



Tackling fuel poverty

A Beacon Council Toolkit for Local Authorities



2002-2003
Tackling Fuel Poverty



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Tackling fuel poverty

A Beacon Council Toolkit for Local Authorities

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Introduction

The Beacon Council Scheme

The Beacon Council Scheme was introduced by the Government in 1998.¹ The aim of the scheme is to identify centres of excellence in local government from which other councils can learn. Each year, ministers from across the Government select themes in service areas that have a direct impact on the quality of life of local people. Councils are invited to submit applications under those themes where they can demonstrate an excellent service is being provided. Beacon status is awarded to those authorities judged to exemplify best practice. The scheme requires the winning authorities to share best practice widely with others via learning events and activities.

In 2002, councils were invited to submit applications demonstrating best practice in tackling fuel poverty. The five authorities awarded Beacon status for the actions they have taken to tackle fuel poverty were:

- Blyth Valley Borough Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- London Borough of Camden
- Luton Borough Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council.

Tackling fuel poverty: a Beacon council toolkit

As part of the process of disseminating best practice, the five Beacon authorities have collaborated on the production of this practical manual *Tackling Fuel Poverty – A Beacon Council Toolkit for Local Authorities*.

It is intended that this toolkit will allow local authorities to examine the different approaches the Beacon councils have taken to tackling fuel poverty in their communities, taking account of local circumstances and priorities, demographics, social characteristics and housing conditions.

Fuel poverty is a complex issue and there is no set of solutions that will prove entirely replicable in all settings. Local circumstances will always dictate the specific priorities and partnerships that will prove most effective in tackling the problem. However, there is much to be learned from the different approaches adopted by the Beacon councils and ultimately it is possible to identify certain common elements of best practice that can be adopted and modified according to local circumstances.

This toolkit is divided into sections describing these core elements of best practice in tackling fuel poverty. Short case studies are used throughout to highlight how each of the Beacon councils has responded to the challenge of finding solutions that aim to bring affordable warmth to their communities.



Representatives from London Borough of Camden collect their Beacon award from Nick Raynsford, Local Government Minister.

1. *Modernising Local Government: In Touch with the People*, DETR, 1998. For further details on the Beacon Council Scheme, see: www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/beacon



Background to affordable warmth



SECTION 1

Background to affordable warmth

Introduction

The inability to afford sufficient warmth for health and comfort was first recognised as a significant social problem in the early 1970s. The causes of fuel poverty are complex, but contributory factors include low household income, poor insulation standards, inefficient or expensive heating systems and under-occupancy of properties. Many households contain individuals who may require extra warmth as a result of age or disability. Further, lack of access to a mains gas supply denies many rural customers the benefits of the most efficient and economic method of heating.

The scale of fuel poverty

Fuel poverty occurs when people need to spend more than 10% of income on fuel to achieve adequate levels of warmth in the home.

While this definition of fuel poverty has been adopted by the Government as the focus for the *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy*,² there continues to be a debate about how household income should be defined for this purpose. A more detailed description of this, and the effect this has upon estimates of the overall number of households in fuel poverty, is contained in Section 4 of this booklet: *Management information for affordable warmth*.

Nonetheless, progress in recent years has brought welcome reductions in the number of fuel-poor households. A range of data now suggests that there are between **1.7 million** and **3.1 million** households in fuel poverty in England – see for example the English House Condition Survey 2001 available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/england2001analysis.pdf

Since 1996, lower fuel prices and higher household incomes resulting from changes to the tax and benefits system have had a significant impact on the number of households estimated to be in fuel poverty. While these developments are clearly welcome, neither of these factors can guarantee long-term, sustainable reductions in fuel poverty. In fact, gas prices have increased significantly since 2001 and most long-term projections anticipate that this will continue.

This serves to emphasise the importance of improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock in order to guarantee affordable warmth now and in the future.

2. *The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy*, DTI, DEFRA, DSD, National Assembly for Wales, Scottish Executive, 2001.



Importantly, the effect of fuel poverty on health has been increasingly recognised. The Government-commissioned 'Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health' (1998) identified poor housing as a factor in health inequality and specifically recommended improved heating and insulation standards to address this problem.

Who is affected and how badly?

Evidence suggests that there are certain categories of household type that are over-represented within the fuel-poor population – particularly lone older people and lone parent families. The table below – using figures taken from the English House Condition Surveys of 1996 and 2001 (and an interim follow up survey in 1998) – shows the incidence of fuel poverty in England in recent years by household type, shown as a percentage of the fuel-poor population.

Household type	2001	1998	1996
Younger couple	6%	7%	6%
Older couple	13%	20%	14%
Couple with children	4%	8%	6%
Lone parent	8%	6%	10%
Adult households	13%	11%	12%
One younger person	16%	11%	16%
One older person	40%	37%	36%

Further facts relating to fuel poverty can be accessed on the NEA's website: www.nea.org.uk/facts/index.htm

Tackling fuel poverty – a national priority

Tackling fuel poverty is now a key priority for the Government and the devolved administrations. The Government's commitment to eradicating fuel poverty in the UK is set out in the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000, which required the Government to publish a strategy setting out actions and targets to achieve this aim. The subsequent publication of the *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001* commits the Government and the devolved administrations to the eradication of fuel poverty among all vulnerable households by 2010 and among all other households by 2018. The strategy also sets out interim objectives and targets that will be reported on annually.

The first annual progress report on the *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy*³ was published in 2003 and is available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/strategy2.pdf

Improving health and well being

Importantly, the effect of fuel poverty on health has been increasingly recognised. The Government-commissioned *Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health*,⁴ www.doh.gov.uk/ih/ih.htm, identified poor housing as a factor in health inequality. It specifically recommended improved heating and insulation standards to address this problem – thus emphasising the link between fuel poverty and ill health and the role that the health sector can play in tackling the problem.

Typically, 30,000–50,000 more people die in the winter in the UK than would be expected given the average death rate for the year. It is much higher in the UK than in other western European countries – including Scandinavia, where winter conditions are severe, but homes more energy efficient.

There is growing evidence of the cost to the NHS of treating ill health caused by living in cold damp homes. For example, a study

3. *The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy, 1st Annual Progress Report*, DTI, DEFRA, DSD, National Assembly for Wales, Scottish Executive, 2003.

4. *The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health*, TSO, 1998.

undertaken in East London compared the healthcare costs of people living in an estate with poor, unimproved housing with those of people living in a similar improved estate.⁵ This study showed the average annual health costs in the unimproved estate to be £512, compared with £72 in the improved estate. It is now widely accepted that energy efficiency improvements can lead to positive gains in health and well-being by making homes warm and heating affordable.

The role of local authorities

It is now widely recognised that fuel poverty not only damages the well-being of individual households, but also imposes additional costs on the wider community in treating poor health, financial disadvantage and social exclusion. The *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy* recognises that local authorities are the most important agencies in the eradication of fuel poverty. It is clear that housing issues will be paramount in any programme of fuel poverty reduction. But finding solutions to fuel poverty also cuts across many other areas of social policy; for example the promotion of better health and well-being, environmental policy, economic regeneration and the redevelopment of communities. Local authorities are well placed to broker the kinds of partnerships that can act strategically and have significant impact in these areas.

Further, local authorities are required, as part of their HECA obligations, to report annually to Government on progress in improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty within their own communities. As a response, many local authorities have developed affordable warmth strategies, in which they set out how they propose to achieve these objectives. In recognition of this fact, the *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy* specifically recognises the contribution that affordable warmth strategies can make to the eradication of fuel poverty at a local level.

Developing affordable warmth strategies

Affordable warmth strategies can provide a focus for local action to eradicate fuel poverty. The benefits of a well-planned, organised and implemented strategy can be far-reaching, helping each authority to:

- **Raise general awareness of fuel poverty and affordable warmth issues.**
- **Encourage cross-departmental and inter-agency partnership working to maximise resources.**
- **Promote cross-community participation, co-operation and wider ownership of the strategy.**
- **Maximise and target resources and initiatives where they are most needed.**
- **Facilitate policy and service integration.**
- **Set out measurable targets and timescales for action.**
- **Develop training and employment opportunities.**
- **Provide feedback for target monitoring and reporting purposes.**



Newark & Sherwood: Good quality energy advice typically delivers tenant householders 10% energy savings. A Housing Department Liaison Officer explains a new central heating installation.

5. Ambrose, P. 'The cost of poor housing and how to reduce it'. In Rudge, Nicol (eds) *Cutting the Cost of Cold*, E&FN Spon, 2000.

Section 3 of this booklet, *Affordable warmth strategy development*, describes how each of the Beacon councils approached developing their own affordable warmth strategies and identifies common elements of best practice.



Profiles of the Beacon councils



SECTION 2

Profiles of the Beacon councils

Beacon status for tackling fuel poverty was awarded to the five successful local authorities on the basis of evidence of a clear corporate commitment to tackling fuel poverty through improving energy efficiency.

In assessing the approach taken by each authority, the judging panel looked particularly for evidence of a coherent strategy for achieving affordable warmth, developed in consultation with others. Councils needed to demonstrate integration of energy efficiency with housing investment, improvement and maintenance programmes as well as effective targeting of advice and information to households in need. There needed also to be evidence that strategies had enabled more households in the community to achieve affordable warmth through energy efficiency.

There is no common template to the provision of affordable warmth that will fit the needs of all local authorities. The extent of fuel poverty within communities, the demographic make up, the mix of housing types, the nature of economic activity and a range of other regional and local dynamics will all be determining factors that help to shape local programmes of activity to tackle the problem.

In recognition of this, this section sets out some background data for each of the Beacon councils, and outlines some of the specific characteristics of the differing approaches each has taken. Local authorities using this toolkit will note much that is relevant to their own circumstances from these descriptions. They will also note from the case study material used throughout the toolkit how each authority has adopted solutions reflecting their own local priorities.

Blyth Valley Borough Council

Background

Blyth Valley Council covers the smallest area of any of the district councils in Northumberland, but has the highest population. The town of Blyth, 13 miles north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, has a population of some 36,000. The area has suffered considerably through the closure of the coalmines, the loss of shipbuilding and ship repair yards at Blyth and on Tyneside. However, new industries have been attracted to the area by the development of industrial estates at Blyth and by the development of Cramlington. The Harbour at Blyth has attracted firms related to the offshore industry. Blyth has NaREC, a large centre for the development of alternative energy generation.

Beacon status was awarded because:

Blyth Valley has developed a broad range of activities and impressive results in tackling fuel poverty, particularly given the size of the council and available resources. There is a strong political commitment. Since 2001 the council has received additional funding with the establishment of the Government's Warm Zone pilot programme in Northumberland, but almost all of Blyth Valley's activities and achievements predate the Warm Zone programme.

Blyth Valley has a fuel poverty strategy in place with clear targets and timescales, and the community strategy specifically refers to affordable warmth as a key element in tackling deprivation and social exclusion.

The council is strong on tenant consultation and this has influenced policies to invest in affordable warmth.

Blyth Valley has sought to develop internal and external partnerships to tackle fuel poverty, and the fuel poverty action plan sets out clear responsibilities for all partners. A particularly successful outcome of partnership work has been the training of 250 volunteer community energy advisers, as well as training for housing association staff, innovative mixtures of funding for measures and the screening of referrals for grant eligibility.

In all, Blyth Valley has demonstrated impressive outcomes in number of energy efficiency measures installed, improvements in the energy efficiency of all stock and savings on fuel bills.

Further details can be found at: www.blythvalley.gov.uk

Profile

Type of authority: District
Region: North East England
Geographical size: 70.2 km²
Population: 80,000

Tenure:

All tenures: 35,481
Owner occupiers: 70.5%
Local authority: 23%
Housing association: 4.1%
Private rented: 2.4%

Fuel poverty:

Fuel poor households: 5,228 (14.7%)
Unfit private sector: 3,717

Energy efficiency:

Average SAP: 60 (April 2002)
Council stock: 66
Private sector: 59
Only 3% of private sector stock has SAP of less than 30.

Ethnicity:

0.6% ethnic minority
(Source: 1991 Census)

Unemployment:

7.74%
(Sources: Using 2002 Nomis unemployment data for December 2002 and 2001 Census workforce data)

Proportion of households in receipt of income support: 7%
(Source: ONS 2000)



East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Background

East Riding of Yorkshire covers a large, predominantly rural, area with many sparsely populated areas. It is the largest unitary authority by area with a productive agricultural base. The largest town is Bridlington, with 32,000 people. Beverley (25,000), Goole (18,000) and Cottingham (16,500) are the other major settlements. Over half the population live in rural communities, many of which are small, scattered and geographically isolated. There are significant pockets of deprivation and poor-quality housing.

Beacon status was awarded because:

The council has carried out a very clear analysis of the extent of fuel poverty in its area and has developed innovative ways of marketing to residents in the private sector and to the elderly population. The council has published an affordable warmth strategy with clear targets, timescales and partner accountability and with clear links to Agenda 21 and the social inclusion agenda. The council has also convened an officer group, which meets regularly to monitor progress on the strategy.

The council's affordable warmth strategy was initiated at a consultation event to which a wide range of stakeholders was invited. Fuel poverty in the private-rented sector was identified as major concern and liaison with a landlords' forum has resulted in effective contributions to the overall strategy.

Effective partnerships with internal departments, fuel utilities, credit unions, the health sector and the Warm Front scheme manager have been developed.

A comprehensive referral network has been put in place, and methods of reaching fuel-poor households in rural communities have been developed via, for example, the Post Office, mobile libraries, Women's Institute and use of e-technology. Local customer service centres and Citizens Links offer a one-stop shop, which includes the provision of energy advice.

