## South West Fuel Poverty Forum 29 June 2023



#### **About NEA**

National Energy Action (NEA) is the national fuel poverty and energy efficiency charity that has worked across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for the last forty+ years, to ensure that everyone in the UK can afford to live in a warm and safe home.

We work across both the energy and water sectors, with frontline practitioners, companies, regulators and Government, to make positive change for customers in vulnerable circumstances.



Time	Agenda
9:30am	Welcome Laura Langman, Project Development Coordinator, NEA
9:45am	Updates, collaboration and networking opportunities  NEA will chair this session and invite participating speakers to share brief updates
10:10am	Policy update Maya Fitchett, Policy Analyst, NEA
10:40am	Bright Green Homes project Rob Redshaw, Senior Project Manager, Bristol City LEAP
11:00am	Refreshments and networking
11:20am	Group discussions Facilitated by NEA
11:50pm	Public Health and Help with Fuel Poverty Anthony Ball, Public Health Specialist, Cornwall Council
12:10pm	South West Water Partnership Hub and Help for Customers Lorraine Whiting and Marie Parr, Community and Customer Liaison Coordinators, South West Water
12:25pm	Forum concludes Round up followed by lunch and networking



#### How NEA has helped tackle the energy crisis (2022-23)

Our Warm and Safe Homes (WASH) Advice line operates across England and Wales, supporting thousands of people each year with energy and income maximisation advice and information.



Over **16,000 calls** answered through our phone lines **465 webchat** conversations Over **3,000** online referrals



1,872 clients have been supported with Benefit Entitlement Checks, of which 1,088 claims were made resulting in over £3.5 million expected financial gains





**11,151 clients** helped with energy advice and support



Over £734,700 of crisis fund, hardship, bill support or debt relief payments administered by NEA



"Thank you so much, honestly, that has been keeping me up at night worrying so it's a huge relief." Single working mum, 34, who had £1,200 of fuel debt written off through the NEA support fund

"I couldn't have got this sorted without you," a client said after one of our advisers sorted out billing errors with her supplier to see her account move from debt to credit.

"Thank you so much for all your support," a client who had been rationing her energy use said, after our adviser solved her complex metering and debt issues.

A 50-year-old mother of five, dependent on a ventilator and a wheelchair, had £1,204.13 of fuel debt wiped off, and her direct debit set to a more affordable amount, all thanks to one of NEA's advisers.

A 62-year-old woman who had been selling her grandmother's jewellery and borrowing money from friends to get by was helped by one of our advisers with both her energy and water bills. Our adviser got the woman onto a social tariff for her water bills and topped up her gas prepayment meter with a £147 voucher.

#### NEA's operational work programme 2023/24

- Communities of interest / supporting under-represented groups
- Smart meter rollout
- Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)



#### Communities of interest / supporting underrepresented groups

#### **Warm Welcome**

- Providing vital energy advice and support to new and expectant parents in England and Wales
- Aiming to support families with managing their fuel bills and to achieve affordable warmth
- Community advice sessions and targeted support with professionals.

#### Building Community Resilience

- NEA and National Grid
- A greater focus on incommunity work and direct support through partnership
- Working with partners who have been marginalised and face intersecting barriers in the energy market
- Tailored, local work to understand community needs and respond proactively
- Increase capacity across the advice giving sector.

#### **Empowered by Energy**

- NEA will continue to offer a unique energy awareness project to empower newly recognised refugees to the UK to overcome language barriers, understand new energy systems and save money.
- Interactive and in-depth workshops supported by translators covering a range of energy related topics and advice
- Delivered online and F2F
- Attendees become confident energy champions who can share tips and information with their peers and community networks.



