

Warm + Well

Warmer Homes, Healthier People

Visit our website, www.changeworks.org.uk

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2008

SPECIAL FUEL BILLS EDITION

Fuel Price Rises Leave Residents Out in the Cold

Rising energy prices have resulted in soaring levels of fuel poverty in Edinburgh according to new research by Changeworks.

The latest calculations show that 63,000 households in Edinburgh could be at risk of falling into fuel poverty, double 2006 figures, leaving nearly 1 in 3 households unable to afford to heat their homes adequately*. These figures are expected to rise in the coming months as the credit crunch continues to impact on the economy and job security.

With this in mind and especially with the cold setting in, it's more important than ever for people on low incomes to get a better deal on their gas and electricity bills. Many might be eligible for a cheaper social tariff, a rebate or a discount from their supplier, which could save them up to 20% on their gas and electricity costs.

Most suppliers offer cheaper deals to their most vulnerable customers, but the qualifying conditions and the benefits on offer vary.

All suppliers also operate a 'priority service register', which entitles those who are older, have a chronic illness or a disability, or have a hearing or visual impairment to FREE extra services. These include FREE annual gas safety checks, regular meter readings, and a password scheme.

Call your supplier to find out if you are eligible for a social tariff or free services – or refer someone you think needs help to Warm and Well.

* For more detailed information about this research see our website's news section.

Warm and Well helps people in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian, whose housing may be affecting their health by making their homes as warm and energy efficient as possible.

As a result of price rises and the increasing number of fuel poor households, Warm and Well has experienced a surge in referrals and the service in Edinburgh is at capacity. Changeworks is working hard to source additional funding to provide support for vulnerable householders that currently have nowhere to turn for assistance.



Case Study

Ms K lives with her two teenage children and had fallen into arrears with her prepayment meter. She went without heating for weeks, because she simply couldn't afford to reconnect her supply.

Warm and Well liaised directly with Ms K's supplier and she was accepted on their social tariff because of her low income and chronic health problems. She now pays 20% less for her fuel than before and her debt is now recovered at a more affordable rate. Ms K also now benefits from her supplier's free priority services.

Warm and Well opens up

Anyone living in Edinburgh, East Lothian or Midlothian with a health problem that could make them vulnerable to cold or damp housing can now contact Warm and Well directly, instead of asking a health or social work professional to refer them.

Of course, we continue to accept referrals from health and social work professionals as before!



The Central Heating Programme

The Central Heating Programme is a Scottish Government grant available to home owners and private tenants who do not have an adequate heating system. The eligibility criteria of the programme has been revised, and it is currently available to people over 60 if they meet **one** of these criteria:

- 1 They don't have a central heating system
- 2 Their central heating system has broken down and they or their partner is 75 years or over
- 3 Their central heating system has broken down and they or their partner receives Pension Credit (guaranteed element)
- 4 Their central heating system is partial or inefficient and they or their partner is 80 years or over
- 5 Their central heating system is partial or inefficient and they or their partner receives Pension Credit (guaranteed element)

Warm and Well liaises directly with Scottish Gas, which runs the scheme, to help eligible people apply. Contact us straight away if you feel that you or anyone under your care could benefit from this scheme.

The Central Heating Programme aims to help fuel poor households and we anticipate seeing further help made available in the spring of 2009 in the form of the Energy Assistance Package. Look out for the next edition of the Warm and Well newsletter for more information.



Contact us

If you, or anyone under your care could benefit from our service, contact us:

Online: log onto www.changeworks.org.uk and follow the links for health professionals to our referral form.

Email: waw@changeworks.org.uk

Phone: **0800 512 012 FREE** (Energy Saving Scotland advice centre) from a landline and ask for Warm and Well

Fax: **0131 555 2768** and mark
FAO Warm and Well

Post: **Warm and Well,
Changeworks,
36 Newhaven Road,
Edinburgh EH6 5PY**

