OUR ACTION
FOR WARM HOMES
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As an independent charity, NEA has organised fringe meetings and receptions at each of the three major party political conferences for a number of years. NEA highlights key fuel poverty policy issues impacting on low-income and vulnerable energy consumers. They are delivered in partnership, for example with Calor, the Energy Retail Association, energy companies, and the Micropower Council and Climate Clinic partners.

The Party Conferences are an excellent opportunity for NEA and party members to stimulate debate and influence decisions about policy changes.
During 2010-13 Calor supported NEA to deliver the 3 year Future of Rural Energy in Europe (FREE) programme.

The project improved outcomes for fuel poor households in rural, off-gas grid communities in England and Wales helping them to reduce their energy consumption through a community led approach. The FREE initiative was awarded a ‘Big Tick’ at the 2014 Responsible Business Awards which are run by Business in the Community and was also shortlisted for a Dairy Crest Rural Action Award.

In 2013, NEA and Calor organised a rural fuel poverty conference in England. Historically, rural homes have been the forgotten face of fuel poverty. Despite households in rural areas being more than twice as likely to suffer from fuel poverty than their urban counterparts, previous initiatives aimed at addressing the heating and insulation needs of low income households have had limited impact. Whilst there are a range of policies which seek to address the problem of fuel poverty NEA can demonstrate that these are often not delivered in an equitable way that is fair to all households, whether they live in an urban or rural area. To examine these issues in more depth NEA organised a 1-day conference entitled ‘Energy and Equity – affordable warmth wherever you live’.

The event gathered evidence of these inequities and considered how they could be addressed within a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for England. It also highlighted examples of best practice in tackling fuel poverty at a local level and explored some of the technical barriers and solutions to alleviating fuel poverty in rural areas. 90 delegates attended the event and a range of senior speakers contributed to the agenda.
In 2014 NEA held the inaugural Nation’s Biggest Housewarming event to raise awareness of the issue of Fuel Poverty and bring in income for the charity. The fundraising initiative, which coincided with Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, engaged with members and supporters of NEA who held their own ‘housewarming’ events up and down the country. Bake sales, coffee mornings and even a ‘selfie’ competition took place to raise money. This will now be an annual campaign!

To learn more about the Nation’s Biggest Housewarming and to support the work of NEA, please see [www.nea.org.uk/supportus](http://www.nea.org.uk/supportus)
In May 2012, NEA hosted an International Conference on European Energy Policy sponsored by Saudi Aramco. Delegates attended from Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Italy as well as the UK. The conference provided a space for stakeholders to consider action on fuel poverty in Europe through the delivery of energy efficiency programmes and opportunities that arose through the directive on energy efficiency and implementation of national action plans.

The conference highlighted the need for a single central repository for information, research and co-ordinated action on the subject of fuel poverty in Europe.

It also set out some of the key challenges faced by the EU in terms of energy policy if the overall goal of European energy policy (to ensure safe, secure, sustainable and affordable energy for all, businesses and consumers alike) is to be met.

The conference gave NEA the opportunity to build relationships with partners including the International Energy Agency, important for NEA’s capability to transfer UK good practice to other countries.
In 2014, NEA in partnership with British Gas developed, organised and delivered five “Smarter Communities” workshops. The aim of the workshops was to inform local stakeholders of the benefits of smart meters and the wider smart meter agenda, as well as to understand some of the barriers to engaging vulnerable customers in the programme and how these could be overcome. 185 frontline workers and representatives from community groups/third sector organisations attended the workshops.

As a result of these workshops frontline workers and community groups were made aware of the benefits of smart meters.

NEA and British Gas gained a greater understanding of the issues facing vulnerable consumers and attendees reported they were more likely to engage in the smart meter agenda.
The Heat Heroes award scheme rewards individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to tackling fuel poverty. Representatives from local authorities, charities, community groups and other not-for-profit agencies are invited to nominate colleagues who they feel had gone ‘above and beyond’ in their work to tackle fuel poverty.

The 2014 Heat Heroes Award Scheme was sponsored by ScottishPower. Fourteen winners from across England and Wales were named as Heat Heroes and invited to a Parliamentary event to celebrate their achievements.

