

# Winter Warmth Partnership Project Report April 2012

## Summary

In order to obtain funding for Peterborough's Winter Warmth Partnership from the WHHP fund various specifications were set for the project under the following categories; Proposal Details, Project Aims, Stakeholder Engagement, Targeting, Strategic Fit, Delivery, Project Costs and Milestones. This report intends to describe how the specifications were met.

## Introduction

The Winter Warmth Partnership was a project funded by the Warm Homes, Healthy People fund supplied by the Department of Health. Peterborough City Council (PCC) applied for £60,000 of funding during December 2011 in order to coordinate a three month project between four main partners: Peterborough City Council, Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), The Salvation Army (TSA) and Age UK.

The main aim of the project was to address the problem of excess winter deaths (EWD) within Peterborough which have averaged 86 EWD's during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 winters \*. Elderly and vulnerable adults were the targeted for help using criteria set out in the fund application form: over 75 years old, frail, arthritis, limited mobility, at risk of falls, fuel poor, and elderly living alone. The project also aimed to increase existing service capacity where it was needed and improve partnership working to provide a more holistic service for vulnerable and elderly adults within Peterborough.

The partnership was lead by two Winter Warmth Project Officers employed by PECT who would co-ordinate services, direct a media campaign, run an advice hotline and carry out home visits. The Salvation Army was to provide general support and extend its existing Good Neighbours Scheme, Age UK were to provide benefits advice, an emergency shopping service, and general support, and PCC would oversee the project and utilise its existing Handyman and Care and Repair Services.

Funding was received in January 2012 and Winter Warmth Project Officers were in place by 23rd January 2012.

All the following delivery targets had to be completed by March 31st 2012 and due to funding allocation at very short notice, the project could only commence from January 23rd 2012. Therefore the all the targets had to be completed within a 10 week time span.

- Deliver a citywide public facing campaign
- Provide a Winter Warmth telephone support line for 12 weeks
- Support 250 older people in addressing fuel poverty and cold homes
- Provide a shopping service for 60 vulnerable older people unable to leave their homes in cold weather
- Train 30 volunteers and support workers in warm homes advice and information
- Hold a summit with representatives from key statutory and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) agencies to instigate development of a co-ordinated response to fuel poverty and cold homes. Including improved information sharing to safeguard vulnerable adults by ensuring they are receiving available support to prevent cold homes and fuel poverty.

The following were predicted key milestones, again due to the nature of the funding allocation the achievement dates were not realistic however all key milestones were reached before 31st March 2012.

- Launch of Winter Warmth public campaign, reaching Peterborough residents through billboards, radio, web, and mail shot leaflets: w/c 16th January 2012  
**Actual Date 23rd March 2012.**
- First Home Visits by Winter Warmth team: w/c 30th January 2012
- Actual Date 9th February 2012.**
- Training Delivered to 30 volunteers: w/c 12th March 2012  
**Actual Date 21st February and 16th March 2012.**

- Winter Warmth Summit with representation from key stakeholder groups: w/c 12th March 2012 **Actual Date 26th March 2012.**
- 300 vulnerable adults supported by the Winter Warmth team by 31st March.

### Finance (Project Costs)

The total funding received for the Winter Warmth Partnership bid was £60,000. For the allocation of funding see figure 1 (see appendix) and all of this funding was spent.

The project also received an additional £40,000 of funding from PCC, which was used for providing Boiler Gas Fire services for over 70 home owners in within the council boundary. This formed a significant part of the projects success and is discussed further in key achievements. It is worth noting a further £20,000 could potentially have been spent on providing more of these services had the project been fully operational sooner.

The short term nature of the project was also restrictive in terms of obtaining extra financial resources from partner's particularly larger public bodies such as the council and the PCT. This is due to the various processes that have to be undertaken to access resources and due to the difficulty in being able to provide accurate measurable outcomes on an annual or quarterly basis.

If future funding were available, all the partners in this project agree that there would be scope to spend more, particularly if such projects were to include targeting the vulnerable in general not primarily the elderly i.e. children, single parent families, disabled.

### Marketing (Targeting)

Marketing for this project was at times challenging. This was mostly due to the circumstances of those members of society we were targeting. The most vulnerable and elderly people do not tend to have established social networks (family and

friends), they are less likely to be receiving appropriate state benefits, in many cases they may rarely leave their house.

As a result we decided to adopt a multi-faceted approach our marketing and use a variety of mediums to raise awareness and to publicise the services available to help particularly the Winter Warmth Hotline.

