



EURO
CITIES



Gateshead Warm Zone

save energy, save money and help the environment

Fuel poverty is a big challenge for many of Europe's cities. In the UK, a household is considered 'fuel poor' if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, as well as meeting their other fuel needs (lighting and appliances, cooking and water heating). In addition to the obvious discomfort, cold and damp homes can increase the risk of illnesses such as stroke, heart and respiratory disorders.

Fighting fuel poverty

Gateshead Council is one of the UK's designated 'Warm Zones', which help to combat fuel poverty by systematically identifying households in need and providing them with support in a coordinated and cost-effective manner. This can range from the installation of energy-efficient measures, such as cavity wall and loft insulation, to advice on reducing energy consumption or entitlement to social security benefits, which help cover the cost of fuel and maximise household income.

In addition to helping Gateshead's poorest residents combat fuel poverty, the scheme has the added benefit of improving the area's green credentials. With 33% of Gateshead's CO₂ emissions coming from homes, many of which were built before 1929 and in need of significant energy-efficiency improvements, the measures can help cement Gateshead's commitment to a cleaner urban environment.

Gateshead Warm Zone was established in 2005 as a not-for-profit partnership between Gateshead Council, Gateshead housing company, Warm Zones (community interest company) and the utility company Scottish Power.



The Warm Zone partnership has made a real difference to the lives of many thousands of residents across Gateshead by tackling fuel poverty, increasing disposable incomes and ensuring that more people can enjoy the benefits of a warmer, healthier home.



David Connor, Director, Gateshead Warm Zone

cities in action

April 2012

where: Gateshead
what: environment
when: 2005+

The scheme offers local residents free or discounted home insulation measures, including:

- cavity wall insulation
- loft insulation
- hot water tank insulation jackets
- draught proofing
- energy-efficient lighting
- central heating system replacements
- benefit entitlement checks and claim support

Healthy and comfortable homes

Many of these measures are essential for improving the energy-efficiency of Gateshead's housing stock. In addition to these, the Warm Zone team offers training and advice to tenants and housing officers, as well as central heating replacements for specific health conditions (via a new 'Health Through Warmth' project integrated in to the Warm Zone and supported by RWE npower).

At January 2012, £8.5 million (€10 million) had been invested in the project, with funding coming from Gateshead Council/housing company in the form of grant finance used to lever in substantial capital investment from Scottish Power (as part of its carbon emissions reduction target obligation) and RWE npower (under its corporate and social responsibility funding for 'Health Through Warmth').

A warm welcome from residents

With a total 93,000 households in Gateshead, the figures show that by February 2012 the uptake and impact of the Warm Zone had been considerable:

- 60,704 households assessed
- 38,293 insulation measures installed in 31,625 homes
- 118 heating systems had been improved (hundreds more referred to a national scheme for assistance)
- £6.2 million (€7.4 million) p.a. secured in additional benefits income
- 30% fuel poverty identified

- total fuel bill savings for residents of £4 million (€4.7 million) each year
- annual CO₂ emissions reduced by c18,000 tonnes

Despite the programme's success at boosting the economy, reducing fuel poverty, tackling climate change and reducing health inequalities, the council has met with a number of challenges.

These include issues of engaging with rented sector landlords and marketing the benefits of the scheme to the wider public.



The council is also looking at ways to secure replacement funding post-2012 coupled with a move towards solid wall insulation, a measure which is significantly more expensive to install and currently with low levels of public awareness.

The Warm Zone approach has already proven very successful in other areas of the UK, with a growing interest in its local partnership model for delivery. The activities carried out so far in Gateshead demonstrate a significant improvement in the quality of life for local citizens, as well as the quality of the urban environment.



From the initial survey to the installation of the cavity wall insulation, everyone has been excellent in their workmanship and customer service. There are a lot of pensioners in our building and thankfully we now don't have to worry so much about the effects of the cold winter. We are looking forward to a 'greener' and warmer winter thanks to Gateshead Warm Zone.

Tom Burn, Gateshead resident

More information: www.warmzones.co.uk

