

# COSY CAN

Autumn/Winter Newsletter 2018



## Preparing for Winter

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**Top 10 tips to keep safe and warm this winter**  
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**Your Recipes**  
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**Spotlight on Stocksfield Tuesday Club Warm Hub**  
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**Warm Home Discount Scheme**

*Photo donated by Ian Britton (c) FreeFoto.com*

**Norman Hooks helps run Stocksfield Warm Hub which was one of the first Warm Hubs to be signed up to the scheme. Here we ask him the secrets of their Hub's success!**

## Tell us a bit about when your Warm Hub started.

We came into existence a long time before Warm Hubs began. For 40 years the meals on wheel service was ran from Stocksfield Community Centre by the RVS, but due to funding cuts they could no longer provide the service. So myself and others realised people wanted meals with others, rather than delivered to their home. We had a big meeting with the volunteers involved and recruited others, ending up with 30 volunteers and set it up in partnership with RVS. We were the first Warm Hub to come into existence when the scheme started. Although we're all different it's been good to know not one size fits all.

## How many people come through your doors?

We get 25-40 people, but it has gone up to 40 in the past. We deliver out into the community as well with generally over 30 meals being produced. Usually there are 2-3 people who can't come to the centre, especially in the winter months with illness. Even if they ring on the morning we'll put them on the list and deliver to them.

## How often and when do you run your Warm Hub?

We run it every Tuesday. It's become a feature of our members lives, they look forward to it every week. You need a lot of volunteers to run it but we're fortunate we do. It's on from 10am-2pm, with lunch around midday.



## What sort of activities do you put on?

The activities are determined by those that come. We play whist, Scrabble, carpet bowls, we have singing to help with memory, and armchair exercises every fortnight. We try not to be prescriptive about doing things that are 'good for them'. We asked them whether they wanted talks every week – they said we don't come here to be educated. We come to socialise, play. If they want to go to a talk, they can go to other groups. We give our customers what they want.

## What food do you serve?

Traditional English hot dinner and pudding. We're having cottage pie this morning. We use seasonal vegetables and are fortunate we have members with big gardens and allotments. We had plum and apple crumble the week before due to a glut.

## How has the Hub helped local people?

Right from the beginning we've been promoting the fact that eating your meal with friends is important. It's the social side of eating together, and the activities that go alongside it. It's become part of people's lives.

## How do you promote the service? Are you at capacity?

In terms of promotion its advertised every month in the Community Association's newsletter, and on the parish council website and newsletter, plus word of mouth. We're not yet full, but if we got much bigger we

could use the main hall, but it wouldn't have the same cosy atmosphere. It's a lovely room with a stained glass window. It's a bit of a dilemma, but we certainly wouldn't turn anybody away. We have a team of 3 cooking, 3 socialising and helping and a vital couple of extras to wash up afterwards.

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

Volunteers are key. They are the most important part of our success. You've got to look after them, make sure they're valued, and listen to concerns. If you lose your volunteers, you'll close. Don't start out till you're certain you've got enough volunteers to deliver what you want to do as two or three people can't run this. One good idea we've had is doing a summer trip with our members. Because we close in August (due to the centre closing over summer) we organise a coach to take people to seaside. We've done it for the past 4 years and go to Seaton Sluice, getting fish and chips at the Kings Arms. We get the bus to Blyth to the beach and buy £40 of ice-cream! We've also visited Seahouses Warm Hubs conference twice and are looking forward to the Christmas get-together.

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

Stocksfield Community Association has benefited from the energy advice through our parent charity, and now have LED lighting throughout the building. Christine and others have been out to talk about energy savings, handed out energy monitors and carbon monoxide detectors. The big benefit is meeting with other Warm Hubs; our members really enjoy getting together with people from other villages. We've also benefited financially, by getting food hygiene qualifications for our cooks which needs renewing every 3 years. Not many other Warm Hubs cook on the scale we do.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY WORD SEARCH

Circle all words associated with efficiency. The hidden words appear straight across, backwards, up and down, and diagonally. Use the word bank below as a guide.

