Welcome….
…to the Affordable Warmth newsletter, which is produced at the end of each Quarter to keep you all up to date on the progress of the Affordable Warmth Strategy.

Please let me have any good news stories from your agencies for future editions. Also if you would like your name removing from my distribution list just let me know!

The first year of Warm Homes has been a great success with a number of key outcomes being achieved including:

- 1074 people brought out of fuel poverty (against target of 1000)
- Over £1.2 million of ECO grant funding brought in through the scheme
- 364 boilers installed, 80 external wall insulation, 19 cavities & lofts installed
- Average saving per household helped is £792
- £45,700 extra benefits secured through CAB benefits checks
- £30,446 worth of trust fund grants secured for homes who are not on benefits with poor heating systems

The scheme was initially funded by Oldham Council, NHS Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group and Oldham Housing Investment Partnership (OHIP) to reduce the number of people in the borough living in cold homes and to reduce fuel poverty. Due to the success in year 1 the Partners have agreed to continue funding the scheme for a further year – Keepmoat will continue to be our delivery partner for the scheme.

Warm Homes Oldham is also not just carrying out property improvements. In partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau residents can access help if they need to:

- Get off a prepayment meter
- Get out of fuel debt
- Check you are claiming the correct benefits
- Help switching energy tariffs
- Apply for other grants to get boiler replacements if you are not on the correct benefits for ECO
Most recently Warm Homes Oldham have just completed external wall insulation to 33 homes in Failsworth, the houses – which were concrete ‘system built’ properties were extremely expensive to heat and most of the residents were suffering from the consequences of living in fuel poverty.

Another resident who is feeling the benefits of the scheme is 70 year old Jean Jones, of Chestnut Street, who suffers from crippling congenital lymphoedema in her legs which has left her unable to step outside her front door after she was hospitalised following a fall in 2009.

But now doctors hope that Jean will have increased mobility thanks to her new central heating system, which was installed free of charge through the scheme.

Following the new heating system install Jean said: “The house is definitely much warmer and the nurses that come to change my bandages say that my legs are much better and are hopeful that I should be able to leave the house in the future. I refurbished the house when I moved in 24 years ago, but I didn’t have enough money left over for the central heating so made do with electric heaters in the front room and kitchen.”

“I only started to notice the cold when my lymphoedema worsened, I can’t move around as much as I once could so I get colder quicker. When I found out about Warm Homes Oldham I thought it was too good to be true, but it really does what it says on the tin – you get improvements for free and it really does make a difference.”

Dr Ian Wilkinson, Chief Clinical Officer at Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “Living in cold, damp conditions can have a detrimental effect on a person’s health, and it is especially harmful for those suffering with a long term condition.”

We still need partner organisations to promote the new scheme to their staff and residents or make referrals. Anyone can refer residents they know for help, this can be via:

- Telephone 0800 019 1084
- Fax 0800 238 8103
- Email: warmhomesoldham@keepmoat.com
- Online: www.warmhomesoldham.org

All the leaflets and promotional materials are available online here for you to share and use: Online document download

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**Fuel Debt – Free Training Opportunity**

We have managed to secure some free training from the NEA on ‘Fuel Debt Advice in the Community’, funded through DECC the normal course costs are £3,680 per course.

This course is an ideal introduction for advice workers involved with clients who are in fuel debt or for the more experienced advisor as an update. It covers the main issues, raises awareness and aims to give participants a clearer understanding of the pathways involved in resolving fuel debt.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

*The 1 day course includes the following topics:*

- What is fuel poverty and fuel debt
- Causes of fuel debt
Responsibilities (customer, fuel supplier, landlord)
Payment options
Switching suppliers
Things that go wrong and how to rectify them:
  - Billing errors
  - Meter problems
Contacting the supplier
The complaints procedure
Grants and assistance:
  - Priority Service Register
  - Warm Home Discount Scheme
  - Grants and Trusts

**ASSESSMENT (OPTIONAL)** - In order to gain a Level 2 City & Guilds qualification an option assessment is now available. This consists of an open book exam which will take a maximum of three hours to complete. Candidates are encouraged to use their course hand-outs to help complete the exam.

The course will run in Oldham on the 26th of June, at Oldham Civic Centre. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis, please let Helen Taylor know if you would like a space on the course by the 15th of June. Email: helen.taylor@oldham.gov.uk or call 0161 770 3670.