Throughout the campaign we utilised;

- Local radio 'Radio Cambridgeshire'
- The newspaper 'Peterborough Evening Telegraph' (see fig 3 in appendix)
- Targeted leaflet drop to 25,000 homes
- Poster and leaflet distribution to local organisations
- Promotional stands at Queensgate, ASDA and Sainsbury's
- Viral e-mails to partners and relevant professionals
- Online platforms including websites of partner organisations, blogs, facebook and twitter (see fig 4 in appendix)

By marketing this way we increased our chances of reaching those most isolated, if not directly via friends, family, neighbours and supporting services. Our experiences highlighted the value of face to face contact in reaching these people as in these cases referrals to the appropriate services are far more likely to occur than if the individual is left to make contact themselves.

We also found the mailing campaign worked well. This involved using census data made available by the council to target postcode areas of the city that had a high elderly population and/or lived in aging housing stock. Although the overall response from the number of leaflets was relatively low those who did respond were exactly the group we were targeting and were most in need of our help and services.

At the beginning in January early February we were often met with scepticism from the public who maybe believed there was some form of significant cost involved with our service or simply did not recognise project as an established trusted brand. Towards the end of the project we began to receive many more enquiries via word of mouth, again these enquiries were very often exactly who we were trying to target.

Unfortunately the project had to draw to a close just as the brand and hotline number were becoming known and trusted.

As mentioned above short term nature of the project hindered our ability to obtain NHS and PCC data to measure our overall impact on reducing excess winter deaths. Such data will be available later in the year, but could not be utilised for the marketing purposes of the project.

## Key Achievements

The main achievements of the project were:

A media campaign outlining the difficulties many elderly and vulnerable adults experience during cold weather and advertising the Winter Warmth Partnership ran throughout project.

The Winter Warmth Hotline was set up at the beginning of the project and advertised heavily during the media campaign. The Winter Warmth Officers took over 400 calls over the duration of the project. Each caller was informed of the services available within the city, how to access them, and offered a home visit by the Winter Warmth Officers. Where possible, callers were encouraged to give out their details over the phone so that they could be referred for relevant services by the Winter Warmth Officers. A database of relevant contacts was also created so that phone numbers could be passed on to those callers who did not want to disclose leave their personal details. Each service that was referred was free with the exception of the PCC Handyman scheme which required materials to be bought by the client while labour was free-of-charge to the client.

An estimated total of 270 older people were supported by the hotline and 54 home visits were carried out by the Winter Warmth Officers. Home visits were particularly successful as clients received more personal advice within their own homes making referrals more appropriate. People were also more receptive to advice and help during visits. Clients were advised on a wide variety of issues such as energy bills and changing tariffs, how to read bills and meters, simple energy-saving measures, and how to use heating controls appropriately. Each home visit resulted in at least one referral to another service and many people received help for installation of wet rooms,

boiler and central heating repairs, installation of new central heating and boilers, electrical and plumbing repairs, and other home adaptations. Trained volunteers also continued to carry out home visits for their respective charities reaching an unknown number of elderly and vulnerable adults.

An estimated 120 people received advice from talks at community clubs and the Winter Warmth Stand. An unknown number of people will have received advice from the case studies and stories published in the Evening Telegraph newspaper, radio interviews and other media. The media campaign also emphasised the important role of families and neighbours in helping vulnerable people in their community.

A total of 9 people were referred for a free shopping service through TSA. The main reasons that the full target of 60 referrals was not met are: no prolonged period of cold weather (TSA and Age UK were inundated with shopping requests in the past two winters), a desire to remain independent, and people already receiving help from family and neighbours. To further prevent slips, trips and falls clients were encouraged to add their names to the wheelie bin collection service from PCC; 32 people have added their names so far this year.

30 volunteers were trained in home energy advice: 23 volunteers from TSA Befriending Scheme were trained by an in-house trainer and the Winter Warmth Officers, and 7 volunteers from the Red Cross Home from Hospital Scheme were trained by a professional trainer at PECT. During each training session other city-wide services were explained and the method of referral for each service so that volunteers could refer clients to services directly.

A final summit was held on 26th March with 26 representatives from 14 organisations. The summit was titled "Launch of Peterborough Cold Weather Network" and consisted of a number of networking and gap analysis tasks in addition to talks from Ian Abbott-Donnelly (IBM, Smarter Cities, Green Cities), Andy Liggins (Director of Public Health, Peterborough), and Eileen La Voi (Safe Local Trades, Peterborough). The main aim of the summit was to draw together the relevant players within Peterborough in order to create a larger network of resources and services. Feedback from summit was good and it created an enthusiasm to carry the project through to next winter and create a cold or extreme weather network.

