

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

10 SEPTEMBER 2018

ENERGY & HOME SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide an update on the Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme and outline other funding opportunities being explored by Newark & Sherwood District Council's Energy and Home Support Team to continuously improve the service offer for vulnerable fuel poor households in the private sector.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Newark & Sherwood District Council-led Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription (WHOP) project aims to help low income residents with cold-sensitive long term health conditions to achieve affordable warmth through a range of free home energy improvement measures such as replacing broken boilers and installing insulation. (WHOP measures are financed by the Better Care Fund.) Newark & Sherwood District Council hosts the Programme Manager and the Project Board is chaired by the Business Manager – Housing & Safeguarding.

2.2 Last year, the Nottinghamshire WHOP project administered 234 referrals and committed £398,000 of funding across the County, almost a third of this was invested for the direct benefit of 35 households living in Newark & Sherwood District. A case study is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.3 This year, despite the prolonged hot weather which has had a significant impact on the number of WHOP enquiries, Newark & Sherwood District Council has already spent and committed almost a third of its 2018/19 Better Care Fund WHOP budget. Since April, 19 fuel poor households suffering with long-term health conditions made worse by living in a cold home have received a range of major home energy improvement measures, including replacing an antiquated and dangerous coal fired partial heating system with modern, efficient gas central heating.

2.4 In addition, this year the Energy & Home Support Team has assisted 11 park home residents to access Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grants via a small-scale pilot which will fully fund the replacement of old Liquid Propane Gas (LPG) boilers and part-fund external wall insulation.

2.5 Under the Government's new ECO 3 scheme (which will operate from autumn 2018 until March 2022) up to £640 million per annum will be available nationally to support low income and vulnerable households in a bid to help meet the Government's fuel poverty commitments. Local Authorities will have an expanded role, through Local Authority Flexible Eligibility, encouraging the use of their expertise to identify the most vulnerable households, particularly in rural and non-gas areas. Local plans are being developed now and will be included within the Council's Home Energy Conservation Act report which will be presented to this committee in January 2019 for approval.

2.6 There are uncertainties surrounding the Better Care Fund funding post March 2019 and the potential opportunities presented under ECO 3, make it imperative that we develop a range of complimentary work streams to ensure our vulnerable residents can benefit from national funding opportunities.

3.0 Proposed Services

3.1 **Appendix B** provides an outline of the current and proposed services being developed by the Energy & Home Support Team, building on the success and learning gained from the WHOP project. Proposals are being developed in partnership and include:

- The Emergency Central Heating Offer (ECHO) will provide free emergency assistance to vulnerable households to repair or replace broken gas central heating boilers. The aim is to restore heating to the property within a maximum of 2 weeks of referral to the scheme. ECHO was successfully piloted last winter and will be funded by energy companies as part of the Warm Homes Fund Industry Initiative for the next three scheme years of the Warm Home Discount Scheme (up to 2021).
- An ambitious scheme in conjunction with Cadent (formerly National Grid), energy companies and their agents to assess the viability of bringing mains gas connections to a private sector housing estate in Rainworth, enabling the installation of first time gas central heating to replace the current electric storage heaters which are proving very expensive to run and often leave residents with little or no heat in the late evenings.

3.4 It is difficult to predict at this early stage the level of funding these proposals will leverage into the district.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 The current and proposed schemes outlined in this report target vulnerable residents with long-term health conditions and those living in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. A positive Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for WHOP and will be carried out for each scheme proposed in order to consider the relevant protected characteristics.

5.0 Financial Services Business Manager Comments – FIN18-19/4209

5.1 Newark & Sherwood District Council's BCF WHOP budget for 2018/19 totals £173,852.14. This includes a carry forward of underspend from 2017/18, Landlord contributions and this year's WHOP allocation from the BCF. The proposed services outlined in this report will be delivered within existing budgets.

6.0 Comments of Director

6.1 Karen to insert

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the progress being made with the Warm Homes on Prescription scheme and the range of funding opportunities being explored by Newark & Sherwood District Council's Energy and Home Support Team be noted.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Leanne Monger on Ext 5545 or Helen Richmond on Ext 5418

Karen White
Director – Safety

Case Study – Mrs B

Mrs B has COPD and Atrial Fibrillation and as a result of these health conditions she spends a minimum of 15 hours per day on an oxygen machine; being dependant on oxygen makes Mrs B virtually housebound. Mrs B has limited savings and receives the State Pension, a small private pension and is in receipt of Pension Credit; being on a low income makes it impossible for Mrs B to adequately heat her home in cold weather and, as a result of Mrs B's long-term health conditions, she feels the cold.

At the time of the home visit, Mrs B's heating was not working which led to Newark & Sherwood District Council's Energy & Home Support Advisor making an immediate referral to Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) to request they deliver and set-up 2 oil-filled electric radiators as a temporary heating measure. Whilst NFRS were delivering the heaters they undertook a Home Safety Check which resulted in the installation of new smoke detectors.

Through the WHOP project a full central heating system was installed. The team also arranged the 1st year annual service to give Mrs B peace of mind that she would have no unexpected maintenance bills during the 2 year warranty period. As Mrs B lives alone, advice was given regarding falls prevention and a Lifeline was installed just in case she falls and needs assistance. A grab rail was also fitted outside the back door to give her safer access to her garden.

Mrs B was also referred to DWP for a benefits check; they visited and have significantly increased her income via the Assisted Living Allowance which has enabled carers to visit twice per week to help her to live more independently.

As a result of the WHOP Mrs B says she is looking forward to being warmer and more comfortable in her home during the winter and is very grateful to the programme for all the support she has received.

APPENDIX B**Energy & Home Support – Current and Proposed Products and Services (September 2018)**

Current Services	Timeframe	Target Audience	Funder
Warm Homes on Prescription	Up to 31/03/2019 then £ TBC	Fuel poor households with cold-sensitive long-term health conditions living in private sector housing (rented or owner-occupied) in need of improvements to insulation, heating or double glazing	Better Care Fund
ECO2t funding for replacement boilers, including oil.	Up to 30/09/2018 (on-going arrangements TBC)	Owner occupiers/private renters in receipt of any of the following passport benefits: Pension Guarantee Credit/Income-based JSA/Income Support/Income-related ESA. If on Working Tax Credit/Child Tax Credit/ Universal Credit, also need to satisfy income criteria based on household size. In all cases, if not broken, boiler must be at least 6 years old	Energy Company Obligation
Replacement boiler/external wall insulation for Park Homes	Up to 30/09/2018 then TBC.	Owner occupiers whose permanent residence is a park home at either Riverdale (Gunthorpe) or Forest House Farm (Ollerton).	Npower
Handy Person Adaptation Scheme	On-going	Residents over 60 or with a disability requiring small jobs/minor adaptations to help retain their independence/ensure they remain living safely at home.	BCF/NCC
New Services in development	Timeframe	Target Audience	Funder
Emergency Central Heating Offer	September 2018 onward	Free gas boiler repair/ replacements within 2 weeks of referral for vulnerable households without heating due to a gas boiler breakdown. (Eligibility criteria tbc.)	Energy Suppliers via Warm Homes Fund initiative
Solid Wall Insulation offer	October 2018 onwards	Low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households – details TBC.	TBC
First time gas connection/central heating scheme	Winter 2018 +	Housing estates/multiple properties in urban areas currently off-gas grid and predominantly owner occupied by households either in, or at risk of, fuel poverty + heating with traditional (low responsiveness) electric storage heaters/direct-acting electric heating.	TBC