“I spoke to Baroness Verma (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Climate Change) and we talked about the fact that so much of the good work we do goes unnoticed and this is a really good scheme and how I personally was pleasantly surprised that NEA and ScottishPower and other panel members picked me for this award.”

The winners represented a range of organisations and were all congratulated on their success and their contributions to tackling fuel poverty in their local community. The scheme will continue in 2014-15.
The Networking for Warmth project was delivered in partnership with Western Power Distribution. The project involved establishing a network of volunteers to provide energy advice and information on the Priority Service Register to local households in their communities living in, or at risk of fuel poverty.

22 volunteers were recruited from community groups and local voluntary organisations across Derbyshire. NEA provided them with training and mentoring to enable them to cascade energy efficiency information to others within their own social networks. Many of the volunteers had already been aware of the general problem of fuel poverty but unsure of how to identify or assist those who were struggling to heat their homes affordably.

The 3-day City & Guilds Energy Awareness training they undertook gave them the knowledge and skills they needed to confidently offer energy advice and further support was given through the provision of tailored, printed information.

Networking for Warmth reached those on low incomes, vulnerable young adults, vulnerable women, those with physical and mental health issues, families, older people and those who are socially and geographically isolated in Derbyshire. The volunteers distributed 896 advice booklets, 1,159 top tips flyers and 854 Priority Services Register leaflets through a network of nineteen different organisations. Overall, the volunteers reached approximately 13,500 households either directly, or by disseminating what they had learnt about Western Power Distribution’s Priority Service Register and signposting householders in or at risk of fuel poverty to organisations that could help. A number of these organisations aim to continue to share this information on a long-term basis creating a lasting legacy for the Networking for Warmth project.

The project was seen as a resounding success and has since been replicated and extended across the East Midlands and West Midlands.
NEA offers an extensive range of qualifications, training courses and educational resources to cover the key issues associated with fuel poverty, fuel debt, affordable warmth and delivering practical energy efficiency advice.

In recent years we have developed a range of City & Guilds qualifications (Level 1 through to Level 4) as well as a number of CPD certified half-day and one day courses and e-learning packages. All NEA training meets the ISO 9001 quality standards. In 2013 NEA’s Training Team received the prestigious Ashden Award and a Green Apple Award for our educational work.

With support from British Gas, NEA has developed an Approved Training Quality Mark (ATQM). This is a new product offered by NEA to help improve standards of energy efficiency and guidance across the sector.

NEA’s newest accredited course is the Level 2 Fuel Debt Advice in the Community 6281-16. This course is an ideal introduction for advice workers involved with clients who are in fuel debt or for the more experienced advisor as an update.

NEA has recently expanded its E-Learning provision with the development of a Fuel Bill Management course. This course is available to assist householders in understanding their energy bills and to signpost them where to go for help and assistance.

As smart meters begin to be deployed across the UK, NEA has responded by developing CPD accredited training for both installers and communities.

NEA is also skilled at developing bespoke training for specific groups and organisations. With funding from EDF Energy, NEA developed a training course to enable Credit Unions to offer fuel poverty and energy efficiency advice to their vulnerable members.
NEA has developed a half-day ‘Vulnerability, Health and Fuel Poverty’ course for professionals who interact with vulnerable customers either via telephone or whilst on home visits. This course has been extremely popular with a number of Distribution Networks including Northern Gas Networks, Northern Powergrid and Scottish and Southern Power Distribution.

This course has enabled staff to understand the needs of vulnerable customers, how to identify a vulnerable customer and know where to refer/signpost a vulnerable customer for advice about fuel poverty, fuel debt and energy efficiency.

“Very enjoyable & informative”
“Good course, just the right length in terms of duration”
“I thought it was excellent throughout”
NEA’s Training Team delivered the Junior Carbon Cutters project in schools across Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. It focused on the emergence of renewable/low carbon technologies and their role in making homes more energy efficient, using the methods of drama, design and simulation. Funding from the Local Environmental Action Fund enabled NEA to deliver 20 sessions to 2,949 school children across the area which were extremely well received by both students and teachers alike.

