

Bury Action for Warmth
An Affordable Warmth Strategy
for Bury
2006 – 2010
Summary of achievements

Working in Partnership with:



Introduction

In order to monitor the progress of the Bury Council Affordable Warmth Strategy, an action plan was developed which enabled key stakeholders and agencies to work towards delivering affordable warmth to the residents of Bury.

The Action Plan also ensured that focus was maintained on five key themes which are conducive to the delivery of affordable warmth. These are outlined below:

1. **Raise awareness, promote communication and provide information on affordable warmth to key agencies / public**
2. **Ensure that housing stock in Bury is capable of delivering Affordable Warmth**
3. **Provide energy efficiency and financial advice to all households**
4. **Improve or sustain the impacts on health, wellbeing and social care**
5. **Establish partnership working and a co-ordinated approach to providing affordable warmth**

The Affordable Warmth Steering Group met bi-monthly to agree actions and report on progress within their designated theme areas, sub-group meetings were undertaken to ensure the development of each theme area.

The Action Plan has been reviewed annually to reflect this development and progress, actions have been closed and new ones created. This document is a summary of the main achievements throughout this strategy which expired in March 2010.

We thank all Steering Group members (past and present), referrers and partners for their commitment over the course of the strategy to date and look forward to continued support and success with the new Affordable Warmth Strategy which is to be launched in April 2011.

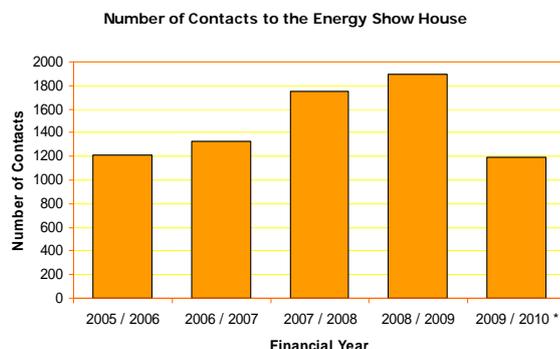
Key Achievements for 2009-2010

The completed key actions are listed below under the five theme areas.

Theme 1: Raise awareness, promote communication and provide information on affordable warmth to key agencies / public

Customer enquiries and visits to the Bury Council Energy Show House have increased annually with the Bury Council Energy Team providing advice on energy efficiency and grant aid assistance for energy measures. The graph to the right highlights this.

40 community events and 29 community meetings have been attended to provide advice on fuel poverty issues and affordable warmth over the course of the strategy.



* No PCT mailout in 2009 / 2010 resulting in a reduction in the number of contacts

71 energy efficiency presentations to primary schools (2361 pupils) were undertaken by the Energy Team in 2006 – 2009.

Environment poster competitions were undertaken in September 2008 and 2009 for primary schools. Calendars were created from the posters and winning pupils were awarded with energy efficient themed prizes such as a wind up MP3 player. The winning schools were awarded funds for renewable energy kits.

Information leaflets are included in correspondence to people receiving or applying for council tax benefit, housing benefit or a disabled parking permit, encouraging the take up of energy grants. 245 contacts have been received as a result.

A joint initiative was undertaken with and funded by eaga Partnership. Letters were sent to 8313 households in receipt of council tax benefit or housing benefit to promote Warm Front grants. 528 Warm Front applications were received during the 2 month period of the mailout, compared to 198 and 195 in the same periods before and after the initiative.

In 2007/08 and 2008/09, Bury PCT funded a mailout to residents aged over 65 who had been invited for a flu vaccination. The letter informed them of the health risks associated with living in cold, damp homes and encouraged them to take up energy grants. Both mailouts combined resulted in 945 contacts to the Energy Show House out of a total 6171.

A bespoke landlord referral form has been developed to refer tenants for energy efficiency measures.

Theme 2: Ensure that housing stock in Bury is capable of delivering Affordable Warmth

‘Switched on to Savings’ an energy improvement scheme in the Pimhole area of Bury in 2006 – 2007, resulted in 172 properties receiving insulation measures. This was jointly funded by the Council and British Gas at a total cost of £62,663.57.

The Housing Association Liaison Group was re-established with the attendance of a Steering Group member.