#### **Smart meter rollout**



- Smart Energy GB in Communities is a grants and training programme established by NEA and Smart Energy GB in 2016
- Designed to reach and support people who might experience a barrier in benefiting from the smart meter rollout
- Provide funding to charities, local authorities and housing associations across
   Great Britain
- Promote the benefits of smart meters and bust myths
- Funding in 2023 is aiming to benefit people in fuel poverty; people who lack digital skills; and people who are carers. 3 smart meter focussed projects have received funding in this region.
- Free resources including a joint NEA/Smart Energy GB advice guide available on the Smart Energy GB website.

For more information: <a href="mailto:smartgrants@nea.org.uk">smartgrants@nea.org.uk</a>

## NEA and the Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

- Funding allowance for all Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) allocated and managed by Ofgem
- To be used to support customers in vulnerable situations and to reduce the risks related to Carbon Monoxide
- Allocated according to the size of each GDN's customer base
- NEA is working in partnership with Cadent, Wales & West Utilities (WWU) and SGN to deliver VCMA funded programmes
- Programmes include gas appliance repairs/replacement and servicing, energy and water advice, benefits advice, fuel debt relief and emergency fuel vouchers.

## Healthy Homes, Healthy People



Partnership approach across Wales & West Utilities footprint



- Energy advice
- Water tariff advice and access to cheaper tariffs



- Home adaptions information and referrals
- Priority Services Register
- Home Safety Measures CO, locking cooker valves
- Income maximisation







## **Cadent – One Number Programme**

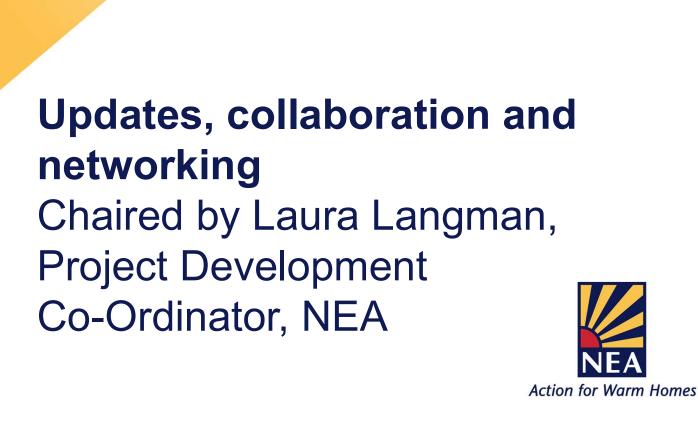
- Referrals generated by engineers attending emergency call outs and carrying out mains replacement works
- Customers in vulnerable situations are referred to NEA (Eastern and North London network areas) or Groundwork (North West and North East network areas)
- Householders are offered:
  - FREE gas appliance repair/replacement or a FREE gas appliance service (subject to eligibility criteria)
  - Energy and water advice
  - A Benefit Entitlement Check and support to make a claim where required





#### Cadent / SGN Collaboration

- Energy and water advice for SGN and Cadent customers:
  - Energy Debt support
  - Support to access water social tariffs and debt relief schemes
  - Priority Services registration to supplier and operator Priority Service Registers
- Emergency fuel top-up vouchers fund for customers using the NEA Warm & Safe Homes (WASH) service living in an SGN or Cadent postcode area.
- Linked support to internal and partner organisations:
  - NEAs' Benefits Team
  - Network Operators Carbon Monoxide Alarms
  - Referrals to local foodbanks
  - Measures projects for insulation, heating and controls







## **NEA's Three Advocacy Priorities**



**People** - Supporting fuel poor households through the energy crisis



Homes - Achieving a fair and affordable transition to net zero



Market Frameworks - Ensuring overarching market, policy and regulatory frameworks work in the interest of fuel poor households

## **People** - Supporting fuel poor households through the energy crisis

#### **Recent Developments**

- Price cap now down to £2,070 but Government energy support now ended (EBSS and EPG). So prices no different to winter
- 20% of prepay EBSS vouchers have not been redeemed to date. This will be passed back to HMT.
- Income support continues for those in the social security system. But this is defrayed across different essentials.
- One third of fuel poor households are not in the social security system and so receive no support going forward.

