

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Cabinet
3rd December 2013

Report of the Director of Public Health**PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENT TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY OF
AFFORDABLE WARMTH INTERVENTIONS TO THE MOST
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS****Health & Communities****1. Purpose of the Report**

The report seeks approval to proceed with public health investment of £188k per year for a two year period to increase the accessibility of affordable warmth interventions to those individuals who are highest risk of experiencing ill health as a result of cold and/or damp housing. This investment is aligned to the requirement under the Public Health Outcomes framework 2013-2016 for local authorities to impact upon fuel poverty and excess winter deaths within their populations.

2. Information and Analysis**Background**

At the meeting of Cabinet on 30th July 2013, approval was given for the deployment of the public health ring fenced grant, including a proposal to provide support to targeted vulnerable people to impact upon the rates of fuel poverty and excess winter deaths in the county.

There is a wealth of evidence on the impact of poorly insulated homes on excess winter deaths. The effect of excess cold and damp in dwellings has been proven, as have the benefits of action to improve housing on improving health. Evidence shows that simple measures to improve housing conditions and increase the ability to pay for energy, provide measurable health improvements

Every year mortality rises by 19% in the winter months in England. This amounts to an average of 27,000 'excess' winter deaths or about 1,560 more people per week dying between December and March compared with the rest of the year. The recent Marmot Review Team report stated: 'Countries which have more energy efficient housing have lower excess winter deaths. This is due to better preparedness for cold weather; well-insulated, well-heated, and energy-efficient homes.

There were an estimated 426 excess winter deaths in Derbyshire in 2011/12 and these arise from an increase in incidence of:

- heart attack /stroke accounting for 35% of the deaths
- respiratory disease, accounting for 30% of the deaths
- influenza
- falls and injuries

There are an estimated 59,295 households living in fuel poverty in Derbyshire which equates to 13.7% of all Derbyshire households. This figure is more variable as it is dependent upon the tariff increases imposed by the energy companies at any one time.

A service to effectively target affordable warmth interventions towards those homes and occupiers who would derive the greatest benefit is needed as Derbyshire County Council must demonstrate how it is meeting the indicators within the Public Health Outcomes Framework 2013-16 to impact upon the level of fuel poverty and rates of excess winter deaths. This work will also support the requirement of the partner District Councils who have a duty to produce a report in accordance with the requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act (2013) The report specifies the measures required to address affordable warmth and energy efficiency issues. Support to householders to access energy provider's offers of free and reduced cost insulation and energy efficiency measures is a fundamental part of this approach.

The current affordable warmth offers to householders are not being effectively targeted to those who would benefit the most, but rely on cold call techniques of energy company providers to invite people to apply. Offers include for example loft and cavity wall insulation, energy efficient replacement boiler systems and individually tailored advice on energy efficiency and fuel poverty. Evidence indicates that this approach does not reach those in the greatest need.

The proposed service will use a range of data sources to identify those people who live in the least energy efficient homes, are on low incomes and have long term conditions associated with excess winter deaths.

They will be contacted by a health professional and with their consent, will be referred through to the District Council who will provide direct support both practical and in certain cases, financial to ensure that barriers to improving the energy efficiency of their homes are reduced and interventions provided. This will include the installation of insulation and new energy efficient boilers where appropriate. Evidence indicates that when a wellbeing message is received from a health professional the most vulnerable are more likely to engage. This focussed strategic approach seeks to ensure that access to existing incentive offers is maximised and very specifically targeted.

Consultations with the 8 District Councils and the Derbyshire Local Authorities Energy Partnership (LAEP) hosted by Derbyshire County Council, shows support for and commitment to joint working to ensure the service is successful and effective. Stringent performance monitoring and evaluation measures will be attached to this service to ensure outcomes are measured.

Proposal for investment

The main aim of the investment is to increase the number of hard to reach /vulnerable households who are supported to access affordable warmth/energy efficiency interventions through a coordinated and targeted approach.

It is considered that the most effective method to achieve this would be through the LAEP whose key objective is to coordinate and secure partnership cooperation and funding for the delivery of energy efficiency measures across the county.

The LAEP will act as the provider body and will engage with the 8 District Councils, the five CCG's and primary care providers across the county to coordinate an approach which ensures that ;

- a. People with a specified long term condition
- b. Properties which are least energy efficient
- c. People on low incomes

are targeted and prioritised to receive support to improve the energy efficiency or address the affordable warmth issues in their home through tailored engagement methods.

The LAEP will also be required, and have agreed to, explore the long term viability of developing a social enterprise which will ensure the sustainability of the intervention and reduce the level of investment needed in the future.

The investment will be used to fund three specific arms of the programme:

1. Resource to conduct the data analysis to identify those at greatest risk and to make contact with and support householders to access existing energy company offers.
2. Resource to support those people who wish to access the existing offers but face barriers to achieving this. Examples include arranging loft clearance prior to insulating or replacing pipework to enable new energy efficient boilers to be installed into their existing systems.
3. Resource to support inward investment into the programme from the energy companies to explore and support the future long term sustainability of the intervention.

The LAEP will oversee the programme and will be responsible to report against specified outcomes on an agreed timescale.

The effectiveness of this intervention would be further enhanced by the extension of the contact with the householder to cover the full remit of the actions prioritised in the DoH cold weather guidance and so will also encompass referrals into other services which impact upon the wider determinants of health eg income maximisation.

The service will cover the Derbyshire county resident population

3. Legal considerations

4. Financial considerations

A budget equal to a two year investment of £188,000 each year was agreed by Cabinet in July 2013. The following amounts will be allocated from the Public Health Ring-fenced Grant for the financial years :-

2013/2014 £ 94,000
2014/2015 £ 188,000
2015/2016 £ 94,000

5. Other considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, legal human resources, equality and diversity, environmental, property and transport considerations.

4. Key Decision

No

5. Call-in

No

6. Background Papers

- British Journal of Cancer (2011) 105, 475-480
- Cold Weather Plan for England - Publications - Inside Government - GOV.UK
- Healthy Lives, Healthy People: update on public health funding, Dept of Health June 2012
- Howden-Chapman et al (2007)
- http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/ENGB/Campaigns/STW/STW_spreadsheet_of_localised_winter_statistics.xls.xlsx
- <http://www.instituteoftheequity.org/projects/the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty/the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty-full-report.pdf>
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216640/dh_130926.pdf
- Marmot Review *The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty*
- Public Health Commissioned Services 2013-15 Cabinet Report July 2013
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-lives-healthy-people-improving-outcomes-and-supporting-transparency>
- Somerville et al (2000)

6. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve the investment of £376,000 over two years from the public health budget to the Local Authority Energy Partnership to impact upon fuel poverty and excess winter deaths within Derbyshire.
2. To approve the use of a service level agreement between the LAEP and the County Council on the basis as set out in this report.
3. To receive a future evaluation report indicating the outcomes achieved from this investment

Elaine Michel
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