Further details can be found at: www.eastriding.gov.uk

Profile

Type of authority: Unitary
Region: Yorkshire and Humber

Area: 2,416 km²
Population: 314,113 (the population has increased by 6.3% over the last 10 years)

Households: 136,633

Tenure:
Owner-occupiers 79% (higher than national average)

Local authority 9%
Housing association 1.6%
Privately rented 7%

Fuel poverty:
Estimated 30,000 (22%) fuel-poor households

Energy efficiency:
Average SAP:
Private sector 52
Local Authority 59
27% of households do not have access to mains gas

Ethnicity:
1.2% Black or minority ethnic groups

Unemployed:
2.5%, February 2003

London Borough of Camden

Background

Camden is a vibrant borough in the heart of London, packed with arts, green spaces, museums, libraries, galleries and an incredible diversity of people, with some 350,000 daytime commuters and tourists passing through each day. Camden is home to some of the richest and some of the poorest areas in the country. Tackling inequalities is the number one priority within Camden's community strategy. The borough has a range of stock types: sixties tower blocks in high-density estates, Victorian mansion blocks and individual street properties that could be worth in excess of £1m (*Camden Housing Strategy, 2002*).

Beacon status was awarded because:

Camden has demonstrated strong leadership in promoting an understanding of the issue and has commissioned research and analysis of the problem at a local level. It has developed and published an affordable warmth strategy, and has a strong marketing approach with recognisable branding. The council has demonstrated a truly consultative approach to developing the strategy, involving a broad range of community stakeholders including ethnic minorities, older people groups and health practitioners. This has resulted in the development of multi-agency partnerships. For instance, partnerships with health agencies have led to Health Action Zone funding for the creation of an affordable warmth referral network and, more recently, Neighbourhood Renewal funding for a post within the Camden Primary Care Trust to mainstream affordable warmth throughout the local health sector.

Energy efficiency is fully integrated in the council's housing investment and maintenance programmes and effective links are made to Warm Front and fuel company schemes to maximise funding. Mechanisms are in place to target groups and individuals most in need, and a referral system for health and other community workers has been developed that includes benefits and money advice.

Camden's Beacon Council Scheme application form can be viewed at: www.camden.gov.uk/beacon

Profile

Type of authority:	London Borough
Region:	Greater London
Area:	22km ²
Population:	Residents: 193,800
Households:	91,700

Tenure:

Owner-occupiers	27%
Local authority	29%
Privately rented	33%
Housing association	11%

(Source: 2001 Census)

Fuel poverty:

19,800 households (23%) in the borough are fuel poor. (19% of private sector and 33% of public sector.)

Energy efficiency:

Average SAP:	
Council stock	58
Owner occupied/private rented	41
Owner-occupied and private-rented dwellings with SAP rating below 30:	11%

Camden has a high proportion of flats and maisonettes and older, solid-walled buildings.

Ethnicity:

27% of population from ethnic minorities. 43% of these live in local authority-owned properties. 120 languages are spoken across schools in the borough.

White	73%
Black Caribbean	1.8%
Black African	4.8%
Black Other	1.3%
Indian	2%
Pakistani	0.6%
Bangladeshi	6%
Chinese	1.7%
Other Asian	3%
Other	5.6%

(Source: 2001 Census)

Unemployment:

Resident unemployment rate 6.7%

(Source: 2001 Census)

Luton Borough Council

Background

Luton is a leading centre of manufacture and employment in South East England and was a centre for car manufacture until the production at Vauxhall Motors ceased in 2002.

Unemployment in Luton is above the regional average. 40% of the population is under 25 and 28% are from minority ethnic groups. In 1999 the Government designated 10 wards in Luton as Assisted Areas.

Beacon status was awarded because:

Luton has developed a strong multi-agency approach, with effective mechanisms for getting advice and information to residents who need it. An affordable warmth strategy is in place with clear targets and timescales. A strong link at officer level between the Chief Executive's Department and the Housing Department has ensured that the strategy is integrated with Luton's social inclusion strategy.

The aims and objectives for Luton's strategy were developed at a series of consultation workshops designed to engage partners. This resulted in an overarching affordable warmth strategy from which developed an innovative multi-agency referral scheme involving the local Citizens Advice Bureau, Social Services, Warm Front and Working Luton – a local supported employment project.

Training has been provided to over 350 representatives from council departments, partner organisations and community groups. Once trained, workers with little or no specialist knowledge, visiting the homes of households vulnerable to fuel poverty, are able to refer for benefits advice, grant aid and social care services.

Attention has also been given to providing information and advice in accessible formats and to utilising the most appropriate routes for advice delivery.

Luton's Beacon Council Scheme application form can be viewed at: www.luton.gov.uk/caring/affordable

Profile

Type of authority:	Unitary
Region:	Eastern England
Geographical size:	43km ²
Population:	Residents: 183,100
Households:	69,600 (2001)

Tenure (1999):

Owner-occupiers (owned outright)	20%
Owner-occupiers (buying)	54.6%
Local authority tenants	13.6%
Housing association	3.6%
Privately rented and other	8.2%

Fuel poverty:

24.8% of private-sector households are in fuel poverty and 10.8% of these are in serious fuel poverty.

Energy efficiency:

The average SAP at 59 is greater than the national average of 50 (EHCS 2001). This is as a result of a more modern stock profile along with ongoing programmes of improvement, i.e. PVCu window and door replacements, energy efficient boilers, loft insulation upgrading and a constant programme of cavity wall insulation.

Mean SAP rating by tenure:

Owner-occupied	55
Housing association	59
Privately rented	43
Local authority stock	54

SAP rating by building types (EHCS typology):

Detached	63
Semi-detached	53
Terraced	54
Converted flat	37
Purpose-built flat	51

Ethnicity:

28.1% of population from black and minority ethnic groups.

Asian/Asian British	18.3%
Black/Black British	6.3%
Mixed	2.6%
Chinese or others	0.9%

(Source: 2001 Census)

Unemployment:

The unemployment rate in Luton in May 2003 was 3.2%.

Newark and Sherwood District Council



NEWARK &
SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Background

Newark and Sherwood covers one third of Nottinghamshire. The council is made up of contrasting elements including the predominantly agricultural influence in the eastern villages and the strong industrial mining towns of the west and north. Its main industries today are mineral extraction, engineering and agriculture. The Sherwood Energy Village is planned to showcase environmental features such as sustainable design and construction, renewable energy sources, environmental technologies and sustainable urban drainage systems.

Beacon status was awarded because:

Newark and Sherwood can demonstrate a longstanding commitment to tackling fuel poverty, now embedded in the community strategy and the work of the Local Strategic Partnership. Newark and Sherwood's approach differs from that of the other Beacon councils in that it has adopted a property-based approach – aiming to improve the energy efficiency of all dwellings in the district over time, but dealing with the worst first, on the basis that properties could be occupied by a fuel-poor household at any point.

The council made a corporate commitment to tackling fuel poverty as early as 1986 when it set an affordable warmth target for its own stock. It has adopted an analysis of the problem based on a projected percentage of income spent on energy. Historically, funding rather than strategy driven, the council has now gained additional benefits through working in strategic partnerships with other agencies such as Age Concern, Care and Repair and other partners in health and social services.

A systematic approach to dealing with public sector dwellings has been developed that prioritises vulnerable householders. Training has been an important part of the approach and energy awareness training has been provided to tenants, voluntary sector workers, health workers, Citizens Advice Bureaux and council staff.

Newark and Sherwood's Beacon Council Scheme application form can be viewed at: www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/downloads/fuelpoverty/bsfpappform.pdf

Profile

Type of authority:	District
Region:	East Midlands
Area:	652 km ²
Population:	105,800

Tenure:

All tenures:	46,236
Owner occupiers:	70.7%
Local authority:	12.6%
Housing association:	3.7%
Private rented:	10.6%

Fuel poverty:

5,247 (11.3%) as Dec 2001

Energy efficiency:

Average SAP:	
Non-council stock average:	53
Council stock:	64

Ethnicity:

White	98.54%
Non-white	1.46%
Mixed (White and Black)	0.33%
Mixed (White and Asian)	0.13%
Mixed (Other)	0.11%
Indian	0.16%
Pakistani	0.07%
Bangladeshi	0.03%
Black	0.26%
Chinese	0.21%
Others	0.16%

(Source: Census 2001)

Unemployed:

District unemployment rate as at May 2003 is 1.8%.



3

Affordable warmth
strategy
development



SECTION 3

Affordable warmth strategy development

Developing a strategic response

Fuel poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional issue and it requires a multi-disciplinary response. This relies on the development of strategic partnerships between key stakeholders across the community to coordinate policy and service developments at a local level.

The involvement of key partners from the outset will invariably result in a more wide-ranging policy and practice. This, in turn, is likely to help to reach the widest range of fuel-poor households, including those considered 'vulnerable' or 'hard-to-reach': the elderly; those who are housebound and/or living with chronic illness or a disability; and those with young children.

What should a strategy seek to provide?

These strategic partners should aim to co-ordinate the range of different types of activity that will be necessary to tackle fuel poverty. It has been the experience of the Beacon councils that affordable warmth strategies should seek to be wide ranging and should provide access to the following:

- **Quality energy advice tailored to individual needs.**
- **Access to income maximisation services – benefits, grants and other financial management assistance.**
- **Energy awareness-raising opportunities – educational or community awareness events or activities.**
- **Mechanisms to identify and target vulnerable households most in need of assistance.**
- **Access to an affordable fuel supply, fuel management and tariff advice.**
- **Warm and healthy homes that are affordable, energy efficient and free from damp and condensation.**

The experience of the Beacon councils has highlighted the importance of several key requirements that can help to support the development of a strategic response. These include:

- **Corporate commitment** to the principle of development, adoption and implementation of an affordable warmth strategy.



Camden: Policy makers and practitioners should be involved, particularly from health and social care, housing, welfare, regeneration and social and financial inclusion.

- **A lead officer** within the local authority to manage the development process.
- **Involvement of key stakeholder agencies:** Both policy makers and practitioners should be involved, particularly from health and social care, housing, welfare, regeneration and social and financial inclusion. Some of the Beacon councils have found it useful to convene a steering group to advise on the strategy development process from among such agencies.
- **Community consultation:** Local authorities should ensure that there are opportunities for the wider voluntary sector, tenants and residents, elected members, fuel utilities and others to comment upon and help to shape the aims and objectives of affordable warmth strategies. Consultation on affordable warmth strategy development should be similar to the processes followed for community plans.
- **Allocated time:** It should be recognised from the outset that the time taken by different approaches can vary according to local needs and circumstances, especially where this involves community consultation, events and other activities. Authorities must be realistic about allocating sufficient officer time to the strategy development process.
- **Resources:** Consideration should be given to the level of financial resources needed to pay for consultation events, external consultancy, marketing, promotion, publications and any other related costs, though partners may be able to offer in-kind support in terms of staff time, promotional opportunities or use of venues.

Developing a local approach

The Beacon councils have all exemplified slightly different approaches to strategy development.

Luton Borough Council and **London Borough of Camden** have employed the assistance of external consultants supported by private sector funding.

Blyth Valley Borough Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council and **East Riding of Yorkshire Council** strategies have been initially developed in-house without external consultancy assistance or funding.

No single approach will suit every authority and clearly authorities need to choose the approach that will achieve the required results at a local level.

However, experience suggests that the success of any strategy development approach relies on initial planning. Poor planning at the outset can create potential for problems in later stages. For example, the process may stall; opportunities may be missed to elicit sufficient feedback to inform the strategy or to engage the stakeholders in consultation; and ultimately, community or professional support for the strategy may be lost or withdrawn.

To avoid these potential pitfalls, good practice derived from the Beacon councils suggests that local authorities should consider the following at the outset of any strategy development process:

- How to secure support for the strategy development process through to implementation?
- What kind of development process is right for your authority, and how should this be managed?
- Who is best placed to facilitate the strategy development process – internal council officers or an independent or external agency?
- How much time is needed to develop the strategy in order to achieve maximum engagement and ownership across the community?
- How may community and agency consultation opportunities and procedures be facilitated?
- How will the final strategy be published and promoted?
- What resources will be needed to facilitate strategy development?
- What are the administration and event management requirements?



Glenda Jackson MP shows Camden residents how to beat the chill in Warm Homes Week (2001).

Securing corporate and political support

As shown in the accompanying case studies, each of the Beacon councils secured corporate and political commitment to support strategy development. Their experience suggests that it is crucial to enlist the support of senior local authority staff and relevant elected members at an early stage.

Case study 1: Developing corporate commitment

BlythValley Borough Council

The council has a history of tackling energy efficiency and fuel poverty since 1994. Its strategy was developed following a detailed study of its baseline fuel poverty position in 1995/6, supplemented by feedback from surveys and other community responses. This was strengthened by a corporate commitment in its 1996 housing strategy to ensure affordability of housing across all tenures. The council also set a corporate commitment to improve the energy efficiency of all domestic dwellings by 30% within ten years – subsequently revised to 2011.



East Riding: Recognising that progress in tackling fuel poverty could not be achieved by the council alone, external agencies were engaged via a workshop held in August 2000.



Since 1992, energy efficiency has been promoted via Local Agenda 21. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 saw the council review its activities in its first Home Energy report, which was produced as part of the local housing strategy in 1996. The council also launched an anti-poverty strategy in 1995, which included a commitment to tackle fuel poverty.

Building on this work, by 1999 the council had launched its affordable warmth strategy and published its first corporate energy strategy encompassing all energy-related activities. Work to address fuel poverty is very much linked into wider objectives to address poverty and social exclusion within Luton. The council has seven corporate objectives, which were developed by elected members in consultation with the public and partner organisations. Each service unit in the council must compile an annual service plan in which they will demonstrate how corporate values and objectives will be met. Luton has a corporate objective to “enhance the quality of life for all Luton’s citizens” and has a corporate value of ‘Equality for all’. Actions to address social exclusion are embedded within a social inclusion strategy which, together with the affordable warmth strategy, is linked into the authority wide community plan.