### Word Bank

- REDUCE
- LIGHT SWITCH
- APPLIANCES
- LED BULB
- RECYCLE
- ENERGY USE
- CONSERVATION
- THERMOSTAT

# 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!

From Vikki Ewen, Coquetdale lunch club

## Carrot & Coriander Soup

Serves 4 (*we scale it up for our Hub*)

### Ingredients

- 1oz butter
- 1 1/4 pints veg stock (real or stock cubes)
- 1 sliced onion
- 1 clove garlic or garlic puree
- 1lb sliced carrots- no need to peel
- 3tbsp chopped coriander
- Salt and pepper



### Method

1. Melt butter and gently sauté the onion & garlic for 2 mins.
2. Add carrots, stock.
3. Season and cook until the carrots are soft.
4. Blend when cooled.

From May Wilson, Powburn Memorial Hall

## Sweet Potato & Mushroom Stew

Serves 4-6

### Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 60ml (4 tbsp.) ground nut oil
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled & crushed
- 10ml (2 tsp.) grated fresh root ginger
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 350g (12oz) sweet potatoes
- 15ml (1 tbsp.) mild or medium curry paste
- 300ml (1/2 pint) chopped tomatoes
- 300 ml (1/2 pint) vegetable stock
- 225g (8oz) spinach leaves, trimmed
- 225g (8oz) button mushrooms
- 60ml (4 tbsps.) peanut butter
- 30ml (2 tbsp.) chopped fresh coriander
- Salt & pepper

### Method

1. Peel & chop the onion. Heat 45ml (3 tbsp.) of the oil in a saucepan, add the onion, garlic & cayenne & fry gently for 10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, peel the sweet potatoes & cut into cubes.
3. Add curry paste to the onion mixture & cook, stirring, for a minute. Add the sweet potatoes, stirring to coat with the onion mix & fry for 3-4 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes & stock. Bring to the boil, cover & simmer for 15-20 minutes until the potatoes are almost tender.
4. Roughly shred the spinach leaves, heat the remaining oil in a frying pan, add the mushroom & stir fry for 4-5 minutes, add to the potatoes with the spinach & cook until vegetables are cooked through.
5. Mix a few of the stews juices with the peanut butter to soften slightly, and then stir back into the pan. Add the coriander, season with salt & pepper to taste & heat through.
6. Serve with rice.

From May Wilson, Powburn Memorial Hall

## Blackberry Crumble

### Ingredients for the crumble

340g plain flour

230g butter

110g porridge oats

110g caster sugar

2tbs Demerara sugar

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Pinch of salt

### Method

1. Sift the flour, nutmeg and salt in a large bowl.
2. Cut the butter into small cubes and rub into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine bread crumbs.
3. Stir in the oats and sugar.

### Ingredients for the filling

1.3 k cooking apples

280g blackberries

230g caster sugar

1tsp cornflour

Half a teaspoon  
of cinnamon



### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190c/375f/gas mark 5.
2. Peel and core the apples and cut into chunks. Place in a bowl with the blackberries. Combine the sugar, cinnamon and cornflour, mix with the fruit.
3. Place the fruit mix in an ovenproof dish scattering the crumble over the fruit then sprinkle with the demerara sugar.
4. Place on a baking sheet and cook until the crumble is golden brown.





# KEEP SAFE AND WARM THIS WINTER

## Insulation and draughts

Here are your Warm Hub co-ordinator **Christine Nicholls's top tips for tackling insulation and draughts this coming winter.**

### 1. Use your curtains

Heat from the sun is free so make the most of it, open your curtains and let the sunlight in during the day to make use of this free heat. When it gets dark, shut your curtains which act as another layer of insulation and keep warmth in your rooms, You should also make sure you don't have any gaps so that the warm air can stay in and the cold air stays out – this can help reduce condensation.

### 2. Central heating

The centre for sustainable energy advises programming your boiler to turn the heating on a little earlier such as 30 minutes before you get up in the morning, but at a lower temperature is cheaper than turning it on just as you need it at a higher temperature. This is because a boiler heats up at a constant speed whether you set your thermostat to 20 degrees or more. But don't leave your heating on all day if you aren't going to be in.