The interactive day of activities included an introduction to renewable energy sources using models; the production of a school comic including a cartoon style story developed by the children and an end of day assembly for parents where the children presented their models and displayed their cartoon strips and posters.

“This session was fantastic – the children really enjoyed it”
Since 2012-13 NEA Cymru, with sponsorship from SSE, has delivered an innovative multi-faceted fuel debt training project designed to help low-income, vulnerable households throughout Wales who were struggling with their energy bills.

This practical project has provided debt advisors with much needed support as they face an increasing demand for their services, and it ensured that they were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle complex fuel debt cases and provide up-to-date advice on assistance for clients in fuel poverty.

NEA developed a bespoke fuel debt training course which has provided in-depth training to 379 frontline advisors and practitioners. The training focused on enabling community advice workers to give practical support to clients in fuel debt comprising information on billing errors, meter problems, and how to navigate the energy suppliers’ complaint procedures. To date, the advisors have supported at least 16,402 low income and fuel poor clients.

"[The training] served as the foundation for me to provide accurate, valuable advice and assistance to our clients.”

The project has successfully facilitated the development of a unique Advice Network for advisors to link up and gain on-demand mentoring via telephone, email and through the production of Fuel Debt E-Bulletins. Fuel Debt and Energy Efficiency Master Classes supported a further 31 advisors to provide specialised affordable warmth advice to clients.

The programme has also provided direct benefit to householders. A series of community events were organised, providing advice on fuel debt and energy efficiency to 131 vulnerable and low-income consumers.

The project continues in 2014-15.
In 2012-13 NEA carried out an evaluation of improvements to 118 Wimpey “no fines” homes on the Boundary Way estate in Watford, Hertfordshire. This innovative project, a joint venture with Three Rivers District Council and Watford Community Housing Trust was made possible through the Department of Energy and Climate Change’s fuel poverty funding. This allowed the partnership to insulate these hard to treat mixed tenure properties with External Wall Insulation in an area with a high incidence of fuel poverty.

As a result the render repairs and insulation not only reinvigorated the homes, but they also ensured that they remained fit for purpose. In conjunction with the insulation works, the street lighting on the estate was replaced with new LED fittings and daylight sensors to both improve the lighting levels to the paths and to reduce carbon. The project has benefited 270 residents on this ‘hard to treat’ estate by reducing energy costs; stemming a rise in deprivation and has produced carbon savings of over 220 tons per year. NEA’s evaluation determined that the impact of the external wall insulations had positive outcomes including reducing CO₂ emissions and fuel bills, increasing temperature levels and improving health and wellbeing, as reported by the residents. The residents were asked if the project was a success and whether they would recommend anyone who was “not sure whether to have the measures installed” to sign up to the scheme. All respondents agreed that the project was a success, and on a rating of 1-10 how successful it was, the average rating was an amazing 8.7%.

In November 2013 the project won the “Outstanding Commitment to Adapt to a Changing Climate” category in Herefordshire’s Building Futures Awards. The judges praised NEA’s evaluation report, noting that “the client should also be commended for commissioning independent monitoring to determine which aspects of the refurbishment work well – it is hoped that the results will be widely disseminated so that other housing associations and RSLs can learn the key lessons.” In 2014 the project also received a Green Apple Award.
In 2011 NEA, in partnership with nine other organisations from Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom embarked on a pan-European research project called SEMANCO (Semantic Tools for Carbon Reduction in Urban Planning). The name SEMANCO comes from semantic data modelling which defines data from a conceptual point of view.

The aim of the SEMANCO project was to reduce CO₂ emissions by integrating the analysis of CO₂ production in our neighbourhoods, cities and regions. The tools and methods developed in the project help architects, planners, engineers, local administrators, policy makers and citizens to make more informed decisions about how to reduce carbon emissions in cities by:

- Classifying buildings for energy analysis
- Visualising urban energy consumption
- Assessing different methods of reducing CO₂ emissions
- Predicting future energy demand
- Providing appropriate energy indicators for local authorities

The technological approach of SEMANCO was based on the integration of energy related open data structured according to standards, semantically modelled and interoperable with a set of tools for visualising, simulating and analysing the multiple relationships between the factors determining CO₂ production. A Semantic Energy Information Framework (SEIF) was developed to model the energy-related data for city planners and decision makers.

