



District of Easington

Fuel Poverty Strategy

and affordable warmth action plan 2002

updated February 2008



District of **easington.**

Schemes available to residents of Easington District:

- **Energy Doctor Scheme**
Free Energy advice in your home plus two free low energy light bulbs
- **Help to choose your energy supplier scheme**
- **Free advice on finding the most competitive home energy supplier**
- **Over 60's Free Insulation Scheme**
- **Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme**
Free insulation measures to residents in ill health
- **Warm Front Scheme**
Grants of £2,700 for central heating to home owners in receipt of a qualifying benefit.
- **Discounted Home Insulation Scheme**
- **Substantial discounts off home insulation measures**
- **Reducing the amount of council tax I pay and information on pension credit**



Cartoon characters Big Bill and Little Bill have been specially created to encourage children and older residents to save energy in their homes and reduce their carbon footprint.

See page 28

Free Energy saving advice and low energy light bulbs
for council tenants and homeowners

Saving energy will save you money, try this new service and get two **FREE** low energy light bulbs.

FREE Home Survey and advice on saving energy will only take 15 minutes but could save you pounds.

To get more information
Fill in and return the last page of this booklet, or call **0191 527 0501**

How to choose your energy supplier

The District of Easington Council will show you how to compare prices from different energy suppliers and make the most competitive choice your energy supplier.

energywatch

To get more information
Fill in and return the last page of this booklet, or call **0191 527 0501**

Discounted Home Insulation Scheme

Homeowners with Easington Council have a substantial discount off home insulation measures.

To get more information
Fill in and return the last page of this booklet, or call **0191 527 0501**

Are you over 60 and a home owner or do you know someone who is?

Apply now before the scheme finishes, for a limited time you can receive:

- FREE** cavity wall insulation*
- FREE** loft insulation*
- FREE** draught proofing
- FREE** hot water cylinder jackets

Don't delay call free phone **0800 833 018** and quote 'Easington Over 60's FREE Insulation Scheme'

To get more information
Fill in and return the last page of this booklet, or call **0191 527 0501**

Free cavity and loft insulation

This scheme is aimed at reducing cold related ill health by providing householders with warmer homes.

To qualify for the scheme you must be suffering from a relevant medical condition that could be helped by having a warmer home.

AGE
NHS

To get more information
Fill in and return the last page of this booklet, or call **0191 527 0501**

You could receive a grant of up to **£2700** from the Warm Front Scheme

Warm Front is a Government funded scheme which provides grants for central heating and insulation measures.

deira
Energy
Warm Front

To get more information
Fill in and return the last page of this booklet, or call **0191 527 0501**

District of Easington

Fuel Poverty Strategy

and affordable warmth action plan 2002

updated February 2008

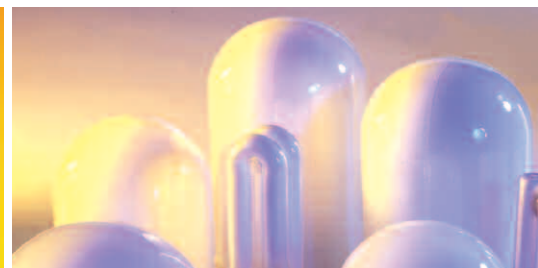


Established 1997

warm homes for all contents

section 1	◀ Foreword	2
section 2	◀ Organisations supporting this strategy	3
section 3	◀ Introduction	4
section 4	◀ Summary of the action plan	5
section 5	◀ Developing an affordable warmth strategy	6
section 6	◀ Fuel poverty - the effect on vulnerable households	8
section 7	◀ District of Easington profile	9
section 8	◀ Energy efficiency achievements	10
section 9	◀ Feedback	11
section 10	◀ Affordable Warmth Action Plan: Key Aims 1-9	12
Appendix		
1	▶ Fuel Poverty and Climate Change	21
2	▶ Priority Services Register	22
3	▶ Emergency Heating Support	23
4	▶ Fuel Debt	24
5	▶ Prepayment	26
6	▶ Social Tariff Schemes	27

www.easington.com/warmhomes





Foreword

Joint foreword by Alan Napier, Leader of District of Easington Council and William Gillis, Chief Executive of National Energy Action (NEA).

Cold homes, cold-related illnesses, increased winter deaths, housing in poor repair and high healthcare costs are all visible signs of fuel poverty – a problem that affects more than six million people in the UK.

There is a clear commitment by the Government to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010 and National Energy Action (NEA), the national fuel poverty charity, was established to develop and promote energy efficient strategies and services to tackle the heating and insulation problems of low-income households.

Their main aim is to help wipe out fuel poverty across the UK, and they believe that local authorities are the key agents in co-ordinating the work to achieve this aim.

Here in East Durham, improving the quality of life for residents is a key priority for District of Easington Council, and helping the most vulnerable members of the community to afford to heat their homes to a level necessary for good health and comfort is vital if we are to achieve that aim.

The council's Warm Home Campaign plays a vital part in our Fuel Poverty Strategy by co-ordinating and promoting grants for heating and insulation measures, helping people with grant applications, and providing ways to cut fuel bills.

Due to the substantial changes in energy supply market this strategy was updated in 2008, which has allowed us to integrate the issues of fuel poverty within District of Easington Council's Climate Change Strategy.

This strategy also demonstrates how a number of different agencies can work together to solve a problem that no individual organisation could achieve alone, and District of Easington Council has shown by its work to tackle this issue that effective partnership is the key to success.

We would like to acknowledge and thank NEA for their involvement in the development of this strategy, as well as the 2002 edition.

