

## Home Energy Check-up Information Sheet

Issue Number 14	Subject / Source Fuel Poverty	Date Major revision 08.2020
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1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A household is in Fuel Poverty (lacking affordable warmth) if they are having to spend 10% or more of available income on heating, lighting, cooking and hot water</li> <li>• (Hill's report [May 2012] definition : a fuel poor household is one with a low income and high fuel bills.)</li> <li>• Approximately 1 – 4 households are in Fuel Poverty</li> </ul>
2	<p>It is important that all issues dealing with Fuel Poverty are dealt with sensitively. People do not wish to be labelled as such and are often proud, independent or vulnerable and avoid claiming benefits. We have discussed the assistance that vulnerable and elderly people need and we now have indemnity insurance to ensure that we were covered if errors of advice are made.</p>
3	<p><b><u>Affordable Warmth – Help Check List</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is cheapest energy tariff being used?</li> <li>• If on a Key / Card meter is electricity supplier making a surcharge for having a key meter? Some suppliers do not do this.</li> <li>• If on Economy 7 are time clock settings correct?</li> <li>• Is the house adequately insulated? In some circumstances there is funding to insulate homes for free.</li> <li>• Would energy saving advice be appropriate – offering 'no cost energy' efficiency advice for householder action?</li> <li>• Are heating systems understood and working correctly?</li> <li>• Is the home drafty? No cost or low cost draft proofing can make a positive difference. N.B. It is not advisable to block up air supplies for open fires – there could be risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Finances</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If of working age and on low income, could working tax credit be claimed?</li> <li>• If unemployed, has a benefits check been completed to see if appropriate, further finance assistance is available? Assistance is available from local Citizens Advice Bureau or local authority benefits service.</li> <li>• If of pensionable age, are Winter Fuel Allowance / Cold Weather Payments being received? Warmer Homes Discount Scheme is offered by some energy companies for those on certain qualifying benefits. This has to be applied for annually.</li> <li>• If claiming any form of state benefit has a benefits check been completed?</li> <li>• If in real hardship has an application been made to the energy company's Support Fund?</li> <li>• Some water companies offer support to those suffering exceptional hardship – this can include medical conditions.</li> <li>• If using oil for heating is there a local fuel buying syndicate which might reduce costs?</li> <li>• If there is difficulty raising money for an oil delivery, some credit unions have a special scheme to help here?</li> <li>• If in fuel debt have all effort been made to get repayments down to a manageable amount? Advice can be sought from Citizens Advice Bureau.</li> <li>• Is there a Local Authority support scheme for those lacking Affordable Warmth?</li> <li>• Are there local charities which could be approached to provide one off financial support?</li> <li>• Do members of the household understand why it is difficult for them to achieve Affordable Warmth</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Emergency Support</b> If the householders heating has broken down note there is emergency heating</p>

	available via "Keep Shropshire Warm" which is administered by The Marches Energy Agency. Tel: 0800 112 3743
5	<b>Priority Service Register</b> It was worth getting people who qualified onto the Energy Companies priority service register. Meters were read quarterly, large print, reduced risk of disconnection etc. Bills can also be sent to third party e.g. a relative of the vulnerable elderly.
6	<b>Legal Obligations of Landlords</b> A Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) should be provided with rented accommodation but this is not always provided. Standard of privately rented properties is generally worse than that of social housing.
	N.B. Organisations such as Age Concern, Help the Aged, Citizens Advice Bureau and Shropshire Rural Community Council Fuel Poverty Support volunteers could be sources of advice. We must always get clients permission to contact outside agencies.