

WELCOME TO

COSY CAN



Welcome to the first Winter newsletter from CAN aimed at sharing tips on energy efficiency, keeping warm as well as publicising some of the fantastic events going on around the county as part of our Warm Hubs scheme.

'Warm Hubs': are places and organisations within the local community where people can be assured of finding a safe, warm and friendly environment in which to enjoy refreshments, receive help, advice and information and the company of other people. We have 20 organisations across Northumberland signed up to the Warm Hub way of working.

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Preparing for Winter

By Christine Nicholls, CAN



Here are some top tips for keeping your home warm in preparation for winter.

1.

Here's how to keep your house warm with some easy foil insulation. Cover a thin sheet of card with tinfoil and place it behind your radiators (if you're feeling particularly crafty you can make it T-shaped so it sits on your radiator brackets). It'll reflect the heat back into your rooms, meaning they warm up faster and retain more heat. If DIY isn't your thing, you can also buy ready-made foil insulation. Or contact Christine at CAN for free reflective radiator panels.

2.

Pipe lagging (insulating hot water pipes with foam tubes) keeps the water inside your pipes hotter for longer and protects against the cold. It also makes your heating and hot water much more efficient. You can buy pipe lagging from any DIY store and fit it in seconds, no tools required.

3.

If your home has a draught, patch it up. Filling in the gaps around windows and doors can help you save on your heating bills, so spending a few pounds on window draught excluder – an insulating tape – is a great investment. Fitting it is a breeze too, just make sure it sits snugly. Don't cover up vents though!

4.

Check your radiators are heating to the top. If they aren't, the chances are you need to bleed your radiator. It sounds a bit medieval, but all it means is releasing the trapped air at the top, which is stopping the hot water from rising. Simply use a radiator bleed key (about £1 in any DIY shop) to open the little valve at the top. You'll hear air hiss and as soon as you see a drip of water, close it up again. Bingo. Energy-efficient radiators. Don't bleed your radiators while the central heating is running though.

5.

Boilers, like people, like to be looked after. Give yours an annual service and it will last longer and work more efficiently – if you don't, it could cost you money, it isn't too bad if the heating breaks down in the summer but in the winter it can be dangerous. Don't forget, it's vital that you use a Registered Engineer.

6.

You won't be surprised to learn that lots of warmth escapes from your home through the windows. If you've got curtains, close them before darkness hits or while you're out of the house and keep that lovely heat where it should be – inside. Better still get yourself a pair of thermal curtain or liners.

Wooden floors might look lovely but they can also let heat escape from right under your feet. Putting down a warm rug covers up the gaps and ensures your toes stay toasty.

7.

