COVENTRY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

West Midlands Fuel Poverty Forum - November 5th 2014

Ed Hodson / Sophie Parkes – Social Policy Team - Coventry CAB
Twin Campaigns

Big Energy Saving Week
- to promote awareness of all energy-related consumer issues to as wide an audience as possible locally and regionally

Fair Play for Pre-Pay
- To galvanise a regional consumer empowerment partnership around the campaign for a fair deal for users of pre-payment meters
## BESW – National Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check</th>
<th>Switch</th>
<th>Insulate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Educate consumers directly on how to <strong>check</strong> they are on the best tariff, <strong>switch</strong> if they are not and <strong>insulate</strong> to cut down on wasted energy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Putting energy efficiency and the cost of fuel on the agenda. Bringing suppliers, central and local government, and the third sector together to develop plans to tackle key energy issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BESW – Coventry Themes

• ‘heat and health’ - to raise understanding of, and provide practical support for, the link between fuel poverty and health problems.

• ‘get more for less’ - to raise awareness of, and provide practical support for, the active promotion of increased energy efficiency.

• ‘pay smart’- to raise awareness, and provide practical support for, saving money on energy bills.

• ‘taking the heat’- to raise awareness of, and provide practical support for, dealing with fuel debts/poverty.
Fair Play for Pre-Pay

- Raise the level of customer service for pre-payment meter users in line with other payment methods
- Make sure pre-payment users have a choice of tariffs and can switch supplier easily
- Agree to a smarter prepay offer that works for consumers

Find out more about the campaign and sign the petition at: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/fairprepay
Issues for Pre-Payment Meter Users

(some)

- Too few tariff choices available to PPM users with no significant gain to be had by switching
- PPM users often not included in collective switching deals
- Tariffs are too high
- Standing charges / debt repayments taken before ongoing usage
- Standing charges / debt repayments stop when user ‘self-disconnects’, accumulates while disconnected and taken immediately when re-connected
- Some PPM users, when in debt trouble, are forced to pay for the installation of PPMs being forced on them
- And many more…
Campaign Tools - generic

- Pre-campaign discussion with possible partners over collaborative action
- Updating materials for display and promotion
- Homepage key text (changed weekly)
- Internal bureau education
- Reception display
- Social media promotion
- Press/radio promotion
- Delivery of expert training
- Organisation of outreach events
- Organisation of ‘guest speaker’ event
- Promotion of the national petition
- Delivery of ‘grant funding offer’
- Promotion of the work of other agencies
- Other miscellaneous activities
Pre-October Activity:
Discussion of partnership opportunities with relevant partners
Contribution to national launch of FP for PP at CitA annual conference – Sept 11-12th
Promotion of BESW/FP for PP campaigns at ASC social policy group mtg – Sept 17th
Referral to twin campaign at CP meetings in September

October
1st – campaign launch (including hosting of WM Social policy Forum and numerous activities)
14th – Act on Energy training session

BESW
20th – Twin campaign refocus (including attendance at Parliamentary campaign launch)
21st – Public Awareness Event – Coventry Central Library (with NEA Coventry)
22nd – BBC ‘switching day’ (with CCC Fuel Poverty Team / Age UK / Trading Standards / switching company)
23rd – Guest Speaker Event – ‘Keeping Coventry Warm Partnership – Fuel Poverty Team’

November 5th – Presentation to WM Fuel Poverty Forum

What’s Next?
Outputs – so far (some)

- Over 3,000 signatures nation-wide for the ‘Fair Play for Pre-Pay’ campaign
- Effective ‘buy-in’ from local bureaux and bureaux from around the region (including the take-up of training opportunities, and the provision of funding for supportive mini-projects from 4 project teams internally and 3 bureaux across the West Midlands)
- Galvanising of public engagement behind the twin campaign through local outreach events (including 40 client conversations and 80+ materials given out at the Central Library event; and BBC radio coverage of key messages reaching a listenership of 80,000 from the BBC ‘switching day’ event)
- Reaching over 100 bureau clients with BESW ‘packs’ during BESW.
Outputs – so far (some more)

• Getting external networks behind the campaign (eg the guest speaker event attracting 14 representatives from projects across Coventry - including Whitefriars Housing and a personal interest from the Leader of the City Council)

