to its own housing stock that will see the average SAP rating improve even further over the

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coming years. At this time there are negotiations taking place to secure funds, in addition to the capital funding already set aside. This will allow a major new investment to be made in the Council's stock in terms of improved insulation. In addition, high efficiency heating systems are being installed in an ongoing rolling programme. This has allowed Brighton and Hove to gain additional external funding to re-invest in further energy efficiency programmes.

An application for feasibility study funding is currently being prepared for the June 2003 round of the Energy Saving Trust Innovation Programme. This programme provides support for local authorities and their project partners to promote and implement innovative approaches to reducing carbon emissions in their local areas. The project proposes to investigate the best ways of working with frontline staff in parts of the health service to identify households in, or vulnerable to, fuel poverty and refer them to help and grant agencies and offer advice on self-help.

The Council is also looking into the possibility of producing leaflets giving advice on energy efficiency in the home in languages other than English. There is likely to be particular demand for Arabic and Farsi versions. The possibility of producing material on a regional/national scale through EST rather than locally is also being investigated.

The Council will also be looking at extending its links with local health services through the East Sussex HECA Forum, and establishing new links with social services.

Finally, the Council plans to work on further initiatives with schools and universities. For example, it will continue to organise energy efficiency road shows for students moving into private sector accommodation. One of the next steps will be to attempt to launch an incentive scheme for landlords of student accommodation and/or HMOs through EEC. Initial investigation indicates that the Council is going to be restricted in this by the current EEC rules. The Home Energy Efficiency Officer believes that students should become a legitimate client group for EEC as they suffer the same problems as the traditional groups targeted by EEC, such as low/no income and often living in poor quality housing. Promotion of energy efficiency in the home to school pupils will continue through participation in events and campaigns with the Council's Sustainability Team.

Lessons learned

- ❑ Administering the EEC grant schemes with the local utility company through the Council's own grant scheme has presented procedural complications and difficulties. This was due to operating a joint funded scheme within the framework set up to operate the Council's Home Repair Assistance grants. A further joint scheme has been operated since and these difficulties have largely been eradicated through changes in administration methods.
- ❑ The private sector is difficult to deal with, in particular HMOs. Landlords often have little interest in improving properties or being more energy efficient, as they are not responsible for utility bills.
- ❑ There is a tendency for landlords to remove gas heating in favour of more expensive to run electric heating, to avoid regulations surrounding gas safety.

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Further information

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Case study 8

South Cambridgeshire District Council: health partnerships

Introduction

In 2001, as part of the work towards the Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan (HIMP), the Cambridgeshire Health Authority (now the Strategic Health Authority) produced a series of datasets illustrating the geographical distribution of health inequalities throughout the county. These datasets revealed countywide pockets of deprivation and a north-south divide of poverty. To address the causes of these health inequalities, it was necessary for the health sector to work in partnership with the local Councils to achieve genuine change. Collaborating through the South Cambridgeshire Health Improvement Partnership and supported by the Local Strategic Partnership, the South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the District Council have succeeded in developing a series of joint objectives to tackle the causes of health inequalities that also incorporate action on fuel poverty.

Corporate objectives

Action on public health and the alleviation of health inequalities are key drivers for activity in the Council. Along with several other factors, fuel poverty has been identified as one of the main causes of health inequalities. Consequently, it has been incorporated into the objectives of the main stakeholders in the area.

The Health Improvement Partnership is the primary vehicle for the agreement and development of overarching objectives on public health. The group sits between the Council and the PCT and is made up of representatives from a wide cross section of agencies including the PCT, the District Council, County Council Social Services and the local NHS Hospital as well as voluntary organisations. The partnership is responsible for the development of the health priorities for all its partner organisations and has recently been consulting on the Local Improving Health Plan (which forms part of the PCT's Local Delivery Plan). Within the plan, "vulnerable people" is one of the six priorities earmarked for action in the district. Covered under this priority are: falls prevention, reducing delayed transfers from hospital and the alleviation of fuel poverty and promotion of affordable warmth. To ensure a consistent and joined up approach outputs such as the Plan are fed back to the Council's Cabinet and the PCT's Professional Executive Committee (PEC) who then formally agree the joint priorities and subsequent actions.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has four overarching corporate objectives. The second has been key to tackling fuel poverty in the region: "The Council will promote a healthier environment to enable our communities to lead healthier lives, by their own actions and in active partnership with others". Treating fuel poverty as a social (rather than a housing) issue has enabled health improvement to be used as a driver to push forward positive action on fuel poverty.