#### **Coming Up**

- Continuing to make the case for more targeted support this winter, specifically for energy (i.e. bill rebates/price support)
- Campaigning for a social tariff to ensure that low income households can access an affordable price of energy.
- Consultation on a social tariff expected this summer.

## Homes - Achieving a fair and affordable transition to net zero

#### **Recent Developments**

- UK Government announced a new energy efficiency scheme – "Great British Insulation Scheme"
- More money allocated to Local Authorities and Housing Associations to deliver HUG and SHDF
- Government announced that it would look to rebalance levies on energy bills.
- UK Government debating whether to tighten energy efficiency standards for landlords to meet.

#### **Coming Up**

- Making the case for fuel poverty schemes (including GBIS) to be targeted on fuel poor households. This includes our work with political parties on their manifestos.
- Working with UK Government officials to ensure that current schemes work as well as possible.
- Ensuring that the UK Government does not rebalance energy bills simply through transferring levies to gas bills.
- Building up case studies of private renters.

# Market Frameworks - Ensuring overarching market, policy and regulatory frameworks work in the interest of fuel poor households

#### **Recent Developments**

- Ofgem have consulted on making some changes to energy pricing, including:
  - How debt allowances are calculated in the price cap
  - Pricing differentials for different payment types
- New voluntary agreements regarding the forced installation of prepayment meters.
- Ofgem consulting on how to improve customer service.

#### **Coming Up**

- Continuing to make the case that there should be no/limited price differentials between payment types in the energy market.
- Pushing Ofgem to take the PPM voluntary agreement into the licence.
- Ensuring that energy customers do not pay over the odds for the cost of debt in the price cap

### Forced Prepay - Deep Dive

#### New Rules for Pre Installation

- Involuntary PPM as a last resort
- Multiple contact attempts by a range of methods and site welfare visit before Involuntary PPM
- Installs must be smart meters as default

### Exemptions from the process

- High risk group completely exempt from installs, including elderly, very young, and certain medical conditions.
- Broader medium risk group exempt if likely they will self-disconnect

### On site requirements

- Site welfare visit and installation teams to be appropriately trained, with clear expectations on their behaviour
- There is a need for bodycam or audio recording

#### New Rules for Post Installation

- New Involuntary PPM to come preloaded with credit
- Suppliers must provide aftercare including check ins and monitoring of top ups/consumption
- Households must be offered to be moved back to credit mode if debt is cleared

Forced installs will not re-commence until suppliers have shown to Ofgem that they can meet these requirements. This is not expected until mid-summer at the earliest.

## What else is happening?

- New Select Committee Established for DESNZ Angus MacNeil will chair the committee. NEA is engaged with helping the committee shape their initial agenda.
- Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) UK
   Government is looking at changing how the wholesale market
   works. Some of this will directly impact fuel poor households, so
   NEA will remain engaged.

### **Indicative Policy Timeline**

#### **Summer 23/24**

- Consultations on a social tariff and rebalancing energy bills
- · GBIS goes live

#### **Spring 24/25**

- Implementation of a social tariff
- Preparation for election (possible May 2024)

#### **Autumn 23/24**

- Winter price cap announced with decisions on debt/levelisation
- Prepay agreement into the licence?
- Party conferences focus on manifesto commitments

## Bright Green Homes Project Rob Redshaw, Senior Project Manager, Bristol City LEAP





## Bright Green Homes project

Rob Redshaw – Bristol City Leap

## Bright Green Homes project

- Energy Efficiency and low carbon renewable technologies
- April 2021 first phase (GHG LAD)
- April 2022 present (Home Upgrade Grant)
- Fully funded installations for eligible owner occupier properties
- Following 'fabric first' approach
- Consortium with Bristol CC, North Somerset C, and BATHNES C.