### 3. Furniture

It might feel great to have your favourite seat/sofa in front of the radiator, but its absorbing heat that could be warming your home. By moving it away from the radiator hot air can circulate freely, same goes for your curtains or drying clothes.

### 4. Insulation

When it comes to heat, around 25 percent is lost through the roof. This can be easily reduced by installing insulation throughout your loft. Its also worth seeing what's going on in your walls, as around a third of the heat in an uninsulated home is lost this way. Although it's not as cheap to install as loft installation, cavity wall insulation could save you up to £160 a year in heating bills. Contact our energy adviser Steve Forster to see if you qualify for free/subsidised insulation.

### 5. Wrap up Warm

If you have a hot water tank, make sure it is properly lagged – or insulated. This will keep the water warmer for longer and reduce heating costs. Insulating an uninsulated tank can save you up to £150 a year.

### 6. Turn down the dial

This may seem a little counter-intuitive, but bear with me. Research shows that turning your thermostat down by 1 degree could cut your heating bill by up to 10%. So keep the dial between 18-21 degrees.

### 7. Draughts

The Energy saving trust estimates that DIY draught proofing your doors, windows and cracks in the floor could save you £25 per year. Self-adhesive seals around doors and windows and door draught excluders are relatively cheap and easy to install, so its worth getting it done before winter kicks in.



### 8. Service or Upgrade your boiler

If your boiler is more than 10 years old, it may be time to replace it with a new, more efficient model. Contact Steve Forster to see if you are eligible to benefit from a new or subsidised boiler.

### 9. Reflect the Heat

Radiator panels ensure that heat from your radiators warms up your room and not your walls, they are particularly important when the radiator is on an

outside wall. These panels are currently available free to warm hub users. Contact Christine Nicholls for more information.

## 10. Carbon monoxide monitors

Carbon monoxide monitors are essential if you burn any type of combustible fuel, oil, gas, LPG, coal and/ or logs. If you have more than one storey to your house you need more than one monitor, follow the instructions on the box for fixing and locating. We have a limited number of free carbon monoxide monitors, contact Christine Nicholls for further information.



## Locking Cooker Valve – Helping customers in vulnerable situations

A locking cooker valve helps vulnerable customers retain their independence at home and provides reassurance to their family, friends and carers. We understand that our vulnerable customers including people living with Alzheimer's, Autism, those suffering strokes and many other conditions, sometimes need extra safeguarding.

This simple safety device is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This removes the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on. It also provides peace of mind to the carer, that the cooker can't be used when they leave the house or room. When the cooker needs to be used, the carer can easily turn the valve on using the key, therefore enabling the vulnerable person to continue to use their gas cooker safely.

Northern Gas Networks (NGN) are working in partnership with the other UK Gas Distribution Networks (GDN's) to offer this free service nationwide, regardless of who the gas supplier is. There is no requirement to change gas supplier, nor inform the gas supplier of the device. If in future the device is no longer required, a Gas Safe engineer can remove the device.



This service is currently publicised on NGN's website, where a referral form can be completed.

[www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/locking-cooker-valve/](http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk/network-supply/locking-cooker-valve/)

Here is just some of the positive feedback we've had from carers who have already made referrals:

*"Very happy with the service received. This will stop the wife frying bacon during the night"*

*"The valve will be a great relief for me and my family's peace of mind"*

## Warm Home Discount Scheme

You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2018 to 2019 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out. The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