The Bury Landlord Accreditation Scheme offers property improvement grants in East Bury and Radcliffe, which include energy efficiency measures. In 2009 – 2010 there have been 46 applications received from landlords specifically for energy efficiency measures.

Bury Council’s housing stock have been improved since 2006 using CERT (Carbon Emission Reduction Target) funding. The table below shows how many properties have been improved and the funding contributions from Utility Companies to achieve this.

Utility Company	Cavity Wall Insulation Installations	Loft Insulation Installations	Six Town Housing Contribution	Utility Contribution
Powergen	426	0	-	£91,222
Scottish Power	292	3	£355	£68,198
Eon	194	40	£1,742	£52,973
npower	203	97	£7,207	£90,758
British Gas	855	78	-	£279,047
Total	1970	218	£9,305	£582,199

The Government Warm Front grant is actively promoted through a variety of publicity opportunities and marketing exercises supported and assisted by the Energy Team and the Greater Manchester Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre (GM ESTac).

The annual activity of Warm Front is shown in the table below:

Year	Households assisted	Cost of measures
2003-2004	1020	£695,852
2004-2005	1093	£909,208
2005-2006	885*	£1,131,278
2006-2007	1303	£1,236,306
2007-2008	1453	£1,505,880
2008-2009	1355	£1,904,341
2009-2010	927	£1,895,599

* In 2005, eaga started trading insulation measures with energy companies and concentrated on installing central heating. This resulted in a drop in numbers of households assisted but an increase in cost.

Bury Council have assisted vulnerable householders who have been awarded a Warm Front grant, but are unable to pay the client contribution, if the cost of works is greater than the Warm Front grant available. The table below shows the annual outcomes of this scheme.

Year	Households assisted	Cost of measures
2007 - 2008	177	£83,202
2008 - 2009	171	£85,736
2009 - 2010	50*	£25,160

* In 2009 Warm Front increased their grant maxima from £2700 to £3500 resulting in a reduced number of residents needing to be assisted due to the Warm Front grant funding successfully covering the cost of the works.

Theme 3: Provide energy efficiency and financial advice to all households

In 2005 Bury Council was a founder member of a North Manchester consortium working in close partnership with the former North Manchester Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, now the GM ESTac. This consortium developed a referral mechanism called AWARM which has more recently been adopted and developed by the Greater Manchester Fuel Poverty Initiative (GMFPI) and expanded across Greater Manchester.

'AWARM' is aimed at health professionals, care workers and other 'frontline' staff, who undertake home visits as part of their job role and have access to vulnerable people living in cold, damp unhealthy homes.

Once trained, staff can become an AWARM referrer. This involves the completion and return of a simple freepost referral card or online form. This is assessed and directed to organisations and agencies that can provide help for the householder to improve their living conditions and quality of life.

A referral could result in the householder receiving:

- Free insulation measures such as draught proofing, loft and cavity wall insulation and the installation, repair or replacement of central heating

- Energy advice – help understanding heating controls, energy bills, switching suppliers and receiving other free energy efficiency measures such as, light bulbs, standby savers and electricity monitors
- Benefits entitlement checks and advice
- Fire safety checks – advice given and free smoke detectors installed
- Debt advice

In 2008 an Affordable Warmth Officer was recruited to the Energy Team to monitor and drive forward the Affordable Warmth Strategy, to assist the Energy Officer in providing energy advice and to deliver the 'AWARM' training.

Over the period of this strategy there have been 380 referrers trained and has resulted in 677 AWARM referrals to date.

A presentation was given to Senior Managers from Community Services Bury to introduce AWARM. Agreement was secured to contact Heads of Department to offer AWARM training. This resulted in 23 PCT staff receiving training in 2009 and 47 in total over the period of the strategy.

Citizens Advice Bureau Bury has been successful in a bid to the Legal Services Commission for 100 additional debt cases in 2009 – 2010 and has delivered debt training to approximately 160 people from outside agencies and conducted 7 in-house debt courses.

Theme 4: Improve or sustain the impacts on health, wellbeing and social care

The Council has been able to work with NHS services to distribute affordable warmth information for local health service practitioners and patients. Room temperature guides are also distributed and information is provided at flu clinics. In 2008 – 2009 information was incorporated into existing discharge packs, for patients leaving hospital.