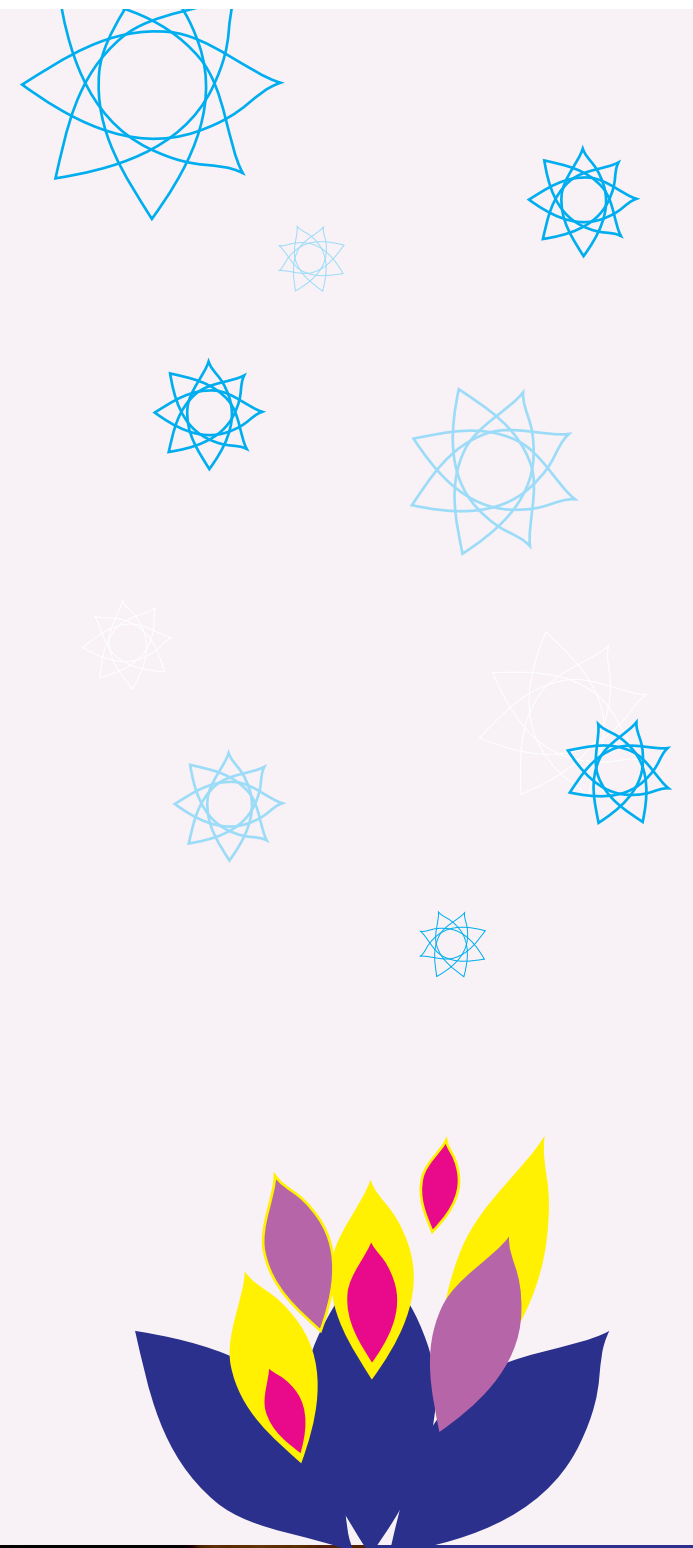
It's easy to turn the thermostat all the way up when it's freezing cold but what temperature should your house be? Aim to set your main room thermostat somewhere between 18°C and 21°C. Having your home heated at less than 18 degrees can affect your health, if you have limited mobility, set the temperature up to 23, but over 24 degrees can also be detrimental to your health.

8.

Carbon monoxide monitors are essential if you burn any type of combustible fuel, Oil. Gas. LPG, Coal or Logs. If you have more than one storey to your house you need more than one monitor, follow the instructions on the packet for fixing and locating. Contact Christine Nicholls at CAN for a free monitor while they are still available!

9.

Clear gutters and drains from a build-up of leaves or debris.



Spotlight on..... Berwick Voluntary Forum Warm Hub

Fiona Calder runs the Berwick Warm Hub which has been running successfully for two years. Here we ask her the secrets of their Hub's success!

Tell us a bit about your Warm Hub.

The Berwick Warm Hub was originally developed to support the North Northumberland branch of the Royal British Legion. The RBL had identified that they needed to establish a presence within the community and had tried to hold a number of drop-in sessions in Berwick. Unfortunately these drop-in sessions hadn't been as successful as they had hoped. The North Northumberland Voluntary Forum approached the RBL with a view to work in partnership to help engage with the local community. Roughly at the same time the Warm Hub Project was established and it made sense to develop a monthly drop-in Warm Hub in partnership with the RBL which was to be known as The Warm Hub NAAFI Break. The Warm hub is open to all serving members of the Armed Forces, ex-veterans, friends and family with a variety of age ranges and both male and female attending. We have had children as young as 8 years old attending with their parents, teenagers and ex-veterans as old as 93. I would probably say that a vast majority of those that attend regularly are male but it really does depend month on month.