The council’s vision is to work to improve the quality of life for the community. A strong commitment to partnership working is fundamental to achievement of the council’s vision. Following a major survey of residents in 1999, five community aims were adopted. Three of the community aims – ‘Improved health’, ‘Greater prosperity’ and ‘A healthy environment’ – are clearly linked to tackling fuel poverty.

In July 2000 a fuel poverty report was produced by the council’s HECA Working Group, which included an anticipated fuel poverty profile, an account of how assistance would be targeted at the fuel poor and an outline of potential initiatives and partnership opportunities as well as delivery targets.

Recognising that progress in tackling fuel poverty could not be achieved by the council alone, external agencies were engaged via a workshop held in August 2000. Ideas to develop the delivery of the strategy were drawn together into an action plan. The council further refined the plan in Autumn 2000 using feedback from landlord forums and the results of a survey of all 12,400 council properties.

Approved in September 2000, East Riding of Yorkshire’s affordable warmth strategy is recognised by members, officers and community partners.

Camden has had an active HECA Working Group since 1997. The group began seeking corporate commitment for the development of a comprehensive and borough-wide affordable warmth strategy in 1999. The key challenge to gaining such commitment was winning the support of senior managers, which was achieved by:

- **Emphasising the Government's view that local authorities should co-ordinate efforts to tackle fuel poverty in the private sector in partnership with health and social services and other agencies and local groups.**
- **Making the links between affordable warmth and other corporate policies and priorities (e.g. regeneration, unfit housing in the private sector, tackling inequalities and social exclusion).**
- **Emphasising the opportunities (i.e. strategy development funded by Bridge House Estates Trust Fund via NEA; leveraging in Warm Front and Efficiency Commitment funding for measures; and Health Action Zone funding for a pilot project targeting older people in the Kilburn SRB area).**
- **Convincing them of the need in Camden. (Fuel poverty was estimated through analysis of the Private Sector House Condition Survey and the Housing Needs Survey.)**
- **Convincing them that a considerable amount could be achieved within existing budgets.**

The Camden Management Team Health Sub-Group agreed to support the development and adoption of a corporate and borough-wide affordable warmth strategy, with a pilot project in the Kilburn SRB area, and for a report to go to the Environment (Public Health) Sub-Committee seeking approval for the affordable warmth strategy's development and adoption. Members were involved during the strategy's development, receiving a formal joint presentation from NEA and the steering group and three committee reports during the process. The Warmth for All strategy was formally adopted by council committee in March 2000. In November 2000 it was launched publicly by a local MP, the Mayor of Camden and the Director of Camden & Islington Health Action Zone.

Camden's ongoing commitment is demonstrated by the inclusion of the Warmth for All strategy within the community strategy, *Our Camden Our Future* (www.camden.gov.uk).



Camden's second workshop during affordable warmth strategy development.

Case study 2: Developing political and stakeholder commitment



Tackling fuel poverty has been a tenant-initiated priority in Newark and Sherwood's social housing sector since 1985. The council worked with tenant activists to establish pilot projects over three years, covering 120 dwellings. These led to a 20-year, £16.4 million energy strategy for social housing being established in 1988. The target is for all council-owned stock to be capable of delivering affordable energy to vulnerable householders by 2008.

Political commitment has been sustained by ensuring that members are regularly briefed on the joined-up benefits of delivering affordable energy. The first holistic cost-benefit analysis of the strategy for social housing was undertaken in 1992. This demonstrated to members the fiscal benefits of the strategy to the tenants, savings to the health service, savings to landlords' operational costs, the £-cost avoidance associated with job creation/training and the environmental benefits in terms of CO₂ emission saving. Following the establishment of an all-tenure housing energy performance database in 1994, a similar holistic cost-benefit analysis was undertaken for all of the district's 45,000 dwellings showing a five-year joined-up payback on investment. As part of the Beacon initiative, a holistic cost-benefit analysis has been produced for tackling fuel poverty that showed a joined-up payback of 3.2 years.

A fuel poverty statement was incorporated into the HECA Energy Conservation Plan of 1996. Progress is reported within annual HECA reports as part of the council's annual housing business plan, which includes a consultation process. A comprehensive fuel poverty statement was prepared in 2000 followed by a local one-day evaluation conference attended by local stakeholders in 2001. Half-day review conferences are proposed every two years, the next being scheduled for November 2003.

Tackling fuel poverty is built into the service plan of the council's Energy Agency and into the community plan, which is assembled by the Local Strategic Partnership in collaboration with all local stakeholders.

Securing key stakeholder support – establishing steering groups

Strategy development can be greatly assisted by establishing steering groups of key stakeholders to oversee progress. Among the Beacon councils, steering groups have included policy makers and practitioners drawn from the health and social care sector, housing sector, energy organisations and the voluntary sector – as well as from key departments within the council. Agencies already participating in Local Strategic Partnerships may form the basis from which steering groups may be drawn.

This kind of 'overseeing body' can assist with the practical development of strategies. By acting as champions of the process within their own sectors, inter-agency steering groups can help to ensure shared ownership of affordable warmth strategies.

Each key stakeholder may need to be convinced that the development of the strategy will assist them to meet specific policy objectives in their own sector and that joint partnerships and resourcing arrangements are operationally and financially beneficial.

In-house development or consultancy?

The experience of the Beacon councils has demonstrated that, with sufficient allocation of time, officer commitment, cross-departmental and inter-agency support, local authorities can lead the process themselves. However, some of the Beacon councils have found distinct advantages in utilising an external consultant to provide guidance and support for strategy development. Consultants can offer objectivity and bring specialist knowledge of best practice. Importantly, their 'neutrality' can often assist in ensuring that the community engagement process is perceived as something more than just a local authority-led initiative.

Engaging with the community

All the Beacon councils have used community participation events to inform the strategy development process. The advantage of this approach is that local authorities are able to increase local awareness of fuel poverty and affordable warmth issues and also elicit detailed feedback from a wide range of individuals and agencies to inform the strategy. This approach may not only help a local authority and its partners to identify or confirm key community priorities, but may also help to foster firmer community ownership of the strategy.

Community participation events usually take the form of workshops involving some sort of focused group work. The number of workshops needed to develop affordable warmth priorities may depend on the range of agencies or individuals to be consulted.

Planning and managing workshops

From the outset the local authority or steering group needs to decide on the purpose of the intended workshops. For those local authorities starting out on strategy development, the intention might be to identify key priorities that are then developed into an action plan. For others already engaged in strategy development, the intention may be to review established priorities.

Whatever the intended outcome of the workshops, the local authority or steering group may need to decide upon:

- **Which individuals and agency representatives to invite and how to secure their involvement – e.g. policy makers, practitioners and/or community representatives.**
- **Content and presentation – e.g. presentations, awareness-raising opportunities and/or focused group work.**



Luton: Demonstrating the customised computer referral programme at a Beacon open day.



Luton: Cosy Rosy goes to school!
Raising awareness among school children and ensuring affordable warmth has recognisable branding.

- Which group work methods will elicit the most useful feedback.
- How feedback will be collated, recorded and used.
- How to manage contingencies – e.g. lack of local support or poor attendance.
- How the proceedings will be reported back to participants.
- How the ideas and output will be taken forward.

Case study 3: Strategy development using stakeholder consultation events



Both authorities developed strategies that built on the outcomes of two separate stakeholder events. The events were facilitated and supported by NEA and attended by a broad range of statutory and community groups.

Both authorities began the consultation process by establishing a steering group that included representatives from the local authority, voluntary sector and health authority among others. The steering groups then identified the organisations and community groups whose members could collaborate to devise ways of achieving affordable warmth for residents.

A workshop was held in which the main aims and objectives of their strategies were developed and agreed. The first event encouraged participants to identify issues that prevented households from achieving affordable warmth and how these issues might be overcome locally. Feedback was then collated and structured to identify a range of key themes.

Following the first workshop, further consultation took place in order to develop some ideas and investigate the feasibility of others. A second stakeholder event refined the tasks to be undertaken and established the targets and timescales to implement the strategy. Emphasis was placed on how the strategy could be delivered to the whole community, with assistance from the voluntary sector, community groups and local health professionals. Thereafter, feedback was collated and sent to all participants for further consultation prior to final drafting and publication.

A commitment to implement the strategy was gained from the key organisations involved. Participants in the workshops were fully acknowledged in the strategy documents.

Further details of Luton's stakeholder events can be found at: www.luton.gov.uk/caring/affordable

Camden's affordable warmth strategy, *Warmth For All*, can be viewed at: www.camden.gov.uk/beacon

Case study 4: Community and tenant consultation

BlythValley Borough Council

Blyth Valley Borough Council has used a variety of methods to engage the community in policy development and consultation. Three area-based community assemblies were established in 1999 to engage the community in local decision-making. The assemblies have discussed affordable warmth issues via consultation on the Local Agenda 21 and housing strategies.

The council is committed to tenant consultation and, through area consultative committees and a tenants' panel, tenants have been involved in shaping policy on issues such as the installation of cavity wall insulation, uPVC double glazing and condensing boilers. This is supplemented by feedback from customer satisfaction surveys which are integral to service delivery. Blyth Valley has also organised focus groups in order to identify needs and how to meet them.

The council also continues to seek the views of internal departments and external agencies in the development of components of its strategy via direct contact and local liaison.

Further details of Blyth Valley's approach to community consultation can be found at: www.blythvalley.gov.uk



Blyth Valley: tenants have been involved in shaping policy on issues such as the installation of cavity wall insulation, uPVC double glazing and condensing boilers.

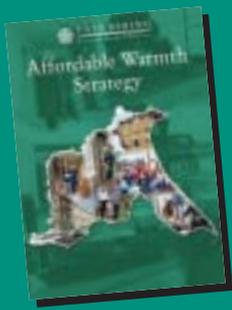
Compiling and managing feedback

Workshops and consultation events tend to generate a substantial amount of feedback. Assessing the feedback allows the opportunity to clarify and formulate additional information. Often gaps in the feedback appear and further information may need to be sourced to address these omissions.

Ensuring ongoing commitment

The experience of the Beacon councils has demonstrated that it is crucial to put in place processes to manage the implementation of strategies at an early stage. If mechanisms for this have not been fully determined via the workshop/consultation process, then local authorities or steering groups will need to give careful consideration to the following issues when compiling priorities, overall aims, objectives and tasks:

- **Management** – This will require the formation and operation of an implementation group to ensure the commitment of key stakeholders.
- **Implementation** – How designated tasks will be prioritised and actioned and how resources will be sought.
- **Consultation** – How the community will be engaged in future development of the strategy.
- **Monitoring** – How and when progress towards individual targets will be measured.



East Riding's affordable warmth strategy. The experience of the Beacon councils suggests that it is good practice for affordable warmth strategies to be published as public documents as this can help to raise general awareness and can foster community ownership and support.

- **Review** – How and when the strategy will be periodically reviewed to ensure it retains focus.
- **Reporting** – How progress will be reported to key stakeholders and the community.
- **Marketing and promotion** – How to ensure the strategy maintains a high community profile.

Publishing the strategy document

It is good practice to put the draft strategy out for consultation before publication. This should ensure that all the key stakeholders and the wider community have an opportunity to suggest final revisions or amendments.

The experience of the Beacon councils suggests that it is good practice for affordable warmth strategies to be published as public documents as this can help to raise general awareness and can foster community ownership and support.

Launching and promoting the strategy

Publishing and distributing a strategy may be enough to ensure that the wider community and professionals alike readily understand its aims.

However, many authorities have chosen to introduce their strategies via a specific promotional launch event. Hosting a promotional launch can be a resource-intensive yet effective way to ensure broad awareness and acceptance of the strategy, attracting wide interest from policy makers and practitioners as well as the community. The launch can also be used as a highly effective publicity tool for attracting interest from the local press and media.

Key lessons about strategy development

The Beacon councils have each followed affordable warmth strategy development processes to suit their specific circumstances. The key lessons that have been derived from their shared experiences are:

- **Acknowledge potential constraints from the start.** This doesn't mean the authority shouldn't aim high, but rather that authorities need to be realistic about what they hope to achieve and how long this is likely to take.
- **Keep targets, outputs, outcomes and timescales realistic.** Strategies are unlikely to achieve success if they are over-ambitious, unclear or take too long to deliver. Authorities should seek to provide a balance between 'quick wins' and the achievement of longer-term priorities.
- **Ensure all actions can be monitored and evaluated and include provision for periodic review.**
- **Recognise contingent policy areas.** Integrating affordable warmth strategies with other key policies can be important in securing commitment, promoting joint planning and working. It can also bring economies of scale through joint resourcing and pooled budgets.
- **Report and promote successes.** This will increase community awareness and ownership.



4

Management
information for
affordable warmth



SECTION 4

Management information for affordable warmth

Introduction

Developing strategies for affordable warmth will necessarily involve the gathering of local data and information on fuel poverty. Knowing which households are affected and how severe the problem is, will have an impact on the design and delivery of affordable warmth strategies and on how resulting activity will be targeted. This section looks at how the gathering of such data may be managed and how action to tackle fuel poverty may be effectively monitored.

Important issues for consideration are:

- **How can accurate and effective methods of estimating the extent of the problem locally be established?**
- **What are the most appropriate methods for assessing which households are experiencing fuel poverty?**
- **How can the impact of activity to tackle fuel poverty be effectively evaluated and monitored?**

Defining fuel poverty

The commonly accepted definition of fuel poverty is where a household needs to spend 10% or more of income to meet all fuel costs.