## Eligibility

- Private homeowners & Private tenants (NOT social housing)
- Low income / Lowest three IMD postcode areas
- Low EPC rated homes
- Non-gas heated properties
- Homes in Bristol, North Somerset, and Bath & Northeast Somerset



### **Energy Saving Measures**

Low carbon Heating systems

Insulation – Wall, floor, loft, roof

Renewables – Solar

Windows and doors



## Customer journey

- Managed by Bristol City Leap aim to keep process simple
- Work with local suppliers / installers
- Local consultants (Assessors, Designers)
- Community energy groups in all three authorities local support





## Progress to date

- First phase Delivered 301 measures to 203 homes (~£3m) ended September 2022
- Second phase (off-gas) Delivered over £1m to April 2023
- 500 homes with upgrades homes April 2023 2025 (~£9m)
- Support homeowners to reduce fuel costs and reduce carbon



#### Bright Green Homes project

- Apply online at –
   bristolcityleap.co.uk/domestic/bright-green-homes
- Full property assessment
- Develop improvement options of energy saving measures
- Technical feasibility and design
- Offer letter to resident
- Install
- Handover





## Bright Green Homes – Challenges

- Raise awareness about funding opportunities
- Difficult properties / PAS compliance
- Planning / conservation areas
- ASHP concerns
- Process timescale from application
- Private landlords less than four properties





## Thank you

Questions?



## Refreshments and networking



## **Group discussions**



#### In smaller groups, please discuss:

#### <u>Involuntary Prepayment Meter (PPM) – Supplier Code of Practice</u>

- Ofgem's Involuntary PPM Supplier Code of Practice includes a number of characteristics/conditions that should be considered as high or medium risk and therefore exclude them from Involuntary PPM or remote mode switching. Do you think there are other categories which have been missed? If so, what would be your rationale for including them?
- How can we best explain to advisers and/or householders what protections the Code of Practice offers?
- Does the Code of Practice provide sufficient protection? If not, what more could it do?

#### Digital exclusion and accessibility

 NEA is still finding digital exclusion to be a significant barrier in people being able to access services. What needs to be in place to resolve this? Can you share examples?

# Public Health and Fuel Poverty Anthony Ball, Public Health Specialist, Cornwall Council



#### **National Energy Action**

**South West Poverty Forum –** 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Exeter

**Fuel Poverty and Public Health** 

**Cornwall Council** 

**Anthony Ball** 



## Fuel poverty is everywhere...and preventable



## Fuel Poverty – Why does it matter?

- Lives are been cut short
- People are dying earlier that they should
- Requires investment and political will

#### UK energy bills crisis could set back health equality by decades, say experts

Chancellor told failure to act would hit services as poverty, cold and missed meals increase sickness rates



The NHS Confederation chief executive warned that the UK is facing 'a humanitarian crisis'. Photograph: Andy Rain/EPA

A failure to tackle soaring energy bills could set back health equality by decades and see the <a href="NHS">NHS</a> faced with a "humanitarian crisis" of people unable to keep warm or eat properly, NHS leaders and public health experts have warned.



#### Fuel Poverty – a health &well being emergency

- Evidence
  - Committee on Fuel Poverty <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-fuel-poverty</u>
  - Cold Homes Toolkits <a href="https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-work/advice-partnerships/cold-homes-toolkit/">https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-work/advice-partnerships/cold-homes-toolkit/</a>
  - NICE Guidance https://www.nice.org.uk/search?q=NG6
  - Training Modules <u>Cold Homes elearning for healthcare (e-lfh.org.uk)</u>





COVID Inquiry.....

Presented with evidence that health inequalities worsened under his government, Cameron swatted away any suggestion austerity was responsible.

This "flies in the face of scientific opinion", in Si Michael Marmot's words

One striking indicator of this is that life expectancy for the <u>poorest people actually</u> <u>fell</u>. Why does this matter for health inequalities ?.

Those with bad underlying health were more likely to become seriously ill, and to die: and they were disproportionately drawn from the ranks of the British poor, among whom minorities are overrepresented.



