

Signposting adults including older people to Affordable Warmth and Housing Services in West Yorkshire

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Housekeeping

- Thanks to Mo Sadiq, Workforce Development Officer, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
- Session will be recorded
- Video and slides shared on www.yhphnetwork.co.uk
- Clickable hyperlinks to resources
- Please turn your cameras off if not presenting
- Keep microphones on mute
- Sli-do survey
<https://app.sli.do/event/wcwE2hZLMQ3vBAQ7itx3pi>
- 188594

What are the barriers to having these conversations?

- Lack of knowledge/training about available services
- Time
- Embarrassment/defensive families/feeling judged/personal question about their finances
- Lack of a solution, support available keeps changing, changes to central government initiatives and funding changes
- Language barriers, translates differently
- Lack of engagement from the family, customers don't always want to make changes
- Covid-19 – less face to face visits
- Stereotyping can be a barrier
- Lack of continuous relationship – a family can see multiple different healthcare professionals when accessing services
- People won't identify with 'poverty'
- Clients disengaging with appointments (especially those with mental health or substance misuse issues)

Aim

To support healthcare staff working with adults including vulnerable adults and older people whose health is being affected by cold homes or poor housing conditions such as damp to know what is available and how to access support services

Learning outcomes

- Discuss why housing is important to adult health
- Understand how housing conditions affect adult health
 - unhealthy homes
 - unsuitable homes
 - unstable homes
- Discuss what support is available
- Describe the 'duty to refer' and who it applies to
- Explore how to talk to someone about their housing

Background

- £1 million being invested by the Partnership to keep people warm – pledge that no one living across West Yorkshire should suffer due to fuel poverty
- In West Yorkshire around 169,000¹ households can't afford to keep their home at the temperature needed to keep warm – more than 1 in 6 households
- Poor housing could be costing the NHS £1.4 billion a year²

References

1. Gov.uk [Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2021](#)
2. Building Research Establishment (2021) [The Cost of Poor Housing in England](#)



How does housing affect health?

There are risks to an individual's physical and mental health associated with living in³:

- an **unhealthy home** - housing that is cold, damp or hazardous
- an **unsuitable home** - a home that doesn't meet the household's needs due to risks such as being overcrowded or inaccessible to a disabled or older person
- an **unstable home** - a home that does not provide a sense of safety and security including precarious living circumstances and/or homelessness

Reference:

3. Public Health England (2017). [Improving health through the home](#)

Homes for people of working age



Unhealthy homes increase the risk of

- respiratory illness
- cardiovascular problems
- mental health problems



Overcrowded homes increase the risk of

- mental health problems
- respiratory illness
- tuberculosis
- tobacco harm



Precarious housing & homelessness increases the risk of

- physical and mental health problems
- alcohol and drug misuse
- suicide
- tobacco harm
- tuberculosis

Underlying health issues can in turn raise the risk of being homeless or living in precarious housing

Reference:

3. *Public Health England (2017). [Improving health through the home](#)*



Homes for older people



Unhealthy homes increase the risk of

- respiratory illness
- cardiovascular problems
- excess winter deaths
- physical injuries, particularly from falls
- domestic fires



Unsuitable homes increase the risk of

- physical injuries, particularly from falls
- general health deterioration following a fall
- social isolation



Precarious housing and homelessness increases the risk of

- physical and mental health problems
- alcohol and drug misuse
- suicide
- tobacco harm
- tuberculosis

Underlying health issues can in turn raise the risk of being homeless or living in precarious housing

Homes for older people

Reference:

3. Public Health England (2017). [Improving health through the home](#)

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Cold homes and fuel poverty

More than
90% of our time is
spent indoors



Fuel poverty
is one of the major
causes of cold homes

During the COVID-19 pandemic people will need to spend more time at home leading to higher energy use and costs of heating.



Some households may find themselves in fuel poverty for the first time and be unaware of the help that is available.

When a cold home is also damp, mould is likely to occur. Cold, damp and mould are all linked to impacts on health.

