



CASE STUDY

Financial & Support Instruments for Fuel Poverty in Social Housing (FinSH)

Gwynedd Council 'Here to Help' Insulation Scheme

Project overview

In 2005, Gwynedd Council and British Gas agreed to jointly fund a Public Sector Housing "Here to Help" insulation scheme for the 6000 houses owned by the local authority.

Along with funding for energy efficiency measures such as roof, wall and tank insulation this programme included a benefit assessment to ensure that the householder is receiving the state benefits to which they are entitled.

This project also included further support from 5 UK based charity partners including: Help the Aged, Royal National Institute for the Blind, Scope, National Debt Line and Save the Children.

In the first 4 years since the projects inception over £370, 000 has been spent on 2,200 insulation measures in over 1500 properties. During this period nearly 650 charity referrals have been made to the project partners and over 400 benefit health checks have been carried out.

For the period between 2008-9 another £120, 000 has been jointly committed.

Funding

The British Gas funding of £185, 000 was matched by the Local Authority using their 'General Capital Fund' as the Council decided that they would use their allocation in order to help them meet their objectives under the 'Welsh Quality Housing Standard' for thermal efficiency.

Technology

During to first four years 2, 242 insulation measures have been installed to 1, 566 properties with the following split:

- Loft insulation 150 mm - 444
- Loft insulation 200 mm - 350
- Loft insulation 250 mm- 170
- Cavity Wall Insulation - 1, 167
- Hot Water Tank Jackets - 111

Barriers

The project required matching funds from the council in order for the scheme to be implemented.

Some of the stock was unsuitable for cavity wall insulation due to poor condition of render and their exposure to driving rain. A Protocol had been agreed with the surveyors who must be 100% sure that the property is suitable before proceeding with works.

There was difficulty in getting some tenants to provide access so works could proceed. This was usually resolved by sending them a letter quoting the terms of their tenancy conditions. There was also problems with attics being full of possessions, with some success in getting people to clear them, but problems with others, especially the elderly tenants.

Highlights

Almost 650 charity referrals have been made to the project partners and over 400 benefit health referrals have been carried out. This is a very positive addition to the energy efficiency work.

The average SAP rating of the Council stock has increased dramatically above the national average of 54 to 61.3 with the National Homes Energy Rating (NHER) figure of 6.8 above the national average of 6.

Replication

The 'Here to Help' Funding is available from British Gas under the current CERT programme (2008 - 11) which also ran under the preceding programme called 'Energy Efficiency Commitment. Over £150 million on the programme since its national launch in 2002.

General Capital Funding (Wales) is administered by the Welsh Assembly Government and is assessed on an annual basis with each local authority allocated resources according to housing needs and local strategy. The General Capital Funding budget allocated to Housing in 2007-08 was £86.342 million, so long as the 'Here to Help' and General Capital Fund continues, the Gwynedd Council model is potentially available to all local authorities in Wales.

Further Information

The 'Here to HELP' programme works with five charities who are committed to the vulnerable members of society. They are:

- Help the Aged - the leading national charity working on behalf of older people.
- Royal National Institute for the Blind - the UK's leading charity offering practical support and advice to anyone with sight problems.
- Scope - the national disability charity, focusing on people with cerebral palsy and related disabilities. In Scotland, it is working with Capability Scotland, the leading disability charity in Scotland.
- National Debtline - part of the Money Advice Trust. It provides a free, confidential and independent telephone helpline for people with debt problems in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Save The Children - the leading international children's charity working to make a lasting difference to the lives of vulnerable children

Contact Details

British Gas 'Here to Help'

0845 605 2535

<http://www.britishgas.co.uk/about-british-gas/what's-important-to-us/community/help.html>

General Capital Funding (Wales)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/localgovernment/finandfunding/settlement/?lang=en>

Gwynedd Council :

Adrian Roberts (Housing Performance Management Officer)

01286 679 304

adrianroberts@gwynedd.gov.uk

Intelligent Energy  **Europe**

The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not represent the opinion of the European Communities. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein

Severn Wye Energy Agency
Entrance A,
Royal Welsh Showground,
Builth Wells, Wales
LD2 3NJ

01982 551006
www.swea.co.uk



SevernWye
ENERGY AGENCY