**Eligibility** - There are 2 ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme:

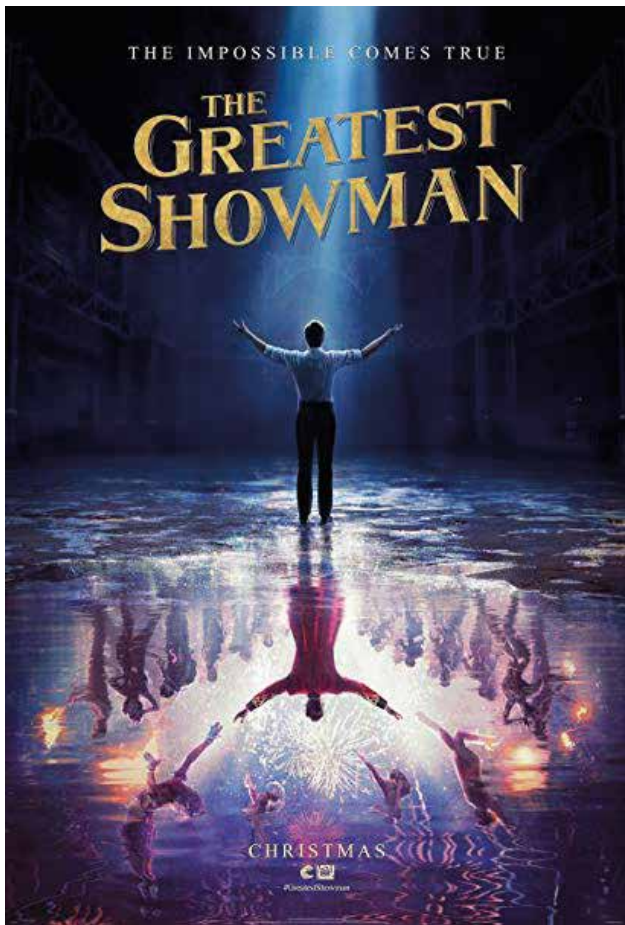
- you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit - known as the 'core group'
- you're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme - known as the 'broader group'

Contact Christine Nicholls or Steve Forster for more information: **01670 517178**

# WARM HUB NEWS

## Warm Hubs Christmas celebration

The Warm Hubs Christmas celebrations will take place at Seahouses, Stone Close on Tuesday 4th December 2018. We will be celebrating with fish and chips followed by a visit from Santa and The Greatest Showman on the big screen. We start at 12 noon and finish around 3-15pm, if you would like to attend please contact Christine on 07827 403 837 or 01289 304141 [christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk)



## Coquetdale Lunch club – they’re a busy bunch!

We asked Coquetdale Lunch club to give us a flavour of what they’ve been doing recently and plans for the future – and boy are they busy! Here is a round up from co-ordinator Vikki Ewen.

“We have a new Book Trolley bought with a £500 Community Grant from NCC. We are establishing a book swap together with magazines and DVD’s. We are adding some audio books and a means to play them and maybe some simple games: dominoes, bingo.



We have been successful in getting a Tesco grant-through Berwick Tesco in October. We called the project ‘Broadening Horizons’ and plan trips to castles with tea of course and using the Community Bus. We have also booked to go to ‘Les Miserables’ at the Theatre Royal next September...going to some local shows to raise awareness. Rothbury Hills Folk Band and the Simonside Fair have agreed to give us a donation. We have also been offered a free-range turkey from the local organic farmer to raffle and she also gives us meat when she can.

We have 15-25 attending warm hub events and the gang of volunteers is steady and reliable.

Other visits planned include the Thropton School Choir nearer to Christmas; local musicians Jack Wilkinson & Ann Brown and a visit to the school to have lunch with them. Our Christmas lunch will be at the Cross Keys on 13 December.

It is a happy time with gales of laughter. We do look





out for the more folk to come along and the leader at the Community Bus - Lesley Leeson - is a huge help in this and in rounding up our troops and delivering them to us.”



## Powburn Memorial Hall

- **Tuesday 6th November**  
Warm Hub Lunch  
11.30am - 1.30pm (2 courses £5.00)
- **Saturday 1st December**  
Wreath Making with Chris Can  
10.30am-12.00 noon Includes a light lunch. Booking essential, £22.50
- **Saturday 8th December**  
Christmas Fayre & Santa,  
Warm Hub event - soup/sandwiches ect.  
Craft & produce stalls
- **Saturday 31st December**  
New Years Eve Party 7.00pm

For further details contact May Wilson on 01665 578576.