Further information about the programme and its outputs can be found at: [www.semanco-project.eu](http://www.semanco-project.eu).
The population of the UK is ageing. By 2035, 23 per cent of the population is projected to be aged 65 and over. NEA is delivering a varied programme of work on behalf of the Department of Energy and Climate Change and supported by the Age Action Alliance (AAA).

The programme supported the AAA to identify and support older, fuel-poor households in Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) delivery. It also examined how older people could be better supported to access the advice and support available to them on matters relating to fuel poverty and energy efficiency in order to maximise the benefit to these households.

The research activities included:

- Examining perceptions of Green Deal and ECO among older people and developing appropriate communication strategies.
- Exploring the role of older people’s social networks and how they can be harnessed to help support older people to improve energy efficiency and reduce or prevent fuel poverty.
- Improving access to and take-up of assistance.
- Examining how older people currently use the internet, if at all, and the extent to which the internet is currently used to access advice and support on matters relating to domestic energy. It focussed in particular on energy efficiency and fuel poverty schemes, switching and managing energy accounts online.
- Developing the Warm Homes for Older People Resource Guide: A practical guidance to the range of measures and benefits available to help older people stay warm in their homes.
NEA’s Research Team have recently delivered a number of projects which have analysed and profiled a specific geographical area to obtain detailed data on the demographic, socio-economic and affordable warmth profiles of tenants/residents and their properties.

This exercise has been undertaken for a number of Distribution Network Operators to assist them in identifying exactly where their vulnerable customers live and to assist in the development of Heat Maps. The exercise has also been extremely useful for a number of wind farm developers who have used the data to formulate detailed plans of how their Community Benefit Funds can be best utilised.
Supported by the Ofgem administered Low Carbon Network Fund, the Customer-Led Network Revolution (CLNR) project is helping us to understand current and future profiles of domestic electricity consumption (kWh). The project also explores to what extent domestic consumers are willing to be flexible in their electricity demand. CLNR project partners include NEA, Northern Powergrid, British Gas, Durham University and EA Technology.

The project is based in the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions of England. This area represents a diverse range of geographical features and demographic groups allowing CLNR to understand the impact of the trial on different types of households, and to understand how the learning from the project could be scaled up most effectively to cover the rest of the UK. The project has installed and monitored a range of customer facing low carbon technologies such as electric vehicle charge-points, air source heat pumps and solar PV arrays as well as smart white goods. Customers in the study have all had smart meters and in-home displays installed and many have access to a range of innovative tariffs such as time-of-use (ToU), restricted hours and direct control.

NEA’s role in the project has included undertaking approximately 80 qualitative household visits with residents using ToU tariffs, solar PV and smart in-home displays, smart washing machines and electric vehicles. NEA has also been involved in dissemination activities, video production and project presentations at events.

The findings from this research are helping us to learn how to mitigate and defer some of the potential investment in electricity network infrastructure which could otherwise be required in the UK over the next 20 plus years to accommodate our growing appetite for electricity – this is likely to total billions of pounds and put further pressure on fuel poor households unless action is taken now.

Further information about the CLNR project and its outcomes can be found at www.networkrevolution.co.uk.
Funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies enabled NEA to deliver the Affordable Warmth Campaign in Northern Ireland and highlighted the need for the eradication of fuel poverty in older households.

The three year campaign was underpinned by the following activities:

- Qualitative research which encapsulated what it was actually like to live in fuel poverty. This enabled NEA to ‘bring the campaign to life’ and to ‘tell the story’ of older fuel poor households.

- The delivery of an Advocacy Network which ensured that fuel poor households and the trusted local agencies that support them were central to the overarching campaign. As part of the Network, training in energy efficiency and fuel poverty was provided to trusted individuals within community organisations enabling them to provide fuel poverty advice and support to older people within their local communities.

- The provision of a Policy and Information service which enabled NEA Northern Ireland to respond to all relevant consultations and assisted in the provision of evidence required by Ministers, Officials, MLAs, MPs, Committees and other agencies to ensure the eradication of fuel poverty was prioritised by all Government Departments, political parties and national and regional agencies with an interest in fuel poverty.