#### **Impacts**

Housing Ombudsman <a href="https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/useful-tools/damp-and-mould/">https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/useful-tools/damp-and-mould/</a>

Damp & Mould <u>Damp and mould in social housing: initial findings</u> [accessible version] - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Rapid rise in energy costs & extra winter deaths

Mitigate the worst effects
Advice and information <a href="https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/costofliving">https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/costofliving</a>



#### Major fuel poverty project cuts households' energy costs by over £900 a year



m Date: 21st Jun 2023 Content Type: News

- Nation / Region: England
- Tags: Energy Costs , Energy Efficiency
- · New research from Newcastle University on one of Great Britain's largest fuel poverty projects finds that on average households saw their annual energy running costs drop from £2,011 to £1,089.
- · Before making improvements, 6,428 homes (41%) had annual running costs above £2,000. Postintervention, the number of homes with over £2,000 running costs fell by over 90% to 460.
- · The total energy bill savings generated by the project were £10.8 million much needed amid the energy crisis and went some way to offsetting the huge price rises across the UK.
- · Also published is a detailed blueprint for the future design and delivery of fuel poverty and energy efficiency programmes.



Greg Fell (DPH Sheffield) "As a society large chunks of NHS budget £ buy back health that we've already lost from poor policy choices in other areas" and "What good does it do to treat people and send them back to the conditions that made them sick? We need to address the conditions that make people sick" <a href="https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/michael-marmot-reducing-social-gradient-health">https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/michael-marmot-reducing-social-gradient-health</a>





# **Committee on Fuel Poverty**

The 2020 Fuel Poverty milestone has been missed and time is running out to meet the 2025 milestone. Without a step up in the volume of energy efficiency work to benefit fuel poor households, the 2030 target will not be achieved.

Fuel poverty is increasing reflecting the pressures on low-income households in the pandemic and the extraordinary surge in their bills in 2022. But, cost of living increases, the energy price shock and the government's desire to reach net zero are not reasons for any delay in making cold homes warmer, they are arguments for urgency.

Tackling fuel poverty must be a shared mission across government, local government and the NHS. Fuel poverty is more than a hardship for 3.2 million households; cold homes impose a toll on the NHS from physical and mental ill-health and create pressures on local government and charities.





A drug called "Heating"	
Generic name	Being warm, boilers, central heating, hot water, radiators, net or zero carbon, renewables, winter wellbeing
Other brand names	Heating, energy, gas, electric, oil, insulation, coal, wood, hot water, affordable warmth, fuel poverty, solar thermal, solar PV, heat pumps
Indications	Struggling to pay for energy, draughty home, cold home, old heating, damp, mould, condensation, trouble breathing, not eating, energy or wider debts, key meter, broken boiler or heating
Dosage	Ability to turn heating on and afford. Daily when cold or damp
Administration	Personal control and can I afford to
Side effects	Improved health and wellbeing, social esteem, independence, better able to manage pre-existing health issues, preventative, ability to cook, shower, best start in life, fewer worries



## But it's not enough....

>

Rising fuel bills can make people ill – physically and mentally – and we are teetering on the edge of a public health emergency. The impacts of living in a cold home should not and must not be underestimated.

Even before the huge energy bills around 10,000 people were dying early every year and the NHS was spending £1.3 billion on preventable conditions caused by cold damp homes.

This winter is set to be even bleaker for millions.

We support the NHS Confederation in calling for more Government support to shield the most vulnerable from the devastating effects of fuel poverty.



