



Better Housing  
Better Health

# Better Housing Better Health Service

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Oxfordshire Annual Report 2018/19

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The National Energy Foundation is an independent, national charity based in Milton Keynes. The Foundation has been at the forefront of improving the use of energy in buildings since 1988. It aims to give people, organisations and government the knowledge, support and inspiration they need to understand and improve the use of energy in buildings.

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*Abbreviations:* NEF, National Energy Foundation; CDC, Cherwell District Council; OCC, Oxford City Council; SODC, South Oxfordshire District Council; VOWH, Vale of Whitehorse District Council; WODC, West Oxfordshire District Council SBDC, South Bucks District Council; AWN, Affordable Warmth Network; BHBH, Better Housing Better Health; CCG, Clinical Commissioning Group; NHS, National Health Service; LEAP, Local Energy Advice Programme; MEES, Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards; ECHO, Emergency Central Heating Offer; EST, Energy Saving Trust.

# 1 BHBH Service Summary

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## 1.1 Introduction

Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) is a preventative service working to reduce and prevent the number of people in fuel poverty; and so improve health & wellbeing it is coordinated by the National Energy Foundation (NEF) but is built on a network of other health and social care orientated organisations, with a cross-referral mechanism in place to maximise help available to residents. BHBH operates across Oxfordshire and is funded by the County Council, Oxford City Council and all four district councils. There are no eligibility criteria to access this service, although it is targeted towards vulnerable residents.

The following report provides an overview of the service from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 and is produced for the Affordable Warmth Network (AWN) steering group which consists of representatives of participating local authorities and key stakeholders. The steering group meets on a quarterly basis to evaluate the services progress against targets and discuss future activity.

## 1.2 Key Statistics

The BHBH Service can be accredited to leveraging and creating **£335,092** of funding and savings that will directly improve the health and wellbeing of fuel poor households across Oxfordshire.

BHBH in numbers:

- **419** Households directly supported
- **114** Home energy visits completed
- Over **1000** Interventions provided
- **£152k** in lifetime energy savings
- **£105k** of Grant funded installs
- **£54k** in new incomes identified

### 1.3 Service Enquiries

419 new enquiries (i.e. not repeat users) into the BHBH service.

687 outgoing follow up calls made by NEF associated with the new enquiries.

**Table 1. BHBH enquires and follow ups by local authority area**

Local Authority	New Enquires	Follow Ups
CDC	76	127
OCC	129	209
SODC	72	116
VOWH	71	117
WODC	71	118
<b>Totals</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>687</b>

- The service achieved its annual target of 400 new enquiries
- Each enquiry can require different levels of support and often multiple follow up calls are made to ensure a successful outcome for the resident.
- On average each enquiry takes 1.5 hours of NEF time to manage from the starting point of a call or referral to the end point of a successful intervention being implemented.

### 1.4 Service Outcomes

The below represents the resulting outcomes of an intervention offered via the BHBH service.

*Note: Not all outcomes are quantifiable and so these do not feature. Some of the values are based on averages and all information is reliant on accurate reporting from intervention providers.*

**Table 2. Measurable outcomes by Local Authority area.**

BHBH Outcome	Total Interventions	Approx. Value	Lifetime Savings (EST)	kgCO2
Home energy visit completed	114	£24,054		
New income awarded	34	£54,000		
New boiler	32	£96,000	£64,320	310,505
Cavity wall insulation	2	£1,800	£6,500	31,379
Loft insulation	10	£7,000	£8,800	42,482
Small measures	556		£72,618	201,307
<b>Totals</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>£182,854</b>	<b>£152,238</b>	<b>585,673</b>

- The service levered in over £180k in additional funding and income to support vulnerable households across the county.
- By utilising EST's savings calculator (which takes into account product life expectancy and average energy use), energy efficiency measures installed are estimated to provide bill savings of over £150k.
- As well as tackling fuel poverty the service is also helping to reduce climate change with new measures installed representing carbon savings of approximately 585,673kgCO<sub>2</sub>