However, there continues to be a debate as to how household income is measured within this definition – in particular, whether housing costs should be included or excluded when calculating disposable income. In effect, the above definition may be subject to three different methods of calculating income, and these may be described as the ‘full income’, ‘basic income’ and ‘disposable income’ definitions. How income is calculated has significant implications in calculating the extent of fuel poverty.

Recent years have seen welcome reductions in the number of households in fuel poverty, although definitive figures remain subject to debate. Producing UK figures is further complicated by the lack of current data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and by changes in the methodology used to calculate both household income and the non-heating components of domestic energy consumption in England.

Only the number of fuel-poor households in England are quoted in the definitions given below. However NEA suggests that the following estimates for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland⁶ can be added to figures for England to produce UK-wide data:

6. Numbers of households in fuel poverty are taken from *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001*, (Annex E, Fuel Poverty Monitoring).

- **Scotland: 700,000 households**
- **Wales: 200,000 households**
- **Northern Ireland: 200,000 households.**

The ‘full income’ definition

This is the definition preferred by the Government, and therefore the one used to set targets for the elimination of fuel poverty in the *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy*. It counts housing benefit and income support for mortgage interest as income.

Number of fuel-poor households in England

1996	1998	1999	2000	2001
4.3 million	3.3 million	3.1 million	2.8 million	1.7 million

The Beacon councils, NEA and others have reservations about this definition, not least because households in receipt of subsidies for housing costs have no discretion in how they are spent. In general, payment is made direct to the landlord or mortgage lender and cannot be described as income available to spend on fuel, or any other household bill. Furthermore, where rents or property prices are higher than average, the amount of these payments will also be higher. This hypothetical increase in income can be sufficient to remove a household from fuel poverty, even though no more money is available to meet fuel bills. Similarly a rent increase or higher mortgage interest rates can also inflate hypothetical income and thereby cause a household to fall outside of this definition of fuel poverty.

The ‘basic income’ definition

The Government has indicated that it is also prepared to measure progress using the definition of income, which excludes the housing subsidies mentioned above. This increases the number of fuel poor households as follows.

Number of fuel poor households in England

1996	1998	1999	2000	2001
5.3 million	4.5 million	4.2 million	3.9 million	2.4 million

This definition also fails to take account of regional variations in housing costs. Where rents are high, for example in London and the South East, they can account for a higher proportion of household income. In reality, the income left to buy fuel and other household goods and services will be lower than in areas where housing costs are cheaper. It also makes an unhelpful distinction between those who receive benefits (whose housing costs are therefore in whole or part disregarded in calculating the income available to them), and those who do not (whose income has to cover essential expenditure on rent or mortgage payments).

The ‘disposable income’ definition

Given the difficulties associated with the definitions outlined above, the Beacon councils, NEA and others involved in the campaign against fuel poverty have consistently maintained that the most appropriate way to define income is to exclude all housing costs paid by

households themselves. Treating household income as the sum that remains after rent and mortgage payments are made avoids regional disparities and other anomalies.

However an estimate of the numbers of households in fuel poverty using this definition has not been made since 1996. At that time, it was 6.8 million households. NEA suggests that extrapolating from this starting point and assuming a similar rate of reduction produces the following figures.

Number of fuel poor households in England

1996	1998	1999	2000	2001
6.8 million	5.2-5.8 million	4.9-5.4 million	4.4-5 million	2.8-3.1 million



A selection of Camden properties: 19,800 households (23%) in the borough are fuel poor.

Case study 5: Establishing baseline fuel poverty data



NEA was commissioned in 2000 to undertake research into the extent of fuel poverty in the private sector. 1008 complete datasets (containing both NHER and socio-economic data) were examined using the 1996 Private Sector House Condition Survey. For the public sector, Camden estimated the likely level of fuel poverty among the 15,000 tenants using individual heating systems, based purely on the number of people on benefits. More robust analysis was undertaken amongst the 12,000 tenants connected to the communal heating system, where annual heating charges are known. Here a standard household composition for each property size was assumed and 'worst case' incomes were assumed based on welfare benefit rates.

Key findings were as follows:

- **19,800 households (23%) in the London Borough of Camden are fuel poor, i.e. they have to spend more than 10% of their income to achieve adequate warmth.**
- **19% (10,800 homes) of private sector and 33% (9,000 homes) of public sector households are fuel poor.**
- **Single parent families and lone pensioners are most at risk of fuel poverty.**
- **Lone pensioners and lone younger adults account for the largest number of fuel poor, the latter as a result of the high proportion of such households in Camden.**
- **Single parent families are most at risk of being in severe or extreme fuel poverty.**

Camden will be monitoring progress against this baseline via periodic stock condition surveys. Analysis of their most recent house condition surveys in the private and council sectors will be completed by the end of 2003.



Blyth Valley: Early work promoting energy efficiency with the 'Flex Family'.

BlythValley Borough Council

Blyth Valley employed The Energy Audit Company to advise and provide baseline SAP data. An attempt was made to assess poverty by looking at the numbers claiming benefits. From this information and other details held in the database, a methodology was developed for identifying a baseline for those in fuel poverty. An exterior survey of all properties was undertaken, and records of measures undertaken in the council's stock and through energy supplier programmes were overlaid.

Progress is monitored by recording the actual take-up of measures by households. The council maintains records for its stock and work partly funded by HECAAction schemes. EAGA supplies records for Warm Front and EEC work. Registered social landlords provide updates of work carried out in their stock. Installers provide details of other private sector work.

Progress is measured primarily through SAP ratings, but also through reductions in CO₂ emissions and savings on fuel bills. Target monitoring takes place on an annual basis together with an annual review of the effectiveness of the affordable warmth strategy. The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model has been adopted and the management of the strategy is carried out through this model. Blyth Valley uses an energy audit database, which allows improvements in SAP ratings, CO₂ emissions and fuel bill savings to be measured.

Assessing fuel poverty

One of the challenges faced by each of the Beacon councils in designing affordable warmth strategies has been to ensure that resources are channelled efficiently and fairly to where they are most needed, and each has had to consider what models of assessment of fuel poverty are most appropriate to their circumstances.

Local assessment of fuel poverty is complicated because two independent factors must be taken into account: household income and the energy efficiency of the dwelling. In practice, a compromise must be struck between accurate measurement and an operationally simple, cost-effective basis for making decisions.

Models for assessing fuel poverty and targeting interventions

The following are summaries of some of the different approaches that may be adopted to target interventions where they are most needed. In practice, local authorities will adopt variations of these basic approaches depending upon local circumstances, intended outputs and resources available.

1. Targeting using benefit criteria

Since low incomes are a contributory factor to fuel poverty, receipt of welfare benefits provides a straightforward qualifying criterion for assistance.

The Government uses this approach for Warm Front. Passport benefits conferring eligibility for Warm Front have been selected in an effort to target those groups deemed to be most vulnerable to fuel poverty; the over-60s, families with young children, people with disabilities and the chronically sick – though no test is made as to whether any individual household would actually need to spend 10% or more of income on fuel costs.

Targeting via this approach makes schemes easy to promote and has advantages in enabling partner agencies (such as home helps, health visitors, social workers) to easily identify eligibility and make referrals.

However, a drawback of this method of assessing fuel poverty is that many fuel-poor households may miss out. Those who do not claim the benefits to which they are entitled or who are not eligible for certain benefits are excluded. Similarly, this form of assessment can lead to intervention even where standards of energy efficiency are already good.

The National Audit Office review of the Warm Front scheme, published in 2003, notes evidence that benefit eligibility does not, in many cases, correspond to fuel poverty.⁷ The NAO report can be viewed at: www.nao.gov.uk/publications/nao_reports/02-03/0203769.pdf

2. Targeting by house type

Local authorities are well placed to identify particular types of property with poor standards of energy efficiency, using the housing and construction data, which they already collect via regular stock condition surveys. Subject to Data Protection Act requirements, this data can be used in conjunction with housing benefit or council tax benefit data to allow for identification of individual cases or geographical areas for intervention. Inevitably, this may also lead to the targeting of non-fuel-poor households. However, this approach clearly has long-term benefits, with all housing being made energy efficient regardless of the circumstances of the current occupier, thus reducing the prospect of future occupiers on lower incomes falling into fuel poverty.

3. Targeting using energy audits

Audits of individual properties can identify cost-effective energy efficiency improvements. However, audits can be expensive to carry out on an individual basis. It is therefore currently more common for audit procedures to be used as part of a stock condition survey, whether on a neighbourhood or borough-wide basis. Although this makes them less accurate, this can be a useful guide to areas where energy efficiency improvements can be best targeted.

Audits alone, without accompanying income data, are limited as a tool for establishing fuel poverty. However individual audits do have the advantage of providing a considerable amount of data to inform evaluation of the effects of intervention. They also provide information on levels of CO₂ emissions as a means of measuring environmental improvement.

7. *Warm Front: Helping to Combat Fuel Poverty*, National Audit Office, 2003.

4. Targeting using an 'affordable warmth' model

This type of assessment model aims to ensure that energy costs are affordable in any given property, assuming a minimum income for a standard family type in occupation. These income levels are calculated by reference to current levels of welfare benefit payments, and thus affordable energy costs can be extrapolated with reference to minimum income levels.

This target, affordable fuel cost figure, combined with information about the fuel type and the floor area of the property, is then used to calculate the SAP rating required to meet it. This can then be compared to the current actual or estimated SAP rating and allows the improvements required to meet the target rating to be identified.

This approach could be particularly useful where there are batches of similar property types with a similar maintenance and improvement history, particularly where the energy efficiency characteristics are known.

Case study 6: *Newark and Sherwood's systematic approach* describes how this kind of approach has been put into action.

5. Targeting by assessment of income

The most accurate measure of fuel poverty is via direct assessment. Details of actual household income are collected and energy rating software is used to calculate required fuel expenditure to meet the Standard Heating Regime (nine hours per day for whole house heating to temperatures recommended by the World Health Organisation: 21°C in the living room, 18°C elsewhere). This data is used to calculate the proportion of income a household would need to spend on fuel costs.

However, there are cases where relying exclusively on this calculation can lead to unrealistic outcomes. Increasing a SAP rating from 65 to 85 in order to make fuel costs affordable might not be considered a cost-effective response. However, constraints can be added to cater for these circumstances, such as fixing a ceiling SAP figure beyond which there is no intervention or establishing SAP targets for different house types and age.

Case study 6: Newark and Sherwood's systematic approach



Newark and Sherwood's objective is to ensure that all dwellings of a reasonable size will be capable of delivering affordable energy to a vulnerable householder by 2016.

This objective is in accordance with the Government's target for the eradication of fuel poverty in England. The basis for this approach is that fuel poverty moves around the housing stock as householder size and income change and as people move home. At some point in time all dwellings will be occupied by a vulnerable householder. Only by removing the risk of fuel poverty from the housing stock will fuel poverty be eradicated from Newark and Sherwood.

'Reasonable size' is defined as properties with a floor size of up to 100m² and is determined in order to set reasonable limitations on the potential cost of energy efficiency improvements. This is not to deny that improved energy performance can be provided as a result of activity delivered as part of HECA responsibilities. In fact, many larger dwellings are capable of delivering the fuel poverty target. 'Affordable energy' is defined as less than 10% of income after housing costs have been met. The assumption is that the householder takes up all benefits they are entitled to.

'Vulnerable householders' are defined as:

- A single parent with two children for dwellings with three bedrooms or more.
- A single pensioner for dwellings with two bedrooms or less.
- A single pensioner for all dwellings less than 100m², using the English House Condition Survey protocol that assumes 50% of 'Zone 2' is not heated.

These hypothetical households provide a worst-case scenario that is then modelled for the entire housing stock.

Newark and Sherwood's view is that definitions of affordability should be specific and a fuel-cost target should be established for England, which should be updated as minimum benefits are increased. Newark Citizens Advice Bureau calculates Newark and Sherwood's targets for affordable energy costs at the beginning of each financial year.

This then provides the basis for the measuring, managing and monitoring of progress towards eradicating fuel poverty. Newark and Sherwood's view is that, while it is valuable to measure the number of households in fuel poverty, eradicating fuel poverty requires a measure of the dwellings capable of delivering affordable energy.

Current data for Newark and Sherwood shows that:

- 5,247 householders are in fuel poverty
- 12,859 dwellings are not capable of delivering affordable energy to a vulnerable householder.

Further information on Newark and Sherwood's approach can be viewed at: www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/chiefexecutives/energyagency/onlineinformation/index.htm

Setting targets and monitoring progress of affordable warmth strategies

There is no commonly agreed set of performance indicators for affordable warmth. Local authorities will need to determine the targets and performance indicators against which the implementation of affordable warmth strategies will be measured. They will need to consider which set of performance indicators will be most relevant to their circumstances and how such data may be most easily collected.

Affordable warmth targets

The Beacon councils have all developed affordable warmth strategies which state broad strategic aims and objectives. These vary according to local priorities, but some examples of key aims from Beacon council strategies include:

- **To raise public awareness of energy efficiency and affordable warmth.**
- **To raise awareness of affordable warmth amongst key partners and agencies.**
- **To increase take-up of grants and benefits.**
- **To maximise the income of residents.**
- **Ensuring access to competitively priced fuel supply.**
- **Ensuring the housing stock is capable of delivering affordable warmth.**
- **To improve the health of residents.**

It is from within the actual tasks that have been identified as part of local action to achieve these broad aims that specific targets may be identified, which can be set as performance indicators.