Adam Scorer, Chief Executive, National Energy Action



### NHS tadeveloping a pathway

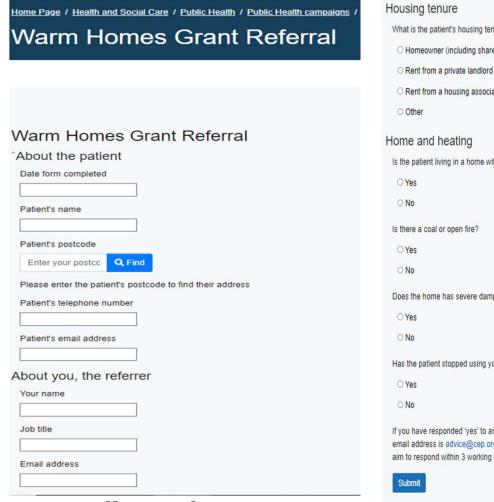
- ICS' should work together to lobby council services to ensure housing quality is not impacting on the health of children and young people (CYP) of all ages. Those CYP at risk of or diagnosed with asthma should be placed in alternative housing if indoor air quality is identified as poor. Severe and difficult to treat asthma services should agree criteria for rehousing those of all ages CYP when the environment is thought to be critical.
- ICS leads should develop a joint policy between healthcare and the local strategic housing/public health to ensure residents CYP with asthma do not live in conditions that might exacerbate their symptoms.



## Step 1 - developing a pathway

- Local proposal is in development, but led by public health
- we will seek to work with **all housing** partners (housing associations, owners, private landlords) and where possible retrofit the existing homes (as have several programmes funded to improve housing). This seems more sensible with the housing shortages.
- We have an advantage existing Winter Wellbeing system and Fuel Poverty initiatives
- All respiratory conditions (not solely asthma)

#### Easy referrals -https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/warmhomesgrant



nousing tenure
What is the patient's housing tenure?
O Homeowner (including shared ownership, leaseholder)
O Rent from a private landlord or an estate
O Rent from a housing association, Cornwall Housing or Cornwall Council
Other
Home and heating
Is the patient living in a home without a working heating system
○Yes
○ No
Is there a coal or open fire?
○Yes
○ No
Does the home has severe damp or mould in multiple rooms?
○Yes
○ No
Has the patient stopped using your heating due to the cost or fear of cost
○Yes
○ No
If you have responded 'yes' to any of the above, we will refer you to our Winter Wellbeing partner Community Energy Plus. Their email address is advice@cep.org.uk. They work with NHS and Cornwall Council to help our residents stay warm and well. CEP aim to respond within 3 working weeks but will respond sooner if your home is without a working heating system.
Submit





#### **Fuel poverty is**

- We should all be able to stay warm at home and healthy.
- Rising energy costs, low incomes and energy-inefficient homes are restricting people's
  options, leaving them in impossible situations fuel, food, rent, mortgage.
- It's a national injustice which sees those with the least money having no choice but to live in homes that are the most difficult and expensive to heat.

#### The impacts

- Cold homes can cause or worsen a range of serious health conditions, impact on mental health and is a known risk factor for suicide. Prevent children from thriving.
- The collective impact on society is significant too. £1.3bn is spent each year on health services in England on treating illness caused by cold homes; and 20% of the UK's carbon emissions come from housing.

#### The solutions

It is not inevitable and fully preventable







🖈) wv

# **Fuel Poverty – partners**







































Lorraine Whiting and Marie Parr, Community and Customer Liaison Coordinators, South West Water

Action for Warm Homes



# Sarah McAndrews & Lorraine Whiting Community and Customer Outreach

CLTeam@southwestwater.co.uk

Thursday 29th June 2023



#### Why work in partnership with us?

- Personalised services
- Empathetic team
- Dedicated multi skilled case managers
- Multiple contact channels for accessibility
- Offering outside the box solutions
- A passionate team offering with various real life experiences









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# Support we offer



WaterCare+

- Priority Service
- The WaterCare Tariff
- Flexible Payment Plans
- The WaterSure Tariff
- Benefits Entitlement Checks

FreshStart

Water Meters and Efficiency Kits

ReStart





# Welcome to the WaterCare Hub

A dedicated portal for our partners which provides direct access to our customer affordability team



#### WWW.WATERCAREHUB.SOUTHWESTWATER.CO.UK

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## How to contact us?