How many people come through your doors?

On average we have between 20 and 25 people attending the monthly Warm Hub.

How often and when do you run your Warm Hub?

The Warm Hub is held on the first Tuesday of

every month however we are looking into extending this.

What sort of activities do you put on?

At the beginning the main focus was to offer a warm and safe environment where people can meet and talk about their lives in the armed forces. The Royal British Legion were on hand to offer Welfare information and promote the role of the legion in the community. We have since moved on from there and we try and have a difference theme each month. We have invited guest speakers to do short presentations about a chosen subject or national campaign.

The Warm Hub has enjoyed talks about "SCAMs" from Citizens Advice, energy saving advice and tips to stay warm during the winter from Christine Nicholls at CAN, a talk about New Zealand from one of the volunteers, various quiz sessions, monthly raffle, craft fair and also a running programme is scheduled for the New Year around the introduction of universal credit and various benefit allowances that are claimable.

What food do you serve?

During the spring and summer we provide hot and cold drinks along with buttered toast that always goes down well mid-morning. We also have a selection of cakes, scones and biscuits. When the weather starts to turn cold we provide hot lentil soup with a buttered roll which is

supplied by a local sandwich shop.

How has the Hub helped local people?

The Warm Hub has now become part of some people's routine and they look forward to seeing their new friends on a monthly basis. One lady who had felt extremely isolated after her husband died and moving to the area fell upon the Warm Hub by accident. She was walking past the building and noticed the signs on the window and called in. At first she was reluctant to join in but one of the Warm Hub volunteers encouraged her to have a cup of tea and sat chatting to her for a while. Since then this lady has developed new friendships and is now helping to plan an extension of the Warm Hub with new activities.



What lessons have you learnt in setting up this Hub? Any advice for new Hubs?

One of the main things I have learnt is to value and support our volunteers. Without them giving up their valuable time it would not be possible to run a Warm Hub as it certainly can't be done by one person. We have volunteers who put up posters, promote events on social media, welcome new visitors into the Warm Hub, make the tea and one who just simply likes to tidy

away afterwards - each one plays a vital role that enables the Warm Hub to function smoothly.

What are the benefits of working with CAN and Warm Hubs?

Prior to becoming a Warm Hub Christine Nicholls arranged for an energy audit to be carried out throughout the Voluntary Centre. A number of issues were raised and through funding we applied for the vast majority of our lighting to be replaced with LED lighting units. In addition to this LED lighting a smart meter was installed and we can now monitor our energy usage remotely. The LED lighting has greatly reduced our electricity costs and we plan to replace the remaining lighting shortly enabling an even bigger saving in outgoings.

Being a Warm Hub has enabled us to take advantage of various training opportunities and we have found that gaining a qualification in food handling has allowed us to prepare food on the premises confidently. The energy courses have been extremely informative and this information has been transferred to the Warm Hub users giving them tips on how to stay warm and save money on their fuel costs. We have held a number of energy events which have offered "freebies" ranging from carbon monoxide monitors to radiator reflectors panels to bedsocks!

Thanks Fiona, any final message for our readers?

We would just like to thank Christine Nicholls and Community Action Northumberland for their help and continually support with our Warm Hub project. Christine has always been on hand to give advice regarding governance and been able to provide information on energy saving subjects. Her enthusiasm for the Warm Hub Project is certainly contagious as we are now looking to extend the Berwick Warm Hub into an umbrella project and develop hubs in the more rural areas surrounding Berwick-upon-Tweed.

News & Resources

North East families to be battered by £9k shortfall this winter

New research released today by charity National Energy Action (NEA) has revealed over 1 million fuel-poor families in England - over 55,000 in the North East alone - will not have the cash to meet basic living expenses as winter begins to bite. It says that families in fuel poverty are facing an income shortfall of up to £9,331 per year (£778 per month) to cover basic essentials, including energy.

