



Supporting a renter with utility bills and an ECO4 application

The story

The team first became aware of this case at an event in Skegness before Christmas.

The initial concern for the occupant was the issue of black mould and a rotten window frame within the property that the landlord had failed to fix. This was ultimately affecting their health and wellbeing alongside the excessively damp weather the area experienced.

Upon further enquiry on behalf of the occupant, the landlord was taking action, albeit rather slowly. Finally, the occupant was seeking support for their energy bills.

The property is in Ingoldmells, a seasonally oriented resort town near Skegness. As such it is relatively isolated throughout the rest of the year. This consumer, who has limited mobility due to medical issues, relies on a mobility scooter to get to the main community hub of Skegness which is approximately four miles away.

The property is a small, detached bungalow with cavity walls for the main structure of the building and a flat roof. It is electrically heated, albeit the storage heaters currently in use within the property were very expensive and inefficient - or were either broken or not functioning correctly.

This case was considered 'hard-to-reach' due to the health and learning difficulties the occupant possesses, and as such had a very limited outlook as to the support that is available.



Project highlights

- Local Energy Advice Demonstrator supported scheme
- Supported a resident with learning difficulties to apply for ECO4
- Lowered their energy bills - including £200 annual reduction in their water bill
- Assisted with access to fuel vouchers

Opportunities

The individual was identified as being a 'hard-to-reach' due to their learning difficulties. They had lack of knowledge of support avenues which was alleviated through the team's in-person point of contact. They attended an event in the local area to promote information concerning energy efficiency schemes and further support.

The property had an EPC rating of F at the time of meeting the occupant, with additional heating being used due to lack of insulation and a damaged storage heater within the property.

However, the potential rating of the property could improve to a B with the installation of insulation and renewable technologies.

Approach

As a result of assistance, it became apparent that the occupant was eligible for the ECO4 scheme. Since initial signposting and an application to the scheme, the occupant has the opportunity for solar panels, an air source heat pump, as well as cavity wall insulation to be installed on the property.

Despite the occupant's learning difficulties and struggles with paperwork, guidance was provided throughout each part of the process. The team gave step-by-step instructions for filling out the required paperwork and provided contact numbers.

The primary focus remained on assisting with the occupant's energy bills. The most notable avenue for achieving this was through Anglian Water low-income tariff which the occupants was eligible for due to their medical and financial situation – saving the occupant over £200.00 on their annual water bill.

The team also assisted with access to fuel vouchers for their prepayment meter, initially through National Energy Foundation, but more recently through the team's use of the council-delivered Household Support Fund.

Stages

The stages of this intervention were:

- 1) Initial contact was made at an event in December and a warm pack was delivered to the occupant shortly before Christmas.
- 2) Further catch-up and reassurance that the landlord was addressing original problems took place, and submission and acceptance into the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme happened in the new year.
- 3) Any offered measures will hopefully be completed over the summer following contact between the occupant's case officer and ECO installer.

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