Approval for Strategic Improving Health partnership working obtained through either the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and/or the Improving Health Advisory Group (IHAG), a group of elected members, advised by the Council's Environmental Health Department. The IHAG is responsible for vetting new proposals before they go to cabinet, and making recommendations on their suitability for further development. Because health improvement is a Council corporate objective, and the impacts of fuel poverty on health are now well established, most projects and initiatives receive

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consent with relative ease. In addition, within the Public Health structure two positions exist that span both the health and local government sectors:

- ❑ Funded by the Council, an Environmental Health Officer with responsibility for public health and HECA spends one day a week at the PCT as part of a 'Virtual Public Health Team'.
- ❑ Jointly funded by the Cambridgeshire County Council and the PCT, the Assistant Director of Social Services also holds the position of Director of Health Development and Partnership within the PCT.

These positions have the dual role of strengthening the links between local government and the health sector and entrenching the need for joint objectives that are achieved through partnership working of the two organisations. In addition, the Council-funded public health post is almost entirely based around sustaining the numerous partnerships between the Council and other stakeholder organisations. Joint working is also assisted by the fact that the geographical areas covered by the Council and the PCT are almost completely co-terminus. This is not the case in every region, where often the areas supported by a council will only partially overlap with a PCT.

Aims & objectives

The overarching aim of both the Council and the PCT is to reduce the number of people living in South Cambridgeshire whose health is adversely affected by cold, damp homes. For the Council the key objectives for achieving this aim are:

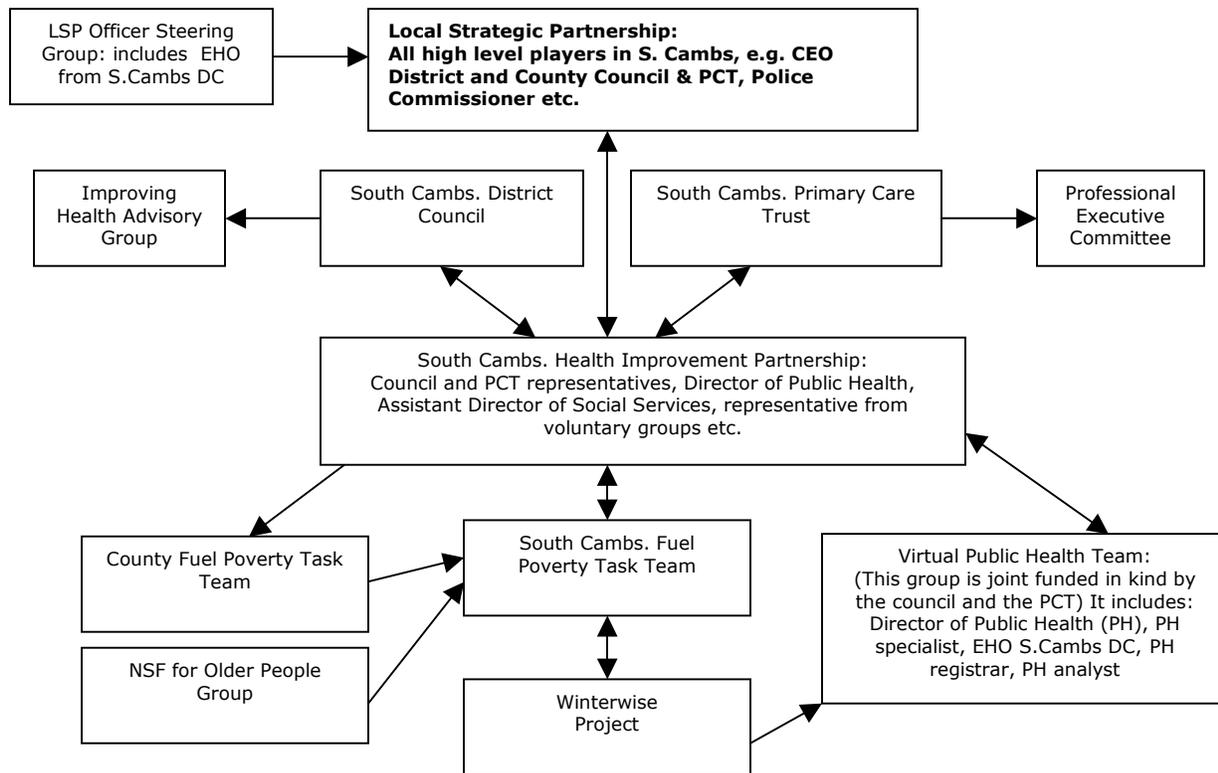
- ❑ To develop appropriate referral systems linking the fuel poor with grant agencies;
- ❑ To ensure that vulnerable people are receiving benefits advice; and
- ❑ To ensure that all local work is linked to and supported by relevant stakeholders.

For the PCT their key objective is to adopt a holistic approach to promoting the health of older people, through participating with Council and other campaigns, and actively working on referral systems.

Who's involved?

Illustrated below is a snapshot of the key groups and partnerships involved in the health and fuel poverty work within South Cambridgeshire.

