



Warm Homes

Information for Frontline Staff

This is an information resource for staff working in Northumberland to help them signpost to support to keep homes warm during winter.

Struggling to keep a home warm can be a result of multiple factors, this could be living on a low-income, high-energy costs or living in a property which is poorly insulated or heated. This resource is designed to help you navigate the support and advice that is available to our residents to help them keep warm this winter.



Northumberland
County Council

TALKING ABOUT WARM HOMES – MAKING EVERY CONTACT COUNT

It might not be immediately obvious that a person is struggling to keep warm. These questions might help you find out more:

- Are you satisfied that you are able to heat your home to a comfortable temperature, even during the colder months? If no, why is that?
- Do you worry about the cost of keeping your home warm? (if so, how often? e.g., occasionally, regularly, all of the time)
- Do you know that having a warm home is beneficial to your health and wellbeing? (see links below)
- Would you like to know more about the support available to help you to keep your home warm? If it's energy costs see pg4 onwards, Home Energy Efficiency see pg7, Maximising Income see pg8

PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY ADVICE

Tips on saving money, reducing waste and staying safe
www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Your-Electricity-Gas-and-Water_How-to-save-money-reduce-waste-and-stay-safe-at-home.pdf

The NHS have provided advice on how to stay well in winter
How to stay well in winter - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

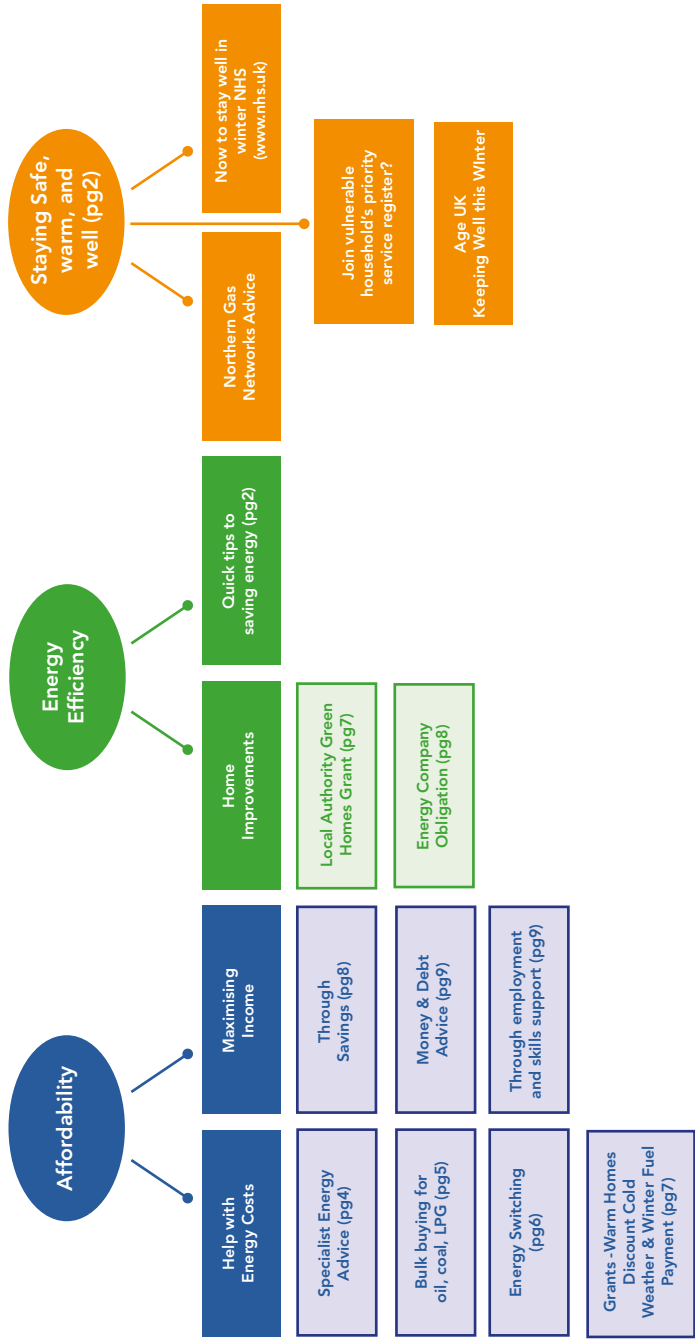
Age UK have provided advice on keeping well this winter
www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health/health-wellbeing/keep-well-this-winter/stay-healthy-in-winter/

Northumberland Communities Together Response Hub provides support and signposting to residents to keep safe and well.

The hub can connect residents to support in their area.

Contact the Hub on 01670 620015 between 9am to 6pm, seven days a week or email nct@northumberland.gov.uk

Warm Homes Advice Map



ENERGY COSTS

Vulnerable Households Priority Services Register

Targeted support offered by energy providers to households containing people who are of pensionable age, are disabled or chronically sick, have a long-term medical condition, hearing or visual impairment of additional communication needs or have a child under 5 years of age. Check energy providers websites.

Specialist Energy Advice

- **Citizens Advice** Specialist Energy Advisers assess household circumstances over the phone and email, in person and through home visits for vulnerable households including people with visual impairments through Northumberland County Blind Association. CABN provides holistic advice and support to alleviate fuel poverty and CABN provide technical aids and specialist support for blind and visually impaired people.
www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk/get-help/our-projects/the-energy-project/
Contact: energy@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk
or Tel: 01670 339749
- **Community Action Northumberland (CAN)** Rural Energy Advisers – to provide advice to reduce energy use and access financial support www.ca-north.org.uk/news/energyadvice
Contact Myra Milne at
myramilne@ca-north.org.uk Tel: 0771 5408343

People living in rural areas or off mains gas/electricity

- **Off grid Households** - Powerless People Register and survey for people living without mains electricity.
www.ca-north.org.uk/promoting-rural-issues/offgrid-households-powerless-people
- **OILCAN - Energy Bulk Buying** – A bulk buying scheme for residents purchasing oil, coal, LPG. Residents join the scheme for £12 per year to access fuel at lower prices www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/oilcan
- **Warm Hubs** supports a network of community buildings in rural areas to provide access to a warm environment and advice
www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hubs
- **Cosy Can** – residents in rural areas can sign up to a newsletter for energy advice www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hubs
Contact Christine Nicholls at christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk or phone 07827 403837.