The charity also warns half a million low-income households nationally could miss out on energy rebates and the proposed new safeguard price cap. The findings are included as part of "Bridging the Gap - addressing the cost of living facing UK households this winter" which has been published at the start of NEA's winter-long Warm Homes Campaign.

<http://www.nea.org.uk/>



Are you on the Priority Services Register?

If you're of pensionable age, disabled or living with a long-term limiting illness then you may qualify for extra help from your energy supplier.

'Priority services' include:

- Providing important communications in Braille, large print or audio CD
- Gas safety checks for appliances
- Meter reading services
- Special controls and adaptations for controlling heating and assistance if there's a power outage
- Free password scheme so you can identify who is at the door

Contact your gas/electricity suppliers for more information and to register.

Warm Hubs work wins gas company an award

The North of England's gas distributor, Northern Gas Networks (NGN), has won the Community Initiative of the Year category at the Utility Week Awards. NGN works in partnership with CAN for the Warm Hubs initiative. Tom Bell, Head of Social Strategy, Northern Gas Networks, said: "We are over the moon that the Warm Hubs initiative has been recognised in this way against some tough competition."

Lesbury Village Hall 'flushed' with success!

The Lesbury Village Hall Committee were thanked in an unusual opening ceremony this month for their hard work and fundraising efforts to install a new disabled toilet in the hall.

Over the years the committee has worked hard on providing and improving facilities, but always top of the agenda was the need for a new toilet block with disabled access.

Thelma Anderson gave a speech at the opening of the new toilets and said:

"When this became a possibility they asked Greg and his building team if they could provide all that was needed for their 'wee' project. They could, and they did it on time. Behind this door is a warm, bright area with gleaming porcelain, dry toilet paper and above all an easy access disability toilet...and, because this is the 21st Century - Unisex! My grannie would have had a fit. The committee must be 'flushed' with success."

Save money on your heating fuel

OilCAN is our bulk buying heating fuel service offering Northumberland residents, groups and businesses the opportunity to buy oil, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and coal at lower prices.

We combine the purchasing power of all our members to help them get the lowest possible prices for their heating fuels.

With OilCAN, you can:

- / save money on your fuel order
- / benefit from the lowest possible prices
- / order quickly and easily through your local volunteer co-ordinator by phone or email
- / receive your order within just ten days
- / get peace of mind knowing that if, for any reason, you run out, we can provide you with emergency provisions.

We charge a small membership fee to join the scheme to cover costs. Any profit we make goes back into supporting rural communities across Northumberland.

For more information visit:

www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/oilcan



Your recipes

Here are some of your favourite recipes from our Warm Hubs. Does your Warm Hub have a favourite recipe you'd like to share? Let us know!

Leek and Potato soup

from Vikki Ewen at Coquetdale Lunch Club

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

2 medium leeks - only trim outer 'damaged' layers NOT the earthy ends and darkest green bits as these are bursting with flavour and are needed. Cut these very finely to cook through though.

25g butter

3 medium potatoes. bakers or reds, peeled and roughly diced

S&P to taste

¾ litre milk and ¼ litre chicken, ham or veg stock (concentrated - I use 2-3 stock cubes)

Method

1. Clean the leeks and chop up- green ends need to be finer
2. Melt butter and sweat the leeks 5 mins- they should not colour only glisten with the butter
3. Add potatoes and sweat for a further 5 mins- maybe less if they start to 'stick'
4. Season and add the stock & milk.
5. Do not let it boil fiercely as the milk will go grainy- just simmer along until veg is cooked.
6. I liquidise but very roughly so it is still a hearty soup with texture.