Performance indicators should be set for both the short term and the longer term, and good practice derived from the Beacon councils suggests that it helps to ensure continued support for affordable warmth strategies if short-term successes can be demonstrated at an early stage. Performance indicators need not be complicated or difficult to measure. They can simply relate to the numbers of actions and interventions that are accomplished, for instance:

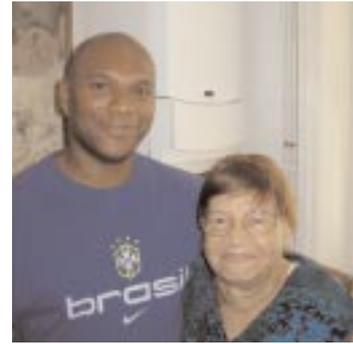
- **Number of training sessions, awareness raising or information sessions, or dissemination events.**
- **Number of referrals made to energy efficiency grant schemes.**
- **Number of people referred to or assisted by Citizens Advice Bureaux for money, benefits or other advice.**
- **Improvements in energy efficiency of all local authority housing (by raising SAP rating).**
- **Number of pensioners resident in the local authority area assisted to move from under-occupied property.**

Case study 7: Monitoring outputs



Camden's Warmth for All strategy is delivered by a multi-agency partnership with clear roles and responsibilities. The steering group for the strategy meets bi-monthly to monitor the progress of initiatives, troubleshoot issues arising and plan future promotions. Outputs are tracked on a monthly basis, and borough-wide performance indicators have been agreed. These can be viewed as part of the Warmth for All resource pack at: www.camden.gov.uk/beacon

Outputs include the number of callers to the Warmth for All helpline; how they heard about the scheme; the number of referrals made by the helpline to local and national energy efficiency programmes and to Citizens Advice Bureaux for money advice; and the numbers of approved and completed grants. A customer satisfaction survey of callers to the helpline is undertaken annually by telephone. Customer satisfaction with private sector grant work is also assessed. Firstly, prior to payment, residents are sent a customer satisfaction card to ensure that they are satisfied with the completed works, then the Environmental Health Team issues a self-completion survey that asks a series of questions relating to the service.



A satisfied Camden private tenant with her new heating system and the networker who referred her to the Warmth for All helpline.

Gathering information to measure performance

Having established performance indicators, consideration should be given to how more in-depth information might be gathered. Some approaches to gathering, comparing and cross-referencing sets of fuel poverty-related data are described as follows.

Heating satisfaction questionnaires

Some authorities have found that sending out a heating satisfaction questionnaire to householders can produce useful data. Heating satisfaction questionnaires can ask about the type of heating used, the cost of running this, the degree of control, the ease of use, the feeling of warmth created, the service offered, and the effect of this on the health and well-being of the person. Responses will run from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. These questions can be added to existing questionnaires, be sent with regular mail-outs, or form part of a HECAMON survey.

Some authorities may feel that a more detailed, crosscutting survey with preparatory research and detailed analysis is required. This will, of course, be more time consuming and costly but may result in better data.

House condition surveys

The addition of questions to existing house condition surveys to allow the coldness, dampness and energy efficiency of homes to be estimated can help to gauge the effectiveness of measures being carried out as part of affordable warmth strategies.

Many authorities carry out local house condition surveys annually, every five years or at another interval. Fuel poverty estimates for the survey area can be produced by adding energy efficiency and household income questions to this survey. In the years between surveys it would be possible to use income data and estimates of changes as a result of energy efficiency improvements to produce up-to-date data against which to measure changes in levels of fuel poverty.

Financial data gathering

Consideration should be given as to how information about levels of income, improved benefit take-up, take-up of social tariffs such as StayWarm (Powergen) or Nest Makers (Scottish Power), can be gathered and assessed for their impact upon levels of fuel poverty in communities. Much of this information will be collected by different parts of the authority and by other agencies. It will emphasise the crosscutting nature of the affordable warmth strategy if such data can be gathered and reported on as part of agreed affordable warmth performance indicators.

Case study 8: Setting best value performance indicators



Newark and Sherwood District Council adopted a local Best Value performance indicator for fuel poverty that requires them to report on the number of dwellings within the district not capable of delivering affordable energy to a vulnerable household.

In order to monitor progress against this performance indicator, Newark and Sherwood assumes that a single pensioner occupies every dwelling smaller than 100m² and calculates the capability of that dwelling to deliver affordable energy. (See Case study 6: *Newark and Sherwood's systematic approach*). For council housing, this analysis is carried out every year at little extra cost.

For the private sector (both homeowners and private landlords), a fuel poverty risk analysis is carried out based on the statutory stock condition survey. This showed 11.3% of householders in fuel poverty in 2002. Newark and Sherwood has collected adequate energy performance data to undertake a fuel poverty risk analysis on 56% of all dwellings within the district. It is expected that this will have been carried out for nearly all dwellings by 2006. The annual survey is carried out using HECAMON software, which has been modified to produce a fuel poverty risk assessment.

Case study 9: Monitoring and reviewing

Blyth Valley Borough Council

Blyth Valley Borough Council is aware that it is not enough to set targets; it is vital that these are reviewed in line with performance. Monitoring progress on the targets takes place annually together with a review of the effectiveness of the affordable warmth strategy. Actual progress against targets is monitored by recording the take-up of measures by households.

The Energy Audit Company was employed to conduct a survey of all public and private properties and to set up a bespoke database. This is compiled using data from an exterior survey of all properties and from both council and fuel company records of installed measures, which is then updated annually. The database allows Blyth Valley to measure improvements in SAP ratings, CO₂ emissions and fuel bill savings.

Blyth Valley is committed both to monitoring progress against targets and to evaluating the overall effectiveness of the strategy. Ongoing review is undertaken by monitoring individual feedback via questionnaires from those who have received grants and from those who made an enquiry, but did not qualify or chose not to proceed. Feedback surveys are also carried out at awareness-raising and promotional outreach events. Focus groups are convened to evaluate the strategy, to identify changing needs and to determine solutions to meet them.



Blyth Valley: Feedback surveys are carried out at awareness-raising and promotional outreach events.

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

East Riding of Yorkshire's HECA Working Group oversees service development of the affordable warmth strategy and a monitoring meeting is held every 8 to 10 weeks. It is chaired by the Housing Standards Manager and attended by representatives of key internal departments, the health sector, the Warm Front scheme manager, and EEAC representatives. The group monitors progress of the action plan in line with agreed targets and ensures there are strong links with the housing, anti-poverty and Local Agenda 21 strategies. Regular reports and ongoing feedback are fed into the Local Agenda 21 Working Group and the Corporate Senior Management Team.



Luton's affordable warmth strategy is led by the local authority in conjunction with a range of key stakeholders in recognition that success is achieved through a multi-agency approach. The other partners are:

- **Luton Primary Care Trust**
- **Luton Against Poverty Forum**
- **The Fire Service**
- **Bedfordshire Energy Advice Centre**
- **Luton BC – Social Inclusion, Public and Private Sector Housing and Social Services**
- **Warm Front scheme manager**
- **Working Luton**
- **Luton Citizen Advice Bureau.**

Ongoing monitoring and review of achievements is carried out by the Affordable Warmth Strategy Steering Group, which meets every quarter to review progress and to update the original strategy.



5

Reaching fuel-poor households



SECTION 5

Reaching fuel-poor households

Introduction

Reaching the most vulnerable members of the community can clearly be a challenging process. This section highlights some of the effective and innovative approaches the Beacon councils have developed. These have included undertaking marketing and promotional campaigns (with fuel utilities, scheme managers and others), targeted mailings to benefit recipients, postal energy audits and, importantly, the development of effective referral mechanisms with partner agencies.

Developing referral mechanisms

One of the main strengths that many partner organisations can contribute to affordable warmth strategies is in assisting with the process of identification of vulnerable households. It is important to consider how processes can be put in place to enable partner organisations to help their clients access the various benefits of affordable warmth. Formalising these processes can establish effective referral mechanisms.

This section will look at how such mechanisms may be developed and how they may contribute to maximising take-up of energy efficiency grants and benefits.

Effective referral networks

The participants in referral networks will vary according to local circumstances, but they are likely to be organisations that have daily contact with clients vulnerable to fuel poverty. Such organisations may be in the health and social care sector; they may be local authority officers from departments with differing primary responsibilities (for example, housing officers, environmental health, education home visiting staff, revenue officers); or they may be staff from voluntary sector agencies.

Developing effective referral networks involves gaining the support of agencies for the practical steps necessary to support the network. Such support can best be gained by early identification of the requirements and policy commitments of individual agencies. It is important to set up a reporting structure that enables officers to present to colleagues and senior officers the benefits such networks may have to their own sectors.



A Camden networker receives £50 Marks & Spencers vouchers for being the first to refer ten clients to the Warmth for All Helpline.

Promoting the referral network concept

The experience of the Beacon councils has been that establishing successful referral networks involves ensuring that senior staff in participating sectors have agreed to support the development of the network. Acceptance at senior officer level may well have positive resource implications. It will also ensure that senior staff are involved in the development process – in selecting the right staff for any subsequent training or in establishing suitable training criteria for their staff. Also, experience shows that any additional role for front-line staff – particularly one that adds to current workload – is likely to be viewed at the outset as a burden. It must therefore be shown as clearly as possible, to staff at all levels, that the network will be supporting the remit and goals of participating agencies.

Design of the referral mechanism: central to the success of the network

From the outset it is crucial to be clear about what form the referral mechanism will take. The structure and operation of any referral mechanism will depend on what is being asked of those making referrals and what mechanisms are being put in place both to support them and to ensure responses to those referrals.

The complexity or simplicity of the referral process will have implications for training requirements. In general, the less that is demanded of the front-line worker, the more likely they are to make a referral.

The delivery structure

A decision should be made on the extent to which delivery of services is to be integrated with other services in the community. This may include linking to money and benefits advice; assistance available through social services and the health sector; or the support and advocacy services available via voluntary sector agencies.

Importantly, front-line staff participating in a referral network must be given realistic timetables showing response times leading to survey and installation of measures. An adequate tracking structure should be put in place to allow for regular updates to front-line staff on referral progress. Participants may withdraw from the scheme if they cannot see any benefits or improvements resulting from their intervention or if the process takes too long.

Case study 10: Developing a referral network

LUTON

Luton Borough Council's affordable warmth strategy has benefited from a close working relationship between the Chief Executive's Department and the Housing Department, leading to a strong anti-poverty focus.

At the heart of Luton's approach has been the development of a one-stop-shop referral network, which aims to make homes more energy efficient, maximise income and ensure social support. Referrals are made by some 40 organisations locally – mainly front-line outreach workers who have regular contact with the most vulnerable households in Luton. For example, these may be home carers, housing benefit review officers, district nurses or health visitors. This has been particularly successful in reaching vulnerable householders aged over 70.

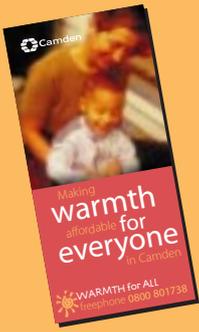
All referral agents receive free energy awareness training and guidance on completion of postal referral forms, which use a tick box system to identify various types of need. Incoming referrals are co-ordinated centrally through a referral desk by the Affordable Warmth Team, which logs each referral on an access-based referral system. These are then forwarded to one or more of five partner agencies for action:

- **Income maximisation** – 53% of referrals go to a specialist outreach worker within Luton Citizens Advice Bureau who contacts clients to complete a full benefit check and helps them to access available benefits. The worker advocates on behalf of clients from initial meetings through to benefit tribunals where necessary. To date, more than £746,000 of annual benefits has been accessed for clients.
- **Social support** – A specialist outreach officer based in Social Services contacts clients (11% of referrals), assesses need and can access care packages, home help, aids, adaptations, social welfare advice and information. The worker is an advocate for vulnerable clients and can arrange household improvements on their behalf. To date, over 100 people have received packages of social support.
- **Making homes more energy efficient** – To date, some £158,000 worth of Warm Front grants has been accessed for clients (29% of referrals). For those not eligible for Warm Front in the private sector, but with an annual income of less than £12,000 (6% of referrals), the local Cosy Homes scheme provides home insulation. The borough's Healthy Heating scheme provides heating improvements for those at risk of cold-related illness. Bedfordshire EEAC also provides a complementary energy advice service (1% of referrals) for householders not requiring any other form of assistance.

The Luton referral system includes a mechanism to ensure that feedback from each of the five provider agencies is logged and can be



Working Luton – a local supported employment project – working with the council to provide home insulation to vulnerable households through their Cosy Homes scheme.



Camden: One of many publications designed to raise public awareness of energy efficiency and affordable warmth.

tracked to provide specific feedback to referral agents on the status of any job at any given time.

Overall, the Luton referral scheme costs the authority some £51,500 per year in mainstream funding since its inception in April 2001. This has principally covered administration and co-ordination costs (£14,500), funding of the part-time support worker from Social Services (£8,000), and mainstream funding from Citizens Advice Bureaux services (£29,000). However this expenditure has resulted in a net gain of some £902,000 in benefits and grant aid over the same period.

Key delivery partners are the local Citizens Advice Bureau, Luton PCT (formerly the Health Action Zone), Warm Front, Working Luton, the Chief Executive's Department, Social Services, Housing Services, and the Luton Against Poverty Forum. Clear roles are drawn up and agreed. These include responsibilities for the Affordable Warmth Strategy Steering Group and the Referral Network Working Group. All partnership members sign up to this agreement. A multi-agency working group meets monthly to review cases and ensure that the scheme is operating smoothly. The sum of their efforts is raising awareness right across the borough and many more households have access to affordable warmth.