## Embleton Parish Room

Embleton Warm Hub has had a makeover with the finishing of the refurbishing of Parish Room. The whole place decorated, main room, kitchen, inside and outside porches and had a hot water system put into the kitchen with a separate handwashing sink. The Lions grant paid for a new carpet for main room which is a great improvement.

They are open two mornings per week and on other days the room is used for different community activities.

## Wingates Village Institute makes plans following energy audit

Last year as a Warm Hub member, Wingates Village Institute received a free energy audit, which highlighted various short and long-term needs, to make sure the building is in the best possible condition in the years ahead.

Future plans include insulating the main room by removing the deteriorating plaster on its three external walls, re-lining these with special insulation material and then re-plastering and re-decorating. It's a major project requiring around £10,000 of which WVI is putting £4,000 of its own fundraising towards, then applying for grants and further fundraising activities. The roof has already had additional insulation since the audit, and refurbishing the car park surface is a priority.

If you are a Warm Hub and would like a free energy audit of your hall get in touch with Christine Nicholls at CAN Tel: 07827 403837.

## Managing your energy costs with Macmillan support

More than one in three people diagnosed with cancer say they feel the cold more. If you are going through cancer treatment, you may be at home often and spending more on energy costs.

If you are worried about paying your energy bills, you should tell your supplier that you have cancer and find out what help they can offer. You should be placed on a register that gives you access to extra support. There are also government schemes that could help you save money on your energy costs.

You could switch suppliers to make sure you're

getting the best deal. You can find cheaper alternatives using a price comparison website.

Making changes around the house can also help you keep warm, for example having insulation fitted.

Macmillan and npower work together to help people living with cancer keep warm without the worry. npower funds Energy Advisers on the Macmillan Support Line, who can support you in accessing schemes to help with gas, electricity and water bills. Call them on 0808 808 00 00.

# NEWS AND RESOURCES

## Warm Homes Fund - plans for deadline to be extended

Northumberland County Council has applied for a six-month extension to the Warm Homes Fund delivery. This will allow them to continue surveys and installs past the original 30th November deadline. So far around 100 central heating installations have been completed towards the target of 367. Surveys for properties in off gas areas are due to start in mid-October after a delay with one of the funding streams for air source heat pumps.

The Council is still accepting new applications from gas and off gas areas. For more information or to make an application please visit [www.northumberland.gov.uk/whf](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/whf) or call on 01670 624140. If they receive eligible applications over and above the original target of 367 central heating installations then the Council plan to include them in a bid for the next round of the Warm Homes Fund.

The Council cannot guarantee that all of these applications will lead to a central heating installation as it is dependent on survey and quotes from their installers. If households are not eligible for the Warm Homes Fund then they will offer to signpost them to support from partner organisations such as Community Action Northumberland or Citizens Advice Bureau.

## What are smart meters all about?

Put simply, smart meters are the latest generation of gas and electricity meters which will replace your traditional meters. As well as your smart meter, you'll receive a portable in-home display that clearly shows you how much energy you're using, and how much it's costing you. Both parts communicate with each other automatically, and send your energy usage information to your energy supplier, which means you don't have to! Energy suppliers hope to be rolling out the second generation smart meters from January next year.

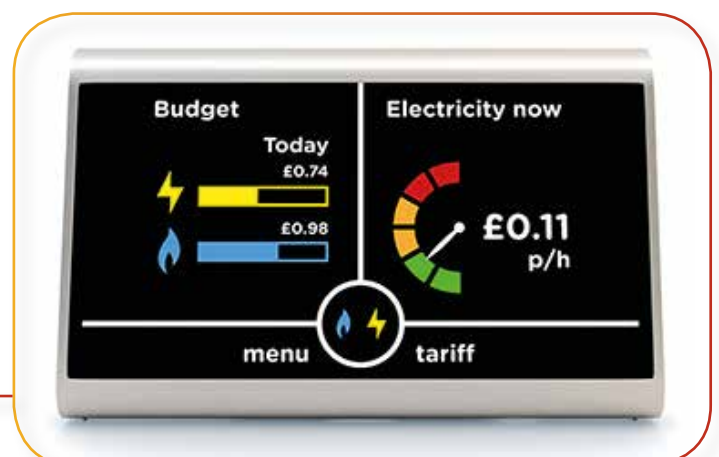
If you have any questions about smart meters contact [christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk) tel. 07827 403 837 or 01289 304141