## 2 Service User Summary

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### 2.1 Key Statistics

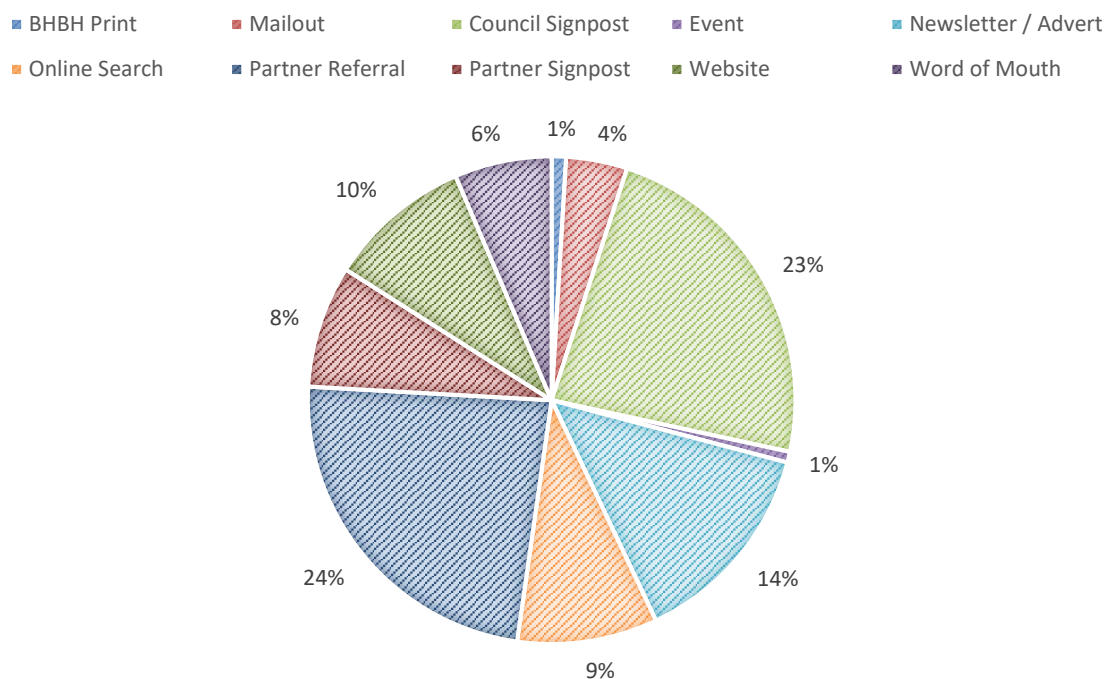
A brief summary of the demographic and property types seeking support via the BHBH service:

- **99** Health and Social Care referrals
- **60%** of enquiries received suffer with a long term health condition
- **25%** of all service users lived in an 'off-gas' property
- Over **100** service users had more than one vulnerability to fuel poverty and cold homes

### 2.2 Source of Enquiry

The service tries to utilise various sources in order to encourage enquiries into the service. The below gives an overview of where the 419 enquiries received during 2018/19 were generated from.

