



Oldham
Council

Affordable Warmth Newsletter

Quarter 1 – 2015/16

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!

Warm
homes
Oldham



WARM HOMES OLDHAM UPDATE

It may be warm outside now, but Oldham Council is reminding residents to get their homes ready for when the cold weather arrives again.

Stanley Warren, from Chadderton, got in touch after seeing details of the scheme on the Council's website. The pensioner, who lives with his wife Joyce and lodger Colin Griffiths, was struggling to heat his home because of its very old electric heating system.

By tea time the heat had run out of the system meaning the residents were forced to go to bed at 6pm most nights just to keep warm

Following the initial contact a Warm Homes officer visited the property and carried out an assessment.

An application for ECO grant funding was approved and once this was topped up with Warm Homes Oldham money, a new central heating system was installed at the house.



The Warm Homes assessor also identified that the household's income was very low, so referred them on for a benefits check – this resulted in extra financial support coming into the property from a benefit that was going unclaimed. An energy tariff check also resulted in savings of more than £300 a year when they switched.

All three residents have also reported improvements in their health

Stanley said: *“Our house is now nice and warm, and we saved money on our bills as well!”*

The Warm Homes scheme is constantly evolving to ensure we offer the best possible service to Oldham residents who might be struggling to keep warm in their homes. As a reminder the scheme offers the following support:

- Energy efficiency and bill advice
- Accessing grants for heating upgrades and insulation
- Accessing grants for gas supplies
- Helping people clear their fuel debt
- Helping residents off prepayment meters
- Helping residents switch energy providers and access warm homes discounts
- Benefits checks to ensure residents are claiming everything they are entitled to
- Providing emergency heating and emergency funds for prepayment top ups

Any household that receives support through the scheme where there is somebody over the age of 50 will now also get a follow up visit from **Age UK Oldham** who are fully trained to undertake a holistic assessment of the resident's situation and fit small energy measures where possible (e.g. radiator foils, foam draft excluders, door brushes, letter box seals, low energy light bulbs, chimney balloons, remote plug sockets, cold alarms & night lights).

We have also secured around £500,000 funding from the AGMA Green Deal Communities funding pot to complete another solid wall insulation scheme at Crossley estate. Residents on the estate have concrete built houses and their heating bills are much bigger than an average house, so far 71 out of the 77 homeowners have signed up for the scheme and work has started on site.



Crossley Estate houses before solid wall works started

The Holts Estate Solid wall Insulation scheme has now been completed which included FCHO and private households. As well as benefiting from much warmer, healthier homes, the estate looks much brighter and residents are extremely happy with the results.



Holts estate homes after solid wall insulation works complete

We have a target to help a further 1200 people this year out of fuel poverty, so we still really need everyone's help to promote the scheme to Oldham residents or make referrals. As you can see there is a wide range of support available to people in Oldham and anyone can refer residents they know for help, this can be via:

Telephone: 0800 019 1084

Email: warmhomesoldham@keepmoat.com

Online: www.warmhomesoldham.org

If you would like any hard copies of the leaflets and posters please let me know, all the leaflets and promotional materials are available online here for you to share and use: [Online document download](#)

We also we have a video to show some of the cases that have benefitted so far: www.warmhomesoldham.org

Oldham's biannual Home Conservation Act Report has now been published [here](#). It summarises progress that has been made on domestic energy efficiency in Oldham over the past 2 years – it is a statutory document that has to be done on a biannual basis for Government.



External wall insulation being applied to Holts

***NEW* Central Heating Funding for Oldham residents**

Oldham has just won £110,000 from the Department of Energy & Climate Change to provide new central heating systems for around 40-50 households in Oldham.

