



New boiler installation for elderly resident

The story

The Home Energy Advice and Retrofit team was referred by NHS social workers for an elderly resident with terminal health issues, significant fuel debt, and a broken boiler which had not functioned for over a year.

The property was a two-story semi-detached house located on the outskirts of Skegness, located about one mile away from its urban centre.

This case was considered 'hard-to-reach' as the resident had significant physical health issues, including chronic pain, which made it difficult for them to focus and take the initiative to resolve their heating issues. In addition, they were often in and out of the hospital making it difficult for them to access needed services.

The property was an 83B rated property with good insulation, including double glazing, cavity wall insulation, and loft insulation. However, this worked against the resident as they were often ineligible for grant funding due to their high EPC, leaving them unable to repair their boiler and being trapped in a cold home, exacerbating their health issues. Due to being a pensioner they lacked the financial means to resolve the issue.



Project highlights

- Local Energy Advice Demonstrator supported scheme
- Provided safe, warm, and affordable residence to a vulnerable individual
- Arranged grant funding for new gas boiler to be bought and installed
- Wiped out £1,000 of fuel debt
- Reduced daily heating bill by £10 per day

Opportunities

The intervention by officers required multiple agencies assisting both the resident and their family. The team realised early on that immediate help would be needed as it was getting well into winter and the resident would be at risk of enduring another damp and cold season trapped in their home.

Officers arranged a home visit to provide Age UK and Alford Hub warm packs to provide immediate means for the resident to stay warm in the short term. They also provided energy-saving, damp, and mould advice to the resident and a family member. Officers also contacted the National Energy Action and National Energy Foundation to provide £100 of fuel vouchers to pay the increased cost of running their electric fan heater.

The team supported the resident and a family member in their application to the Local Energy Advice Partnership to fund and replace the broken gas boiler. The team also explained the process of applying to the Great British Energy Trust to pay off the resident's fuel debt which they had accumulated while in hospital. Officers planned to arrange dehumidifiers for the property to combat the relatively high humidity of the coastal residence.

Approach

The resident was well known to other organisations and departments of the council which were unable to assist with their circumstances. Initially officers contacted them by email and phone to gather a base of information to work with.

Calls with the resident revealed that arranging calls at the same time in the afternoon to make them more accessible due to mobility issues and memory issues proved advantageous in connecting with the resident. In addition, encouraging a family member to attend the home visit and help explain what could be done proved important in progressing paperwork for the grants.

Stages

The stages of this intervention were:

- 1) Information gathering from other involved agencies and council departments.
- 2) Collating data and forming a plan of action with assistance from senior members of the department.
- 3) Contacting the resident and discuss the plan.
- 4) Taking new information from the resident to refine and develop the planned solutions.
- 5) Scheduling follow up calls to assist resident and monitor plan progress
- 6) Having a summary call to conclude that all issues had been solved.

Find out more about the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator projects in the Midlands.