**Figure 1. Source of enquiries into BHBH Service.**

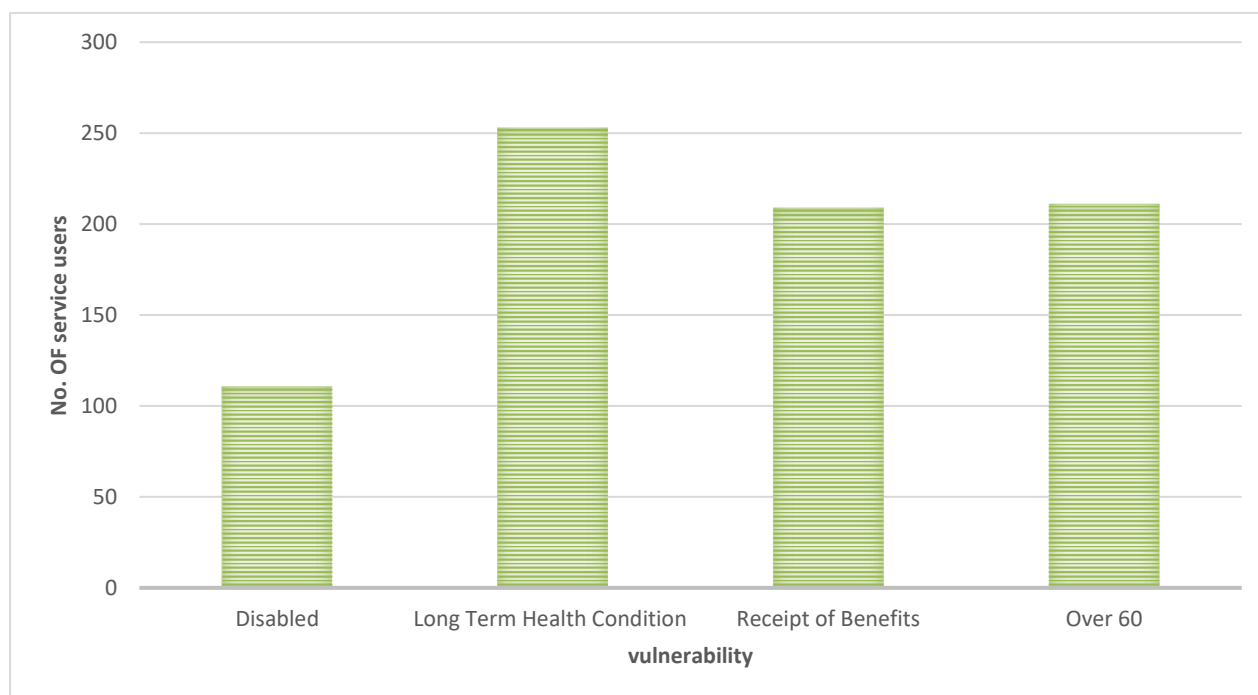


- 99 direct referrals (24%) from partner organisation proved to be the most successful source of enquiry. This is excellent news as the service has put a lot of resources into encouraging frontline health and social care professionals to identify and refer residents at risk of being negatively affected by living in a cold home.
- The council's signposted 98 residents towards the service which is pleasing and shows a growing awareness amongst staff; however in order to minimise drop out we would ideally like to see these residents being directly referred for support. This is a good area we can look to improve upon during 2019-20. Most residents often turn to their council first when seeking help for energy efficiency related advice and it is integral that council staff are well versed in the service.
- We saw a big drop off in residents enquiring as a result of seeing BHBH marketing. The service has not had any new resources and print for a couple of years and this is an area that NEF have planned to develop and improve during the next year.

### 2.3 User Vulnerabilities

Some residents are more susceptible to fuel poverty and cold homes than others and there are certain characteristics and circumstances which can be used as a good indicator to this vulnerability. This information helps the project officer to assess what support the resident may be eligible for and helps the service to know if it is reaching the correct demographic.

Figure 2. Service user's vulnerabilities



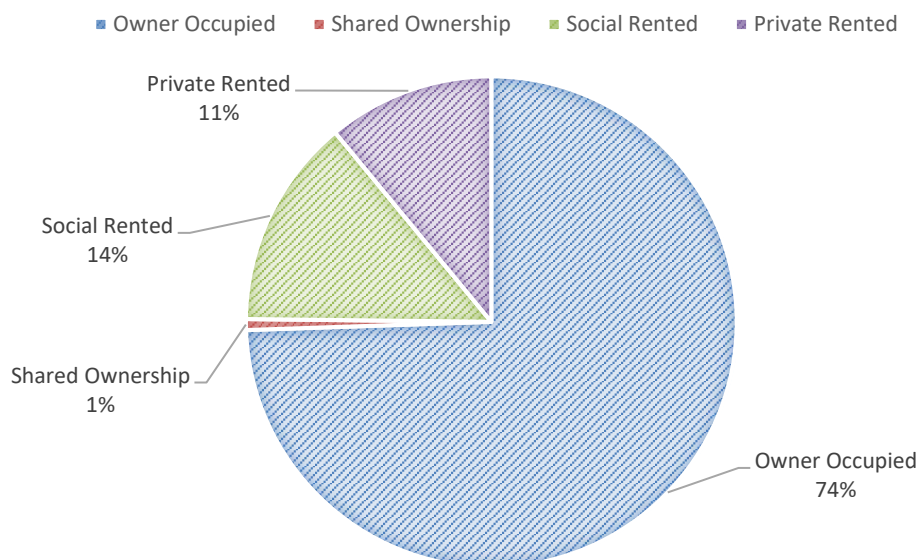
*Note: Some service users may have one or more of the vulnerabilities above.*

- 60% of all enquiries into the BHBH service indicated that they suffer with some form of long term health condition. This highlights the correlation between cold homes and health and vindicates the services decision to target this group.
- Often age and health implications go hand in hand and there would appear to be a relationship between the 'Over 60' and 'long term health condition' categories.
- Many funding avenues and support schemes have eligibility criteria attached; often closely linked with the above demographics. Increasing focus onto these groups by engaging health and social care professionals to help with identification would enable more residents who seek the help of the service to benefit from a quantifiable intervention.

## 2.4 Housing Tenure

Housing tenure is recorded as it can give an indication to the personal circumstances of the resident and ultimately who should be responsible for any associated costs. It can also be used as part of the eligibility criteria for schemes that provide financial assistance.