We also applaud all those who have contributed to this document, and wish them success in implementing a strategy that will provide households with the means to heat their homes to the standard necessary for good health and comfort, at a price they can afford.



Cllr Alan Napier
Leader, District
of Easington Council



William Gillis
Chief Executive,
National Energy Action

Organisations supporting this strategy

and their strategies working to reduce fuel poverty

District of Easington Council

- Energy Policy / Fuel Poverty Strategy
- HECA Policy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Housing Business Plan
- Climate Change Strategy

Social Services, Durham County Council

- NHS Plan
- Partnerships in Action
- Intermediate Line Strategy
- National Service Framework
- Local Strategic Partnership

Age Concern, Durham County

- Advice and Information Policy

County Durham Primary Care Trust

Easington Health Promotion Service

- NHS Plan
- NHS Framework Document for Older People Standard 8
- County Durham and Darlington Health Improvement Plan
- Health Improvement Group Action Plan
- Health Improvement Programme
- National Service Framework
- Promotion of Health in Old Age (Section 14)

East Durham Homes



Janet Johnson
Chief Executive,
District of Easington
Council



Lesley Tickell
Head of Adult Care,
Durham County
Council



Harriet Gibbon
Chief Executive,
Age Concern



Claire Sullivan
Consultant in Public
Health, County Durham
Primary Care Trust



Joan Freak
Executive Member,
District of Easington
Council



Introduction

Fuel Poverty Strategy

District of Easington Council’s Fuel Poverty Strategy aims to address the issue of fuel poverty in East Durham.

Fuel poverty occurs when households are unable to afford sufficient heating for health and comfort due to the combined effect of low income, inadequate heating systems, lack of insulation measures and high fuel costs.

Fuel poverty is a complex problem and its solution requires a strategic approach. This document is the result of a number of consultative workshops held with the public and a wide range of organisations and community groups, along with expert assistance from National Energy Action, the national fuel poverty charity, and support from Transco.

The strategy sets out the aims and objectives developed by District of Easington Council and partner organisations to provide affordable warmth for vulnerable residents. The document sets out an Affordable Warmth Action Plan, together with timescales and targets against which progress can be measured. In this way it is intended to tackle fuel poverty by bringing affordable warmth to people living in East Durham.

Affordable Warmth

‘Affordable Warmth’ is the solution to fuel poverty. It enables householders to heat their homes to an adequate level for comfort and health without developing financial debts as a result.

Commitment for Affordable Warmth

As a demonstration to its commitment to Affordable Warmth issues, District of Easington Council’s Executive Committee has given its approval to this Fuel Poverty Strategy.

The authority is working to bring the benefits of Affordable Warmth to those residents suffering from fuel poverty and this will be achieved by working in partnership with a wide range of organisations and groups to find the solutions to help us to achieve our goals.

The work to tackle fuel poverty will also contribute to many of the council’s strategic objectives.

Key priority areas are as follows:

- We aim to:
- ⇒ improve the health of our community
 - ⇒ provide an excellent housing service
 - ⇒ strive to eliminate fuel poverty in all homes in the district
 - ⇒ encourage and assist the provision of affordable warmth in private sector housing by advising, enabling and developing partnership initiatives
 - ⇒ ensure residents have access to clear advice by promoting energy awareness to ensure advice reaches the most vulnerable members of the community

Summary of the action plan

A total of nine key aims underpin the Affordable Warmth Strategy, each with its own set of objectives and tasks. The action plan is set out in full in Section 10 of this document. The overall aim is to work with partner organisations in District of Easington to eradicate fuel poverty.

The key aims of the Affordable Warmth Strategy are:

Key Aim 1

Provide an effective energy advice service that reaches the most vulnerable members of the community.

Key Aim 2

Take advantage of competitive fuel supply market.

Key Aim 3

Identify target priorities for Affordable Warmth.

Key Aim 4

Develop partnerships with public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

Key Aim 5

Ensure integration with other relevant initiatives and policies.

Key Aim 6

Undertake an energy awareness and training programme amongst partner organisations and general public.

Key Aim 7

Improve the energy efficiency of council housing stock.

Key Aim 8

Promote Affordable Warmth programmes in private sector properties.

Key Aim 9

Establish a co-ordinating mechanism to oversee development and delivery.

Requests for energy saving advice and home insulation grant referrals will be generated through a variety of means and will be co-ordinated by the Warm Homes Campaign. Health professionals, council staff and voluntary groups who visit vulnerable homes will be given training to recognise households who can benefit from energy efficiency and advice. A systematic referral network will be established which will be supported by the Warm Homes Campaign.

The central referral point for these initiatives will be District of Easington Council's Warm Homes Campaign. Here, staff will assess the best course of action for each client to determine which of the many sources of funding and help they maybe entitled to.



Developing an affordable warmth action plan

Affordable Warmth is a social, health, economic, and environmental issue. It is relevant to and impacts upon, many organisations.

In order to develop this strategy it has been necessary to take into account the viewpoints and perspectives of the general public.

District of Easington Council carried out a number of consultative workshops to allow information and ideas on fuel poverty to be exchanged. In addition these meetings helped develop a sense of ownership of the strategy amongst key partners, which in turn should ensure its effective delivery by them.

This Fuel Poverty Strategy was updated in 2008 by the Warm Homes Steering Group assisted by National Energy Action, the national fuel poverty charity.