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The approach

Developing the case for fuel poverty

Research was carried out on data from Addenbrookes Hospital, calculating the number of excess winter deaths in the area and matching this with an age profile. The data confirmed that these deaths occur predominantly among the elderly (especially those over 80). Further work went on to characterise the nature of the illnesses of patients admitted into hospital over the seasons. Data showed sharp peaks in respiratory admissions over winter; again, the majority of these were in the elderly. Analysis of time spent in hospital after admission revealed the average stay for those over 60 to be more than three weeks. This work was commissioned by the Fuel Poverty Task Team, and carried out by a public health analyst resident at the Anglia Support Partnership. The work was funded by the PCT as part of the work required by the Virtual Public Health Team.

The purpose of the studies was to illustrate, using local data, the extent of the problems that fuel poverty could be influencing. The data showed the potential impacts of fuel poverty on priority areas such as bed blocking and care for older and vulnerable people. This has been a very useful resource in making the case to the health sector for inclusion of action on fuel poverty in their strategic priorities.

"It is important to find the right joint trigger points for people working in the health sector. They are interested in how you can help them meet their targets. Just talking about energy efficiency and the specifics of fuel poverty won't push the right buttons. We both have the same target point; only our language differs", says Iain Green, Environmental Health, South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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Gathering momentum

Through the forum of the Health Improvement Partnership, the data was fed back to the PCT. Based on the evidence outlined above, the PCT accepted that tackling fuel poverty could be a key factor in helping them to meet their targets on reducing delayed discharges from hospital and would assist the older and vulnerable people in the area. Following this, the Council and the PCT co-operated on developing a "health needs" analysis for the entire district. Identifying problem areas in all aspects of public health and prioritising them for action. This data has been instrumental in the development of the Improving Health Plan, and the priorities on tackling fuel poverty formally adopted by both parties.

Taking action

Working through the networks outlined above, two frontline projects have been developed specifically to address the issues of fuel poverty and health.

The Winterwise Programme is an awareness-raising and referral system managed by Age Concern, which acts as a 'one stop shop' for providing information on a range of topics from Warm Front grants to falls prevention, security and fire safety. A variety of frontline workers (health professionals, occupation therapists, post office workers, frontline Council staff etc) have been briefed on the scheme and are being encouraged to promote it to their clients where appropriate. The scheme has only been running for a year. Initial results have not been as good as expected but there is still considerable commitment to the work and new promotion plans are currently being made for winter 2003.

Using the Council's benefit database, a mailshot is sent to all benefit claimants once a year promoting the Warm Front grants. The scheme is proving to be successful, with marked increases in referrals to Warm Front during the mailing period. This scheme continues on an annual basis with regular mailshots to all benefits claimants, promoting a range of available grants in the area.

Monitoring

The numbers in fuel poverty are difficult to monitor. However, the number of referrals to Warm Front can and is being used to monitor the effectiveness of the mailshot campaign. Age Concern also monitors the number of enquiries to its services as an indication of the effectiveness of the Winterwise Campaign.

Next steps

The next steps for South Cambridgeshire District Council's health and fuel poverty work centre on developing frontline activity. The Winterwise programme will be widened to include the Council's elected members in the referral network, using them to promote the scheme to their elderly residents during local surgeries. In addition, all Council services across Cambridgeshire will shortly be covered by a single phone number for all enquiries. This should enhance the 'one stop shop' initiative of the Winterwise programme.

A House Condition Survey will be carried out in the coming year, which will develop the work on identification and targeting of the fuel poor. The survey will include information on the general fitness of the property, along with information on the health of the occupants. Questions may include: "Have you been admitted to hospital for respiratory problems in the last year?" "Do you think your home is cold/damp?" Data from this survey will be used to back up the earlier research from Addenbrookes on the impact of cold homes on health in the region and will be

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compared with housing data. This data will also be used to prepare the new grant regime under the regulatory reform of the Housing Grants System. In particular, the Council hopes to offer grants to those most in need of replacement boilers.