- A programme of public relations, press and public affairs activity raised awareness of the causes and consequences of fuel poverty amongst older households in Northern Ireland.
The UK Fuel Poverty Monitor was produced by NEA and Energy Action Scotland (EAS) and was supported by Consumer Futures. The report evaluated the different approaches to addressing fuel poverty across the UK and made recommendations on a devolved nation-specific and UK-wide basis.

The 2013-14 report showed that current policies and practices to tackle fuel poverty are inadequate if they are to mitigate the effect of rising energy costs and the impacts of recession and welfare reform. It also revealed that whilst householders are more likely to be in fuel poverty in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, they are more likely to receive support for energy efficiency measures in those countries than in England.

The 2013-14 report was released to coincide with NEA’s national Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, whose aim was to raise awareness of the problem of fuel poverty and the of the solutions available to keep people warm in their homes.

The Fuel Poverty Monitor is available on NEA’s website www.nea.org.uk.
Over the last six years NEA has worked with the Department of Energy and Climate Change and British Gas to deliver an award scheme that recognises and rewards best practice in the fields of fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

The scheme provides grants to not-for-profit organisations that deliver projects helping to tackle fuel poverty in the local communities. The award money enables the winners to further develop their projects and reach a wider audience, and judges take into account the potential for replication of the models implemented in the winning projects in an effort to achieve sustained and long-lasting impacts for the fuel poor.

The scheme has grown steadily in popularity and is now running throughout the year in several phases, awarding up to fifteen prizes annually and regularly attracting in excess of sixty applicants per phase.

The Community Action Award winners have also been organising community engagement events to celebrate their success where judges, project staff, stakeholders and MPs have come together to learn more about the successful projects in their local communities.

Buckinghamshire County Council were delighted to receive a Community Action Award: “we wanted to celebrate this special occasion with the local families and partners so we hosted an Information and fun day for families at the Castlefield Children’s Centre, it was an amazing day; we had over 100 people attend the event. The extra money received by Buckinghamshire County Council for winning the Community Action Award will help support a lot more families to save on their rising energy bills.”

Award winner Julie Silvers from Community Law Service was “delighted that our work to help disadvantaged residents in Northampton heat their homes affordably has received national recognition. Our organisation regularly meets people who are struggling to meet the high cost of fuel and helping people to stay warm in winter has become a key priority for our work.”
NEA is currently delivering the VIVA project (Volunteering: Independence & Vitality in Action), a three year energy champions programme in Yorkshire and the Humber supported by Comic Relief.

The programme utilises the networking opportunities of Age UK Yorkshire and the Humber’s older people’s forums as a channel for recruiting and developing volunteer older people’s Energy Champions.

The ‘Champions’ provide peer-to-peer advice on:

- affordable warmth;
- enabling peers to understand how to keep warm in winter, especially the health benefits of keeping warm;
- raising awareness of, and encourage referrals to, government mandated energy saving schemes including the Energy Company Obligation (ECO);
- where to apply for advice and grants;
- and most importantly, they provide a support mechanism for older people in their communities.
Developed and delivered by NEA and E.ON, Community Energy Fit aimed to reduce fuel poverty and tackle unemployment in five localities: Stoke-on-Trent; Knowsley; Exeter; Birmingham; and Coventry. Participants attended an initial half-day energy awareness course and then – if they wished – undertook further training to achieve the City & Guilds qualification, and became a fully-fledged Community Energy Fit volunteer, sharing their newly acquired knowledge with others in their local area.

Through the duration of the programme, the half-day training course was delivered to 716 participants, with an additional 118 undertaking City & Guilds Energy Awareness accredited training. 100 of these trainees then went on to become Community Energy Champions, engaging in a range of community activities which both provided practical work experience as well as increased local awareness of household energy efficiency and grants and services available to help those struggling to heat their homes affordably.