The Warm Homes Campaign Steering Group is comprised from local and regional partner organisations to co-ordinate delivery of the action plan, as shown below:

- Energy Manager - District of Easington Council
- Fuel Poverty Officer - District of Easington Council
- Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Culture - District of Easington Council
- Housing Policy Section - District of Easington Council
- County Durham Primary Care Trust
- Adult Care Services
- Age Concern
- Warm Up Wearside
- Energy Saving Trust
- Eaga Partnership
- NPower
- Community Representatives
- East Durham Homes
- Care and Repair
- Energywatch



Warm Homes Campaign Steering Group.

Fuel poverty - the effect on vulnerable households



Fuel poverty is said to occur when a household is unable to afford sufficient domestic heating for health and comfort, commonly due to the combined effect of low household income, inadequate or expensive forms of heating, and thermally inefficient housing. Those particularly at risk include older people, households with young children and the long term unemployed.

The commonly applied definition of fuel poverty, and that accepted now by Government is when a household needs to spend in excess of 10% of its income in order to achieve a satisfactory heating regime for health and comfort.

The factors that contribute to fuel poverty often reinforce each other. For example, people experiencing fuel poverty are more likely to spend long periods of time at home and may therefore need to use their heating systems more to keep warm.

Such households are also likely to have little money to invest in energy efficiency measures or improved central heating systems. For those who live in privately rented accommodation there is little incentive to make such investments.

Fuel Debt

People in fuel poverty are more likely to get into fuel debt and as a result are required to pay for fuel by prepayment meters. Tariffs for prepayment customers are higher than those who pay by direct debit/credit customers, which further compounds the disadvantaged.

Fuel Poverty and Ill-health

The principal effects of fuel poverty are health related. Cold homes have been shown to exacerbate existing illnesses such as asthma and reduce resistance to respiratory illnesses such as influenza, pneumonia and bronchitis. The risk of heart attack or stroke is also increased by cold conditions in the home. In addition the fuel-poor suffer from loss of opportunity by having to use a larger proportion of their income to keep warm. This can result in a decline in social well-being and overall quality of life.

District of Easington profile

Demography

Population

The population of District of Easington was 93,993 in 2001. (National Statistics Office).

Households: 42,411

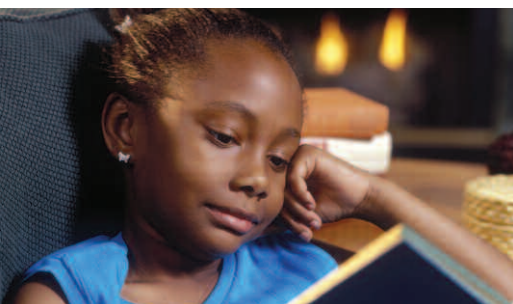
Tenure:	Owner Occupier	31,632	75.4 %
	Local Authority	8,979	21.1 %
	Housing Association	1,791	4.4 %

Age Groups:	0 - 14:	19.3%
	15 - 59:	58.2%
	60 plus:	22.4%

Social Indicators

Income and Benefit Levels:

People in receipt of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit:	12,477
People in receipt of Housing Benefit only:	10,326
Council tenants receiving Housing Benefit and Council Tax:	7,933
Incapacity Benefit:	17.9% of population





Energy efficiency achievements

In order to promote community involvement in the uptake of energy efficiency grants District of Easington Council introduced the Warm Homes Campaign in 1997, a scheme which is unique to Easington.

The objective of the Warm Homes Campaign is to co-ordinate all known assistance to vulnerable households, especially the fuel-poor, to allow them to claim the range of grants available to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

This campaign seeks to maximise the uptake of home insulation grants to achieve warmer homes and lower fuel bills. The Warm Homes Campaign has a wide range of promotion and supporting activities, including a network of 250 local community venues, mobile energy displays, joint working with partner organisations and most importantly a help line to assist and advise people to make the process of claiming home insulation grants as easy as possible.

District of Easington Council has made considerable progress in terms of promoting the uptake of grants in public and private sector housing. Its Warm Homes Campaign has its own unique referral mechanism and council-funded insulation schemes to maximise assistance. This method of joint community involvement has enabled District of Easington to be in the top 10 nationally for the uptake of home insulation grants, with the benefits being seen by the fuel-poor households in our district.

Since the start of the Warm Homes Campaign in 1997 District of Easington Council has achieved the following:

- Established a whole stock Energy Database for 42,000 domestic properties
- Surveyed all council and private properties to give accurate SAP records. All energy conservation schemes are recorded allowing for accurate targeting of fuel poverty schemes.
- Free insulation schemes for all over 60s homeowners. Since 2005, over 3,500 homes have been insulated free of charge.
- Regular training events for all staff from social services and County Durham Primary Care Trust.
- 200 Energy Champions trained from the general public
- Warm Homes on Prescription scheme launched with funding from County Durham PCT.
- Warm Front funding - £6 million brought in to district insulating over 13,000 homes
- Award winning Warm Homes Campaign - 250 local venues district-wide promoting fuel poverty schemes.
- 7,000 council properties insulated
- Warm Homes campaign helpline and promotional literature.

Feedback and comments

The lead officer for District of Easington Fuel Poverty Strategy is Cliff Duff, Energy Manager.

If you have any comments regarding this document, would like to be involved in the Affordable Warmth Action Plan, or the Warm Homes Campaign Steering Group.

Please contact:
Cliff Duff
District of Easington Council
Council Offices
Seaside Lane
Easington
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 3TN

telephone: (0191) 527 0501 extension 4762
e-mail: cliff.duff@easington.gov.uk



Warm Homes Campaign National Award 2007 from National Energy Action. L-R: Ann Marie Gibson - NEA, John Cummings MP, Coun Joan Freak and Cliff Duff - Energy Manager.