Further details of Luton's referral scheme can be found at:

www.luton.gov.uk/caring/affordable

Case study 11: Camden's Warmth for All network



The London Borough of Camden has developed a three-pronged approach to its referral network: grant eligibility, energy advice provision and income maximisation. A specific branding, entitled Warmth for All, has been adopted to ensure high visibility for the affordable warmth strategy. The approach relies upon high-profile, recognisable marketing and uses two approaches to targeting key groups and individuals:

- **Periodic mailings are scheduled to maintain a constant flow of grant referrals.**
- **A referral network has been established to ensure that the most vulnerable and socially-excluded householders are reached.**

The first approach has already targeted all 12,000 homes in the private sector that are in receipt of benefits. This was achieved via an information mailing by Camden Benefits Division. In total, targeted mailings have resulted in over 900 calls to the Warmth for All helpline. Camden has also developed a range of branded information resources that are disseminated widely across the borough. These include leaflets (with a referral card) for the general public explaining how they can benefit from the service; a Warmth for All website; welfare rights leaflets which link benefits advice to affordable warmth; and branded thermometers. The campaign is also supported by regular features in the local press, Camden's own newsletter to staff, and voluntary and health sector newsletters.

The Warmth for All referral network comprises a range of health and care professionals, as well as community workers who have agreed to promote the campaign to their clients. Originally funded as a Health Action Zone pilot in two wards, the network has since been rolled out across the borough. Agency staff receive briefings about the service and are issued with leaflets, which they are asked to pass on to clients. Since 2000, 350 potential networkers have received some level of energy-awareness training and their referrals have resulted in 180 calls to the helpline.

The helpline acts as a single point of contact. It is a freephone number to the public and referral agents and is operated under contract by North West London EEAC. EEAC staff determine need and eligibility and referrals are then passed on to a range of agencies to action in the following ways.

- **Grant eligibility** – Helpline staff use an Energy Efficiency Resource Matrix to determine which grant schemes callers should be referred to. The matrix prioritises the Government’s Warm Front and the council’s private sector Warmth for All grant by client category. Camden is currently trialling a Warm Front top-up scheme in partnership with EAGA. Camden has also introduced its own Warm and Dry grant for vulnerable council tenants, which is managed directly by the Housing Department. The matrix can be viewed at: www.camden.gov.uk/beacon
- **Energy advice** – The helpline offers a range of energy advice to clients based on personal circumstances, including grant aid, low-cost and no-cost energy saving tips, tariff and benefits advice.
- **Money matters** – All callers to the helpline are offered an appointment with the Camden Citizens Advice Bureau for money and benefits advice. The helpline routinely sends out a benefits leaflet detailing services available to clients, which is produced jointly with the Camden Welfare Rights Team.



Blyth Valley: launch of the Better Living scheme.

Case study 12: Reaching fuel-poor households

Blyth Valley Borough Council

Blyth Valley targets fuel-poor households through systematic use of its energy audit database. People who likely to be in fuel poverty and who for whatever reason have not been identified via the database, are targeted by enclosing promotional leaflets with council tax benefit and housing benefit forms.

Awareness-raising activities have also resulted in very good take-up levels of Warm Front measures. In particular, the council’s Better Living scheme offers subsidies to private householders to fit condensing boilers.



Blyth Valley newsletter: one of a range of awareness-raising activities through the press, commissioned studies, newsletters, pamphlets, targeted letter drops, and promotional events.

Blyth Valley organises a range of awareness-raising activities through the press, commissioned studies, newsletters, pamphlets, targeted letter drops and promotional events.

Wardens linked to the council's dispersed alarm scheme have been trained to provide energy awareness information to the 2600 older and disabled householders they visit. Social services staff help by providing energy awareness information to people visiting day centres. This is particularly aimed at reducing excess winter mortality figures. Tenants' representatives are informed and given information for distribution.

The council devised a model for implementing HECA's Spreading the Word initiative across the area. HECAAction funding was secured to set up the volunteer Community Energy Advisors Network (see Case study 15: *Energy advice in the community*).

The Better Living scheme is used for self-referrals, and other referrals as appropriate. The client is referred to the EEAC, which will check for entitlement to free measures and – if this is not the case – will advise on discounted measures under this scheme.

Blyth Valley has no specific staffing resources and, as with many authorities, the HECA function is not a full-time responsibility. Partnership working has therefore been crucial in reaching fuel-poor households. Working partners have included Northern Electric, KNW (a Warm Front installer), the Energy Audit Company, Northumbria EEAC and, more recently, EAGA and Warm Zone. Further to this, the Northumberland Energy Watch Service (NEWS) partnership has been set up using HECAAction funding. This comprises representatives from the six district councils in Northumberland as well as external partners. NEWS is a partnership dealing with the issue of achieving affordable warmth and reaching fuel-poor households throughout Northumberland.

Case study 13: Developing partnerships to reach fuel-poor households



East Riding of Yorkshire has used a range of initiatives and partnerships to reach fuel-poor households.

A key partner has been Warm Front and success in increasing take-up of these grants, (£1.1million has been claimed 2002-03) has been due to the joint development of local initiatives. A range of marketing initiatives has been undertaken, usually funded jointly between the council and Warm Front. These have included regular articles in the local press, landlord newsletters and other local publicity.

Annual letters are sent to all residents in receipt of benefit in the private sector (approximately 14,000) using the council's IT and Benefits departments to set up standard reports and mailing lists. In this way, the council has been able to target both owner-occupiers and those in the private-rented sector.

Presentations to local relevant groups, residents' meetings and landlord forums are regularly undertaken, and the council's customer service centres have been used as information points for grant information. The Bus Pass scheme has also been used as a mechanism to raise awareness of grants amongst the elderly.

The npower funded Health Through Warmth scheme was launched in September 2002. An ongoing training plan has been developed for a variety of organisations including local authority staff, NHS, Sure Start, advice centres, etc. At present the private sector enforcement staff, grant officers, Staying Put team and Occupational Therapy team have been trained. Their referrals are sent to the referral team based within the council to determine the relevant measures necessary to the client. Further, a pilot 'energy on prescription' scheme has been undertaken within one area to provide information to residents suffering a cold-related illness.

All staff within the customer service centres have energy efficiency training provided by the local EEAC. This ongoing training enables the staff to provide basic advice to all callers via telephone, in person or via citizen link if they live in a more remote location. The EEAC also works in partnership with the council to provide more detailed energy advice and to advise residents of the range of energy efficiency initiatives available in their area.



Camden: The Warmth for All campaign is supported by regular features in the local press, Camden's own newsletter to staff, and voluntary and health sector newsletters.

Case study 14: Targeting via postal energy surveys



Newark and Sherwood regularly mail out energy surveys for householders to complete and return. These are sent to approximately 7,500 householders in targeted localities between November and March each year. The data is collated and the householder mailed a 'key measures' energy advice pack within one working day. A modified, postal survey is sent to 2,500 households in April each year and, again, the householder gets a 'key-measures' energy advice pack.

Over the years these DIY surveys have been co-funded by the council, the Rural Development Commission, the EU SAVE Energy Agency Network, EU social exclusion grant funding, the Newark and Sherwood PCT, Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services and the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire EEAC. It has taken six years (1996–2002) to include all owner-occupied and private landlord dwellings in this rolling programme, and resources are now in place to work through the district every four years. Householder returns average 43%, and those dwellings that do not return are now subject to a walk-past energy survey.

Newark and Sherwood has found that:

- **In-house postal surveys are cheaper than commercial telephone surveys.**
- **Survey envelopes should indicate the letter is from the council (rather than a utility or other commercial organisation).**
- **It is worthwhile including a 'Global to Local' educational message with the covering letter.**
- **A simplified form increases returns.**
- **DIY surveys are surprisingly accurate when compared with professional surveys.**

From the surveys, Warm Front referrals are identified and details of the scheme are forwarded by post. Importantly, those householders that do not request a Warm Front grant through the council are contacted by the Energy Agency, this time by telephone. A significant minority of householders prefer to deal directly with the Warm Front team.

The survey data is processed, recorded within a Newark and Sherwood residential performance database, and sent electronically to the EEAC, which sends out a more 'authoritative' energy pack two weeks after the council's response.



6

Measures, interventions and funding sources



SECTION 6

Measures, interventions and funding sources

Introduction

Major sources of funding for energy efficiency measures are available through government and fuel utility programmes. These have criteria that determine who is eligible for assistance and what measures may be available to them. However, the Beacon councils have demonstrated that other sources of funding can be accessed to maximise the benefits for the widest possible range of householders. Local authorities have an opportunity at the local level to involve partner organisations and residents to determine local priorities for energy efficiency programmes. In particular, local authorities can play an important role in co-ordinating and integrating the often confusing range of funding sources available so that residents can access the most beneficial packages of energy efficiency improvements. However for many fuel-poor householders, energy efficiency improvements will only be part of the solution. Delivering energy advice to householders and identifying opportunities to maximise income may be equally important.

Identifying and packaging energy efficiency improvements

The majority of housing in the UK is rated poorly in terms of energy efficiency compared to other, often colder countries. In order to achieve a common UK standard of energy rating the Government has funded and published a methodology for producing energy ratings for dwellings. This is called the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP).

This procedure calculates energy ratings for dwellings on a scale of 1 to 120, where 1 represents the lowest level of energy efficiency and 120 the highest. The average SAP rating of dwellings in England is 50. For low-income households a SAP of 70 to 80 may be required to provide affordable warmth and remove the occupants from fuel poverty.

To help local authorities with SAP and other energy surveys, various energy-rating and database software is available. These vary in scope, complexity and cost. New software is being produced regularly and fuel poverty modules have been developed for some. They can help pinpoint homes where there is a particularly high probability of fuel poverty. A list of approved software is produced by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and is available at: <http://projects.bre.co.uk/sap2001/SAP2001-software.pdf>

National schemes such as Warm Front and the Energy Efficiency



Blyth Valley: promoting energy efficiency.

Commitment can provide important improvements for eligible householders. However, unless efficient heating systems are in place, the improvements available under these schemes are unlikely in themselves to lift households out of fuel poverty. In many cases a package of energy efficiency measures is likely to be required in order to achieve affordable warmth for low-income occupants.

Packages of improvements – provided they are adequately funded – allow all the practical improvements to be carried out over a short period of time, rather than the piecemeal approach of many existing schemes, which require households to be revisited on a number of occasions before they are improved sufficiently.

Packages of improvements should be designed to take into account the condition of the property and likely occupancy. The principal aim of an energy efficiency improvement package is to provide whole-house heating and levels of comfort at a price the occupants can afford.

The property should be capable of providing the following room temperatures within the budget of the householder.

Standard recommended design conditions

Room	Design temperature (° C)
Living room	21
Kitchen	18
Bedrooms	18
Hall and circulation areas	18
Toilet	18
Bathroom	22

Further benefits can be gained by linking energy efficiency schemes to other improvement or renovation programmes designed to renew estates or neighbourhoods. A number of energy efficiency improvements would only be cost-effective if carried out alongside other improvements, such as the installation of double-glazing when replacing windows, flat roof insulation during repairs, and internal or external insulation during repair or maintenance contracts.

Further guidance can be sought from the Energy Saving Trust's Housing Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme, which provides a useful source of information, relevant publications, and offers access to training and advice (www.est.org.uk/bestpractice). Descriptions of energy efficient solutions for housing problems can be found in the *Good Practice Guide 171: Domestic Energy Efficiency Primer*, available at: www.est.org.uk/bestpractice/publications/index.jsp

Energy efficiency improvement options

Heating systems

Heating systems options will depend on the fuels available, convenience, householder choice, capital cost and cost of heating fuel. Where mains gas is available, affordable warmth is possible even with homes that have walls that are neither easy nor economical to insulate. Where homes are well insulated and mains gas is available, the boiler and radiators must be sized to suit the heating load required. This will

give both lower installation costs and minimum running costs to the occupants. While central heating will usually be the preferred choice in order to provide affordable whole house heating, room heaters may be appropriate in smaller or very well insulated properties – providing an economic form of water heating can be installed.

Where mains gas is not available, it is recommended that properties should be insulated in excess of the standards of the current Building Regulations or affordable warmth will not be achieved. Maintenance and servicing should be taken into consideration and, where appropriate, schemes to allow householders to purchase maintenance and repair contracts should be brokered with the manufacturers of the heating equipment, or with service providers.

Independent and updated information on boiler efficiencies can be found at: www.sedbuk.com. This can be used as a guide when specifying new boilers or approving specifications from heating engineers. Part L of the Building Regulations states that only boilers of over 78% efficiency can be installed in new or existing properties.

Heating controls

Heating controls will prevent unnecessary fuel use and provide comfort where and when required. They help to take advantage of solar and incidental gains, but must be robust, easy to use and suitable for the requirements of the householder. Part L of the Building Regulations gives guidance that must be considered when upgrading or installing heating systems. Controls should preferably be demonstrated to the householder before and after installation by a qualified energy advisor.

Ventilation issues

Ventilation is required to move air in and out of buildings to improve internal air quality and meet legal requirements for safety. It is also crucial in preventing damp, condensation and mould growth, which can exacerbate health problems. Control of ventilation is achieved by draughtproofing doors and windows and installing methods of removing moisture. These may include trickle vents, extractor fans, positive pressure ventilation and passive stack ventilation. Each has its advantages and limitations depending upon household circumstances or structure of the property. A ventilation strategy should be in place alongside a heating and insulation strategy to ensure the three measures complement each other, and that problems are not being stored up for the future.

Tackling 'hard to treat' housing

The *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy* raises a number of important issues concerning the difficulties of achieving affordable warmth in certain types of housing. These 'hard to treat houses' are:

- **The five million households in Britain that are not connected to the gas network and are therefore perhaps reliant on expensive fuels with price volatility.**
- **Over-large, owner-occupied houses such as single pensioners living in large family houses.**
- **Older solid-walled houses where wall insulation is both expensive and disruptive.**
- **Houses in a state of disrepair that prevents energy efficiency improvements.**



Newark & Sherwood: A 'Staying-Put' client in her nineteenth century cottage. Cost effective insulation and central heating with a high performance boiler will provide affordable energy for a vulnerable householder.

