



Progress in Practice

Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme

Easington Primary Care Trust, in partnership with the District of Easington Council, are providing warmer homes on prescription to people with cold-related ill health problems by making them a priority for home insulation.

Summary

The Warmer Homes on Prescription scheme aims to reduce the incidence of cold-related diseases, such as arthritis, in Easington, County Durham, through providing warm homes for patients suffering from such illnesses. The scheme is led by Easington Primary Care Trust (PCT), and allows GPs and other medical professionals to make referrals for patients suffering from cold-related problems to have their homes insulated by Easington Council as a priority. The PCT has contributed funding for insulation to be fitted, allowing the council to act faster to insulate the homes of patients referred by the scheme.

In addition to the health benefits gained from better insulated and subsequently warmer homes, patients may also experience reduced heating bills through reduced fuel use. Good insulation can lead to a decrease in fuel use, which has additional positive impacts on the environment, by reducing pollution and carbon emissions. Improving the health of people suffering from cold-related illness reduces avoidable need for healthcare within Easington and frees up resources to be used for health improvement schemes such as Warmer Homes.

Since the initial pilot of the campaign at six GP surgeries in Easington in 2003, the scheme has been so successful that it has been expanded to all GP surgeries and Social Services teams in Easington.

"We have been amazed by the number of referrals received. Everyone involved understands the health benefits of having warmer homes and is very willing to help patients. Almost 300 vulnerable people have been provided with warmer homes through the scheme, helping to alleviate their cold-related health problems."

Cliff Duff, Energy Conservation Officer



"I no longer have to sleep in extra clothing, and my arthritic pains are lessened by warmer temperatures in my home." Patient who has benefited from the Warmer Homes on Prescription scheme.

Strategic Learning

- Partnership working and a shared vision between Easington PCT, the District of Easington Council and Easington GP surgeries has been vital to the success of the scheme.
- Enabling GPs and healthcare professionals to influence wider determinants of health, such as housing, can improve the health of the local population and make best use of NHS resources.

Links and organisations involved: Easington Primary Care Trust www.easington-pct.nhs.uk; District of Easington Council www.easington.gov.uk

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