

AFFORDABLE WARMTH AND EXCESS WINTER DEATHS – PROGRESS UPDATE

Report of the Head of Housing Support and Community Living

1 Introduction

1.1 A presentation was given to the Adults' Partnership Board in May 2014, setting out the current position with the city's approach to Affordable Warmth, the levels of fuel poverty that exist and the current position with excess winter deaths.

1.2 On the back of the presentation and the subsequent discussion at the Board it was agreed that a multi-agency Affordable Warmth Steering Group would be set up. The purpose of the Steering Group would be to ensure the development of an Affordable Warmth Strategy and Plan and to ensure that agreed objectives and outcomes are delivered against.

Furthermore it was agreed that the Steering Group would report to the Adults Partnership Board, on a bi-annual basis and also to the Health and Well-being Board.

2 Progress to date

2.1 An Affordable Warmth Steering Group has been established with membership from key agencies e.g.

- Sunderland CCG
- Age UK
- City Council – People Services, Public Health, Policy
- City Hospitals
- GPs
- Warm Up North (British Gas)
- Gentoo
- South Tyneside Foundation Trust

2.2 The Group has agreed a Terms of Reference (see attached), which sets out the outputs and outcomes for the Group.

2.3 A 'Task and Finish Group' has been set up to develop the Affordable Warmth Strategy and Plan and this is well advanced and should be available in draft form by the end of December.

Notwithstanding the need to develop the Strategy an early priority for the Steering Group was to consider what actions could be taken to help reduce excess winter deaths, particularly focusing on those people with long-term conditions. It is pleasing to say that the work of the group has resulted in bids being made to the CCG which have been successful. One bid for £6K to do work with GP surgeries in the North Area linked to the flu jab campaign; and another bid from Age UK for £100k to help keep people warm and safe over the winter and prevent hospital admissions will both help those with long-term conditions. The latter bid also includes an amount for energy solutions for those most in need that may need a boiler repair or a new boiler installing. It is proposed that we combine this with the Council's Hardship Fund thus providing a useful sum of money that can be used to make a real difference to affordable warmth and fuel poverty for those most in need in the city.

- 3.0 In addition to developing the Strategy and ensuring outputs and outcomes are actioned, the Steering Group will also monitor the progress of initiatives such as Warm Up North and Collective Switching and the impact that they are having on affordable warmth and fuel poverty. Updates on both of the initiatives will be provided at the meeting.
- 4.0 In conclusion, it is hoped that having a multi-agency approach to affordable warmth will enable a 'whole system' approach to be developed which will result in positive outcomes for the city's residents and reductions in health and social care spend, as well as the environmental benefits that will accrue.
- 5.0 The Board is asked to note the progress made to date.