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**Green Deal Update**

Greater Manchester Energy Advice have procured Keepmoat, Wates Living Space and Willmott Dixon as the three providers who will carry out energy improvements to homes over the next five years under the AGMA Green Deal Framework.

The scheme will see residents offered assessments to find out what work could be done to make their homes warmer and their fuel bills cheaper. Measures could include insulation, heating, draught-proofing and renewable energy systems such as solar electricity.

Homeowners can opt to pay for the work through loans from the government’s Green Deal initiative, which sees the costs of energy measures repaid through the subsequent savings made on fuel bills. Or if residents have alternate ways of financing the improvements they can use these instead!

Mr Toast has officially been dropped as the AGMA campaign and a new campaign for the Green Deal scheme is in development. We are pleased to introduce…’Little Bill’ who will be fronting the campaign going forward.

Nationally the Government have announced its new Green Deal Home Improvement Fund (HIF) which simplifies the national cashback offer and forms the basis of GM’s Green Deal offer. Due to Launch in June households interested in retrofitting their homes will be able to claim cashback up to £7100 towards the costs of works.
The new Home Improvement Fund is broken down into:

- **£6,000** towards the cost of External Wall Insulation (capped at 75% of cost of works)
- **Up to £1000** towards the costs of installing two eligible measures (e.g. boiler, double glazing, insulation)
- **Up to £100** cashback towards a Green Deal Assessment if one eligible measure is installed
- New Homeowners who have purchased a property within 12 months and install measures through Green Deal will also be eligible for a further **£500** cashback.

Do you want up to £12,000 to be a demonstration house for Oldham?

AGMA have recently secured £6.1million of funding from Department of Energy and Climate Change ‘Green Deal Communities Funding’. This funding will be used to incentivise Green Deal take up within designated areas. Details of the scheme are just being developed however one aspect of the funding is to retrofit 3 demonstration homes to achieve significant carbon reductions.

If you live in one of the following areas and are interested in being part of the competition to find demonstration homes then please call 0800 009 3363:
- Saddleworth (North and South Wards)
- Failsworth (East and West Wards
- North Shaw and Crompton

Further details of the competition and what the funding can pay for will be circulated in June.

Keepmoat will continue to deliver the Warm Homes Oldham service in Oldham and the Green Deal option will also be available through them from August 2014.

Anyone who wants more information about the scheme can call the Greater Manchester Energy Advice Service on 0800 009 3363.

Free Green Deal Assessor Training

Green Energy Training, based in Manchester, have been successful in securing a limited pot of funding from the European Social Fund ‘Skills for the Workforce’ programme for places of work in Greater Manchester. The standard cost for a Green Deal Advisor and Energy efficiency course is in excess of £2800.00 and the DEA/GDA Up-skill for £1500.

Find out more details about this limited offer by contacting Green Energy Training on: T: 0800 955 5056 | Direct Line: 0161 266 2178 | E: mark.chauhan@greenenergytraining.co.uk

First Choice Funding Boost for St Marys

First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) and partners have launched a £10 million ECO scheme in central Oldham, with a further £11 million of investment in properties and the environment.

The B Green project is a partnership between FCHO, Oldham Council, British Gas, Forrest and Savills. The work will see 1,400 homes in central Oldham (St Mary’s, Barker Street, Coldhurst, Burnley Street and Egerton Street) benefit from the installation of biomass district heating from a new energy centre, with 600 homes also being fitted with external wall insulation.
The scheme has attracted over £10m of ECO funding due to the carbon emissions saved by switching to efficient biomass boilers and external wall insulation improvements. The other £11 million is from FCHO to fund further improvements like kitchens and bathrooms.

The insulation improvements will make the buildings more thermally efficient, meaning that residents can enjoy warmer homes. The installation of the efficient bio-mass heating will provide customers with a much higher degree of control over their individual heating needs and reduce carbon emissions.

Cath Green, Chief Executive at First Choice Homes, said: “This project is about giving customers more control over their individual heating, and helping to make customers’ fuel pound go further, thereby helping to reduce fuel poverty across the borough. The project will also create apprenticeship opportunities and so will benefit the wider local community”.

Campaigning for Warm Homes
The next North West NEA Fuel Poverty forum is on the 23\textsuperscript{rd} June, in Bolton. The forums are great for a wide range of professionals working in the field. If you would like to attend, please go to Fuel Poverty Forum Booking Form and complete your details.

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*Hair colour subject to change!