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Charity No. 1159816

Energy Advice Drop In
The Wellbeing Centre
Church Stretton
Thursday's 10.00 – 12.00



INFORMATION SHEET No. 14 DATE OF ISSUE November 2020

Fuel Poverty

1	<p>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 (definition from Hills report¹, March 2012: a fuel poor household is one with a low income and high fuel bills).</p> <p>Approximately 1 – 4 households are in Fuel Poverty</p>
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.</p>
3	<p><u>Affordable Warmth – Help Check List</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Is cheapest energy tariff being used?· If on a Key / Card meter is electricity supplier making a surcharge for having a key meter? Some suppliers do not do this.· If on Economy 7 are time clock settings correct?· Is the house adequately insulated? For those on benefits there may be help with insulation.· Would energy saving advice be appropriate – offering ‘no cost energy’ efficiency advice for householder action?· Are heating systems understood and working correctly?· Is the home draughty? No cost or low cost draft proofing can make a positive difference. NB It is not advisable to block up air supplies for open fires – there could be risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. <p><u>Finances</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· If of working age and on low income, could working tax credit be claimed?· 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.· 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. During an energy crisis, has Government support been received?· If claiming any form of state benefit has a benefits check been completed?· If in real hardship has an application been made to the energy company’s Support Fund?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Some water companies offer support to those suffering exceptional hardship – this can include medical conditions. · If using oil for heating is there a local fuel buying syndicate which might reduce costs? · If there is difficulty raising money for an oil delivery, some credit unions have a special scheme to help here? · 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. · Is there a Local Authority support scheme for those lacking Affordable Warmth? · Are there local charities which could be approached to provide one off financial support? · Do members of the household understand why it is difficult for them to achieve Affordable Warmth?
4	<p>Emergency Support If the householders heating has broken down note there is emergency heating support via “Keep Shropshire Warm” which is administered by The Marches Energy Agency Tel: 0800 112 3743</p>
5	<p>Priority Service Register It was worth getting people who qualified onto the Energy Companies priority service register. Meters are read quarterly, large print bills available, reduced risk of disconnection etc. Bills can also be sent to third party e.g. a relative of the vulnerable elderly.</p>
6	<p>Legal Obligations of Landlords An 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. Since 1 April 2020, landlords can no longer let or continue to let properties covered by the MEES Regulations if they have an EPC rating below E, unless they have a valid exemption in place.</p>
	<p>NB Organisations such as Age Concern, Help the Aged, Citizens Advice Bureau and Shropshire Community Resource could be sources of advice. Always get clients permission to contact outside agencies.</p>

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-of-the-fuel-poverty-review>

Caution - Please Read this:

Our Advice Note has been carefully prepared and is, as far as we know, accurate at the date of publication. However, things change very fast in the world of technology and in government schemes. Sometimes parts of Advice Notes become outdated and may not offer best advice very soon after publication. We do our best to keep them up to date with the limited resources we have. Furthermore, our advice may not be appropriate for your particular circumstances. We advise that you get advice from a relevant expert before making changes. We may be able to offer further advice or make suggestions on who to contact if you get in touch with us. We are not technical experts but have many years of offering common sense advice and we recommend you should not rely on our Advice Note alone for making decisions. The national advice centre Energy Savings Trust is a good source of information.

See <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>