

Practical support to help people stay warm and well in North Yorkshire

Wellbeing support through Warm & Well in North Yorkshire creates warmer homes and improves overall health.

What help was needed?

Cheryl had been to see Selby Citizens Advice about her finances. They referred her to Warm & Well in North Yorkshire after discovering her boiler had been broken for around 8 months.

The broken boiler had resulted in a build-up of electricity debt due to reliance on electric plug-in heaters. Cheryl suffers from underlying health conditions and can only work one hour per day so relies on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Child Benefit as her only income which had contributed to the accrual of electricity arrears, amounting to £1,122 and increasing.

Cheryl's village has no gas supply so the home is heated by oil. In order to have a new boiler fitted, there needed to be oil in the tank. The cost for this needed to be paid upfront which Cheryl was unable to afford.

We looked at countless options for a replacement boiler. Firstly, we applied for Npower's Health through Warmth scheme which Cheryl was accepted due to having a health condition that gets worse in the cold. However, after the surveyor came round, they said that they couldn't help her anymore as their oil contractor in the area was no longer operating. Both we and Cheryl then contacted countless installers who had ECO funding but had no success,



Warm & Well in North Yorkshire

despite numerous surveyor visits to her home. No-one would help as her boiler was oil (but the swap could have been done if the boiler had been gas).

Eventually we referred Cheryl to Selby District Council's home improvement loan scheme. They have given her an interest free loan. This means that a new oil boiler has been fitted at no charge and the cost will be paid back as and when the house is sold.



We paid for a 500 litre delivery of oil so that Cheryl's new boiler could be installed.

When we first visited Cheryl in October 2019 she had already built-up significant electricity arrears which increased again by November. We realised her

ongoing electricity use was so high due to the reliance on electric heaters. We applied to the Npower Energy Fund for help with the arrears and she was granted a provisional award. This gives Cheryl a chance to start again with her electric now that the new boiler is fitted and her electric use will reduce dramatically. We will also help her to get onto a cheaper rate now she is no longer in arrears.

The project also told Cheryl that she qualified for the Warm Homes Discount and helped her with an application. In addition to this, Selby Citizens Advice helped her to apply for Universal Credit which she now receives, significantly increasing her household income.



How did Warm & Well in North Yorkshire help?

A new boiler has been fitted to help reduce energy costs as well as help with reduction in electricity arrears.

Having made 3 monthly payments, the Npower Energy Fund confirmed their grant and wiped out her arrears of around £1600. This means we can now help Cheryl get onto a cheaper energy rate.

Cheryl and her son's health and wellbeing has been significantly improved. Her home is warmer and she has a significant increase in her income.

Cheryl says: "[It's amazing] to be able to have a shower and wash your hair and get the shampoo out before water goes freezing cold and have a warm bathroom when you come out. My son doesn't have as many asthma attacks now, I don't have as many flare ups. We'd forgotten what it was like to be warm.

"There were that many places advertising [free boilers] so I thought it would be quite easy but it wasn't. It was so frustrating to not be able to find anyone who would supply an oil boiler, everyone you called would come out, still insist they would do it and then say sorry 'we don't have any engineers in your area'. At least 5 engineers came out and 4 promised me help over the phone. They were wasting my time, would say they could do it but would say we had to do loft insulation or floor insulation first which we didn't need.

"I would go down the garden to get sticks for our fire and we had to use electric heaters.

"Having the electric sorted is a huge relief as well as getting the oil delivered. [The boiler installers] said I had to have a tank of oil when they came to fit the boiler and you helped with that. I just don't know what I would have done without you. The oil should see us through for a while as we don't need the heating on as much now. We already feel a big difference in temperature."



Warm & Well in North Yorkshire is a project managed by Community First Yorkshire.



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