• Strengthening of collaborative partnership working between the CAB, the City Council and other frontline advice agencies such as Age UK and Trading Standards

• Persuading the City Council to seriously consider a new collective switching initiative for December

• Persuading the City Council to re-visit / revive the profile of the flagship ‘Keeping Coventry Warm Partnership’.
Any Questions?
West Midlands FUEL POVERTY FORUM
Policy Update

Lorraine Gumbs
Regional Manager
Warm Zones cic
Cutting the Cost of Keeping Warm

Government consults on a new fuel poverty strategy for England
Context

Using 10% definition: 2012 fuel poor households in the UK estimated at around 4.50 million (17%). Up from 4.34 million in 2011.


The aggregate fuel poverty gap: 2012 £1 billion projected to increase to £1.1 billion in 2014.

The average fuel poverty gap: 2012 £443, projected to increase to £480 in 2014.

Context

**Off-gas:** 2012 533,000 fuel poor households in England did not have access to natural gas and heated their properties with oil, solid fuel, LPG or electricity.

**Off-gas average fuel poverty gap:** These households continue to typically have higher fuel poverty gaps, approx. double the average on gas, typically over £1,000.

**Most energy inefficient dwellings** (those with a SAP rating of E or below): much more likely to be fuel poor than those in more energy efficient dwellings, and have higher fuel poverty gaps. Statistically, these less efficient properties are much more likely to be concentrated off the gas network.

Background

NEA has always stated energy efficiency is the most sustainable solution to unaffordable fuel bills and can enable warm, healthy homes for all consumers.

NEA has encouraged and increased almost unanimous consensus

The UK Government has set out a new binding fuel poverty target for England and released a 12-week consultation on a new fuel poverty strategy which will take effect from 2015.
**Proposed Target**

To ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency standard of Band C, by 2030.

Interim milestones in the new fuel poverty strategy:
(i) as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to Band E by 2020 and
(ii) as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to Band D by 2025
## Fuel Poverty in England (LIHC) by EPC band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAP 09 band</th>
<th>Proportion of households within group (%)</th>
<th>Number of households (000's)</th>
<th>Aggregate fuel poverty gap (£m)</th>
<th>Average fuel poverty gap (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not fuel poor</td>
<td>Fuel poor</td>
<td>Not fuel poor</td>
<td>Fuel poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, B, C</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,895</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,495</td>
<td>817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4,326</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19,653</td>
<td>2,283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress to Date
More is needed...

• ECO: lack of adequate resources and many barriers
• England has no recurrent match funding compared with the significant financial incentives offered by the Scottish and Welsh Governments
• Customers failed and eligibility is limited
• Continuing disagreement regarding compliance in the private rented sector
• Lack of geographic equity discouraging local authorities to invest in on-going capacity and local supply chains
More is needed...

• A lack of equal access to other programmes (RHI/FiTs etc)
• Energy discounts are weighted towards low income pensioner households
• Inflation and cost of living hitting the poorest, hardest
• Government still to report consistently on the scale of mitigating policies required to protect low income householders across the UK from the initial costs of decarbonisation policies
NEA Recommendations (Targets)

Reform the current final objective: set a revised end target of improving the homes of low income households to a minimum of EPC Band C by 2025.

Reform the two interim milestones: remove the band E target entirely and bring forward the Band D target by five years to 2020. The remaining D minimum milestone should then also be adapted to have the same statutory basis as the 2030 target.

Remove or tightly define the term ‘as far as reasonably practicable’.
NEA Recommendations (Targets)

Set three new targets:

• A requirement to reduce the size of the aggregate and average ‘fuel poverty gap’ each year.
• A requirement to reduce the size of the aggregate and average ‘fuel poverty gap’ by 90% by 2030 compared to 2015 levels.
• Adopt a new interim target to improve the homes of 2 million low income households to EPC band C by 2020.
Further Recommendations

Available in hard copy today.
Fuel Poverty & Health

Highlight the potential for a new system of national ‘mandated’ health referrals

Process has to be administratively simple and not prohibitively expensive to engage with professionals

Mandated referrals with guaranteed assistance

Ensure energy customers are not subject to the cost of relevant programmes increasing

Annual updates showing Health & Wellbeing Boards that have prioritised fuel poverty or Excess Winter Deaths within their local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)
Recommendations

Finalise the draft NICE guidance "Excess winter deaths and morbidity and the health risks associated with cold homes”

Authorise the sharing of patient level health data

Public Health England (PHE) must take a lead role in helping to provide support and resources

PHE must also work with DECC and DoH to ensure there is a continuous effort to track the coverage of existing local schemes.