## Legacies

The main legacy that the Winter Warmth Partnership hopes to leave Peterborough is improved partnership working with the creation of a Cold Weather Network. While the feedback from the summit was overwhelmingly positive and many people were enthusiastic about the creation of a network of services, it would require another similar project next year in order to co-ordinate and expand on the successes of this year.

A major outcome of the summit was the need for a central directory of services in Peterborough that voluntary, public and private sector organisations can use to refer clients.

Volunteers who have been trained in home energy advice will continue to visit elderly and vulnerable adults within their own homes.

A free boiler and gas fire service provided by PCC was extremely successful and left a long-term legacy for the city. The service targeted homeowners over 70 living in Peterborough and included repairs to boilers and gas fires up to £500 and another free service in 12 months. In total over 150 boilers and 120 gas fires were serviced reaching over 240 households in Peterborough; the full £40,000 of funding was spent and significantly more could have been spent if time and fund were available. As a result over 40 boilers were repaired, at least 5 boilers were condemned and replaced, and 3 gas fires were condemned and capped potentially saving each client from carbon monoxide poisoning and other health risks.

Finally, word-of-mouth became an increasingly important method of advertising towards the end of the project. The information and advice given to each person contacted by the Winter Warmth Partnership will be passed on to family, friends and neighbours. A similar project next year would improve this vitally important method of communication improving the legacy left for the city of Peterborough.

## Unexpected Achievements

The Winter Warmth Partnership was able to both improve partnership working between the main partners, in addition to reaching new partners such as The Red Cross, DIAL, Anglian Water and Safe Local Trades. Each of these organisations provided essential services and resources that the partnership was able to utilise: 32 were referred to the Anglian Water Bits and Bobs scheme saving each client around £40/year on water bills, 10 were referred to the Red Cross Home from Hospital Scheme, and DIAL were able to utilise their benefits advice service. It would be important to include such organisations in future bids so that their services can be used to the fullest extent.

A major part of the Winter Warmth Partnership was free boiler and gas fire services to over 70's offered by PCC. PCC were able to gain an extra £40,000 of funding as a result of the Winter Warmth Partnership and was advertised in the local Evening Telegraph. The adverts produced a huge response from the public who were all directed to the Winter Warmth Hotline. While taking details for the boiler and gas fire services, callers were also advised about and referred to other services from the Winter Warmth Partnership. Many callers were in need of help but did not know that it was available.

## Partnerships (Stakeholder Engagement)

The ethos of the Winter Warmth Project was based on partnership working as alluded to throughout the report; a number of partnerships were developed throughout the campaign. Below is an overview of the invaluable contributions of our key partners and a list of many other organisations involved in the 10 week project from private, public and voluntary sectors.

### Bid Partners

Peterborough City Council – contributed significant funds for the boiler and gas fire services. The Housing Need, Care and Repair and Handyman departments gave support and advice to guide the project at a strategic level building on experience from many previous public facing campaigns. We found much of our activity to be mutually beneficial for example we publicised and increased the use of council services that



were in need of the extra demand. Equally PECT could provide a flexible service to visit and advice on domestic energy efficiency measures and act as extra capacity to field calls and record data. The council also helped with various material resources such as energy efficient light bulbs from previous council campaigns, census and mapping data and stands and leaflets. Finally the council were a key partner for their strong trusted brand and familiar local numbers and webpages.

The Salvation Army – contributed substantial manpower from the head office on Bourges Boulevard, especially the befriending team throughout the 10 weeks. The Salvation Army provided 23 volunteers for training, made regular referrals to the hotline, helped man our promotional stand in the Queensgate. Again we found the promotional stands to be mutually beneficial allowing the SA to publicise its services and even recruit more volunteers. We had access to their day centres and lunch clubs for talks and interaction. The head office facilities were also used to host The Peterborough Cold Weather Network event, lending use of a wealth of electronic equipment, conference space, catering and much more.

Age UK – contributed considerable resources during difficult economic constraints. Age UK provided a free emergency heater loan service, delivering right to the door of elderly people who had insufficient heating during the cold weather. They had an emergency shopping team on standby to help people in snowy and icy conditions. They also provided extra capacity via referrals for benefits advice and help with home adaptations. Age UK has national identity as a brand for the elderly they are respected and trusted and provided the project with a wealth of informative literature for public distribution.