The excellent work that began in these localities continued through the Community Energy Fit Legacy Fund, which provided financial assistance to not-for-profit agencies in order to support existing volunteers and to increase the volunteer network.
Frontline mental health professionals are in an ideal position to help their service users to manage their energy use and achieve warmer homes, but often lack a basic knowledge of energy efficiency measures or of available assistance. With funding from the ScottishPower Energy People Trust, NEA and Mental Health North East worked in partnership in 2012-13 on the Warm Minds project to address this need. Warm Minds aimed to investigate the potential for mental health-focussed organisations to act as a channel for providing advice and support to fuel poor households with mental health needs.

12 bespoke training courses were delivered to 132 participants. The training increased participant’s knowledge of fuel poverty/energy efficiency and their level of confidence to be able to provide energy advice to service users. Resource guides and mentoring support including e-bulletins were provided to both the practitioners and service users after the training to enhance their learning and to provide ongoing support.

The project also administered 10 support grants to pay for basic energy efficiency, heating or other measures to assist households to stay warm and healthy. Grants provided thermal gloves and hot water bottles; thermal fleece under-blankets for families with young children; duvets; energy efficient kettles; window sealant (for draught-proofing); power down switches for computers and TVs; a cooker; and flasks.
Many households whose first or preferred language is not English may face difficulty accessing basic energy advice in their own language to help them achieve a warmer, healthier and more energy efficient home. The Heat Is On DVD seeks to overcome these barriers and is an interactive multi-language energy advice resource suitable for individual use or for group viewing. The DVD is suitable for households living in England and covers services available in England only.

With support from npower Health Through Warmth, NEA recently updated the Heat Is On DVD and has produced commentary in English, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Welsh, Arabic, French, Cantonese, Kurdish, Romanian and Bulgarian which will help households to:

- Understand how to better manage their energy use
- Improve the warmth and energy efficiency of their homes; and potentially
- Reduce their household’s environmental impact.

The Heat Is On DVD is a copyright free resource and NEA is actively encouraging advice providers and other agencies to copy the DVD for local use and distribution.
A brand new army of Energy Hotshots was assembled in 2013 to provide hands-on help and advice to households in the local community, thanks to a project run by NEA and supported by Saudi Aramco. The project trained 129 energy hotshots across four areas: Newcastle, Birmingham, Leeds and Greater Manchester. The Energy Hotshots represented a wide range of local organisations who went on to share their knowledge with over 5,220 householders.

The training course for the Energy Champions was intentionally straightforward, consisting of practical and useful information designed to enthuse and inspire delegates to go on and share their newfound knowledge with others.

The Hotshots were then supported by NEA to disseminate their learning and advice to their clients, friends and family.
In 2013/14 NEA, in partnership with E.ON, delivered the Access to Warmth project. This project targeted disabled households experiencing fuel poverty in order to maximise access to the advice and assistance available to them.

Accessibility is often a barrier. For example, households including someone with a disability are particularly vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty and often encounter barriers to accessing the assistance for which they are eligible. Through the Access to Warmth project, NEA in partnership with practitioners from organisations representing disabled people achieved the following aims:

- Raised awareness amongst disability organisations of the assistance available through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and other sources of affordable warmth support.
- Made recommendations about critical success factors in relation to delivering services to these households.
NEA recently delivered a pilot project in North Tyneside called Students’ Energy Hotshots. This project aimed to help students understand how the way that they use energy, whether heating their homes, watching TV or by the method of transport they used, affects the environment.

NEA trained and supported 50 students from TyneMet Colleges in energy efficiency to improve sustainability and environmental conservation. The students were chosen specifically for this project based on the understanding that they would make a positive difference not only at home, but by helping others by passing on what they have learned. NEA developed bespoke training and a student resource pack containing energy management handouts to assist students to monitor their energy use and expenditure and provided energy conservation information. Students were encouraged to monitor their own carbon footprint throughout the project and undertake homework-based assignments with support and mentoring provided by NEA.

Support was given via social media, e.g. email and text messaging and a micro-site was developed. Students were also encouraged to cascade basic advice to others within their own communities including friends, families and neighbours. The project culminated with the creation of a toolkit promoting best practice which was adopted by North Tyneside Council for rollout across its colleges, sixth forms and community groups.
Working with the Department of Energy and Climate Change, NEA assisted 8 Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB) to take forward action to help alleviate fuel poverty and the impacts of cold homes on the health and wellbeing of local communities.