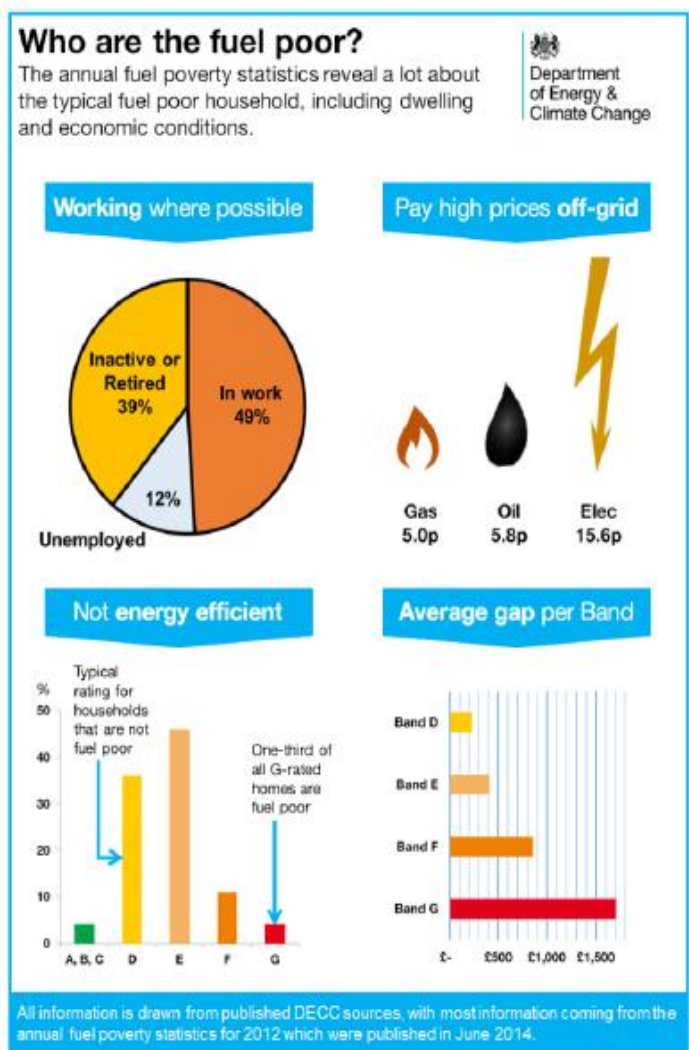
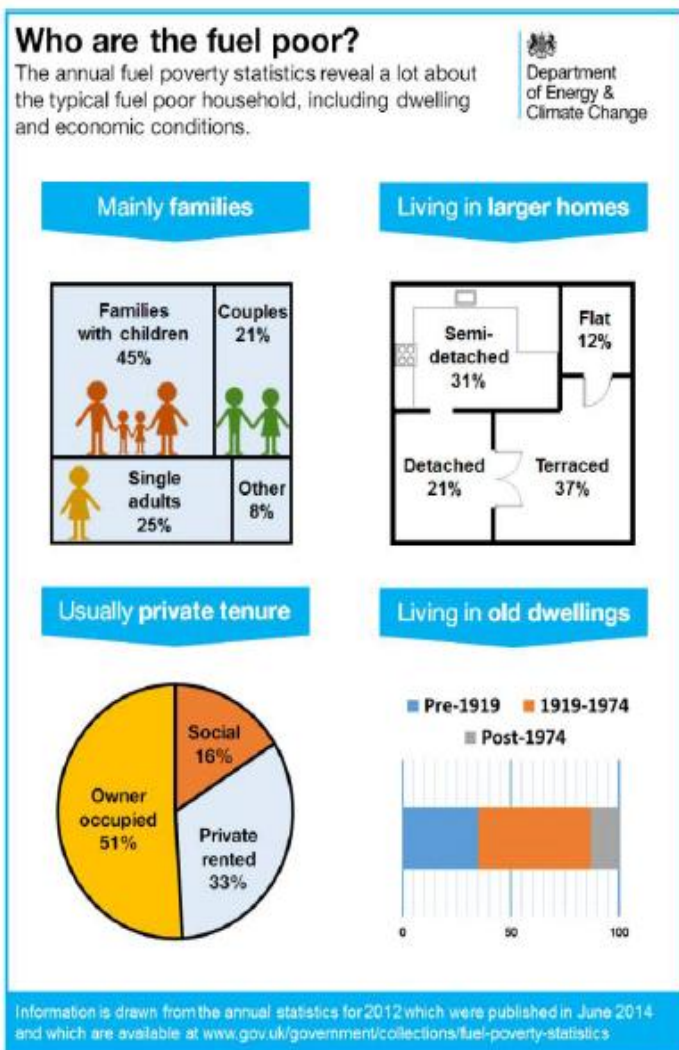
If you know anyone that doesn't currently have gas central heating in their home, please get in touch with Warm Homes Oldham so they can be assessed to see if we can help.

Households don't have to be on benefits to access the funding, but they do have to have a low income.