Affordable warmth action plan

All of the key aims and key objectives in this action plan are as a result of extensive consultations with the public, and local and regional organisations. This ensures that the affordable warmth action plan is tailored to meet the needs of everyone living in District of Easington.

Key Aim 1

To provide an effective energy advice service that reaches the most vulnerable members of the community and to encourage the take up of grants and benefits.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
<p>a Establish a local network of partner organisations to communicate the energy advice and assistance which is available to combat fuel poverty.</p>	<p>Map key information points throughout the district (Doctors' surgeries, libraries, Job Centres, Age Concern etc).</p>	<p>District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion)</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
	<p>Distribute Warm Homes Campaign literature information, leaflets, posters etc and distribute to community venues and residents.</p>		
	<p>Extend the current promotional strategy to target groups of people who are not currently benefiting from energy grants and make information and energy advice available to them.</p>		
<p>b Continue to ensure energy efficiency advice and information is accessible to target groups.</p>	<p>Make information available to visually impaired, hard of hearing, etc. Send out information with all relevant external mail.</p>	<p>District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion), DCC (Social Services), Age Concern</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
	<p>Mapping exercise to determine relevant organisations/groups.</p>		
<p>c Extend the existing Warm Homes Campaign as the main referral mechanism in the District of Easington and encourage partners to participate with the campaign.</p>	<p>Identify and train key groups to participate in the referral network. Extend and develop the referral system and promotion literature.</p>	<p>District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion), DCC (Social Services), Age Concern</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
	<p>Extend the Warm Homes Campaign contacts database.</p>		

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
<p>O Continually explore all opportunities for promotion of home insulation grants and dissemination of the Warmth message.</p>	<p>Prepare a strategy to maximise the take-up of grants/ incentives to the community.</p>	<p>District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion), DCC (Social Services), Energy Saving Trust</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>E Carry out training sessions with partner organisations to enable workers to identify fuel poverty in the community and provide appropriate assistance/ referrals.</p>	<p>Carry out training/briefing sessions. Carry out regular information updates as required.</p>	<p>Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion), Age Concern</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>
<p>f Ensure District of Easington Council's Benefits Staff are adequately trained to identify energy and fuel poverty issues to make appropriate referrals.</p>	<p>Undertake training/briefing sessions on grant schemes and how to use referral mechanism.</p>	<p>District of Easington Council</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>g Ensure that all agencies that visit clients in their homes can offer basic advice on energy grants available.</p>	<p>Map all relevant agencies Carry out training sessions. Monitor feedback and carry out periodic refresher update.</p>	<p>District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion), DCC (Social Services)</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>h Explore potential for establishing a 'one stop shop' to integrate all benefits and grant advice.</p>	<p>Investigate current benefits advice mechanism and alternative mechanisms.</p>	<p>Energy Saving Trust, District of Easington Council Housing Department and Benefits Section</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>i Develop promotional cartoon strip to reach vulnerable residents.</p>	<p>Engage illustrator to develop cartoon strip.</p>	<p>Affordable Warmth Steering Group, Eaga, Warm up Wearside</p>	<p>May 2008</p>

Key Aim 2

Take advantage of the competitive fuel supply market.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
<p>a Ensure that households can access unbiased information on tariffs in order to make an informed choice of fuel supplier.</p>	<p>Liaise with consumer bodies to progress this objective.</p> <p>Evaluate results and determine promotional possibilities.</p>	<p>Energy Saving Trust, Energywatch, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, Fuel Suppliers, Age Concern</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>b Encourage the development of more flexible fuel tariffs and payment methods for all customers (including those in fuel debt) and encourage fuel suppliers to improve services to customers.</p>	<p>Liaise with fuel utilities to explore potential for preferential tariffs for those in fuel debt.</p> <p>Encourage fuel suppliers to find ways of allowing people without bank accounts to access lower tariffs.</p>	<p>Energywatch, Fuel Suppliers, County Durham HECA Partnership, National Energy Action</p>	<p>12 months from re-launch</p>
<p>c Utilise available funding from fuel suppliers for the benefit of fuel poor households.</p>	<p>Work with fuel suppliers to develop appropriate provision under the CERT for fuel poor households.</p> <p>Promote CERT schemes to the public.</p> <p>Assist people in fuel debt.</p>	<p>Fuel suppliers, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, County Durham HECA Partnership, Energy Saving Trust.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>



Key Aim 3

To identify target priorities for the Affordable Warmth Strategy.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
a Identify numbers and types of properties in fuel poverty.	Use SAP information in the Energy Database intergrated with Benefits data. G.I.S. system	Housing Stock Condition Survey, Economic Development, Housing Strategy, Care and Repair, Social Services, National Energy Action	update annually
b Identify those occupants who are either in fuel poverty or are likely to become so.	Establish a mechanism to identify fuel-poor households based on income, employment, benefits, age, personal circumstances. Housing Stock Condition Survey.	District of Easington Benefits Section, Fuel Utilities, National Energy Action	update annually