Lessons learned

- ❑ Start with contacting the Director of Public Health. Since April 2002 this position should have been established in every PCT across England. Public health is a key focus point for activity as fuel poverty is more than just an issue of poor housing; the related health impacts of cold, damp homes are well documented. Public Health covers the wider concerns of primary health care. Therefore, professionals working in this area should be better placed to take decisions on holistic solutions than some other frontline staff;
- ❑ However, public health often has the smallest budget of all areas of the health sector (where most money is directed to reactive services and treatments);
- ❑ It is very important to remember that health professionals have very little interest in fuel poverty as a housing or an energy efficiency issue. It is vital to address the issue in their terms, illustrating how fuel poverty causes problems that relate to their everyday work such as excess winter deaths, bed blocking and respiratory illness;
- ❑ Understanding how the health sector operates and what its priorities are is very important. It helps if you understand all the relevant National Service Frameworks (NSF) that can benefit from tackling fuel poverty. Although it is a laborious process, understanding NSFs and using them to illustrate how fuel poverty work can achieve other goals plays a key role in getting the health sector on board;
- ❑ Flexibility of aims and a willingness to work on all objectives (even those that are not core work) have kept the partnership working effectively together. This means that the Council and the PCT can be working together on a common agenda, with each party taking the lead where it has greatest relevance to core activities; and
- ❑ The Local Strategic Partnership has been (and will increasingly be) vital in setting agendas at a high level that ensure a buy-in from all stakeholders. Because improving health is one of the key topics addressed by the LSP, it has made it easier to get Council commitment to take part in initiatives that can advance this area.

Further information

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Case study 9

Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council: working with the health sector

Introduction

The Council's Cabinet approved Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2002, following consultation with key partners. It aims to abolish fuel poverty across all sectors in Calderdale by 2016 with three five-year plans. This case study looks at the activities taken by the Council to tackle fuel poverty, focusing in particular on how the Council is working with the health sector.

Corporate objectives

Calderdale MBC has six priorities in its Corporate Plan, one of which is: "To support and protect vulnerable children, young people and adults and promote independent and healthy living." This corporate priority feeds into the Local Strategic Partnership's Futures Plan, which has a more specific and relevant statement in its vision. This states (amongst other things) that: "At the heart of the Futures Plan is a vision for the Future of Calderdale where people feel safe, warm and comfortable in their homes."

The Council has won Beacon Status for Local Health Strategies and the Calderdale Health Energy Action Project (CHEAP) scheme was one of three case studies used to demonstrate the Council's best practice with regard to partnership working to improve health in the community.

In addition, senior councillors have always been kept informed of the work of the Housing Energy Team and were consulted on the Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Aims & objectives

Calderdale's Fuel Poverty Strategy aims to abolish fuel poverty in Calderdale with three five-year plans:

- *2001-5 General improvements and improving information on the stock (target – average SAP 50 by 2005).* The Council recognises that to target their efforts effectively, they need to improve the information that they currently hold on the energy performance of housing in the area. In 2001 the Housing Energy Team purchased a whole stock energy database called Starpoint 2000. The database contains every domestic address in Calderdale and includes information from completed Home Energy Checks (HECs), data on the heating and insulation characteristics of Pennine Housing 2000 properties and information on measures carried out by the Warm Front team. The information held will improve year-on-year as the Council gains more HECs and inputs more information on the improvements that they have made. Calderdale believes that by 2005, the Housing Energy Team should have very clear information about the insulation and heating standards in the area and be able to break this down into a ward-by-ward basis. It will also give the Council a stronger indication of the cost of delivering their Fuel Poverty Strategy. The Council no longer owns housing stock. This was transferred three years ago to the Pennine Housing 2000 Housing Association and comprised approximately 10,000 homes. Pennine Housing 2000 should have completed their initial investment programme and none of their tenants should be suffering from fuel poverty by 2005.
- *2006-10 Use stock database to target improvements at the poorest stock (target – average SAP 55 by 2010).* Using detailed information on the energy performance of individual properties in Calderdale, the Council will be able to remodel and retarget

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schemes like CHEAP to focus on those households with the lowest SAP ratings and carry out tailored measures to bring those properties above a SAP of 50. The Council will work on a 'worst first' basis to ensure that those properties where households are most at risk (such as the elderly, disabled or families with young children) are dealt with at an early stage. An individual energy survey will be carried out after measures have been installed to ascertain whether or not they have been lifted out of fuel poverty.

- ❑ *2011-15 Target efforts at less vulnerable households (target – average SAP 62 by 2015).* Calderdale's aim is not just to tackle vulnerable households, but also to eradicate fuel poverty in its entirety. At present there are no schemes running in Calderdale to improve the energy efficiency of those households in receipt of benefits who have no children, do not receive a disability premium, or are under 60. There is an assumption that these are non-vulnerable households, although this may not always be the case. Although it is the Council's aim to concentrate on these householders in the last five years of the Strategy, they will explore ways to ensure that they have the flexibility to provide help to them through schemes such as Health Action Calderdale Kirklees (HACK), which provides measures purely on the health of the applicant.

Who's involved?

"Partnership brings unexpected benefits to all organisations involved. The Council has benefited from using other organisations' networks to reach their clients, has been able to access funds and provide valuable links to services not related to energy efficiency such as fire safety, home safety and crime prevention. Tackling fuel poverty in this way has provided a key to building and deepening partnerships between local organisations", says Andrew Cooper, Home Energy Conservation Officer, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) are the Council's principal partner. They have paid for some promotional mailshots, as well as the printing of 20,000 leaflets distributed with the flu jab campaign. They also manage a number of schemes operating in the Calderdale area on behalf of the Council. The Local Authority Support Programme (LASP) Coordinator assists with funding bids and provides training for staff involved with the numerous fuel poverty schemes.

