

# BUSINESS SUPPORTERS REVIEW

2015-2016



Action for Warm Homes

The interests of our Business Supporters Group (BSG) span the range of the energy sector and encompass utilities, installers, energy service providers, manufacturers, network operators, suppliers, designers and consultancies.

NEA prides itself on being able to offer its Business Supporters Group the opportunity to engage with other NEA members, and to access excellent opportunities to network with and influence a wide range of key policy makers, stakeholders and customers. This includes Ministers, MPs, Peers and Assembly Members.

During 2015-16, Business Supporters Group (BSG) members were able to take advantage of a number of key membership benefits.

## four policy briefing meetings

**BSG members were able to take advantage of four policy briefing meetings held by NEA. Members not only hosted these meetings but were also afforded the opportunity to shape the meeting agendas and to present.**

### 29 April 2015

Hosted by npower and held in Solihull, this meeting covered policy updates surrounding the new fuel poverty strategy for England and the introduction of new NICE guidance on excess winter morbidity. A presentation by Ofgem gave an overview of their PSR Consultation Response. NEA and British Gas delivered a joint presentation to the group which provided members with an overview of their Community Action Partnership, and a speaker representing National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions updated members on innovative solutions for off-gas grid homes.

### 8 July 2015

Held in Sheffield, this meeting afforded members with the opportunity to hear presentations from a great range of speakers. The meeting included presentations by Northern Powergrid, who discussed how improved energy efficiency could offset the need for future network reinforcement. Speakers from DECC provided an overview of the Big Energy Saving Network (BESN), and a member presentation was delivered by Community Switch. Members were also able to provide feedback on NEA's services to help inform the development of the charity's future strategic plan.

### 25 July 2015

The third meeting of the year was hosted by British Gas and held in their A-rated Oxford offices. Speakers representing the company provided members with a detailed overview of the Value of British Gas Energy Trust Impact Report. In addition, members received a description of The Better Housing Better Health Project by a recent recipient of NEA's Community Action Award, hosted in partnership with DECC and British Gas. NEA delivered an overview of its Warm Homes, Healthy Homes project which is being co-delivered with the Papworth Trust, and there was also a member presentation by The Energy Savers.

### 27 January 2015

The final meeting of the year was held in Newcastle and was followed by the annual dinner for all BSG members. Representatives from DECC gave an overview of the Bonfield Independent Review of Consumer Advice, Protection, Standards and Enforcements for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and a member presentation was provided by GB Energy Supply. The meeting also featured presentations by Ofgem, an update on the NEA HIP/TIF Programme, and a discussion of an affordable warmth research project carried out by NEA in conjunction with The Children's Society. A highly enjoyable evening was had by all at the annual dinner, and members were able to take advantage of the opportunity to network and socialise in a relaxed setting.

## networking and discussion with experts

In 2015-16 our BSG members attended an array of events hosted by NEA.

Each year, NEA hosts three **fuel poverty forums** in eight areas across England, and two forums in both north and south Wales. The forums presented our members with an invaluable opportunity to keep up to date on the latest policy developments, with information provided by expert speakers. Participating in the forums alongside frontline service providers, policy makers and other BSG supporters meant that members could share in good practice, contribute to lively discussions, and share information about their work with those in attendance.

Each forum on average attracted around 40 participants, and covered topics including: the future of ECO and complementary programmes; the end of the Green Deal; new regulations for the private rented sector; the smart meter rollout; new NICE guidelines on excess winter deaths; the Priority Service Register consultation; gas distribution network discretionary reward submission; and NEA's Manifesto for Warmth. Forums in Wales also covered topics such as the energy efficiency strategy for Wales and the evaluation of the NEST scheme.



By attending our annual receptions in the **House of Lords** and the **House of Commons**, members were able to meet with MPs and Peers and ensure that fuel poverty and associated issues were brought to the attention of key UK policy makers.

members enjoyed **free exhibition opportunities** and **discounted access** to the UK's biggest fuel poverty conference

In September 2015 NEA's annual **national conference** was held in Sheffield. Over 350 delegates attended the conference, which explored a wide range of issues associated with fuel poverty and its alleviation. Each session was focused around one of NEA's six mission statements, and covered issues such as: innovation in delivering and funding energy efficiency programmes; linking fuel poverty, health and inequality; addressing the problem of disadvantage due to property type, tenure or location; empowering individuals and communities to take control of their energy generation and behaviour; and enabling customer engagement with the competitive energy market. This year's conference even featured an eco-action playground, where members could indulge in some energy efficient fun and games.



Members were also able to attend the conference banquet, which was held in Sheffield's beautiful Cutlers Hall. Here, they were addressed by Lord O'Neill of Clackmannan, and Charles Hendry, incoming and outgoing Presidents of NEA respectively.

