



<u>Committee and Date</u>
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7
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Warm Homes Healthy People Fund

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1. Summary

The Department of Health established the Warm Homes Healthy People (WHHP) fund as part of this year's Cold Weather Plan. Shropshire submitted a bid for £126, 938 which was approved on 16th December 2011. The funding has been used to extend the existing Shropshire Heatsavers Project, This provides co-ordinated support to people at risk of death and serious health problems from cold weather, in partnership with other agencies and the voluntary sector.

This Report summarises the progress made thus far.

2. Recommendations

- a) Continue the project aims and elements that remain with available funding including Awareness Training and Emergency Repair Grants.
- b) Continue to support Shropshire Heatsavers
- c) Provide evaluation for the Shropshire Cold Weather Plan 2012/2013
- d) Develop Shropshire Warm Communities Project

REPORT

- 3.1** The Shropshire Council Scrutiny Committee Report (October 2011) estimated up to 30% of the local population is at risk of fuel poverty. Shropshire has a high proportion of older people (26%), a low proportion of social housing (14%), a high percentage of owner occupied housing (80%) and a disproportionate number of older detached 'hard to heat' houses (40%).

It can be anticipated that there may be significant effects on the health and mortality rates of vulnerable people during cold weather.

- 3.2** The proposal was developed by a task group of Shropshire Council Officers in liaison with partners from Shropshire PCT and the Voluntary and Community Sector via the VCS Assembly.
- 3.3** Shropshire has a dispersed rural population and it was assumed travel and transport could be problematic in cold weather. The primary aim was therefore to increase resilience within the home reducing dependence on services being delivered 'to the door' or accessed via transport. Project aims also include;
- Reduction of deaths and health problems caused by cold weather
 - Reduction of hospital admissions related to cold home and weather
 - Reduction of the effects of rural isolation on Fuel Poverty
- 3.4** The project is based on;
- Engaging community based agencies via awareness raising training
 - Extending the Shropshire HeatSavers project
 - Responding to high risk situations with practical help
 - Increasing community involvement in support for vulnerable people

The allocation of funds to deliver the project is being co-ordinated by Shropshire Council.

3.5 Main areas of activity are:

- a)** An **Emergency And Out-Of Hours Service** was put in place during the week leading up to Christmas. This provided an emergency response service to deliver and install oil filled electric radiators throughout the Christmas/New Year period and the duration of the project.
- b)** **Awareness Training** (and Materials) for volunteers and partner professionals to identify risk factors for vulnerable people – Target 400 participants
- c)** **Extension of existing multi-agency Shropshire HeatSaver Project** : to provide a Resource Hub to deliver a full range of assistance and signposting measures. Includes appointment of Project Co-ordinator to 31st March 2012 located with Private Sector Housing Team (Shropshire Council- Housing Health and Well-Being)
- d)** **Provision of Emergency and/or Supplementary Heating:**
HeatSavers have co-ordinated the deployment of 75 emergency oil filled electric radiators in partnership with Mears Home Services (Home Improvement Agency). Fuel vouchers were made available to cover additional emergency heating fuel costs to those living in fuel

poverty. Thermometers to alert to low temperatures and an additional 'cold weather pack' (fleece, torch, hand warmer and so on) are also provided.

- e) **Emergency Repairs Grants (vulnerable people):** Private Sector Housing Team have managed WHHP funding provided to undertake emergency remedial works to reinstate, replace or install heating systems which are defective or inadequate. Advice on heating management, insulation and the control of condensation and damp is also provided by the Private Sector Housing Team
- f) **Community Oil/LPG Fuel Buying Scheme:** extending existing Shropshire Community Council scheme to extend into and target off-mains gas and high risk areas
- g) **Cold Weather 'Store Cupboard' Cooking :** provision of information and booklets on cold weather cookery. This is being delivered through the 'Love Food Hate Waste' programme in partnership with Through the Doorway to Healthy Living.
- h) **Assessment by Age UK support workers** of 1000 older people, to identify and prioritise those at greatest risk, with a focus on isolated communities and high fuel poverty areas.

3.6 Summary of Progress

Progress against targets and costs are detailed Appendix 1
Despite a colder period in February the winter was milder than in the previous two years so demand has not been as high as expected. However assessment work has continues throughout the quarter and will produce a continuing demand into the next few months.

4. Proposal

The key learning point is the recognition of the scale of the task of eliminating fuel poverty and achieving affordable warmth. There is a urgent need to engage with local members and communities to work with partnerships to find solutions.

It is proposed that the HeatSavers Awareness Training and Emergency Repairs elements continue into the next financial year as this will help alleviate vulnerable situations in time for next winter. It is understood that the Department of Health is supporting the continuation of use of the funding for the Warm Home Healthy People Project criteria.

With this support in mind, it is proposed that remaining funding is allocated to the emerging Warm Communities Project. This is a partnership with Marches Energy Agency, Social Landlords, and Shropshire Council seeking to agree community SAP(energy

effectiveness) targets and address them jointly. The overarching outcome is the safe, sustainable affordable warmth across Shropshire's communities, with a particular focus on vulnerable households. There will be two themed initiatives which target steps to reduce heating costs and increase energy efficiency and targeted maintenance to prevent impacts on health from disrepair. This project will feed into and assist in preparation for implementation of the Cold Weather Plan 2012-13.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Remaining funding from the HeatSavers Awareness Training allocation to be used to support the Warm Communities Project in 2012-2013.

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p> <p>Department of Health Cold Weather Plan Department of Health Warm Homes Healthy People Fund Shropshire WHHP Fund Bid</p>
<p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</p>
<p>Local Member</p>
<p>Appendix 1 Shropshire Warm Home Healthy People Fund Activity</p>

Warm Homes Healthy People : Shropshire

27-
Mar-
12

Project Allocation: £126,928

Activity	Funding Allocation	Committed	Mid Term Balance	Comments	Target	Progress	
Awareness Training	12,000	14,000	0	Includes commitment to develop Warm Communities Project during 2012-13	400	222	
Shropshire HeatSaver Coordinator	5,000	5,000	0		Appoint	Done	
Emergency /Supplementary Heating	15,188	7,974.80	7,213	On target to spend	94	19	
Emergency Repairs Grants	78,000	50,269	27,731	Actual expenditure may extend into 2012-13, average commitment higher than predicted.	60	18	
Community Oil/LPG Fuel Buying Scheme	3,000	3,000	0	Forms widely distributed	120	10	
Cold Weather 'Store Cupboard' Cooking	1,750	1,750	0	Information distributed via Love Food Hate Waste	150	150	
Assessment by Age UK	10,000	10,000	0	In process @100 referred to HeatSavers	1000	619	
Marketing	2,000	0	2,000	Re-Allocate to Awareness Training	0	0	
	126,938	91,994	36,944				