## Case Studies

In order to emphasise the effectiveness of partnership working in this project below are two examples of real case studies encountered by the Winter Warmth campaign.

1. Mrs Saunders Vergette Street

On 22nd March, a female resident phoned the Winter Warmth Hotline in response to an article about free boiler and gas fire servicing. On calling the hotline, the Winter Warmth Officers, Tom and Jon were able to advise the resident on a number of other services available. In order to follow up the enquiry and speak to the resident personally; a home visit was arranged.

Meanwhile, the free boiler service was carried out by Jones Heating, a local contractor fully vetted by Peterborough City Council. The servicing was also funded by the council. On servicing the boiler, the engineers found that it was unsafe to use and would need replacing. The case was referred to Peterborough City Council's Care and Repair scheme who also visited the property. They were able to address a number of issues including replacing damp proof coursing, rotten window frames, installation of a wet room and a new boiler free of charge.

When the Winter Warmth Officers carried out the home assessment and discussed the client's needs with her, it was immediately apparent she would benefit from a number of our partner services. The front door was often draughty and needed draught proofing, this was referred to the Peterborough

City Council Handyman Scheme. Additionally, the resident has never received any benefits other than her state pension and was in need of some alterations to her home. The Winter Warmth Officers were therefore able to refer the case to Age UK who provided free benefits advice and advised on how the client could improve her home by installing handles and mobility aids. Having been recently discharged from hospital, the Winter Warmth Officers were also able to refer the resident to the Red Cross Home from Hospital Scheme as she expressed difficulty in adapting to home life again. The client and her son were also very interested in the befriending service offered by the Salvation Army as she found it difficult to leave the house and would enjoy some company.

Having completed the referrals her son expressed his thanks saying it would mean he could continue to work while knowing his mother was being looked after. The client herself was overwhelmed with all the help and support she was entitled to; "I think I must have been living on another planet to not know this help existed". This case is a great example of the value of partnership working; from one simple boiler referral

PECT, Salvation Army, PCC, Red Cross, Jones Heating and Age UK all contributed their services.

## 2. Mr Smith Mount Steven Avenue

Mr Smith saw our article in the evening telegraph in early February. Mr Smith was reluctant to cause a fuss but wanted to enquire and ask what the project was about. I explained that we could book a visit to discuss and advise him on his energy bills and keeping warm in the home. I arranged to visit with a colleague from the SA. On the visit it became clear Mr Smith had no central heating downstairs only a damaged boiler and a couple of radiators. He lived in a privately rented, solid wall, single glazed property and took an electric plug-in fan heater from room to room, because Mr Smith was also on an electric pre-payment meter his electric bills were completely unmanageable.

During the visit I was able to educate Mr Smith on practical tips and behavioural changes to save money and improve his health. I was also able to explain the various energy discounts available to him and Paul from the SA explained how he could help him apply for extra financial support to keep up his art class at a local college.

Upon return to the office I could begin referring Mr Smith to our partner's services.

- Anglian Water's 'love every drop scheme' for a free plumber visit to convert him to a water meter and install free water saving devices around the house.
- The Council Care and Repair Scheme to arrange an insulation assessment from Arran Services, to top up loft insulation and provide advice on solid wall insulation measures.
- The Council Handyman scheme to help Mr Smith with repairs around the house.
- The Council could also assist Mr Smith's Landlord with boiler repairs and installing a new radiator.
- Such activity also helped convince Mr Smith's landlord the value in converting Mr Smith's energy meters from prepayment to standard.
- Age UK visited Mr Smith to discuss his financial situation and help him apply for extra support from benefits.

I called Mr Smith later in March to check everything was progressing as planned and to arrange to drop off some energy efficient light bulbs. He was very thankful for the help he has received from the partnership;

“I’m over the moon, since you visited everything’s started, I now have the confidence to speak to my Landlord about my heating”.

Mr Smith was one of many people reached by the project and despite his initial reluctance to call he now has renewed confidence and he is a perfect example of how partnership working and effective referrals can ensure those in need are receiving all the support they are entitled to without damaging their pride and independence.

## Evaluation

The overwhelming conclusion is the project was a big success. The aims and targets of the project were met despite significant time constraints.

Having interacted with hundreds of Peterborough’s elderly and vulnerable residents we have identified several key findings that seem to make a significant impact on the health and well-being of those we were targeting.

