



Campaigning for Warm Homes



CORE – Rural Off-gas Energy Champion’s Initiative

The energy champion role

Fuel poverty – the challenge

The government estimates that there are at least 4 million households in England living in *fuel poverty* but this is likely to be significantly higher following recent energy price rises. Households living in fuel poverty need to spend 10% or more of their household annual income to maintain a warm and healthy home. Particularly vulnerable households may include those on low incomes including the elderly, those with small children and those living with long-term illness. Vulnerable households may struggle to afford sufficient fuel alongside other household essentials and as result may ration fuel and under heat their homes. This can result in a cold damp and unhealthy home environment which can impact on health and wellbeing and have social and economic impacts for individuals and communities.

CORE initiative – an overview

NEA in partnership with Calor Gas and rural partners is currently supporting a new energy champion’s initiative called CORE that aims to engage frontline staff within organisations to promote simple energy efficiency messages to fuel poor and other vulnerable households living in selected rural communities without access to mains-gas across England. Messages will include basic tips on how to manage energy use and improve comfort levels at home at minimal or no-cost to the householder. Champions will learn to signpost householders to other sources of specialist energy or money advice and for assistance with households heating and insulation improvements where eligible.

The project will operate from September 2011 to the end of March 2012.

The energy champion role

As an energy champion you will be expected to attend an energy awareness event locally that will provide you with an overview of fuel poverty and energy efficiency issues and help you to understand how, through the promotion of simple messages rural households living in fuel poverty can improve their homes and comfort levels. There will be ample opportunity for champions to ask questions about how to identify and assist households in need at the event.

As an energy champion you are not expected to be an expert on fuel poverty or energy efficiency issues but rather be someone with enthusiasm, who is willing to integrate the promotion of simple energy efficiency messages into their day-to-day work with local people.

NEA will provide each champion with an information pack containing a simple “*top tips*” guide to promote to households which also contains signposting information on further sources of local advice and assistance. This can be used with individuals or in group settings.

Following the awareness event and throughout the project low-level mentoring support will be available from a nominated member of NEA staff for each energy champion. This specialist support will help champions to address any issues raised by householders and/or provide guidance on signposting of households into available services to meet their needs.

NEA expects that the time commitment for energy champions will be minimal. Each champion will be expected to attend the initial awareness event, attend two local catch-up meetings and maintain intermittent contact (by phone) with their NEA mentor. All champions will be expected to keep a simple tick-box record (a record log will be provided by NEA) of how many households they have engaged and which of the top tips they discussed. Champions will also be expected to complete a quick CORE survey at the end of the project.

NEA will offer one champion the opportunity to undertake further training for a recognised energy advice qualification (City & Guilds Energy Awareness 6281-01 course). NEA will cover all training and certification costs. The selected champion/organisation will be expected to cover travel and expenses costs for this 4-day training.

Your energy champion commitment - summary

NEA expects that energy champions will be expected to:

- Attend an energy awareness event to learn more about basic energy efficiency issues
- Integrate and promote simple energy efficiency messages and top tips to at least 15 local residents using the resources provided by NEA
- Maintain monthly telephone contact with an NEA mentor for guidance, assistance and for project updates.
- Attend short two catch-up meetings with NEA mentors
- Complete and return a simple tick-box record log detailing how many householders have been engaged during the project period and the information provided to them
- Participate in an end of project survey

Please note that aside from friends and family contact with local residents will be in community settings as appropriate. Energy champions are not expected to cold call any local residents and are not expected to incur any costs other than their own time.

NEA's commitment to energy champions – summary

NEA will support energy champions by:

- Inviting them to an energy awareness event and providing a certificate of attendance
- Providing a resource pack containing a simple 'top tips' information and signposting resource to aid promotion and other resources
- Offering ongoing low-level mentoring support and guidance by phone
- Hosting two catch-up mentoring sessions
- Providing two email briefings on CORE and other developments
- Providing a simple tick-box record log to capture feedback on activity
- Undertaking a short evaluation survey
- NEA will also provide **one** selected champion with the opportunity of gaining a recognised energy advice qualification (see conditions above).