Members received a substantial discount on the delegate fee and could also attend the incorporated Annual General Meeting. BSG members also received a free exhibition stand and delegate place at conference as part of their membership, giving them the opportunity to promote their products and services to the many delegates who attended.

*"We joined NEA back in 2011, and if I was starting out again I would have no qualms in joining this vibrant organisation. I often refer to them as my extended family to outsiders in the industry as they treat all members with total professionalism."*

### informing others in the sector about your own activities

#### BSG members have:

- Supported NEA's media and fundraising campaigns by participating in Fuel Poverty Awareness Day and The Nation's Biggest Housewarming. Members got involved by issuing press releases and posts on social media to promote their support for NEA and their own activities to tackle fuel poverty
- Highlighted their achievements and activities, provided news updates, advertised new job opportunities and requested information by logging in to the members' area of our website
- Made their presence known by appearing in NEA's national and local press releases, as well as on our LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook updates
- Featured in our quarterly magazine NEA Focus, which has a circulation of over 500 stakeholders from across the sector
- Forged new partnerships by networking at NEA events.

### a clear view on policy: keeping members informed about the fuel poverty policy framework

NEA's monthly e-newsletter ensured that our members were kept up-to-date with new funding streams and opportunities for collaborating on projects. Updating members on changes in policy and legislation meant that they were able to understand the implications for their business and to plan ahead.

News from our Business Supporters Group was published in our quarterly magazine, NEA Focus, and members were kept informed about new product launches and project updates. They were also able to access case studies of actions to tackle fuel poverty and promote energy efficiency in practice.

NEA's expert research team ensured that our members were provided with the most up-to-date figures on fuel poverty and excess winter deaths, as well as IMD statistics, for their area or in areas in which they were operating.

In 2015-16 our BSG members collaborated with NEA on a fantastic array of projects. These include:

- Working to deliver the Community Action Partnership with **British Gas**
- Support from **EDF Energy** for NEA's Communities Programme and an Improving Energy Efficiency in Communities Project
- Continued support of NEA's HEAT project in Coventry by **Scottish Power**
- **Yes Energy Solutions** are working to install new technologies in Wembley through the Technical Innovation Fund (TIF)
- **Husky Heat Pumps** are working with the Rural Comparison evaluation project for off-gas homes, funded by National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions
- The Malcolm Wicks Memorial Fund Student Programme is being delivered in conjunction with **National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions**
- **SSE** supported a number of NEA's Fuel Poverty Forums, as well as our House of Lords Reception in March 2016. They also funded a Fuel Debt Training and Mentoring project in Wales, as well as Fuel Debt Community events and Feel the Heat Award Scheme
- **Affordable Warmth Solutions** also supported NEA's annual House of Commons event in November 2015
- **Northern Power Grid** and **National Grid** co-sponsored NEA's Annual Conference 2015 in Sheffield
- **Wales and West Utilities** provided sponsorship for our NEA Cymru's annual Wales Conference 2016, held in Cardiff
- **The Chopping Company** and **The Energy Savers Ltd** collaborated with NEA on a joint gas distribution network-funded project to study the effects of their technology on heating bills and performance of heating system
- NEA carried out an evaluation of a **Npower's** fuel bank project
- NEA carried out a Tamworth gas extension/central heating intervention study in conjunction with the Children's Society and **National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions**.

*"If you have technologies for testing and bringing to market they have an excellent technical team which will give you advice and the facility to test and report on the findings and point you in the right direction as how to get new technologies into the main stream - an invaluable service!"*



Action for Warm Homes

helping NEA to raise money with **community fundraising**

## THE NATION'S BIGGEST HOUSEWARMING

Many of our BSG members got into the fundraising spirit and took part in **The Nation's Biggest Housewarming during 2015-16**. They carried out a range of fantastic fundraising activities to raise money for NEA and help in the fight against fuel poverty. Members held bake sales, ran tuck shops, walked to work, held pop-up energy advice shops and held 'selfie' competitions.



In September, runners from BSG member Schneider Electric took on the 13.1 mile challenge of the **Great North Run** to show their support and to raise money for NEA. A fantastic day was had by all, with a brilliant burst of energy from our runners ensuring a wonderful result for all.



**Thank you to all our BSG members for their continued support!**

Interested in becoming a **Business Supporters Group** member and taking advantage of the benefits outlined above? Visit our website for more information [www.nea.org.uk/membership](http://www.nea.org.uk/membership) or contact [jamie.ruse@nea.org.uk](mailto:jamie.ruse@nea.org.uk)

NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION

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