The funding will be on a first come, first served basis – so if you know anyone refer them now and we will see if we can help!

Who is likely to be living in Fuel Poverty?

Department of Energy and Climate Change have released a diagram to show the key characteristics of households that are at risk of being fuel poor, as you might expect households tend to have lower incomes and higher energy needs than the typical house.



Save Water and Save Money!

Oldham Council recently hosted a Water Poverty Event for front line workers in Oldham to find out what they can do for residents who struggle to pay their water bills. Presentations were given by United Utilities & Auriga on the wide range of initiatives available. More information can be found on their website here: <http://www.unitedutilities.com/difficulty-paying-bill.aspx>

For example:

- *Help to pay scheme* - £250 set bill amount for the year, available to residents on pension credit
- *Water sure* – if resident is on a water meter & requires a lot of water use (e.g. for medical purposes or if they have 3 kids under 19) capped rate at £410 per year
- *Extra care scheme* – similar to utility companies' priority services register, password scheme for the elderly. Scammers pretending to be from 'the water board' is the biggest alias used by scammers
- *Water meters* – are free to install & you have 24 months to change your mind & revert back. If residents live on their own they are likely to save £100-£200

The website also has lots of facts and figures on how to change behaviours to save water (and therefore money if you are on a water meter), for example average amounts of water used for various household activities:

- Bath 75 litres, shower 35 litres, power shower 80 litres!
- Toilet flush 9 litres
- Washing machine 50 litres (washing bowl 10l)
- Dishwasher 30 litres
- Hosepipe/sprinkler – 540 litres per hour!

More facts and tips on how to save can be found on their website, you can even order water-saving freebies for your home: www.unitedutilities.com/watertight

BWarm Agreement - helping communities to help themselves

An ongoing project in the First Choice Homes BGreen (St Marys) area is the development of a very different community agreement. Although agreements have been running for many years, it is the first one to look at the issues around affordable warmth and fuel poverty. The agreement is being shaped with the help of a range of services including FCHO, Oldham Council, Age UK and the Credit Union as well as a group of volunteer residents (OL1 community group).

We all know that support, education and behaviour change are the key to healthy happy communities but achieving it is the hard task. With informed residents working as advocates for services we are hoping to make progress so that the community can do more for themselves and know exactly where to turn when they do need support.

For anyone that wants to get involved or know more about this project, please contact Maxine Moar on 07967 515 106 or email: maxine@moarcommunities.com



Councillor Arooj Shah meeting some of the members of the OL1 Community Group

Oldham leads new Community Energy Apprenticeship

Oldham Council is to lead a consortium of employers to develop a new national apprenticeship standard for young people who want to explore a career in community renewable energy.

The new apprenticeship will help young people to acquire skills around renewable energy technologies, financial modelling, project management and business administration – all of the requirements to gain employment in the growing community renewable energy sector, and all transferable skills within the renewable energy sector generally.

Skills Minister Nick Boles said: *“Businesses must have their say in training tomorrow’s workforce. Giving employers like Oldham Council the power to design apprenticeships means apprentices graduate with the skills they need for the job they want and businesses get the talent they need to grow. Young people on these programmes will have the opportunity to learn sought-after skills and enjoy a great start to a working life.”*

Over 5,000 community groups over the past 5 years have started up their own renewable energy projects, and there are a growing number of employers in the sector who need apprentices with the essential skills to deliver community energy. It is anticipated that over 350 community energy apprenticeships will be completed within the first 3 years of the scheme.



Have you had your FREE NHS Health Check yet?

All Oldham residents are entitled to a free NHS Health Check if they are 40 to 74 years old, not had one in last 5 years and have no known heart problems, stroke, type 2 diabetes or kidney problems. This is a NEW service being offered by Positive Steps across the Borough. The appointment includes a cholesterol, weight and blood pressure check as well as discussing lifestyle and family history. From this we can give a score that estimates risk from developing heart problems in the next 10 years. We can also advise you on what you can do to look after your health and help you start to make changes. We have venues in Oldham Town Centre, Failsworth, Chadderton, Glodwick, Royton and Shaw where you can access this service. We could even come to your home if the venues are not suitable.

Call **0800 288 9008** or email info@positive-steps.org.uk to arrange a 30 minute appointment to get started.

Contact

For further information on any of the information in this newsletter

Please contact:

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*Hair colour subject to change!