Warm Homes Campaign receives National NEA award from John Cummings MP

Key Aim 4

To develop partnerships with public, private and voluntary organisations to reduce fuel poverty.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
<p>a Annual review of relevant organisations and agencies.</p> <p>Produce a Warm Homes Campaign newsletter for all partners</p>	<p>Undertake a mapping exercise to identify all relevant organisations throughout the district.</p>	<p>Affordable Warmth Steering Group, County Durham HECA Partnership, Age Concern, CDPCT (Health Promotion), CA Bureau, Voluntary Sector Groups</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>
<p>b Promote the link between health and housing and raise the priority of fuel poverty within the health and social care sector.</p>	<p>Commence joint working initiatives with County Durham Primary Care Trust and Health Promotion Service. This work should include raising awareness about fuel poverty with health professionals and developing an affordable warmth referral system.</p> <p>Integrate the Warm Homes Campaign into health promotion activities.</p>	<p>CDPCT (Health Promotion), DCC (Social Services), Health Improvement Group</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>
<p>c Promote Affordable Warmth issues with Social Services Departments.</p>	<p>Regularly update Social Services contacts. Identify areas for joint working on Affordable Warmth issues.</p> <p>Organise training/briefing sessions for staff.</p>	<p>HECA Officer, DCC (Social Services), CDPCT (Health Promotion)</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>d Promote partnership working with partner agencies schemes to secure maximum benefit for residents.</p>	<p>Draw together information on grants currently available and promote these to the public and partners.</p>	<p>County Durham HECA Partnership, Fuel Utilities, CERT, EST, Eaga Partnership</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>e Promote Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme to all partners.</p>	<p>Organise training / briefing sessions</p>	<p>CDPCT, DCC (Social Services)</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>f Promote Over 60s Free Home Insulation Scheme</p>	<p>Organise training / briefing sessions</p>	<p>CDPCT, DCC (Social Services)</p>	<p>ongoing</p>

Key Aim 5

Ensure the Affordable Warmth Strategy is integrated into all relevant policies, initiatives and funding opportunities of District of Easington Council and partner organisations.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
a Integrate the strategy into District of Easington corporate activities and initiatives.	Promote Affordable Warmth Strategy to local councillors and senior management.	Affordable Warmth Steering Group, CDPCT (Health Promotion), Age Concern, DCC (Social Services)	Immediate and ongoing
b Integrated fuel poverty into District of Easington Council's Climate Change Strategy	Explore all possible affinities	Affordable Warmth Steering Group, Sustainability Steering Group	Immediate and ongoing
c Investigate all opportunities to link the strategy with relevant policies and initiatives of partner organisations (eg NHS Plan, National Service Framework).	Ensure that the re-launched strategy is endorsed by partner agencies and identify lead officers within those agencies for joint working.	HECA Partnership, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, County Durham	Immediate and ongoing
d Ensure Affordable Warmth is built into regeneration strategies.	Ensure that the key aims of the strategy are addressed within regeneration projects such as SRB, Neighbourhood Renewal and Community Plan.	Corporate Policy, Economic Development, Housing Policy, County Durham HECA Partnership, Environmental Health	Ongoing
e Develop strategies to increase funding resources for tackling fuel poverty in public and private sector properties.	Explore all potential funding sources eg Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, private sector funding and carbon emission reduction target.	DoE (Economic Development), County Durham HECA Partnership, Care and Repair, Housing Associations	Ongoing
f Integrate Affordable Warmth into all relevant public sector housing improvement schemes.	Map decent homes schemes. Integrate into all ongoing schemes.	Housing Policy, County Durham HECA Partnership	Ongoing
g North East Fuel Poverty Declaration	Organise partners to sign declaration alongside District of Easington Council	District of Easington Council, East Durham Homes, EST, DCC (Social Services), CDPCT (Health Promotion)	6 months from re-launch

Key Aim 6

Undertake an energy awareness and training programme amongst District of Easington Council staff, general public and partner organisations within East Durham.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
a Extend the Warm Homes Campaign to keep partners up to date with fuel poverty issues and energy developments.	Set up a campaign newsletter for partner organisations. Use newsletters, poster, leaflets, local press, Infopoint, etc.	Warm Homes Campaign, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, Health Promotion Service, Social Services, Age Concern	quarterly newsletter
b Continue the energy awareness raising/training programme for key internal staff and elected members to promote an understanding of energy awareness and fuel poverty issues.	Hold an awareness raising seminar for local members and managers. Identify relevant front line staff and other key internal staff and carry out training/briefing sessions. Keep a register of trained staff and provide regular information updates.	Affordable Warmth Steering Group, DCC (Social Services, Age Concern, CDPCT (Health Promotion)	6 months from re-launch
c Continue the development of an Energy Training Programme and carry out energy efficiency briefing sessions with partner organisations.	Identify relevant staff and determine training needs. Keep a register of trained staff and provide regular information updates.	CDPCT (Health Promotion), DCC Social Services, Affordable Warmth Steering Group	Ongoing
d Improve council tenants' awareness of fuel poverty issues and grants, etc.	Use Infopoint and Insight newsletters to provide information. Training sessions for Tenant Forum. Provide information to estate /community venues.	Warm Homes Campaign, District of Easington front line staff, East Durham Homes	Immediate
e Promote Energy Performance certificates to council tenants	Undertake a pilot scheme with NEA to intergrate all energy conservation schemes with roll out of E.P.C's.	NEA, EDH Warm Homes Campaign	May 2008

Key Aim 7

To improve the energy efficiency of council stock so that it is capable of delivering Affordable Warmth.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
a Set Affordable Warmth targets for council dwellings.	Extend the energy database to profile housing stock.	Warm Homes Campaign	6 months from re-launch
	Review SAP targets necessary to provide affordable warmth.		
	Set SAP targets/ time scales for achievement.		
b Use capital budget funds to improve Affordable Warmth in council owned stock.	Identify how existing council services can contribute towards Affordable Warmth in the public sector.	District of Easington Council	Immediate
	Develop a matrix to prioritise spending on worst first basis.		
c Target insulation rolling programme in council dwellings and integrate into capital schemes.	Identify properties eligible for Energy measures and target with installers.	District of Easington Warm Homes	Immediate
	Integrate energy measures into East Durham Homes' schemes.	East Durham Homes	Ongoing
	Monitor take-up of Energy measures.		
d Investigate a renewable energy pilot scheme	Identify how renewable energy technologies can reduce heating costs	District of Easington Council, NEA, EST, LSP Housing Group	6 months from re-launch