NEA initially scoped local authorities in England who had specified public health outcomes and/or aspirations to alleviate fuel poverty and/or excess winter deaths as part of published Health and Wellbeing Strategies (HWS). NEA subsequently issued a call for expressions of interest to HWB and Public Health teams to promote developmental support. 19 HWB applied for assistance from the programme and NEA chose 8 applications that it was best placed to be able to support.

NEA engaged and worked with nominated local partners to develop work plans in each locality. Activities delivered included:

- Supporting revision of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments;
- Research and information gathering to provide an evidence base to support policy development and practical action to address fuel poverty (including to provide leverage for funding bids);
- Practitioner training;
- Community engagement activities;
- Awareness raising and briefing activities;
- Support to align fuel poverty strategies with local Health and Wellbeing Strategies;
- Supporting local mapping and targeting activity;
- Referral system and service developments;
- Partnership developments.

Overall, the project has improved NEA’s knowledge and understanding of how Health and Wellbeing Boards are operating and responding to the challenge of alleviating fuel poverty as one of the broader determinants of ill-health via Health and Wellbeing Strategies and other local partnership developments and actions.

NEA is now planning a follow on project.
Northern Exposure is a project delivered by NEA Northern Ireland and funded by the Public Health Agency. It is a locally delivered, action based, community development project designed to tackle the high levels of fuel poverty in Belfast. The project promotes energy efficiency services to tackle the insulation and heating problems of low income households by working in partnership with statutory, community and voluntary organisations.

In 2013, NEA worked in the Whiterock and Westrock areas of Belfast to provide advice and to generate referrals for eligible residents. The project knocked on over 240 doors and carried out 100 home visits to householders in the Whiterock and Westrock area. A total of 57 householders were subsequently referred for energy schemes. In addition to the home visits, 120 energy efficient light bulbs, 160 advice and information packs, and 200 temperature cards were distributed. Belfast City Council also provided winter warmth packs to older people in the area to further support the project.

The project has left a real lasting legacy in the area with residents now more aware of their energy needs and behaviour and the services that are available to them.
NEA is extremely proud to have been recognised and awarded for our innovative work to tackle fuel poverty

Green Deal and ECO Fuel Poverty Campaigner of the Year 2014
NEA was delighted to win Fuel Poverty Campaigner of the Year at the National Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Awards 2014. The award recognises individuals or organisations that have made an outstanding contribution to raising awareness of fuel poverty and leading the fight against it. NEA has worked tirelessly over the last 33 years and more recently since the introduction of the Government’s Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation to ensure that the schemes can improve the lives of people living in fuel poverty.

NEA’s work has involved advising Local Authorities; conducting research into how vulnerable households can benefit from the schemes; updating NEA’s City and Guilds training courses to reflect changes to the Green Deal and ECO; and holding six seminars across England, Wales and Scotland to inform representatives from local authorities of Government plans for Green Deal and ECO.

Ashden Award 2013
NEA were delighted to win the prestigious Ashden UK Friends Award in 2013, which recognised NEA for its excellence in providing training on energy awareness and energy efficiency advice, and for its leading role in professionalising the energy advice sector.

Green Apple 2013
NEA was awarded the Green Apple Gold Award in 2013 for Environmental Best Practice. This award recognised the Performing Energy Efficiency Project in Schools (PEEPS) which NEA delivered with support from Conwy County Borough Council’s Families First Programme.

PEEPS is a unique curriculum enrichment project which utilises drama techniques to educate school children about the importance of energy efficiency. The PEEPS project engaged with schools in deprived areas of Conwy, North Wales. It educated children on how energy efficiency can contribute towards reducing energy costs and saving on carbon dioxide emissions. Children learned how to help the environment and to secure a sustainable future; whilst at the same time, reducing fuel bills.
NEA would like to thank all of the organisations who have supported and funded our work. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

NEA’s mission is clear. We intend to bring an end to fuel poverty. If you would like to support or discuss future projects please contact NEA’s Business & Partnerships Team at partnerships@nea.org.uk or call 0191 261 5677.