- Tariffs – many of the people we encountered were very resistant to changing energy providers, either because they were familiar with their current set up or they had bad experiences (heard of) of switching. We found in most cases people could make big savings without swapping but by changing/adapting their tariff. This sometimes meant changing meters or payment plans, but sometimes merely required a phone call enquiring about the latest and most suitable tariffs. Green Energy Switch was also of use for those people who had internet access and were comfortable with online interaction.
- There was wide spread difficulty in understanding domestic energy supply, even from volunteers and professionals involved in the project. It is quite apparent that meters, bills and payment tariffs need to be simplified for consumers, in many instances it is simply confusion or ignorance that has led to problems managing energy payments.
- The importance of savings in other areas i.e. water. With resources becoming more scarce on the planet prices for home energy are predicted to continue to rise in the foreseeable future, therefore we see the value in adapting behaviours and maximising sustainable sources of energy. This project in

- particular found helping people with their water meter could produce savings to counter act expensive gas and electric bills.
- Knowing who to contact
- There is already a wealth of services around Peterborough tackling the issues this project focused on. In some cases overlapping each other in terms of service provision. One example of this is the befriending services. As a result of activities at the summit we found SA, Age UK, Red Cross and Vivacity are all providing a befriending service, often to capacity, therefore they will seek to establish a befriending forum to ensure by grouping together they can meet demand across the city more effectively.

## Future Recommendations

Running alongside existing services particularly if they are under used was mutually beneficial particularly with the council it also helps leave a legacy if such services continue to be used long after a particular campaign or project runs out.

There is a clear necessity for funding of such a project next year, especially if there is appropriate preparation time to effectively plan and target. At this planning stage extra resources and access to information particularly from the NHS/PCT's would be very useful in ensuring effective large scale targeting.

Discussions with partners often raised the question of whether there should be a combined project with excess summer deaths to combat preventable mortality and illness all year round now that our temperate climate is becoming more extreme for both hot and cold weather.

Extending the scope of such projects to tackle vulnerable people in general to include single parent families, people with severe disabilities and children living in deprivation. These people can often be missed for example The SA experienced younger adults in desperate need of food parcels during the cold weather insinuating they too are making the choice between whether to 'heat or eat'.

There is a very apparent need for establishing a health/social care network in an effort to target the most vulnerable in society. Perhaps developing a central hub to field calls and referrals and utilising tools such as generic citywide assessment form and

manipulating data in manner similar to that demonstrated by IBM in their smarter cities initiative.

Advertising the project to the target audience was a particular challenge. Vulnerable and elderly people can become isolated from the rest of the community and do not use a wide range of social media. Using a variety of marketing resources such as in-house advertising at local organisations and community groups, newspapers reports and radio broadcasts, and face-to-face communication at events aimed to capture interest from all sources. As well as targeting elderly and vulnerable adults themselves, it became ever more apparent that family, friends and neighbours should also be targeted to advertise by word-of-mouth.

One of the main problems encountered during the marketing was that many people believed there was a 'catch' or a fee to pay for services. Another major problem was the idea that there were stringent criteria that had to be met before any help became available. In future schemes the project may be marketed to emphasise that the services really are free with no hidden costs, and that the criteria for getting help is focused on individual circumstances rather than only those that are over 75 or have arthritis and so on.

Overall the feedback was very positive, both from the partners involved with the project, and the clients that received help. Especially towards the end of the project the hotline received 12 calls from clients calling to pass on their thanks at the help and support they received. One complaint was received from a client who received £520 of repairs to her boiler and was required to pay £20 to cover expenses as part of the PCC boiler service scheme. This complaint was dealt with accordingly and was an anomaly regarding the scheme and project as a whole.

Similarly other organisations involved with the project reported that this was a much needed service within Peterborough and that drawing resources and services from all areas would be extremely beneficial to both the organisations and their clients. The main partners to the project also commented how they had been able to refer their clients to each other's services and reached a much wider client-base. Partnership

working is often perceived to be inefficient and add to the workload of people who are often volunteers or are already at maximum capacity for their organisation. However the referral process between partners within this project ran smoothly and appeared to add very little to the workload of both individuals and organisations as a whole.

**“Thank you for all the help, time and advice you gave me.**

**My life, comfort and savings are about 40% more comfortable thanks to you and for linking me up with Age Concern.**

**I feel like I have ‘won the pools’ and I am eternally grateful. “**

**Charlie, Walton**