References

4. Public Health England (2020). [Health matters: cold weather and COVID-19](#)

Why should we have conversations with older people about this?⁵

- Age UK estimated 150,000 older households are likely to be plunged into fuel poverty in the winter of 2021-22
- Rising energy prices, rising living costs, rising inflation
- Many older people are living in hard to heat, older homes
- Older people tend to feel the cold more than younger people as it is harder for them to regulate and maintain body temperatures



References:

5. Age UK 2021. [The Cost of the Cold Campaign](#)

Why should we have conversations with older people about this?⁵

- **Peter, aged 75, told Age UK:** *“It's a simple choice, heat or eat. I already confine myself to one room and stay in bed as long as possible. If I cut down any further there won't be any point in living.”*
- **Geraldine, aged 77, said:** *“I have arthritis which is worse when it is cold. I will have to keep my heating low now. Already I wear gloves on my hands and a heat pack inside my leggings to help my back.”*
- **Sheila, aged 81, said:** *“We will have to have the heating off, as the bills are scary.”*

References:

5. Age UK 2021. [The Cost of the Cold Campaign](#)

What does climate change have to do with this?

- Domestic use of fossil fuels contributes 21% of England's carbon emissions, our homes produce more than our cars⁶
- Energy inefficient homes use more fuel and cost more to heat
- Widen inequalities

References

- 6. [Decarbonisation: a guide for housing associations](#)

What support is available? – local authority services

- [Gov UK postcode checker](#) to find which local authority for that patient
- Social prescribing services
- [Mecclink website](#) has contact details for each local authority housing service, duty to refer contact details and affordable warmth resources

MECC Link - Simple Signposting to Better Health and Wellbeing

[Home](#) » Yorkshire & Humber

[Location view](#) [Wellbeing view](#)

Affordable Warmth
Alcohol
Covid-19 Support
COVID-19 Vaccinations
Memory Problems/Dementia/Carers
Falls and Frailty
Financial Inclusion
Fire Safety and Prevention (Safe and Well)
Healthy Diet and Healthy Weight
Housing and Homelessness

What support is available?

- Contact details and leaflets for support services on the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership website on [living in cold homes](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#), a network of independent charities offering free and confidential advice about the [Grants and benefits to help pay energy bills](#).
- This includes details of the [Warm Home Discount Scheme](#).

6 tips for keeping warm

Aim to keep your home at 18 to 21°C (that's 65 to 70°F)

1

Keep bedroom windows closed on cold nights

2

Layer clothing and wear gloves and scarves when outside

3

Keep as active as you can

4

Contact one of the support services listed in this leaflet to find out if you are eligible for financial support to pay your heating bills or to make home improvements to keep your home warm

5

6

Have your heating and cooking appliances checked by a Gas Safe Registered engineer to check they are operating safely



What support is available?



0113 238 0601

greendoctorleeds@groundwork.org.uk



[Groundwork](#), a group of charities that focuses on poverty and the environment.

Its Green Doctor telephone support service helps many people save money on their energy costs such as:

- Making the most of their income and debt advice
- Cost comparison and switching fuel providers
- Emergency broken heating, hot water or gas appliances
- Priority Services Register sign up for vulnerable people
- Energy efficiency advice

What support is available?

Better Homes Yorkshire

A programme for residents in participating councils (Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale, Wakefield, York, Craven, Harrogate and Selby) to pay less for their energy and live in healthier, warmer homes. The programme has improved 3000 homes in the first three years alone.

You can find out more by calling: 0800 597 1500 or by going onto the [Better Homes Yorkshire website](#).



Both customers and non-customers of British Gas living in England can apply for an energy grant. You can find more information on the [British Gas Energy Trust website](#), including details about the [energy grant scheme](#), or call 0121 348 7797



What support is available?



Free advice on

- Money matters
- Health and well-being
- Home and care
- Work and training
- Leisure and lifestyle

Specific advice on Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance. Cold Weather Payments and the Warm Home Discount Scheme for those on a low income such as those claiming Pension Credit

[Age UK website](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) and advice line open 365 days a year 8am to 7pm call 0800 055 6112

TURN2US

[Turn 2 Us](https://www.turn2us.org.uk) is a national charity for when times are tough. Its website details the various grants and schemes available to help cover the cost of fuel bills and making your home more efficient



What actions can people take to reduce their energy bills?