Key Aim 8

To promote Affordable Warmth programmes in private sector and housing association properties.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
a Establish energy profile of private-sector stock.	Carry out energy audit of private stock.		Immediate
b Maximise funding for improving condition of private sector housing and its energy efficiency. Promote and extend Easington's Free Over 60s insulation Scheme Promote and extend Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme	Map funding/grants available to private sector housing. Promote uptake of Warm Front grants and other utility funded schemes. Seek to secure funding for energy efficiency grants and work with partner organisations.	Housing Policy, Economic Regeneration, County Durham HECA Partnership, Fuel Utilities	Immediate
c Target energy grants at the private sector.	Strategy required to promote all grants at the private sector. Monitor uptake of grants. Target areas for grant assistance using benefits lists.	EAGA, Benefits Section, District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign	Immediate
d Promote Affordable Warmth to registered social landlords.	Carry out training sessions with RSL's to promote grants. Map contact details of RSL's. Seek to encourage Affordable Warmth considerations as part of RSL capital investment. Establish closer links with RSL's.	District of Easington Warm Homes Campaign, EAGA	6 months from re-launch
e Set up a private landlords forum to educate and inform PL's of benefits of energy efficiency.	Set up database of private landlords. Write to all landlords inviting them to get involved in forum. Involve Environmental Health staff in grant information.	Environmental Health Dept, Benefits Section	Ongoing
f Undertake an RSL pilot scheme to build new housing to build new housing to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.	Undertake feasibility study with LSP Housing Group.	RSL, LSP Housing Group	July 2008

Key Aim 9

To establish a co-ordinating mechanism to oversee the continuing development and delivery of the affordable warmth strategy.

objectives	key tasks	partners	targets
<p>a Establish an Affordable Warmth Steering Group to oversee progress of the strategy.</p>	<p>Establish terms of reference for the Affordable Warmth Affordable Warmth Steering Group.</p> <p>Secure appropriate representation from partner organisations on the Affordable Warmth Steering Group.</p> <p>Set up monthly Affordable Warmth Steering Group meetings and newsletter.</p>	<p>Social Services, Primary Care Trust, Health Promotion Service, Age Concern,</p> <p>Economic Development, Warm Up Wearside, Durham County Council, Housing Policy</p>	ongoing
<p>b Develop evaluation and monitoring system for the strategy.</p>	<p>Develop methods to measure the success of the strategy.</p> <p>Annual review of the strategy to feed into annual HECA Report to DEFRA and to partner organisations.</p>	Affordable Warmth Steering Group	ongoing
<p>c Ensure that there are adequate resources to enable delivery of the key aims of the Affordable Warmth Strategy.</p>	<p>Identify funding opportunities and match these to funding needs.</p> <p>Prepare and submit funding applications as identified.</p>	Affordable Warmth, Affordable Warmth Steering Group, Economic Development	ongoing
<p>d Compliance with new National Indicator 187</p>	<p>Prepare an action plan to ensure compliance.</p>	EST, NEA	June 2008

Appendix 1

Fuel Poverty and Climate Change



District of Easington Council's Climate Change Strategy was launched in 2008 by Phil Woolas MP Minister for the Environment and Climate Change. The re-launched Fuel Poverty Strategy will work alongside the Climate Change Strategy to maximise the benefits to local residents.

The main link between fuel poverty and climate change is in the most effective way to address both issues, that is, increasing energy efficiency. Someone living in fuel poverty may be in that situation because their property has inadequate insulation and, therefore, their home does not retain the heat so the householder faces large fuel bills but still has a cold home. If the energy efficiency standard of that property were to be improved by installing insulation (cavity wall and/or loft, where possible) then the amount of energy needed to heat the home adequately would reduce, as would the fuel costs, thereby helping to remove that person from fuel poverty.

Similarly, an effective way to address climate change in the domestic sector is to increase energy efficiency standards in homes. Climate change campaigners want people to consider their carbon footprint/carbon dioxide emissions and for householders to consider ways that they can reduce their carbon footprint by saving energy and reducing their carbon dioxide emissions. For example, The Energy Saving Trust has a campaign encouraging people to 'Save Your 20 per cent' and one of the ways they suggest that people can do this is to install insulation in their homes.

So both fuel poverty and climate change concerns can both be addressed by working to improve the energy efficiency standard of homes and by encouraging householders to use energy more efficiently (for example, turning appliances off standby mode). Increasingly, people working on fuel poverty initiatives are also examining the potential role of renewable energy and microgeneration technologies in helping to tackle fuel poverty. These technologies have the potential to provide free (or substantially reduced cost) energy to householders, so it is important to assess their potential contribution to helping to tackle fuel poverty and to addressing climate change. Developments in this emerging area of work are ongoing and provide an exciting opportunity to address two issues of great concern.

Appendix 2

Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a scheme developed to help those who are of pensionable age; have a disability; are chronically sick; are hearing and/or visually impaired.

Services are available to domestic consumers of gas and/or electricity.