The Calderdale Primary Care Group/Calderdale Health Authority 'Health Family' is one of the core sources of funding for many of the Council's activities. Calderdale have secured £100,000 of recurring funding, which attracts matched funding from the utilities enabling the Council to help even more householders that are vulnerable. The Health Family also funds Age Concern Calderdale's Safe and Warm Coordinator who is a key partner in the Council's efforts to tackle fuel poverty. Through the Primary Care Trust's Capacity Planning Group the Housing Energy Team have a direct input into health matters and they use this group to integrate their services in joined up approaches tackling health inequalities.

Age Concern Calderdale works very closely with Calderdale on fuel poverty projects. It has a member of staff for whom this is a key function. Age Concern also has volunteers trained to City and Guilds Energy Awareness level who visit and advise householders. They provide advice at numerous energy advice days across the district, as well as giving talks to numerous groups. In 2000 they won the British Gas/National Energy Action Partnership for Warmth Awards with the Council for their work with the Council on the Calderdale Health Energy Action Project (CHEAP). Age Concern also operates a Fuel Poverty Fund, which can finance improvements to households not covered by existing national and/or local schemes.

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Under the Energy Efficiency Commitment, fuel utilities have an obligation to provide finance for energy efficiency measures, of which a proportion is targeted at fuel poor households. Schemes currently operating in Calderdale receive support from TXU Energi, Scottish Power and Yorkshire Electricity.

The Warm Front Team have spent over three-quarters of a million pounds in the Calderdale area on improving properties. In addition, they have funded mailshots to householders in receipt of benefits.

Hebden Bridge Alternative Technology Centre is an educational charity promoting sustainable lifestyles. The Centre does all the folding and stuffing of thousands of envelopes for the Council's annual benefits mailshots and energy advice days.

Finally, Calderdale works very closely with Kirklees Metropolitan Council. This partnership has arisen out of both Councils' joint interest in the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre that covers Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield. The Councils worked together to establish the EEAC and Calderdale MBC has an observer on the board of Kirklees Energy Services (managing agents for the EEAC). The EEAC was successful in a number of HECAction bids and these schemes generally involved joint working as they were covering at least two Councils. The partnership is centred on the EEAC as this is the focus for a lot of the energy conservation activities in both Councils.

The approach

The Council funds the three permanent full time members of staff that make up the Housing Energy Team, whose role includes identifying external funding partners. In addition, there is a Local Authority Support Programme Coordinator who was appointed in 2002 and is funded by the Energy Saving Trust. This Coordinator is based at the EEAC and provides training for frontline staff in energy advice.

The Council has a number of schemes and activities running to combat fuel poverty in Calderdale. As well as the national Warm Front grant scheme, which offers energy efficiency measures to vulnerable households, there are a number of schemes that target those who are not eligible for Warm Front grants. Warm Front grants accounted for £1.1 million of energy efficiency measures in the Calderdale area in 2002/3.

The Calderdale Health Energy Action Project (CHEAP) was set up in 1999 and is designed to enhance the Warm Front Plus scheme by providing additional radiators and insulation that would not normally be carried out under this scheme. In this way, Calderdale can help reduce the risk of condensation and mould growth and the health problems associated with these, as well as improving the energy efficiency of the property. CHEAP also provides all householders over 60, regardless of income, with free loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and draught proofing.

The Calderdale and Kirklees Energy Savers (CAKES) scheme is a partnership between Calderdale and Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Councils. The scheme was awarded £150,000 under the Energy Saving Trust's HECAction programme in 2000 and a further £100,000 in March 2001. This scheme is currently being funded by Scottish Power and provides tendered prices and cash backs for a range of heating and insulation improvements to those suffering fuel poverty and not in receipt of benefits. These measures can be paid for through partnership arrangements with a number of Credit Unions and a no interest revolving loan scheme called EnergyHELP (Home Energy Loans Project).

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In 2001 Calderdale was awarded a further £100,000 by HECAction to develop the Health Action Calderdale Kirklees (HACK) scheme. This offers 100% grants for insulation and heat recovery ventilation to households with occupants who suffer from respiration illnesses such as asthma. All GPs in Calderdale have been made aware of the scheme and good links have been established with health visitors and the respiratory nurses at the Royal Calderdale Hospital.