Research by the Association for the Conservation of Energy (ACE)⁸ (www.ukace.org/pubs/reportfo/affwarm.pdf) has indicated that there are over 1.4 million low-income households living in properties that have no access to mains gas and have walls that cannot be cavity insulated. Costs of improving these properties may be in excess of £10,000 per property, which is considerably less than demolition and rebuild but is still a massive amount of funding to be raised if the problem of hard-to-heat homes is to be tackled.

There are no simple solutions to any of these problems, but authorities looking for guidance and information may find recent research commissioned by the Energy Efficiency Partnership useful. Published in 2003, the EEP report on hard to treat homes⁹ can be accessed at the EEP website: www.est.org.uk/partnership. The report looks at practice within 41 local authority schemes across the country and reviews the extent to which local authorities are dealing with the problem.

Case study 15: Tackling hard to treat homes



In 1988, Newark and Sherwood established its £16.4 million, 20-year energy efficiency investment programme for its 7,500 council-owned dwellings. From 1985 to 1988, various studies established that insulating solid-walled dwellings would add a further £16 million to the proposed energy improvement programme – a level of public funding that was not available. However, it was demonstrated to the tenants' satisfaction that affordable heat targets, set by the tenants' Damp Action Group, could be met without wholesale internal dry lining or external wall insulation. Internal or external wall insulation was still undertaken to overcome 'energy design defects' such as sloping ceilings of rooms in the roof and dropped eaves, half-brick external walls and ceilings to external accesses stores or passageways.

Following the 1985-1988 pilots, Newark and Sherwood's approach has been that there is no 'hard to heat' problem for dwellings of a reasonable size.

Newark and Sherwood has concluded that installing cost-effective insulation and a high efficiency gas central heating system, or a high efficiency oil heating system for non-gas rural areas, ensures that all dwellings of a reasonable size are capable of delivering affordable energy to vulnerable householders.

Cost-effective insulation together with installation of boilers compliant with current Building Regulations ensures that all dwellings of a reasonable size are capable of delivering affordable energy within Newark and Sherwood in all tenures of housing.

⁸ *Affordable Warmth in Hard to Heat Homes: A Way Forward*, ACE/Eaga Charitable Trust, 2002.

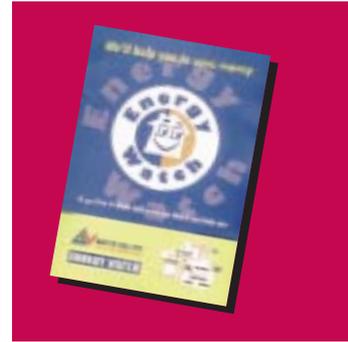
⁹ *Investigation of Local Authority Activity In Respect of Fuel Poverty in Hard to Treat Homes*, EEP/Impetus Consulting, 2003.

Energy advice

Research carried out on behalf of the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes – *Energy Advice: A Good Investment* (copies of the full report may be accessed at the EEP website: www.est.org.uk/partnership) – has highlighted the need to integrate improvement packages with energy advice, education and training so that householders fully understand the benefits of the improvements, and know how to use any new appliances, such as heating boilers and controls. Only in this way will expected savings be achieved. It is recommended that residents have access to informed individuals who can continue to give advice after installation.

The provision of energy advice to householders should be seen as an essential part of an improvement package rather than an added extra. Advice should be provided before installation, so that householders understand the purpose and benefits of carrying out the works, the options and what will be involved; during installation, so that any problems or fears can be dealt with; and after installation, to make sure they understand fully how to operate any new systems. Some examples of good practice with regard to energy advice services would include the following:

- **Written information on potential fuel cost savings following improvements with an explanation of how this was calculated, plus energy rating certificates and cavity wall guarantees for householders to pass to prospective purchasers.**
- **Laminated cards with instructions on use and informative diagrams should be supplied and preferably fixed near relevant appliances. Cards should include advice on maintenance and servicing and relevant contact numbers.**
- **There should be a 'running in' period following installation when advice is freely available. Preferably, local residents, community activists or housing officers would be trained in energy and product awareness to offer long-term support.**
- **Advice on choosing a fuel supplier, particularly where there has been the installation of a new fuel supply.**
- **Advice on choosing the correct tariff and payment method.**
- **Log book provided for householders to keep a record of consumption and costs of fuel.**
- **Advice on how to keep the home free from damp and condensation.**



Blyth Valley: 'Energy Watch' leaflet.



Blyth Valley: promoting affordable warmth through display boards in council offices.

Case study 16: Energy advice in the community

BlythValley Borough Council

In 1997, following a successful HECAction bid, Blyth Valley recruited 255 voluntary community energy advisors who were trained in the benefits of installing energy efficiency measures in domestic properties. In order to be convincing advocates of the advantages of installing such works, free measures were carried out to the community energy advisors' homes. The volunteers were then asked to spread the word of these benefits to others within a small area of around 70 properties in the community. The result was a network of volunteers covering the majority of private sector properties within the borough. Through regular briefings, advisors are kept up to date with grant availability and new initiatives. Their awareness and advocacy of the benefits of energy efficiency has helped to increase the take up of grants in all sections of the community.

Access to income maximisation services

Energy efficiency improvements will play an important role in ensuring that fuel poor households can achieve affordable warmth. However each of the Beacon councils have demonstrated that in order to effectively tackle fuel poverty in communities, affordable warmth strategies must adopt a holistic approach. This includes ensuring that householders are given access to opportunities to maximise their income. Many householders may not be claiming the benefits to which they are entitled. Assisting householders to claim benefits is important not only to raise household income, but also because many energy efficiency grant schemes, such as Warm Front, require receipt of certain benefits to confer eligibility. Some fuel poor householders may simply not be eligible for current grant schemes, or may live in properties where the construction type limits the range of energy efficiency measures that may be offered. For such householders looking at opportunities to raise income may be crucial in helping to provide affordable warmth. Affordable warmth strategies should look at opportunities to link into benefits, debt or money advice services provided by Citizens Advice Bureaux, local advice agencies or others. This may include advice on paying for fuel, assisting householders to gain access to more advantageous tariffs or basic banking facilities.

Luton and Camden's approaches to providing income maximisation services are described in case studies 10 and 11.

Sources of funding for energy efficiency improvements

Even those with a professional interest may be confused and frustrated by the multiplicity of different, often competing, schemes. Combining these schemes will maximise investment in each property. Each funding source will have its own criteria and additional funding will need to be found for measures not covered and for those in fuel poverty who fall outside eligibility criteria, usually those just above benefit levels.

The Energy Saving Trust has developed a database with up-to-date information on all available grants and offers for energy efficiency improvements. It is available at: www.saveenergy.co.uk

Sources of funding for energy efficiency improvements

(i) Energy efficiency grants

Warm Front

This is the principal government-funded grant scheme to aid the fuel poor through energy efficiency improvements in England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have separate schemes.

Warm Front packages of measures were designed in conjunction with the Building Research Establishment to substantially reduce the calculated cost of keeping warm, and can offer grants of up to £2,500 for insulation and heating measures for eligible clients in the private sector. In England, the scheme is managed by either Powergen or Eaga Partnership depending upon regional location. Details of eligibility and measures available can be accessed at: www.eaga.co.uk or www.powergen-warmfront.co.uk. Full contact details for the scheme managers can be found at Section 7: *Useful contacts*.

Fuel suppliers

Through the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), fuel suppliers are required to encourage and assist customers with energy efficiency measures. Introduced in 1995 as Energy Efficiency Standards of Performance, the Energy Efficiency Commitment has a target spend of £50 million per year during 2002–2005. In the domestic sector, these schemes have largely funded loft and cavity wall insulation, low-energy lighting, energy-efficient white goods and discounts on other appliances. Ofgem, the energy regulator, has directed that EEC should continue to have a focus on disadvantaged customers with 50% of energy savings to be derived from customers receiving benefits or tax credits. Individual fuel suppliers should be contacted for details of EEC schemes.

(ii) Other funding mechanisms

New Deal for Communities (NDFC)

This government-funded programme was introduced in 2001 to tackle multiple deprivations in the very poorest neighbourhoods. Schemes to tackle the social, economic, health and environmental problems of these neighbourhoods are devised and implemented by local partnerships. Over £1.9 billion has been committed to support the 39 accredited partnerships over the next 10 years. It is expected that there will be significant investment in housing improvements. Details are available at: www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/ndcomms.asp

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

This is a fund to enable the 88 most deprived authorities to improve services, narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country. With budgets of £200 million in 2001/02, £300 million in

2002/03 and £400 million in 2003/04, the fund can be spent in any way that will tackle deprivation. The fund concentrates on improving public services to increase employment, improve economic performance, reduce crime, improve educational attainment and health, and provide better housing. The grant can be used to support services provided not only by the local authority, but also by other organisations. In future, it is likely that strategies will have to be agreed with Local Strategic Partnerships. Details are available at: www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/nrfund.asp

Regional development agencies (RDAs)

From April 1999, RDAs became responsible for the physical, economic and social regeneration of their regions. They were specifically asked to promote sustainable economic development, prepare strategies for social and economic regeneration and to co-ordinate the work of regional and local partners in areas such as training, investment, regeneration and business support.

Primary care trusts

A growing body of evidence is illustrating that health improvements have resulted from improvements to the heating, insulation and ventilation of properties and that savings have been made for the health service in primary care costs as a result. It is hoped that a greater degree of funding will be forthcoming from primary care trusts for energy efficiency improvements. Action will be initiated on fuel poverty policies in health improvement programmes and the local implementation of national service frameworks.

Local authorities will find the *Fuel Poverty and Health Toolkit*,¹⁰ published by the National Heart Forum, a useful resource (www.heartforum.org.uk/pdfs/book.pdf). The toolkit is aimed primarily at strategic planners and primary care professionals. It contains summaries of research into the effects of cold homes on health, examples of successful programmes and a summary of health, environment and social policies related to fuel poverty.

Local authorities

Local authority capital programmes are financed through the annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP), the Capital Receipts Initiative (CRI) and authorities' own resources. Most of the expenditure goes on improving existing council housing, but authorities also provide means-tested grants to households living in poor private-sector accommodation (Housing Renovation grants and Home Repairs Assistance grants) or requiring disabled adaptations (Disabled Facilities grants). The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 has important implications for local authorities because it repeals most of the existing prescriptive legislation governing provision of grants to home owners and replaces it with powers to offer a wide range of assistance for housing renewal. In order to take advantage of these new powers and access capital funding, local authorities must adopt and publish a policy detailing the nature and extent of assistance available.

¹⁰ *Fuel Poverty and Health: A guide for primary care organisations, and public health and primary care professionals*, National Heart Forum, Eaga PCT, Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Help The Aged, Met Office, 2003.

Local strategic partnerships

Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) are key to delivering neighbourhood renewal at a local level. Because fuel poverty has severe impacts upon local communities, action to achieve affordable warmth can help LSPs to achieve their aims of economic and social regeneration; improvements to public services; reduction of inequalities and the development of sustainable growth. LSP members – whether health agencies, advice agencies, community groups, local businesses or energy suppliers – can provide access to sources of funding and can help to co-ordinate, integrate and target a wide range of resources to the benefit of vulnerable communities.

Supporting People programme

The Supporting People programme funds housing-related support for vulnerable people. From 1 April 2003, existing government funding streams were transferred to a single source to be administered by local authorities, amounting to an estimated £1.4 billion in the first year for organisations that provide accommodation and support services. Details can be found at: www.spkweb.org.uk

Householder/private landlord contribution

There is potential for property owners to contribute towards the cost of energy efficiency improvements, especially when they can see a return on their investment through either increased property values or lower fuel bills. The majority of low-income home owners may not consider this a high priority, but landlords may see greater value when investment makes properties easier to let, helps retain tenants for longer, increases rental income, or allows membership of an accreditation scheme. The success of East Riding of Yorkshire's Promoting Home Energy Efficiency and Warmth (PHEEW) scheme for private landlords (see Case study 17 below) suggests that landlords will be prepared to contribute to energy efficiency measures as long as discounts are high enough.



Health Action Zone funding enabled Luton to provide fast-track help to private sector householders deemed at health risk through lack of affordable heating.

Case study 17: Funding scheme integration



East Riding utilised capital funds in the private sector for an energy pilot scheme in Driffield. Under SRB6, accessing EEC funding from npower, the scheme offered reduced-cost cavity wall and loft insulation to all residents. This improved the energy efficiency of the homes of 278 owner-occupiers who were not eligible for any other assistance. Due to the success of this pilot, £1.5 million has now been secured from a capital bid to roll out this scheme to the entire authority over 2003–05.

For those living in the privately rented sector, Promoting Home Energy Efficiency and Warmth (PHEEW) grants are available to landlords for cavity wall and loft insulation as well as central heating. These grants offer 50% of the cost of the works up to a maximum of £1,800. To qualify, landlords must have their property accredited and maintain it to a good standard of repair.



Students of Camden's Neighbourhood Renewal-funded Community Energy Awareness course are put through their paces.

Energy efficiency measures are also included within other private sector grant schemes offered by the authority – for example, the Empty Properties grant and Housing Assistance grant.

In the council stock of just under 12,000 dwellings, work is prioritised using the energy database to determine the order and type of interventions that are most appropriate to reduce fuel poverty.

Works undertaken include the provision of first-time central heating with a package of insulation measures. There is also a major programme for upgrading existing systems. In both cases the new system is a combi-condensing boiler with TRVs. Funding for both heating and insulation is received from Powergen EEC funding which has enabled the programme to stretch further and more quickly than had previously been anticipated. It is expected to complete the full insulation programme within the next two years. Tenants are involved closely with the design and prioritisation of this programme via a specific Business Plan Working Group.



Since 2001, Camden has allocated over £800,000 of Housing Renewal grants for energy efficiency works in the private sector. Camden is presently piloting the use of this grant budget as a top-up for Warm Front grants as local installers have reported that they often cannot proceed with this grant because other works, not available under the current Warm Front scheme, are often required.