In 2007/08 and 2008/09, NHS Bury funded a mailout to residents aged over 65 who had been invited for a flu vaccination. The letter informed them of the health risks associated with living in cold, damp homes and encouraged them to take up energy grants. This resulted in a significant number of enquiries at the Energy Show House.

Theme 5: Establish Partnership working and a co-ordinated approach to providing affordable warmth

The following partners have worked closely together to achieve the outcomes mentioned in this document:

Bury Council Energy Team based at the councils Energy Show House. This is open to members of the public and the team provide advice and assistance on grants, schemes and special offers, to help private sector housing residents in Bury, finance energy efficiency measures. They also provide advice on understanding energy bills and the Show House displays the different technologies and materials available, to make homes warmer and more energy efficient. The Affordable Warmth Officer who is part of the Energy Team takes the lead on and manages the Affordable Warmth Strategy and Action Plan documents.

Warm Front a government funded scheme managed by eaga which provides grants to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient. The grant provides energy efficiency advice and a package of insulation and heating improvements up to the value of £3500. Homes that require oil central heating may receive a grant up to the value of £6000.

Age Concern Bury an independent, locally run charity that aims to promote independence and a better quality of life for all older people in the borough of Bury. They are members of the national Age Concern federation and work closely with Age UK. They have an Information and Advice centre based in the centre of Bury and offer people a wide range of information on local services and sources of support, welfare benefits and issues such as health, safety and housing.

Greater Manchester Energy Saving Trust advice centre (GM ESTac) part of the national Energy Saving Trust, they help people to save energy and reduce carbon emissions in the domestic sector. They provide a service to all 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities. They have a list of registered insulation and heating installers that are monitored to ensure they provide a quality service. Bury Council Energy Team refer individual residents to this advice centre for insulation and heating measures. GM ESTac also coordinates and manages AWARM.

Citizens Advice Bureau Bury an independently registered charity which helps people to resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice.

NHS Bury (Bury Primary Care Trust / PCT) receive the NHS budget for Bury which they use to plan and deliver health services to meet the needs of local people. They co-ordinate, fund and manage local health services.

Six Town Housing an arms length management organisation that manages public sector housing in Bury. A dedicated energy officer from Six Town Housing attends the steering group.

Great Places Housing Group a housing association, they run the Bury Landlord Accreditation Scheme - working with private landlords to encourage and reward good standards of property management and maintenance.

Bury Council Age of Opportunities promote health and well being to Bury residents aged 50 and above. They welcome anyone who is a resident of Bury who feels that they would benefit from healthy activities, meeting new friends, trying new things, learning new skills or getting some help around the house.

Local Area Partnerships promote engagement and partnership at the local level. There are six Local Area Partnerships across the Borough covering the areas of: Bury West; Bury East; Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor; Radcliffe, Prestwich and Whitefield and Unsworth. Membership of the Local Area Partnerships comprises of:

- Councillors
- Service providers such as the Police, Health and Housing
- Community members

The Local Area Partnerships work together to tackle the problems that affect people in their local areas. A local area partnership (LAP) manager attends the Steering Group to ensure that Affordable Warmth remains on their agenda.

Bury Council Adult Care Services has a Research and Policy Officer who also attends to assist with the strategy document development and progress and encourages linkages with other Council strategy documents.

Affordable Warmth has been integrated with other Partnering Strategies and Action Plans including:

- Bury Council's Housing Strategy
- Housing Strategy for Older People
- Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy
- Local Strategic Partnership Strategy
- Six Town Housing Energy Strategy

The Energy Team liaised with LAP managers and negotiated the inclusion of AWARM targets and objectives into the LAP Action Plans.

Key Challenges

Challenges over the previous strategy included gaining full stakeholder commitment, limited funding availability to support further energy efficiency improvement schemes and establishing approximate levels of fuel poverty and energy efficiency ratings of households in Bury.

Despite these difficulties however, the Affordable Warmth partnership is now in a very strong position, with members from across a wide range of local organisations, moving forward to develop the new Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011 – 2016 in line with the government target to eliminate fuel poverty for all by 2016.

We also now have the capacity to source funding from a wide range of bodies and, although having accurate and recent data to inform the work we do will always remain a challenge, the recent publication of the Bury Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides us with a comprehensive picture of Bury needs which can inform our work.

For further information on the Affordable Warmth Strategy or Action Plan please contact:

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