Timeframe

- ❑ 1999 - Calderdale Health Energy Action Project (CHEAP) established.
- ❑ September 2000 - Calderdale and Kirklees Energy Savers (CAKES) scheme launched.
- ❑ 2000 - Council housing stock transferred to Pennine Housing 2000.
- ❑ 2001 - Health Action Calderdale Kirklees scheme launched, which aims to abolish fuel poverty in Calderdale by 2016.
- ❑ 2002 - Council's Cabinet approve Calderdale's Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Achievements

Calderdale's achievements include:

- ❑ Utilising funding from the Primary Care Trust and Energy Efficiency Commitment, along with some Council funding, has enabled Calderdale not only to maintain, but also to exceed the number of jobs that were carried out under CHEAP in 2001/2. In the 2001/2 financial year 1,023 jobs were carried out on 711 properties. In the 2002/3 financial year 1,062 jobs were carried out on 695 properties. Concentrating more measures on fewer properties should mean that more people will feel a real benefit from the scheme and savings. The comfort levels of householders should also improve. This scheme was one of the examples of best practice in the Government's recent Energy White Paper.
- ❑ The HACK scheme has proved very successful, with around 250 measures being carried out to over 163 households in Calderdale.

Monitoring of schemes and programmes

The Council is using a combination of methods to monitor their fuel poverty schemes closely. All CHEAP customers are contacted with regard to the quality of work carried out under the scheme.

More probing questions on health indicators are asked one year after installation, by which time all households will have experienced a heating season with measures installed.

Questions asked include:

- ❑ Whether they have visited their GP less;
- ❑ Whether they had a reduced need for medication; and
- ❑ Further details on how their health has been affected.

Customer satisfaction from this scheme has been particularly high, with 87% of respondents recognising that their homes were warmer as a result of the work carried out.

In addition, Calderdale will seek to quantify any savings that the HACK scheme has made to the health service in terms of time saved for health service staff and in reduced use of prescription medicine such as 'Ventalin' for asthmatics.

Next steps

- ❑ Towards the end of 2003, the Council will be involved in the Sure Start scheme (Sure Start is a government initiative aimed at families with children under the age of 5) in the Elland area of Calderdale. This is a Primary Care Trust led initiative, which is targeting 0-4 year olds with asthma, and is currently being formulated.

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- The Council is in negotiations with npower regarding setting up a 'Health through Warmth' scheme in the Calderdale area. (Health Through Warmth is an npower initiative that trains community based key workers to identify those at risk of ill health through cold living conditions. Once identified, npower then matches vulnerable households with grant funding to install insulation and draught proofing measures)

Lessons learnt

"One of the key lessons that we've learnt at Calderdale is that you need to nurture and maintain links with the Primary Care Trust. We will be concentrating our efforts on developing better links with the PCT", explained Andrew Cooper, Home Energy Conservation Officer, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Further information

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Case study 10

Leicester City Council: identifying fuel poor households and leveraging in funding to tackle fuel poverty

Introduction

Leicester City Council published 'Tackling Fuel Poverty: a Local Well Being Issue Report for Leicester 2000' in August 2000 as a response to a requirement for all Energy Conservation Authorities to report on policies, strategies and achievements in tackling fuel poor households in the local area.

The Council is also exploring the possibility of writing a fuel poverty strategy with the NEA and Eaga Partnership within the next 12 months.

This case study looks briefly at the activities taken by the Council to tackle fuel poverty, focusing in particular on how the Council is identifying fuel poor households and leveraging in funding to address fuel poverty.

Corporate objectives

Leicester became the first 'Environmental City' in the UK in 1990 in recognition of its significant target to reduce energy by 50% by 2025. As a result of this, the then leader of the Council, Peter Salsby, was invited to attend the first Earth Summit, held in Rio in 1992. Leicester produced its first Home Energy Strategy in 1993 (3 years before the government required authorities to produce strategies of this kind). The strategy included 3 goals, one of which was to provide affordable warmth for all. Since then, affordable warmth has always been an integral part of the Home Energy Strategy.

The Council also has an inter-departmental sustainable officer group, which aims to incorporate sustainability and therefore energy into all the Council's strategies. Leicester is also EMAS (Environmental Management Accreditation System) accredited across all sectors and looks to minimise all environmental impact as a result of work carried out. Energy is a part of this and therefore the Housing Department and the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) play a key role in the implementation of EMAS.

Nick Morris, the Housing Department's Home Energy Team Manager says, "Having a sustainable officer group, EEAC, EMAS and an environmental team gives sustainability issues commitment at chief officer level. This means that Councillors are interested in this issue and energy is therefore high up the agenda."

All the work with homes within Leicester is focused on the goal of ensuring that every citizen has access to affordable warmth and a safe and healthy environment in which to live. Since 1993 this has been incorporated into policies and strategies such as the 1994 Energy Strategy. The Local Plan and the Community Plan have been utilised to support these objectives and the new well-being power conferred by the Local Government Act 2000 has continued this trend. The City Council was one of the first councils in the UK to appoint a fuel poverty officer in 1990, specifically to help reduce fuel poverty. The Housing Department provides the lead for these initiatives but works closely with the City Council Energy Management Group and the EEAC.