PHE are ideally placed to pool information on the cost of related morbidity at a local level
Recommendations

Secretary of State to require obligated energy companies to follow up ‘mandated referrals’ with guaranteed assistance provided to householders with an existing medically certified health condition which could be exacerbated by an energy inefficient or cold home;

- Eligibility based on the current affordable warmth element of ECO (or potentially a broader proxy)
- suppliers compensated for any additional costs
- third party contributions from HWBs and CCGs would be sought
Recommendations

DECC and DoH must place a duty on relevant strategic agencies and provide greater support where notable gaps continue to be evident.

Without this, NEA considers the momentum of the new NICE guidance will be lost and the potential contribution of the health sector could be undermined for years to come.
Building Capacity

• NEA and Warm Zones advocate the importance of community-led approaches
• Build on the potential of new partnerships to support and enhance delivery
• Increase recognition of local authorities as key intermediaries
• Central Government must underline the need for local authorities to deliver their current duties
• Competition-based, non-recurrent, funding models are not encouraging sustained local engagement
• Recurrent, ring-fenced, funding models optimise delivery, reduce delivery costs and nurture a sustainable contribution from local communities and the voluntary sector
Recommendations

NEA promotes the role of different 'actors' who can support interventions to fuel poor households to

• enhance coverage of fuel poverty as a cross departmental priority
• highlight an over reliance on supplier led delivery and
• build support for other groups who should be more involved in supporting low income and vulnerable consumers

Local authorities have a key role in delivering and enforcing the new fuel poverty targets
Recommendations

NEA insists local authorities are provided with the means to deliver their current duties in relation to housing, fuel poverty, reducing carbon emissions and public health responsibilities.

DCLG and DECC must work together to provide a reliable update of this critical work.

The Government must address the fact there are no sanctions for the non-submission of HECA reports or acknowledge that in the current financial climate it could easily be categorised as a 'nice to have' as opposed to an essential area of local authority activity.
Recommendations

Government must supplement ECO by emulating the Scottish fuel poverty scheme; tax funded and led by local authorities.

Government should re-examine the provision of a joined-up extra help service to provide critical contact to identify, reach and support vulnerable consumers.

Obligated suppliers must better integrate the cost effective delivery of their current obligations and look to join up ECO and WHDS to the roll-out of smart meters.

Training will be needed to ensure consistency in advice provision across a range of agencies including community groups.
Finding The Funding

CSR following the General Election in May 2015 is critically important; a range of Govt. departments have a key role in helping to support, fund and deliver a new fuel poverty strategy from 2015.

Annual investment to be increased to circa £2 billion per year to meet the revised energy efficiency targets in NEA’s response.

Continuation of current ECO resources + some of the annual proceeds from carbon revenue and VAT receipts.

Potential for energy efficiency to deliver a range of policy objectives but, most importantly, offer a long-term, sustainable solution to unaffordable fuel bills providing secure warm, healthy homes for all consumers (IEA).
Multiple Energy Efficiency Benefits
Further Information

Contact:

Peter Smith
External Affairs Manager
National Energy Action (NEA)
M: 07595780893
E: peter.smith@nea.org.uk
Consultation Round-Up

NEA has responded to the NICE guidance consultation

NEA has responded to the call for evidence on Park Homes

NEA has submitted a response to the Private Rented Sector Regulations

NEA has responded to Ofgem’s Consultation on the Review of Priority Services Register

Ofgem’s consultation on the Fuel Poor Gas Network Extension Scheme - **closed 31 October 2014**
Consultation Round-Up

• DECC consultation on Warm Homes Discount extension to 2015/16 – **closes 13 November 2014**

• The Government have released their response to the consultation on the Government Electricity Rebate.
Ofgem

New animated video, infographics and webpage for consumers which explains energy networks and Ofgem’s role.


Web page - [www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-networks](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-networks)
Community Action Awards 2014-16
Tackling fuel poverty together in local communities