Curried Butternut Squash Tart

by May Wilson from Breamish Hall Powburn

Makes 12 portions using an extra-large muffin tin

Ingredients

600g puff pastry

250g red onion

2 cloves of garlic crushed

10g coriander stalks & leaves

500g butternut squash

15g curry powder

300g crème fraiche

4 eggs

100ml milk

50g spinach

Salt & pepper to taste

Method

1. Roll out the pastry & line muffin tin making sure the pastry reaches the top of the moulds; don't worry about the edge being a little uneven
2. Peel and cut the butternut squash into small cubes, steam then drain & put to one side
3. Finely slice the red onion & sauté in oil with the garlic until soft
4. Add the finely chopped coriander stalks continue cooking for a couple of minutes
5. Add the butternut squash & curry powder stir well cooking for a further couple of minutes
6. Place the crème fraiche, milk, eggs & seasoning in a bowl, whisk until smooth then stir in the coriander leaves
7. Divide the squash mixture between the pastry cases then pour in the custard mix
8. Place in the oven at 170c & cook for 20-25 minutes or until the filling is set & the pastry is golden

Lemon Crunch Pie

from the Cooks at Stocksfield Tuesday Club

Makes 12 portions using an extra-large muffin tin

Ingredients

Flan case:- 1/4 lb digestive biscuits

2 oz butter

1 level tablespoon caster sugar

Filling:- 1/4 pint single cream
6 oz can condensed milk
finely grated rind and juice of 2 large lemons

Need: 7 inch pie dish

Method

1. Crush biscuits finely
2. Melt butter and sugar in pan then remove from heat and mix in biscuit crumbs.
3. Turn mixture into dish and press into shape. Bake in oven [gas 1, 140C, 275F (very low) for 8 mins. Cool.
4. Mix together cream, condensed milk and lemon rind. Beat in lemon juice a little at a time then pour into flan case and chill for several hours.



Do you have an old Central Heating System?

Under the Governments new 'ECO' scheme in 2017/18

home owners and private rented tenants in receipt of certain benefits or tax credits who have a broken or an **old central heating system** (i.e. 7yrs old or more) could qualify for free or generously subsidised **Gas, Oil, LPG or Solid Fuel** replacement boiler – or – a replacement Electric Storage Heater system.

There is no catch!

Under government rules - if you qualify - then you may be entitled to a replacement free boiler or a generously subsidised boiler - meaning you only to need to contribute a fraction of the cost.

Rest assured!

Community Action Northumberland work in partnership with **0800 Repair** and promote this service to qualifying residents of Northumberland with confidence. 0800Repair's 'ECO' experts will welcome your call and check to see if you qualify. If you do qualify 0800Repair heating engineers will install

your new replacement boiler at your convenience and provide 1 years full warranty!

If you, or a member of your community, want more information or help with your application please email graeme.stephenson@0800Repair.com

It's easy to see if you qualify.

If you are a home owner –or– you rent your home from a private landlord – and you are in receipt of one of these benefits :

- Pension Credit
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance

- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Support
- Or you are in receipt of Tax Credits – or – Universal Income (see full details below)

...and you have a broken or old boiler,

Call the 0800 Repair Team now on **0191 607 5112**. If you know the make and model of your old boiler before you call this will speed your enquiry along.

Don't wait until your existing boiler breaks down!

Apply now and check if you qualify for a replacement boiler with a new 'A' - rated boiler. According to the Energy Saving Trust a new A-Rated Boiler makes your home warmer for less and could save you up to £340 per year on your energy bills. So don't miss out apply now!

You can also check the CAN website for the qualifying criteria www.ca-north.org.uk



Northern Gas Networks warn householders of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide

You can't see it, taste it or smell it, but it can kill.