The energy management group produced the first City Wide National Home Energy Rating (NHER) assessment in 1992. This has provided a base to monitor the housing stock of Leicester, which had an average rating of 3.5 in 1992 rising to 5.9 by 1999.

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The Council's fuel poverty work also ties in with the Council's Anti-Poverty and Home Energy Strategies.

Aims and objectives

Two of the Council's objectives relate specifically to fuel poverty:

- To ensure that a decent home is within the reach of every citizen of Leicester.² (This is specifically targeted at homes in declared areas and identified as needing help. A target date of 2010 has been identified by which to achieve this aim.
- To enable all households in the city to have access to affordable warmth and a healthy living environment, with a target date of 2010.

As part of the Housing Home Energy Strategy, which formed part of the 1994 Energy Strategy, Leicester has also set up a public service agreement target to assist 2,250 vulnerable (private sector) householders over the period to March 2005.

Progress towards meeting the targets set is reported in the annual EMAS public statement. As part of the EMAS procedures, this progress is also verified annually by independent assessors.

Who's involved?

The Housing Department approached the Director of Public Health at the then Health Authority to see if he would be interested in getting involved in the 'Prescription for a Healthy Home' project, primarily to target those suffering from asthma. This project developed further with funding from the Health Action Zone Innovation Fund (see the section below entitled 'The approach' for further details).

A Steering Group has been set up for the Health Through Warmth scheme. The following Council departments are represented on this group: the Housing Technical Services Section, the Housing Renewal Team, Environmental Health (private sector housing) and Social Services. External partners include the Leicestershire Health Authority/Primary Care Trusts, National Energy Action, voluntary sector agencies and Pensions Plus (a benefits agency).

The Steering Group meets for approximately two hours on a bimonthly basis and helps to shape the work being done through this initiative. Having senior level representation on the Steering Group helps to ensure that plans are put in place to train staff to offer energy efficiency advice and make referrals.

The Council is in the process of recruiting a co-ordinator for the Health through Warmth scheme. This will be funded by the Health Authority Sustainability Partnership, and the Council hopes to have the post filled by Summer 2003. Part of this post's role will be to set up a working group for practical issues including training of frontline staff to implement the new referral mechanism to access the energy utility's 'Crisis Fund'.

The approach

Assessing the extent of fuel poverty in Leicester

The Home Energy Team has been able to assess fuel poverty in the City by referencing available Geographical Information Systems (GIS) information, which profiles income levels, older people (60+) and those living in ethnic minority communities.

² ODPM Decent Homes definition and guidance – a decent home is one that provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

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This information provides a profile of older people and minority ethnic populations living in house types in which the achievement of affordable warmth is problematic due to the age, built form and condition of the homes. This information, combined with income level data, has enabled Leicester to concentrate grant-aided energy efficiency measures to areas of greatest need.

In addition, Leicester has an ongoing programme that undertakes home energy surveys. These surveys provide detailed quantitative assessments of the levels of fuel poverty and this data is added to broader demographic trends to create an evolving fuel poverty profile of the area.

The GIS system included the licensing of the mapping software and the building up of layers of information to demonstrate the areas of fuel poverty across the city according to ward area. This has proved useful in raising the profile of this issue with elected members. The expertise was developed in-house to produce the GIS profiles. Other local authorities can also adopt this process and many have done so.

Funding to Tackle Fuel Poverty

Leicester has invested staff time in work to lever in funding from a number of external bodies to carry out measures to alleviate fuel poverty. In addition, it has received contributions from the Council's own Housing Investment Programme. This covers both public and private sectors.

Leicester City was established as a Health Action Zone (HAZ) in 1999 and was awarded £815,000 from the HAZ Innovation Fund. This is a national source of grant funding for which individual HAZs can apply. It provides project funding to enable frontline professionals to work with partner organisations to develop new and better strategies for treatment and care. This will influence the future delivery of services to target areas of health inequality.

A partnership bid between Leicester City Council housing department and the health sector resulted in the Prescription for Healthy Homes initiative for the city. Using this money the Council built on an existing NEA project – Leicester's 'Warm and Healthy Homes'. The project aimed to target those living in ethnic minority communities by providing training for health professionals to link energy efficiency with good health. This scheme aimed to help fill the gap in the housing service provision that results in people with ill health living in environments that exacerbate their medical conditions, thus hampering their recovery and delaying hospital discharge.

The project included a 'Warm, Safe and Sound' component. This provided an energy, security and hazard identification survey for referred households, with access to grant-aided, subsidised implementation of measures where appropriate. Funding from the HAZ Innovation Fund ceased in March 2003. However, the project is being further developed in partnership with utility companies using existing best practice.