Energy Switching

When fuel costs are high and the market is unpredictable, customers should check the best deal with their existing energy provider. When fuel costs and markets are more stable, customers may want to consider switching energy providers if there are better deals available. Advice is available at:

- **Citizens Advice Best Deal Booklet** - A guide to understanding energy and making savings www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/Public/BESN%2018-19/Booklet%2018-19.pdf
- **Citizens Advice Energy Comparison Tools** compares energy suppliers using information from customers energy bills. energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/
- **Ofgem Accredited energy Switching Tools** www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/switching-energy-tariff-or-supplier
- **Residents** on electricity can sign up to collective purchasing auctions run by iChoosr. There is no obligation to accept the tariff that is offered at the end of the auction and it is up to the household to decide if the tariff works out better for them than other offers. bigcommunityswitch.co.uk/northumberland/home

Grants

Warm Homes Discount Low-income households can apply to their electricity supplier to see if they qualify for the Warm Homes Discount. This is a one-off discount of £140 off electricity bills between October and March. If the energy supplier is part of the scheme and the residents received the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit, they will receive a letter between October and December 2021. For others on low income, they may qualify by checking with their supplier. www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Cold Weather Payment of £25 per week is available to people on certain benefits for each 7-day period where the temperature is below 0 degrees Celsius. Payment is provided automatically. www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment

Winter Fuel Payment for over 65s, between £100-£300 for those receiving state pension or another social security benefit www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

There are also various time limited discretionary grants which could help in emergency situations contact

Northumberland Communities Together Service

NCT@northumberland.gov.uk

or telephone 01670 620015 between 9am to 6pm, seven days a week

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

- **Local Authority Delivery Green Homes Grant** – Homeowners could be eligible for free energy efficiency installations such as solar panels, an air source heat pump and wall and loft insulation through Northumberland County Council. More information will be available in Spring 2022. Visit northumberland.gov.uk/Climate-Change/Renewable-energy

- **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** Households in receipt of qualifying benefits may be eligible for help with energy efficiency measures such as loft or wall insulation or heating measures. www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/energy-company-obligation-eco/support-improving-your-home. The council can also refer Northumberland residents who are not in receipt of benefits into the ECO scheme through more flexible criteria based on household income and vulnerability to the cold. Contact Kate Ershadi for more information kate.ershadi@northumberland.gov.uk (Weds to Friday) or energy@northumberland.gov.uk for any urgent enquiries. Residents can contact any of the obligated energy suppliers to find out how they may be able to help and a resident can benefit from ECO regardless of who they purchase their energy from. Residents should search for Government Endorsed installers at www.trustmark.org.uk/
- To check the property's energy rating visit find-energy-certificate.digital.communities.gov.uk/

MAXIMISING INCOME

Through savings

- **Northumberland Community Bank** supports residents to regularly save and access loans. www.northumberlandcommunitybank.co.uk/ Referrals by enquiries@northumberlandcommunitybank.co.uk or telephone 01670 522779 Monday – Friday 10am-4pm. Call in to Northumberland Community Bank, 65 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RX
- **North East First Credit Union** can offer loans at lower interest rates than many loan providers, especially door stop lenders, pay-day loan companies and pawn brokers. www.nefirstcu.co.uk/ Email: info@nefirstcu.co.uk Tel: 0330 055 3666

Through money and debt advice

- **Citizens Advice Northumberland** provide advice on range of money, employment, debit and benefits
www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk/get-help/
Tel:01670 339960 Text DEBT to 81400

Through Employment and Skills Support

A range of support delivered by Northumberland County Council and partners is open to help residents increase their income through raising skill levels and finding a job, or move on to a better one.

- **Northumberland County Council Employability, Inclusion and Skills Support:** [www.northumberland.gov.uk/Economy-Regeneration/Economy-Regeneration-Teams/Strategic-Transport-Employability-1.aspx /](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Economy-Regeneration/Economy-Regeneration-Teams/Strategic-Transport-Employability-1.aspx/)
- www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Learning/About.aspx
- Short courses to boost interview and digital skills.
Contact Rianne.Gallon@northumberland.gov.uk or call 01670 626107
- **Jobcentre Plus** support job seeking and benefits
www.gov.uk/universal-credit/contact-universal-credit
Universal Credit 0800 328 5644
Other appointments 0800 169 0190
- **CVA Job Club** – Provides support with CVs, application, covering letters www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/for-individuals/help-getting-a-job/job-club
Contact Leanne Brown or Lisa Wackett on 01670 858688

Young people can get specific support through

- **The Northumberland Youth Employment Partnership:**
www.northumberland.gov.uk/Economy-Regeneration/Programmes/Pathways-to-Work/Northumberland-Youth-Employment-Partnership-YEP.aspx
- **Careers Guidance for under 18s:**
Contact: 01670 622799, 07827 244027
or email careersteam@northumberland.gov.uk
www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Learning/Careers.aspx#learningandskillsservicecareersguidanceteam.

LEARNING MORE

If you would like to find out more how to help people living in cold homes. You could complete "Helping People living in cold homes" e-learning module on E-Learning for Health e-lfh.org.uk/

Thank you!