According to the NHS, more than 50 people die in the UK from Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning every year and 200 people are left seriously ill. Anyone can help keep themselves, as well as their family and friends, safe by following these safety tips:

- Always use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix and service gas appliances
- Always ask to see an engineer's Gas Safe Register ID card and check the back of the card to ensure they are qualified to carry out the specific type of gas work
- Find a Gas Safe registered engineer in your area by calling 0800 408 5500
- Have all your gas appliances, including boilers, gas cookers and gas fires, safety checked every year
- Unsafe gas appliances can put you at risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, gas leaks, fires and explosions
- Recognise the symptoms of CO poisoning – Headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness
- Check gas appliances for warning signs that they are not working properly, e.g. lazy yellow flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks or stains on or around the appliance and too much condensation in the room

- Buy a CO alarm for your home and make sure it is located near to your gas appliances in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance
- Only use gas appliances for their intended purpose, e.g. don't use a gas oven to heat a room or use a gas barbeque inside the house or a tent
- Always ensure there is enough ventilation for your gas appliances to allow them to burn correctly and make sure you are not blocking any air vents that provide an air supply
- Anybody working with gas has to be Gas Safe registered by law. Report someone working without registration or call Gas Safe Register on 0800 408 5500



Spotlight on Hubs

Whittingham Church is part of the CAN Warm Hub scheme, The Chantry @ St Bart's opens its doors to local residents and visitors every Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9-1pm, why not pop along for a coffee, some cake or sometimes a bacon sandwich.

Seahouses have a Warm Hub event once a month at the Seahouses Hub, fish and chips (of course, its Seahouses!) are on the menu, this is run with the support of the local Rotary Club, if you would like more information contact: 01665 721868

Berwick Voluntary Centre, 5 Tweed Street, have a drop in coffee morning the first Tuesday of every month 10-1pm, join them for tea, coffee, buttered toast and cakes. For more information, contact Fiona on 01289 304141

Training courses

This year we have had over 150 volunteers attend training courses through the Warm Hub scheme.

Courses include:

- Safeguarding
- First Aid and Paediatric First Aid
- Dementia Awareness
- Carbon monoxide Awareness
- An Introduction to Energy Efficiency
- Introduction to use of the Infra-Red Camera
- Food Safety

All these courses and more will be available in 2018, please register your interest with Christine Nicholls on 01289 304141 or email

christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk



Self-Help First Aid course coming soon

If you live or work on your own what do you do if you have an accident or suffered a stroke or heart-attack? Through the Warm Hubs scheme we are hoping to run a series of self-help first aid courses. The course programme would include:

- how to recognise a stroke or heart-attack
- what you can do to help yourself before the emergency services arrive
- dealing with accidents
- what to keep in your first aid box

The course will last three hours and does NOT include any form of exam or assessment it is user friendly and would suit anyone!

If you are a Warm Hub and would like to arrange for a course at your hall next year please contact Christine Nicholls or ask your local Warm Hub to get in touch to put one on.

An Introduction to Renewables

Next year we'll be putting on a course to learn more about domestic solar panels, air source heat pumps, carbon reductions and renewable heating incentives. Look out for dates to sign up to which will be circulated through the Warm Hub network.

Warm Hubs is a project of Community Action Northumberland, funded through a generous grant from Northern Gas Networks.



Thanks to Northern Powergrid and 0800 Repair who have funded the costs of this newsletter.



About Warm Hubs

'Warm Hubs' are places and organisations within the local community where people can be assured of finding a safe, warm and friendly environment in which to enjoy refreshments, receive help, advice and information and the company of other people.

Each venue that joins the scheme is asked to undergo an assessment to ensure that the service they offer meets a minimum standard. Reaching this standard entitles them to call themselves a 'Warm Hub' and to use the Warm Hub logo.

Who do I contact to find out more?

We are currently unable to register any new Warm Hubs as we are full to capacity. However, we are keeping a list of interested organisations whilst we look for further funding to extend the project.

If you would like to be added to the list of potential Warm Hubs, or are interested in supporting or funding this initiative, or would just like to be kept informed about

Warm Hubs, please contact:

Christine Nicholls, Community Development officer and Organisational Lead on Fuel Poverty and Energy
Email: christine.nicholls@ca-north.org.uk
Telephone: 01670 517178



Find out more online:

<http://ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hub-project>

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