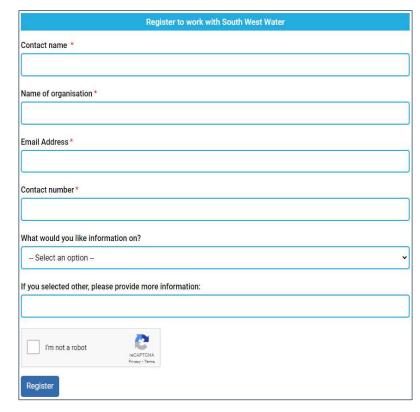
If you would like to work with us please complete the online registration form on the dedicated HUB.

#### We can

- Attend your event
- Work with you and your clients
- Provide training on our hub and services.

You can also contact us via email at anytime.

CLTeam@southwestwater.co.uk







# Applying for client support

Our dedicated HUB allows you to apply for support on behalf of your clients.

Whilst the form will ask for a lot of data this allows us to provide the best level of support to each client depending on their individual circumstances as fast as possible with the best outcome.



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## Come and meet us...

We regularly attend events all across the South West region to help our customers access our support services.

These events range from dropping in at a food bank or going to a community hub, or a community centre to answer any questions and help customers apply for our support.







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### So far we have.....



## Since last July the team have:

- Directly helped 6,600 customers lowering there bills
- Connected with 187 local organisations and charities
- Attended over 550 events



# **Any Questions?**



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# **Training**



Large suite of short courses or qualifications to help enhance knowledge and practical understanding about fuel poverty, fuel debt, decarbonisation and vulnerability.

Funded places available for frontline staff or volunteers (for non-commercial organisations)

www.nea.org.uk/training



# **NEA Membership**



Everything we do, we do in partnership and our members are the heart of those partnerships.

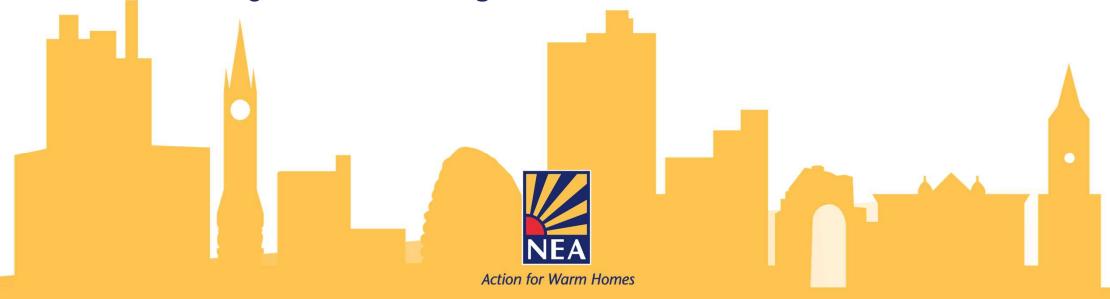
- The Business Supporters Group has been in existence for over 20 years. A strong
  relationship with the business community is vital to ensure the fuel poor can benefit from current
  schemes and technological developments. NEA's campaigning activities would not be so effective
  without industry support.
- Our **Supporting and Enhanced Membership** include local authorities, housing associations, health agencies, charities, community groups and contracted installers through energy provider schemes. **Supporting membership is FREE!**

NEA relies on its members, both as a source of income and for support in achieving the charity's aims and objectives. More information about benefits and costs can be found on our website.

### **NEA Annual Conference and Exhibition**

This year's conference will be taking place from 4 - 6 December 2023 at the Leicester Tigers' Stadium in Leicester.

To join the mailing list for updates and early-bird booking rates, go to www.nea.org.uk/annual-conference-2023/



Thank you for attending and for your contributions. We'd be grateful if you can complete an evaluation form & hand this back to a member of NEA staff.

**Action for Warm Homes** 

Please stay for lunch & further networking.