

Health Improvement Partnership Board

This sheet must be completed and attached to the front of all papers to the Health Improvement Partnership Board so that the paper is submitted is one continuous document.

Date of meeting: Thursday 29th May 2014

Title of report: Briefing on Fuel Poverty Outcome and associated Action Plan

Is this paper for:

Discussion

Decision

Information

Purpose of Report:

To inform Health Improvement Board members of the proposed outcome measure for fuel poverty and the associated action plan for 2014/15.

Action Required:

The Board is recommended to adopt the proposed outcome and endorse the proposed actions in the plan for 2014/2015.

Impact on Public:

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Health Improvement Partnership Board, 29th May 2014

Briefing on Fuel Poverty Outcome and associated Action Plan

The Health and Wellbeing strategy 2013-2017 identified the need to make reducing Fuel Poverty a priority. The board set the objective of coming up with an outcome to measure work undertaken, that would contribute to reducing fuel poverty levels across Oxfordshire.

The Affordable Warmth Network (AWN) is co-ordinated by National Energy Foundation (NEF) who in turn are funded by the six Oxfordshire local authorities. The AWN, besides comprising of partners who fund the Network, also includes other organisations who have a part to play in reducing fuel poverty in Oxfordshire, such as Age UK and the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Fuel Poverty Outcome

The AWN were tasked with proposing an outcome and, as such, now propose the following outcome;

To establish a baseline of the number of households in Oxfordshire, who have received significant increases in the energy efficiency of their homes or their ability to afford adequate heating, as a result of the activity of the AWN and their partners.

Significant increases are defined as:

Loft insulation (including top ups, where the insulation level is at least doubled), cavity wall insulation, external / internal solid wall insulation, Installation of a more efficient boiler, installation of a more efficient heating system, upgrading of windows from single glazingⁱ and Increase in the uptake of benefits (at least £1200ⁱⁱ)

The various figures will come from the work of Private Sector Housing teams in local authorities, Home Improvement Agencies, Green Deal installations (such as installed by Oxfordshire-based Green Deal Together), the AWN (including partner installing companies) and the number of successful benefit claim cases that the CAB processesⁱⁱⁱ.

There may be other projects and associated sources of funding (such as Energy Company Obligation (ECO), or Home Improvement Fund (HIF)) that are subsequently identified that could contribute to the outcome. These will be identified and collated by the AWN and will be detailed in any reporting.

In future years it is hoped that more detailed information, such as the targeting of vulnerable groups can be quantified and reported.

It is hoped that through the combined efforts of partners, an aspirational baseline target of 550 households will be helped through the activities of the AWN. This figure is made up in the following way and needs to be confirmed at the next AWN meeting.

| Partner | Measure | Total |
|---|---|-------|
| Environmental Health teams in each of the five local authorities | Number of excess Cold hazards identified and resolved and licence conditions applied and complied with. | 300 |
| Home Improvement Agencies teams in each of the five local authorities | Number properties where grants and loans for energy efficiency work | 20 |
| NEF partner installing companies | Number of properties where energy efficiency measures installed | 20 |
| Green Deal and Green Deal Together | Number of properties where energy efficiency measures installed | 100 |
| Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux | Number of cases where there has been a successful benefit claim | 110 |

Due to the recent significant changes and complexity of the Governments' funding mechanisms of energy efficiency measures, the number of installation measures are likely to be significantly reduced. Under old schemes, 9832 Oxfordshire households had received energy efficiency measures in a year, under the new ECO programme, there have only been 990 energy efficiency measures *recommended*. Anecdotal reports suggest that uptake of these recommendations are very low.

In order to ensure what limited resources are available, are directed towards the most vulnerable households and are used most effectively the AWN have developed an Action plan for 2014/2015.

Action Plan

In Appendix 1 is a plan for 2014/2015 for the partners of the AWN which outlines how the network will direct its' existing resources over the coming year.

Recommendation

The board should adopt the proposed outcome and endorse the proposed actions in the plan for 2014/2015.