Services available from gas and electricity suppliers are:

- Accessing prepayment meters – the supplier may move the meter if it is inaccessible.
- Meter reading – if no-one in the house is able to read the meter the consumer can ask for quarterly meter readings.
- Bill nominee scheme – a copy of the bill can be sent to a nominated person.
- Special help if the gas supply is interrupted – if all adults in the household are eligible for PSR, alternative cooking and heating facilities can be provided.
- Advance notice if the electricity supply has to be interrupted – if the supply is interrupted due to planned work, advance notice will be given if the householder relies on vital medical equipment.
- Services for visually impaired, or hearing impaired consumers – formats suitable for reading bills, meter reading and making complaints or enquiries can be provided.
- Gas safety check – if the consumer owns their own home, receive an income related benefit and all in the household are eligible for PSR or at least one in the household is under five years then the household is entitled to a gas safety check on appliances and gas fittings, (this must not be confused with a gas service).
- Moving meters – the meter may be moved if the consumer is living with a disability and it cannot be accessed.

Appendix 3

Emergency Heating Support

Emergency heating can be supplied by Eaga plc if a householder has applied for and been surveyed for a Warm Front grant. Two electric fan heaters will be provided and will be in the ownership of the householder even when the new system has been installed.

Social services can in exceptional circumstances supply temporary heating to those felt at risk.

Care and Repair who are the Home Improvement Agency may also offer help depending on their priorities, funding and remit.

Appendix 4

Fuel Debt

In October 2008 energywatch will be phased out and other agencies will need to take up the mantle of the consumer. If a consumer is in debt they must contact their supplier to advise them of the situation and must never think that the supplier will help them without them making the first move.

If they cannot get any help from the supplier or feel that they cannot resolve the situation themselves there are agencies that may help.

Citizens Advice Bureau – 0845 450 0351

Advice UK – 0207 407 4070

National Debtline – 0808 808 4000

Consumer Credit – 0800 138 1111

There are different reasons why a consumer may be in debt, it may not necessarily be their fault. A few tips:

- A bill can be wrong because it is based on wrong estimated readings. Check the reading given on the bill against the actual meter. If it is greatly different, contact the supplier and give them the actual reading so they can send an adjusted bill.
- Price increases not being applied accurately can cause inaccurate bills. Make sure to take a reading on the day prices increase and, if there is a token prepayment meter, get the company to come out and update the meter as soon as possible.
- The consumer can end up being billed for energy used by the previous occupant if they move into a new home, don't read the meter, and do not advise the fuel company.
- The consumer can be billed for energy used by the people who move in after them, if they move out of the old home without reading the meter and telling the supplier on the date they move out.
- The meter can be misread (by the meter reader or the householder). Occasionally readings from the standard rate and cheap rate dials of a two-rate electricity meter are mixed up.
- The wrong meter can be read. For example, where all the meters for a block of housing are in the same basement.
- The supplier's records about the meter can be incorrect. Perhaps they may not have recorded that the meter had been exchanged so that new readings won't follow on from the old ones. Sometimes people are sent bills to pay even though they have a pre-payment ('pay as you go') meter; metric gas meters can be billed as imperial.
- The supplier's records can be wrong about whether there is an Economy 7 or other non-standard tariff.

- There could be an address mix-up. This is most common where houses have been recently divided into flats, and new properties where the original builder's plot numbers don't match the eventual street numbers.
- The wrong contract terms could be used through administrative errors - perhaps, for example, discounts are omitted.
- The consumer could be on record as being on a commercial contract (charged VAT at 17.5% instead of 5%). Sometimes this happens if they move into a new home that was previously a business.
- Inaccurate meters are, very occasionally, responsible for incorrect bills. The vast majority of suspect meters return from testing with accurate figures and, those that don't, are often below five per cent away from perfect accuracy, leading to far less of a reduction than expected. All avenues should be explored before testing a meter.
- Several trust funds have been established to offer financial help in managing debt problems. Some of these are run by energy suppliers. The supplier should be able to advise of these and if the consumer is eligible. Information must be shared with the supplier. If they are of pensionable age, disabled, visually or hearing impaired or chronically sick they are eligible for certain free services and protection under the Priority Services Register (PSR). Companies have to offer this service and it can be useful if the consumer is in debt. If a consumer on the PSR is under threat from disconnection, the company should offer additional assistance.
- There is also a ban on disconnecting elderly consumers between October and March. If they are having difficulty in keeping the home warm and dry let the supplier know. Suppliers should be able to refer to their energy efficiency grants or to others for help in improving the home. They should also advise of others, such as Citizens Advice or local authority money advisors, able to assist people in managing money and accessing the full range benefits to which they may be entitled. Such agencies are also listed in the local phone book and should be contacted for help

Appendix 5

Prepayment

Prepayment allows a consumer of gas/and or electricity to pay for their fuel as they use it by a special pre payment meter.

Meters take tokens, cards or keys depending on the area and fuel utility. Fuel companies are phasing out token meters as they require manual recalibration and are therefore more expensive to service, especially with ever changing fuel prices. Cards and keys are recalibrated every time the consumer tops up at the charging outlet (Post Offices and PayPoint).

The meter will collect any standing charge or debt even if no fuel has been used therefore the consumer must ensure that there is sufficient credit even if they are on holiday.

There is Emergency Credit built into the meter usually a nominal amount of approximately £2 which will allow the consumer to top up when possible.

Fuel utilities charge various rates – some charge a higher rate than the consumer paying by direct debit or quarterly billing, some charge the same as a quarterly billing consumer and some are now charging the rate of a direct debit consumer. Some may even offer a dual fuel discount. Some tariffs are, however, dependent on the consumer already being supplied by the fuel company and being on certain benefits.