Camden is also now promoting equity release and loan initiatives to the fuel-poor as part of the new Housing Renewal grants policy. (Details at: www.camden.gov.uk/beacon)

Camden has secured an allocation of over £300,000 from Scottish & Southern's EEC budget for grant contributions to the council's £1.2 million Wall and Loft Insulation Programme 2003-05. Camden's building consultants manage these works and Camden invoices Scottish and Southern for their contribution on completion of each scheme.

In 2001–02, Health Action Zone funding of £20,000 was secured for an Outreach Energy Advice Co-ordinator to establish a pilot affordable warmth referral network in Kilburn and Priory wards. A further £35,000 HAZ funding has recently been secured to help embed affordable warmth throughout the Camden Primary Care Trust.

Camden has received £53,000 Neighbourhood Renewal funding to develop and deliver a training programme to enable members of black and minority ethnic groups to become qualified energy advisers and promote the Warmth for All service across the community. Camden has modularised the existing City and Guilds 6176 Energy Awareness course – in partnership with NEA and the local Working Men's College – and is delivering the course through the college's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme. Ofgem are supporting this project and are contributing to the production of a Warmth for All branded leaflet entitled *Changing Your Fuel Supplier*.

£53,000 Neighbourhood Renewal funding has also been obtained for the recruitment, training and placement of two apprentice plumbers from the local community with local heating contractors.

LUTON

Health Action Zone funding enabled Luton to test their whole referral process. This made it possible to pilot and refine the scheme until its success could be proven to secure mainstream council funding.

Through accessing Prevention Services money, Luton was able to access mainstream funding for an Affordable Warmth Support Worker based in Social Services. This worker is able to provide home visits to households referred through the scheme and make assessments when appropriate, and assist through Warm Front or otherwise signpost householders to the voluntary sector as appropriate. Mainstream funding from the council also funds a full time CAB Affordable Warmth Worker and the administration of the borough-wide referral scheme.

Further Health Action Zone funding enabled Luton to provide fast-track help to private sector householders deemed at health risk through lack of affordable heating. Again, the success of this project secured mainstream funding from the council.

Luton has also identified a path through the Home Repairs Assistance grant, which offers opportunities to target fuel-poor households. Known as 'Healthy Heating', households vulnerable to fuel poverty are identified by using agreed criteria which recognise the health risks associated with cold homes. If an eligible household is experiencing problems associated with cold homes, but cannot access help through Warm Front, they can be referred for insulation measures or heating improvements. Health Action Zone funding tested this process and it is now mainstream funded through the council.

BlythValley Borough Council

Blyth Valley has developed their Affordable Warmth Strategy by combining various funding sources. The Housing Investment Programme is mainly used for council stock improvements. A particular effort has been made to raise awareness of, and claims to, government-funded measures. Warm Front is actively promoted and used wherever applicable.

Through sponsorship from npower, the Northumberland Warm Zone now funds part of the core costs of implementing Blyth Valley's Strategy.

EEC funding for Blyth's Better Living scheme provides insulation, heating, security and fire prevention measures across all tenures.

A Capital Challenge bid secured £1.5 million for cavity wall insulation and condensing boilers (where replacement boilers were required) in council stock, grants towards cavity wall insulation in private sector properties, and free energy advice to local businesses.



EEC funding for Blyth Valley's 'Better Living' scheme provides insulation, heating, security and fire prevention measures.

Though this funding has now run out, the private sector part of the scheme has continued using Housing Capital Programme funding.

The energy audit database was set up through Housing Partnership funding. SRB funding is used in all qualifying areas for strategy-supporting projects, such as the extension of the pilot uPVC replacement window programme.

In 2002, an arms length management organisation (ALMO) – the Blyth Valley Housing Company – was set up. The ALMO has been awarded £40 million for stock maintenance and, in keeping with Blyth Valley's affordable warmth strategy, part of this funding will be used to tackle fuel poverty.



Useful contacts for affordable warmth strategy development



SECTION 7

Useful contacts for affordable warmth strategy development

The following list of organisations is not intended to be exhaustive, but it will serve as useful guide to many of the agencies who may offer guidance or assistance on many issues related to affordable warmth strategy development.

Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA)

Layden House
78-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG
Tel: 020 7926 6600
www.idea.gov.uk/beacons

I&DeA provide a range of improvement and development programmes for local government. The Beacon Council Scheme identifies innovation and excellence in local government services.

Government websites

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/fuelpov/index.htm

Department of Trade and Industry
www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/index.shtml

Department of Health
www.doh.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
www.odpm.gov.uk

Keep Warm Keep Well campaign
www.doh.gov.uk/kwkw

Other contacts

Age Concern
1268 London Road
London SW16 4ER
Tel: 0800 00 99 66 (Age Concern Information Line)
www.ageconcern.org.uk

Age Concern produces policy papers on fuel poverty and information sheets on help with heating. Services for older people are available through their network of local groups.

Association for the Conservation of Energy (ACE)
Westgate House
Prebend Street
London N1 8PT
Tel: 0207 359 8000
www.ukace.org.uk

ACE represents companies active in the energy conservation industry. Membership of the Friends of ACE is open to local authorities. ACE lobbies to increase energy efficiency investment and carries out research into energy conservation and fuel-poverty related issues.

BRE

Garston
Watford WD2 9XX
Tel: 01923 664000
www.bre.co.uk

BRE is a centre of expertise on buildings, construction and energy. BRE provides buildings expertise to the Carbon Trust's Action Energy programme and to the Housing Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme.

Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)

Create Centre
B-Bond Warehouse
Smeaton Road
Bristol BS1 6XN
Tel: 0117 929 9950
www.cse.org.uk

CSE promotes the development of energy efficiency, sustainable energy and the alleviation of fuel poverty at local, regional and national levels. CSE offers a range of services including strategy reviews, an indicator tool to help local authorities determine local levels of fuel poverty, and delivery of energy projects. CSE manages Community Action for Energy (café), which promotes community-based energy projects.

Child Poverty Action Group

94 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
Tel: 020 7837 7979
www.cpag.org.uk

CPAG promotes action for the relief – directly or indirectly – of poverty among children and families with children. CPAG's campaigning and information work seeks to improve benefits and policies for low-income families, in order to eradicate the injustice of poverty.

Eaga Partnership

Eaga House
Archbold Terrace
Jesmond
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1DB
Tel: 0191 247 3800
www.eaga.co.uk

Eaga was established in 1990 to manage the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme on behalf of the Government. It now manages the Warm Front scheme in many English regions, Warm Deal in Scotland, the Home Energy Efficiency scheme in Wales and the Warm Homes scheme in Northern Ireland.

Eaga Partnership Charitable Trust

23 Macadam Gardens
Penrith
Cumbria CA11 9HS
Tel: 01768 210220
www.eaga.co.uk

Funded by Eaga Partnership, Eaga PCT funds projects and research leading to the relief of fuel poverty and the promotion of the efficient use of energy.

Energy Efficiency Advice Centres

Freephone: 0800 512 012

There are 52 Energy Efficiency Advice Centres (EEACs) throughout the UK, run by the Energy Saving Trust. They offer free, impartial and independent advice to householders on energy-saving measures in homes, designed to help reduce fuel bills. Some centres also offer assistance or a co-ordinating role to local authorities and other local stakeholders interested in promoting energy efficiency through the Local Authority Support Programme.

The Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes (EEP)

c/o Energy Saving Trust
21 Dartmouth Street
London SW1 9BP
www.est.org.uk/partnership

EEP was launched in April 2000 and is facilitated by the Energy Saving Trust. It provides a mechanism to bring together all those with an interest in domestic energy efficiency and in combating fuel poverty to achieve their objectives more effectively.

Energy Saving Trust (EST)

21 Dartmouth Street
London SW1 9BP
Tel: 0207 222 0101
www.est.org.uk

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) is a not-for-profit organisation set up by Government and the major energy companies. Its purpose is to work through partnerships towards the sustainable and efficient use of energy. Among its many programmes, EST facilitates the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes; co-ordinates the network of Energy Efficiency Advice Centres; runs a Practical Help support service for local authorities; and offers grant funding for innovative local authority schemes.

For more information on local authority-related initiatives, see: www.practicalhelp.org.uk/content/housing.htm

For information on energy efficiency grant schemes: www.saveenergy.co.uk/index.cfm

For Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing: www.est.org.uk/bestpractice

Energy Conservation and Solar Centre (ECSC)

Unit 237
30 Great Guildford Street
London SE1 0HS
Tel: 020 7922 1669
www.ecsc.org.uk

ECSC provides training for tenant groups and local authorities and works with utilities and local authorities to develop renewable energy and improve energy efficiency.

energywatch

Third Floor
Artillery House
Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT
Tel: 0845 906 0708
www.energywatch.org.uk

energywatch is the independent gas and consumer watchdog set up by the Utilities Act 2000, replacing the Gas Consumers Council and the Electricity Consumers Committees. It provides free, impartial information and advice to consumers in England, Wales and Scotland about gas and electricity issues. This includes:

- Helping consumers to choose an energy supplier.
- Investigating consumer complaints against suppliers about related matters.
- Running a priority service register campaign (where people who are elderly or in ill health can register with their energy supplier to ensure that any problems with their supply are addressed within 24 hours).

Help the Aged

207-221 Pentonville Road
London N1 9U2
Tel: 020 7278 1114
www.helptheaged.org.uk

Help the Aged works to combat poverty, reduce isolation, defeat ageism and challenge poor care standards. Help the Aged offers a range of services for older people.

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)

Foundations
Bleaklow House
Howard Town Mills
Glossop SK13 8HT
Tel: 01457 891909

Home Improvement Agencies are independent organisations providing personal advice and help to older people, people with disabilities and those on low incomes who need to carry out repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes in order to remain independent.

National Energy Action (NEA)

St Andrew's House
90-92 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6SG
Tel: 0191 2615677
www.nea.org.uk

NEA is the national energy efficiency charity that campaigns for warm homes. NEA develops partnerships with central and local government and the private and voluntary sectors to tackle the heating and insulation problems of low-income households. NEA's campaigning activities seek to inform and persuade decision makers about policies that increase comfort, reduce cold related illness and reduce fuel bills for the poorest households.

NEA undertakes research and provides information services and energy efficiency training. It has worked with over 50 local authorities to develop local affordable warmth strategies. For further information about NEA's affordable warmth strategy development work programme, contact: peter.summy@nea.org.uk

Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem)

9 Millbank
London SW1P 3GE
Tel: 020 7901 7000
Freephone: 0800 887777

www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem/index.jsp

The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets is the regulatory body for the electricity and gas industries and protects the interests of consumers, ensuring they get value and choice, by promoting competition and regulating monopolies.

Information is available, particularly on advice to householders on competition in the energy markets.

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Myddelton House
115–123 Pentonville Road
London N1 9LZ

www.nacab.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureaux offer free, confidential and impartial advice on all issues, including benefits, debt and heating. NACAB's website includes details of local bureaux.

National Right to Fuel Campaign

www.righttofuel.org.uk

The National Right to Fuel Campaign focuses on the protection of disadvantaged energy consumers in the competitive energy market. Its steering group includes representatives from a range of voluntary and not for profit organisations.

Powergen Warm Front

Bridge House
Wherstead Park
Wherstead
Suffolk IP9 2AQ
Tel: 01475 553225

www.powergen-warmfront.co.uk

Powergen Warm Front manages the Government's Warm Front scheme in Yorkshire and Humberside, the Eastern region, and East Midlands.

APPENDIX

Contact details for the Beacon councils

Blyth Valley Borough Council

Council Offices
Avenue Road
Seaton Delaval
NE25 0DX

Tel: 01670 542 221

Contact officer: Pat Ledger

Email: beacon@blythvalley.gov.uk

Website: www.blythvalley.gov.uk

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Housing Standards
Social Services, Housing and Public
Protection Directorate
County Hall
Beverley
East Riding of Yorkshire
HU17 9BA

Tel: 01482 396 330

Contact officer: Jane Mears

Email: beacon.council@eastriding.gov.uk

Website: www.eastriding.gov.uk

London Borough of Camden

The Housing Department
Bidborough House
20 Mabledon Place
London
WC1H 9BF

Tel: 020 7974 6370

Contact officer: Oliver Myers

Email: beacon.warmth@camden.gov.uk

Website: www.camden.gov.uk

Warmth for All: [www.camden.gov.uk/
beacon](http://www.camden.gov.uk/beacon)

Luton Borough Council

The Town Hall
George Street
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BQ

Tel: 01582 546 979

Contact officer: Sarah Allen

Email: affordablewarmth@luton.gov.uk

Website: www.luton.gov.uk

Affordable Warmth: [www.luton.gov.uk/
caring/affordable](http://www.luton.gov.uk/caring/affordable)

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Kelham Hall
Kelham
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG23 5QX

Tel: 01636 655 598

Contact officer: David Pickles OBE

Email: beacon@nsdc.info

Website: [www.newark-sherwooddc.
gov.uk](http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

Tackling Fuel Poverty: [www.newark-
sherwooddc.gov.uk/chieffexecutives/
energyagency/fuelpoverty.htm](http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/chieffexecutives/energyagency/fuelpoverty.htm)



BlythValley
Borough Council

EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

 **Camden**

LUTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL


**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

In 2002, authorities were invited to submit applications demonstrating best practice in tackling fuel poverty. The five authorities awarded Beacon status for the action they have taken to tackle fuel poverty were:

- Blyth Valley Borough Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- London Borough of Camden
- Luton Borough Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council.

To support the process of disseminating best practice, the five Beacon councils and NEA have collaborated on the production of this practical toolkit.



2002-2003
Tackling Fuel Poverty



Campaigning for Warm Homes