[Home energy saving](#) tips from Groundwork Green Doctors
Series of short videos with advice on:

- Storage heater settings
- Reducing energy use from your most energy hungry appliances e.g. only filling the kettle with as much water as you need
- Adjusting your hot water temperature
- Using programmers and thermostats to avoid heat wastage
- Draught proofing
- Radiator foil to reflect heat back into your room

Duty to refer

- The [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#) significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas, and to provide homelessness services to all those who are eligible.
- Additionally, the Act introduced a **duty on specified public authorities to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to local authority homelessness/housing options teams.**

Public authorities with a duty to refer

- prisons
- young offender institutions
- secure training centres
- secure colleges
- youth offending teams
- probation services (including community rehabilitation companies)
- Jobcentres in England
- social service authorities (both adult and children's)
- **emergency departments**
- **urgent treatment centres**
- **hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care**
- Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the regular armed forces

What is 'making every contact count'?

- Making Every Contact Count is an approach to behaviour change that utilises the millions of day to day interactions that organisations and people have with other people to support them in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.⁸
- Focus on stopping smoking, drinking alcohol only within recommended limits, healthy eating, physical activity, healthy weight, and improving mental health and wellbeing
- MECC enables the opportunistic delivery of consistent and concise healthy lifestyle information

Reference:

8. Health Education England (2022). [Making every contact count](#).

ASK – ASSIST – ACT

Ask-Assist-Act

Example for someone you have not met before:

‘Hello, I’m xx one of the social prescribers at your GP surgery. I’m here to help and I’ve been asked to give you a ring about some of the free services that might be relevant to your medical condition, would it be ok if I explain them to you?’

Sometimes your health can be affected by cold or damp at home and there are a range of services that might be able to help, is this something that that would be of interest to you?

For example, you may be able to save money on your energy bills by changing your electricity and gas supplier or get some help to make your home more energy efficient, would you like some more information on this?’

Ask-Assist-Act

Example for raising the conversation incidentally during the consultation on a home visit / video consultation:

Conversation starter (ask):

‘Some people are finding it more difficult to pay their fuel bills and keep their homes warm with the rise in fuel costs, is this something you are finding?’

‘Many people are finding it increasingly difficult to keep their homes warm and dry I noticed an area of damp on that wall/it feels cold in here’

(Assist/Act):

‘Would you be interested in some of the support services that can help reduce the cost of bills and advice on how to keep your home warm?’

Ask-Assist-Act

Example for raising the conversation incidentally during the consultation on the phone/in clinic:

Conversation starter (ask):

‘Many people are finding it more difficult to pay their fuel bills and keep their homes warm, is this something you are finding?’

‘a lot of people are struggling financially at the moment, is this something you are finding such as difficulty paying your energy bills?’

(Assist/Act):

‘Would you be interested in some of the support services that can help reduce the cost of bills and advice on how to keep your home warm?’

Ask-Assist-Act

Other useful phrases:

- How are you finding the current situation with energy rises and food costs?
- You are not alone with this
- What has happened?
- Tell me a little bit more about the difficulties you are having with your housing and managing affordability of your bills
- Are you able to keep your house warm and free of damp
- I'm worried about your housing conditions / risk of homelessness, would you consent to me sharing your details with the housing team at the council?

Top tips:

Introduce yourself – name, role, who you work for

Explain why you are calling

Raise the topic in a sensitive way, use ‘affordable warmth’ rather than ‘fuel poverty’

Use open questions

Avoid individual blame

Get consent if sharing details across organisations

Consider discussing with safeguarding lead if concerns

Further training

Video training resource in development

[E-learning for health](#) modules:

- ‘Helping People Living in Cold Homes’
- ‘Duty to refer for frontline NHS staff’
- ‘What is MECC and why is it important’
- Groundwork fuel poverty awareness courses

Learning outcomes

- Discuss why housing is important to adult health
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 - unsuitable homes
 - unstable homes
- Discuss what support is available
- Describe the 'duty to refer' and who it applies to
- Explore how to talk to someone about their housing

Sli-do survey

- Have you ever had conversations about housing conditions and/or affordable warmth services with adults?
- How do you feel about having or the idea of having these conversations (in one word)?
- What questions or phrases have you found useful when having these conversations?
- Can you share any case examples where having these conversations has made a difference for someone?
- What are the barriers to having these conversations?
- What is your role?
- Sli-do survey
<https://app.sli.do/event/wcwE2hZLMQ3vBAQ7itx3pi>
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Questions?

- Thanks for attending
- Please complete the sli-do survey if not already done so
- [Groundwork Green Doctors Leeds](#)
- Please share case studies to help with our work to continue these services – follow-up survey to follow