Prepayment tariffs change with price changes and therefore it is advisable investigating all utilities to discover the best deal available at any specific time as anyone can switch supplier at any time, although it should be noted that if the debt is over £100 a supplier may block the switch.

There can still be a £195 to £304 difference between prepayment and on-line deals.

One of the major concerns of many energy professionals is not only are many consumers being over charged for their fuel, there is also a chance of the consumer self disconnecting due to lack of funds or the need to re-direct funds to a different area.

Appendix 6

Social Tariff Schemes

It is difficult to make comparisons between different schemes as they all use different criteria, help different groups of vulnerable consumers and offer different support.

There appear to be four main methods of assessing whether a consumer qualifies for a social tariff:

- Means testing – although this does not always hit the disadvantaged as many people do not apply for means tested benefits because they may feel they are too intrusive or too complicated.
- Specific groups – for example older consumers.
- Fuel poor – as defined by paying ten per cent or more of income on heating a home, however, it has been found that many consumers that fall within this group do not put themselves forward to be assessed.
- A mixture of two or more of the above.

Not all companies offer a social tariff as social tariffs are voluntary and not mandatory.

There are four main ways companies offer the tariffs:

- Set discount off eligible consumers tariff
- A tariff which is equivalent to a suppliers' direct debit tariff
- A tariff which is equivalent to a suppliers best tariff, e.g. on line tariff
- A fixed bill tariff for one year e.g. Staywarm

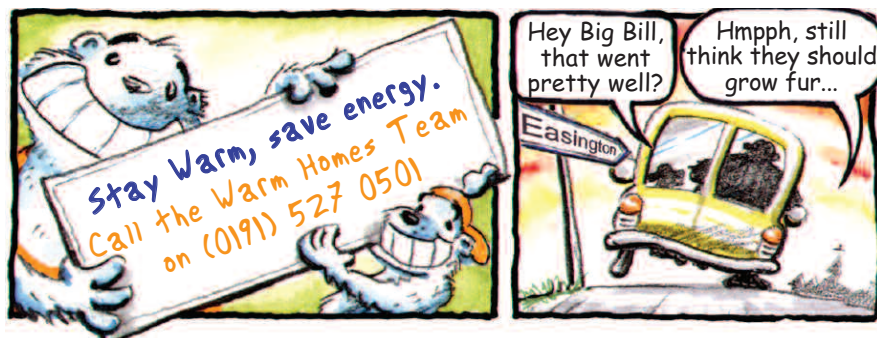
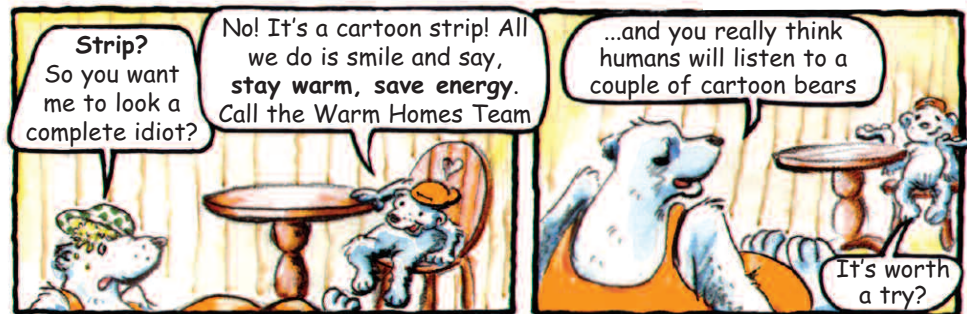
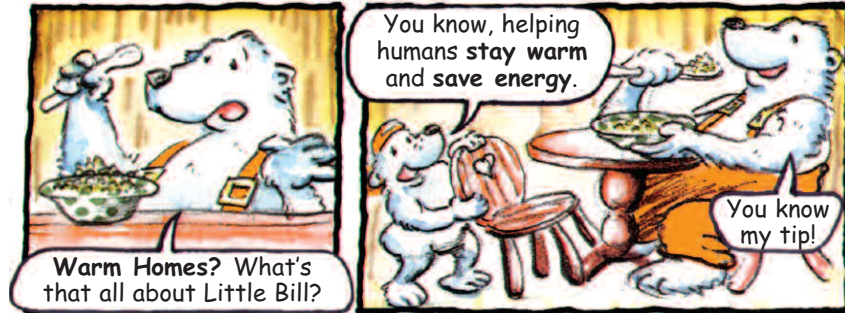
Along with social tariffs some companies give a winter rebate to qualifying customers, although the scale of rebate varies depending on the company.

Social tariffs will not be automatically offered. It is also worth noting that depending on the fuel utility social tariffs do not always give the best deal to consumers.



Meet...
Big Bill
 and
Little Bill

Two new characters are here to help promote the Warm Homes Campaign. Big Bill and Little Bill are cartoon polar bears who will offer help and advice as part of their adventures. The Warm Homes Campaign has now been running for ten years and it is hoped that the new characters will help take the message to a new audience in a fun and innovative way. Keep your eyes peeled for them in local publications.



Working in partnership



Campaigning for Warm Homes



County Durham Primary Care Trust
Darlington Primary Care Trust



www.easington.com/warmhomes



District of **easington.**

District of Easington Council
Council Offices
Seaside Lane
Easington
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 3TN

t: 0191 527 0501
f: 0191 527 0286
e: energysmart@easington.gov.uk