This project gave Leicester the basis to partner with the East and West Leicester City Primary Care Trusts and utility companies on their 'Health Through Warmth' scheme, which was launched in November 2002. This initiative works to improve the health and living conditions of people in cold homes, primarily through frontline local health and community workers who receive energy awareness training and support. This allows them to recognise the signs of fuel poverty and refer patients and clients to energy-saving grant aid and

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access the Utility's Crisis Fund, which provides funding for people and measures not covered by other funds.

The Council has also secured funding from the Government's Sure Start programme, which targets households with children under five. Following the establishment of a partnership with health professionals, social services and voluntary sector groups (including NSPCC and Home Start), a project has been piloted to identify households with children under five who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) fuel poverty. Following a referral, a full energy audit of the home will be carried out, a costed schedule of measures drawn up and sources of grant aid identified and secured.

The Council was also awarded SRB 2 (Single Regeneration Budget) for the 'Challenge Home Energy Strategy' scheme in 1996 for a 5-year programme of measures targeting 100 homes per year in one of the most deprived wards of Leicester. This funding was used to improve insulation measures and install central heating systems for the first time or upgrade existing heating systems with gas condensing boilers and energy efficient controls (programmers, room thermostats, cylinder stats and thermostatic radiator valves.) The Council also used this funding to install heat recovery fans in kitchens and bathrooms. Owner-occupiers were offered a 75% grant (with 50% funding provided from the SRB grant, 25% from the Council's Housing Committee and the rest made up by the householders). This was not the first Home Repairs Assistance scheme that Leicester had operated and considerable experience had been developed since 1990. Housing Associations in the area were also offered a 50% grant under the SRB funding to install condensing boilers and other energy efficiency measures, to a maximum of £2,250.

In addition, the Council has an ongoing Housing Capital Programme for its own properties, which includes district heating work, central heating, boiler and window replacement programmes. Leicester City Council has a window making facility to facilitate this service.

Timeframe

- ❑ 1993: Home Energy Strategy launched.
- ❑ 1996: SRB 2 funding awarded for 'Challenge Home Energy Strategy' scheme, which finished in 2001.
- ❑ 1998: Healthy Homes launched.
- ❑ 1999: Leicester established as a Health Action Zone; scheme finished in March 2003.
- ❑ November 2002: Health Through Warmth scheme launched.
- ❑ 1999: Sure Start 'Safe and Healthy Homes' 5 year programme.
- ❑ 2002-2005: PSA target to provide affordable warmth to 2,250 vulnerable households.
- ❑ 2002: SRB funding application approved. Awaiting final decision from East Midlands Development Agency.

Achievements

- ❑ SRB 2 funding of £732,000 (resulting in £1.25 million worth of work) assisted 400 private homeowners and 95 Housing Association properties over a 5 year period (1996-2001).
- ❑ HAZ funding of £815,000 levered in.
- ❑ Leicester housing stock's average National Home Energy Rating increased from 3.5 (1992) to 5.9 (1999).

Monitoring

Part of the co-ordinator's role will be to implement a monitoring system for the numerous fuel poverty and health schemes that are currently operating in the Leicester area.

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Leicester is also in discussions with De Montfort University regarding work on evaluating the impacts of Warm Front, energy efficiency measures, etc.

Next steps

A further SRB-funded programme has been approved locally (SRB 6) with funding worth £250,000 for an affordable warmth scheme (up to 2006). The application is currently being considered for approval by the East Midlands Development Agency.

The Council also has an objective to set up a private sector database, as part of the local Public Service Agreement target work. This will monitor average SAP ratings and assist with the evaluation of fuel poverty schemes.

Finally, funding for the Beaumont Leys Sure Start area (tackling families with children under 5) has been extended to 2003/4 and there has been interest in the 'Safe and Healthy Homes' initiative from other Sure Start areas that wish to replicate the scheme.

Lessons learned

- ❑ From their first attempts at working with a health authority on the 'Prescription for Warmth' scheme, the housing energy department has found that establishing a successful scheme requires a considerable amount of work. For example, it is important to keep staff up to date with what's happening with case referrals and the relationship with the authority needs to be nurtured as staff change, etc. They have found that their relationship is now improving.
- ❑ Lifting people out of fuel poverty requires a comprehensive package of measures, which is not cheap. Additional sources of funding to the Energy Efficiency Commitment are required.
- ❑ Although the Council is targeting areas where fuel poverty is likely to occur, staff have not been able to measure how many households are actually suffering from fuel poverty. Therefore it is difficult to estimate the number of households taken out of fuel poverty. However, the Council is taking steps towards this with the introduction of the private sector database planned for late 2003, and then they will develop a fuel poverty index for housing in this sector.

Further information

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