Appendix 1: OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY FUEL POVERTY ACTION PLAN 2014 – 2015

| Factor | Objectives | Key Actions | Who/Lead |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Low Income/Vulnerable | 1. Overall target activity to reach those on low income or who are vulnerable – over 60 / families with children aged 5 or under / with a disability that makes them housebound/more vulnerable to cold | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data mapping to target outreach activity • Develop database on JSNA of housing conditions and other Fuel Poverty related intelligence • Strengthen cross-referral mechanism between CAB & AgeUK and AWN • Promote schemes to Health and Social Care and Health Care Providers (GPs, District Nurses, Health Visitors, OTs and care workers) • Develop plans for a Switching Day – possibly linked with Registered Housing Providers (RP's) | National Energy Foundation / District councils, Oxfordshire County Council & NEF |
| | 2. Use benefit assessments to increase income | | CAB lead with AgeUK & NEF |
| | 3. Increase awareness of available schemes | | NEF, Oxfordshire County Council |
| | 4. Supplier switching to reduce energy bills | | NEF with Registered Providers |
| Poor Energy Efficiency | 1. Improve the energy efficiency of properties in owner occupied tenure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities for community focused projects • Explore opportunities for discounted energy-efficiency measures • Use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to facilitate owners to carry out appropriate work • Explore the use of the Building Research Establishments calculator to evidence formal action. • Develop relationships with Housing Associations • Develop area-based projects to maximise uptake of Energy Company Obligation funding, for example to deal with solid walled properties • Signpost to the Affordable Warmth Helpline – work with community action groups to link with action on fuel poverty • Maintain levels of outreach activity and face-to-face assistance. • Increase awareness of energy use through current cost monitors loan • Build links with trading standards on promoting/checking reputable installers • Link up with Age UK Community Information Network and the Consumer Empowerment Partnership | NEF, and Local Authorities |
| | 2. Improve energy efficiency of properties in private rented tenure | | NEF Local Authorities |
| | 3. Improve energy efficiency of properties in social tenure | | NEF with RP's |
| | 4. Hard to Treat Properties | | NEF with targeted local authorities |
| | 5. Promote Energy Saving Advice | | NEF with network partners and Community Action Group Oxfordshire |
| | 6. Reduce impact of schemes on vulnerable people | | NEF, OCC, Age UK and Oxford CAB |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Expensive Fuels | 1. Encourage bulk buying oil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, bulk buying oil scheme in off gas network communities Develop a factsheet, and update information in EasySave booklet. | ORCC, NEF |
| | 2. Electric only heating | | NEF |
| Accessing hard to reach groups | 1. Work with the disabled and long-term sick | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with health and social care professionals - promote advice line and establish referral mechanisms e.g. through GP surgeries, flu campaigns Establish relationships with job centres / job clubs Work with OPAC's (Older Persons Action Groups) Continue to work with children centres Establish links to minority community leaders | Public Health Oxfordshire, NEF, Carers Oxfordshire |
| | 2. Work with the unemployed | | NEF |
| | 3. Work with older people | | NEF |
| | 4. Target single parent families or families with very young children | | NEF |
| | 5. Work with BME groups | | NEF |
| | 6. Develop partnerships with other agencies who work with hard to reach groups | | NEF with CAG Oxfordshire / Low Carbon Hub |
| Confusion among residents | 1. Promote the Affordable Warmth Helpline as referral service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote helpline through partner's websites, newsletters and relevant publications (likely to reach vulnerable residents) Provide affordable warmth talks to community groups | NEF and network partners Carers Oxfordshire |
| | 2. Continue to attend events to educate residents | | NEF |
| | 3. Work closely as partners | | All AWN partners |
| Targeting appropriate areas/groups | 1. Target through GIS mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of GIS mapping to find areas with high levels of fuel poverty and opportunity for targeted area-based approaches Develop a cold weather plan for AWN members | NEF |
| | 2. Use partner databases to target vulnerable groups | | Cherwell DC, Oxford City Council & West Oxfordshire DC |
| | 3. Develop Cold Weather Plan | | All AWN partners |

ⁱ This may translate in to a reduction from a category 1 to category 2 hazard for Excess Cold under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme. Or in other instances the increase of a band on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

ⁱⁱ The value chosen as what the average cost of powering a house is, 44% of which is on heating.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is estimated that each successful benefit check can increase income by an average of £5000.