



Campaigning for Warm Homes

Warm Healthy Homes - Tackling Cold Related Illness in Hambleton Thirsk Pilot running now

A pilot project to address cold-related illnesses in **Thirsk, Sowerby and surrounding areas** has started, just in time for winter. This aims to help reduce preventable cold-related illness, excess winter hospital admissions and deaths. It should also reduce the stress and discomfort of cold damp homes, fuel poverty and high energy bills.

Many vulnerable residents cannot afford to heat their homes to temperatures adequate to maintain health and wellbeing (18-21 °C). Preventable excess emergency winter admissions, for respiratory conditions alone cost the former NHS North Yorkshire and York PCT £1.56 million in 2009/10.

To roll out the pilot successfully we need your help to identify those we could help. If you suspect a patient has a condition which may be made worse or caused by their cold damp home, refer them ASAP to Vale & Dale: **01609 767983**, or valeanddale@broadacres.org.uk – they will organise a home visit, carry out a Warm Healthy Homes Check, and organise or refer people for appropriate help. The project only runs to the end of April 2014, so we need to act quickly: make your referrals as soon as possible and do let others know about the pilot so we reach as many people as we can.

All frontline services, particularly those where staff visit people in their homes so can identify cold / damp issues, or chat to patients elsewhere about such concerns, should refer those with conditions linked to and made worse by cold:

- restricted mobility;
- heart attack or stroke;
- respiratory diseases: pneumonia, COPD;
- trips and falls injuries, arthritis;
- stress / mental health issues;
- increased incidence of colds / flu;
- diabetes and other illnesses linked to poor circulation, injuries slow to heal;
- asthma, eczema & other allergies caused by damp / mouldy homes.

This project enhances current provision, so as well as identifying and referring those eligible for existing insulation and heating schemes, householders who fall outside the current eligibility criteria can also get help to stay warm and healthy. The type of help available includes:

- Cover “customer contribution” for energy efficiency work undertaken by another scheme, if the resident cannot afford it,
- Emergency heating repairs, when delays waiting for other schemes or where no other funding is available, could be hazardous to health,
- Remove “barriers” preventing insulation / energy efficiency works being carried out e.g. loft clearance, damp-proof course works, asbestos assessment etc.,
- Best Tariff – payment and switching options,
- Referral for fuel debt advice,
- Referral to advice on stopping smoking, healthy eating, opportunities for social interaction and physical activity.

Hambleton District Council, NEA - the National Energy Action charity and North Yorkshire Public Health are providing funding, and working with Hambleton, Richmondshire & Whitby CCG, Children’s Services, Adult Social Care Services, plus voluntary / third sector organisations active in the area.

You and your staff may wish to use the attached checklist when on home visits, or talking to people presenting with cold-related illnesses, as a reminder. Laminated A5 copies can be sent to you, by Bryony Wilford (contact details below), for convenient use.

If you would like more information about the project, or to get involved - particularly if there is an opportunity for us to come and brief your staff early in the New Year - please contact Hambleton’s Sustainable Development Officer, Bryony Wilford, on 01609 767160 or sustainable.development@hambleton.gov.uk.