**Figure 3. Housing tenure of 419 BHBH Service User's**



- The majority of enquiries came from owner occupiers which is fairly typical for the service. Housing stock is becoming older and residents who own their home are struggling with the costs associated with upgrading the energy efficiency and warmth of the property.
- Service Users living in socially rented properties represented 14% of all enquiries. They are often some of the most vulnerable residents in our society however the tenure often rules occupiers out of schemes as responsibility for the up keep of the property is seen to be with the provider

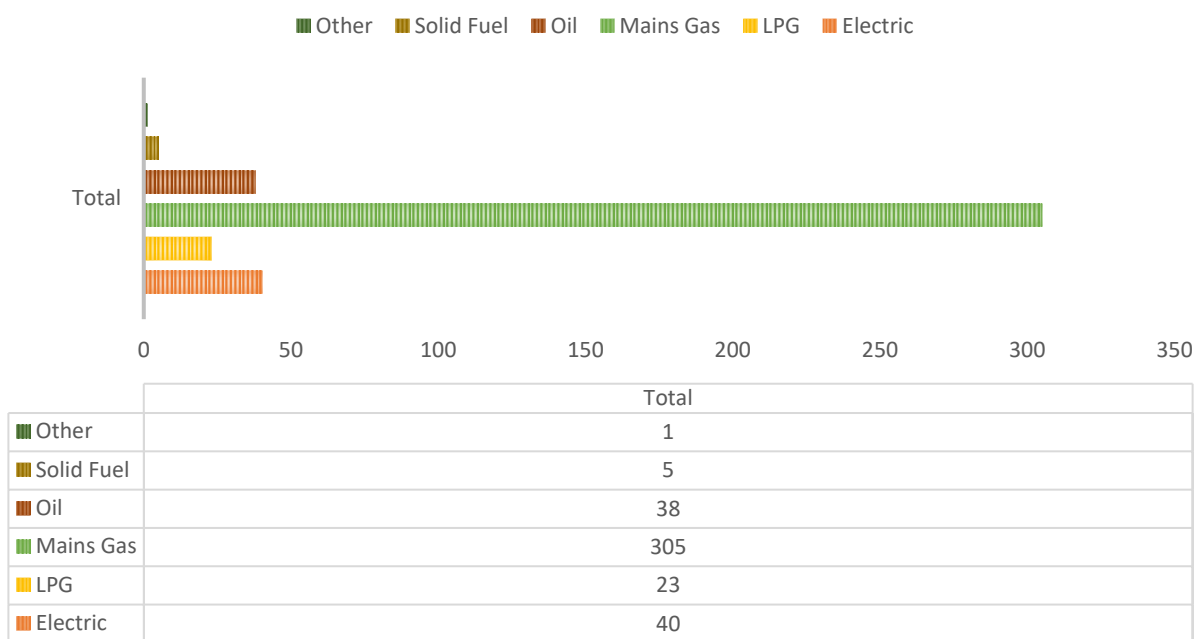


- Over 50% of all fuel poor households across England are said to be privately renting. More work is needed to increase uptake amongst this sector especially as housing improvements are now enforced by MEES.

## 2.5 Heating Fuel

Heating fuel is recorded during the initial phone assessment as this can affect the building energy efficiency and heating performance as well as associated costs.

Figure 4. Heating fuel used by 602 BHBH enquiries



- Typically for the service and the area 'Mains Gas' fuels the majority of heating systems used by those seeking help. Funding for gas replacement boilers has been intermittent at best during the last couple of years which can make it hard to assist with gas boiler upgrades.
- A quarter of those contacting the service live in 'off-gas' properties. These can often be harder to heat homes and unless they can be connected to the grid, financial support for upgrades and repairs is difficult to obtain.
- 10% of enquiries heated their properties using electric which if combined with an inefficient heating system can be costly and lead to high energy bills.

### 3 Yearly Targets

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Each year the service is set targets by the steering group to aim towards. Overall the service performed well and represented value for money which is demonstrated well by the funding and savings the service managed to lever in however some targets were not met and this needs to be addressed going forward.

**Table 3. Targets and final figures achieved by BHBH**

Targets	Totals	Achieved
400 Households Supported	419	Yes
50 Frontline Staff Trained (online)	0	No
150 Energy Efficiency Measures Installed	76	No
50 New Incomes Identified	34	No
3 New Services Integrated	3	Yes
2 Bids Submitted to External Funders	4	Yes

- 3 of 6 targets were met or exceeded. This included the integration of new services and support schemes which featured ECHO, the PSR register and the Warm Home Discount.
- The biggest failure relates to the staff training target. NEF had hoped to be able to produce an online training programme aimed at engaging health and social care staff on fuel poverty and cold homes. Despite two funding bids being submitted this has failed to materialise. NEF did attend several workshops and engaged hundreds more staff via newsletters and emails however these have not been included as the training was not formalised.
- Although the service did fail to achieve the target of 150 energy efficiency installs the 76 larger measures installed was a good result in a year where ECO (main funding source) was not available throughout the busy winter period as the new ECO3 scheme was being finalised. The figure does also not include the 556 smaller measures (draught proofing, LED lightbulbs, radiator foils etc.) installed during home visits.