



# Are your clients suffering from **FUEL POVERTY?**

**Older people, children, people with a disability and those with long-term medical conditions are more vulnerable to cold.**

**Use this checklist to look for signs of fuel poverty among your clients.**

## **Diseases and conditions related to cold homes:**

- asthma
- chronic bronchitis or emphysema
- coronary heart disease
- stroke and TIAs
- worsening of long-term illnesses in the winter
- falls and accidents
- slow recovery from illness.

## **Your client may tell you they:**

- can't afford fuel bills
- owe money for fuel

- use a prepaid meter to avoid running up debt
- lie or sit in bed to keep warm
- want to stay in hospital, as it's more comfortable
- feel the cold or draughts at home.

## **What you might notice about your client's home:**

- it feels cold or draughty
- it smells of damp
- there is no visible form of heating
- the only heating is electric fires, fan heaters, oil filled radiators or bottled gas heaters

- only one room is heated
- there is home-made draught-proofing
- ventilators have been blocked or covered
- curtains are closed in the day to keep in the heat
- there are signs of damp, eg
  - pools on window sills
  - mouldy patches around windows or on walls, ceilings or upper corners of upstairs rooms
- the client wears lots of clothes indoors.

# Sources of help and advice

## Eaga Partnership

Manages the Warm Homes Scheme, which provides insulation measures to owner occupied housing or privately rented homes. The householder must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit and *either* have a child under 16 *or* suffer an illness/disability. Applicants aged 60 or over in receipt of a specified benefit can also qualify for central heating. Eaga will provide advice on eligibility and accept referrals.

**Freephone:** 0800 181 667. Note: Clients will be asked for reference number MK662.

**Website:** [www.eaga.co.uk](http://www.eaga.co.uk)

## Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

Trained energy advisors provide:

- advice on how to make homes more energy efficient, to reduce energy bills.
- a free home energy check and a report on how to make the home more energy efficient, including any grants that are available.
- a home visiting service, HEATSMART, to housing executive tenants who have or are about to have a new heating system installed, or are aged 60 or over.

**Freephone:** 0800 512 012

**Local websites:**

Belfast: [www.belfastenergyadvice.com](http://www.belfastenergyadvice.com)

Derry: [www.foyleenergy.org](http://www.foyleenergy.org)

Enniskillen: [www.wrean.co.uk](http://www.wrean.co.uk)

## Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

Provides advice on grants and schemes for private sector and NIHE schemes for Housing Executive tenants, eg:

- Heating Conversion Programme.
- Disabled Adaptations Programme.
- Ongoing maintenance and improvement schemes (loft/cavity wall insulation).

**Tel:** Phone your local Housing Executive office listed in the business section of the Phone Book.

**Website:** [www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

## Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)

Gives advice on benefits available (eg Winter Fuel payments, Cold Weather payments) and on where to seek help with home repairs, insulation and energy efficiency.

**Tel:** Phone your local CAB listed in the business section of the Phone Book.

**Website:** [www.adviceguide.org.uk/nireland](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/nireland)

## Advice NI

Members of this organisation provide information and advocacy services on social security, housing, debt and consumer issues.

**Tel:** 028 9064 5919

**Website:** [www.adviceni.net](http://www.adviceni.net)

## General Consumer Council

Represents the interests of consumers and deals with complaints in relation to gas, electricity and coal matters where the consumer is unable to reach a satisfactory outcome directly with the supplier.

**Tel:** 0845 601 6022

**Website:** [www.gccni.org.uk](http://www.gccni.org.uk)

## Age Concern Northern Ireland

Offers telephone advice for older people on benefits, energy efficiency and saving money. Produces a number of useful factsheets, including *Help with Heating*.

**Tel:** 028 9032 5055 (Mon-Fri 9.30-1.00pm)

**Website:** [www.ageconcernni.org](http://www.ageconcernni.org)

## Help the Aged

Offers telephone advice for older people on benefits, energy efficiency and saving money. Produces a number of useful factsheets.

**Tel:** 0808 808 7575 (Mon-Fri 9.30-1.00pm)

**Website:** [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)



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*Campaigning for Warm Homes*



**DSD**  
Department for  
Social Development  
[www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk)

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