## Help us continue our vital work

Could you help us continue our vital work in the community by considering donating your Winter Fuel Allowance? Community Action Northumberland run a number of energy related projects which support individuals and communities across the county. Including our award winning warm hub scheme, face to face energy and debt advice and information events which highlight free and/or subsidised heating and boiler schemes and energy saving measures. We strive to continue to deliver this service. If you feel you would like to donate to one or all of these projects we would be immensely grateful and ensure your donation is used directly to support those in need. Just give us a call or email to discuss how. Tel. 01670 517178 or email [christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk)

We would like to thank those people who have donated their winter fuel allowance in the past.



## Priority Services Register

Electricity and gas suppliers must offer special services to customers who are of state pension age, disabled, suffering from a chronic illness or have a visual or hearing impairment. Among the benefits of being part of the PSR are:

- Free annual gas safety checks (subject to additional qualifying criteria)
- Priority in an emergency, this could include providing alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of a loss of supply
- Controls and adapters for appliances
- Meters moved to an accessible location for free (if possible)
- Meter reading service

- A password scheme
- Statements in large print or braille
- Statement nomination scheme

**Remember if you switch suppliers you will need to re-register on their PSR.**

The contact details for your energy suppliers is usually on your bill.

British Gas PSR	Tel. 08000728625
EDF	Tel. 0800269450
e.on	Tel. 03450520000
npower	Tel. 08081726999
Scottish Power	Tel. 08000270072
SSE	Tel. 0800622838

## ASK STEVE

Steve Forster is Cosy CAN's resident Agony Aunt when it comes to questions on all things energy related.

Hi, my name is Steve Forster and I started earlier this year a new and exciting role as an Energy adviser with CAN, funded through the NCC Warm Homes Fund and Awards for All. I am working one day a week helping to provide free and confidential information and advice **in order to:**

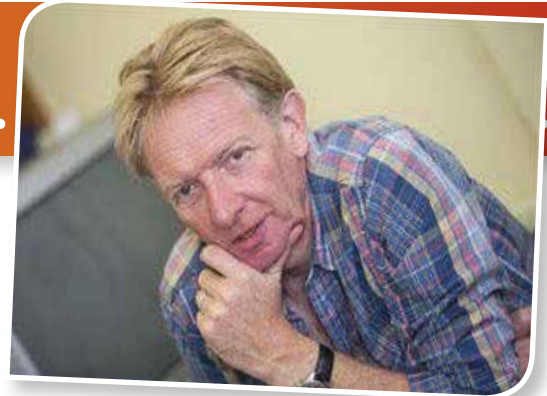
- **Help check that households are on the best and most appropriate fuel tariff**
- **Provide free and confidential advice and information on energy related issues**
- **Help households improve their energy efficiency and save money**
- **Support those in fuel debt**

If you need any information, please contact me on 0779 1369625 or email [steveforster@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:steveforster@ca-north.org.uk)

I'd also like to share just one example of the lovely feedback we get from doing our role as advising people on energy advice. This was received by Christine for her efforts in helping Mr P. I hope I can do the same for you!

Dear Christine,

*It seems as if your work - on my behalf - is complete. It feels like I am saying goodbye to a long time friend.*



*I do not have the words to express my gratitude to you for all you have done for me. I shall never forget you.*

*Besides my illnesses, I was in a bottomless pit of depression. You dragged my life into one of positivity and everything I had been begging for is now becoming reality and all the things I have been fighting for are about to happen.*

*Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for everything you done for me.*

*Best wishes and thank you again.*

*Mr P.*

Do you have any questions regarding funding, heating/boiler schemes, fuel debt advice, insulation etc. for a future issue of Cosy CAN? Just get in touch with Steve on 0779 1369625 or email [steveforster@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:steveforster@ca-north.org.uk)

***I live in a private rented property and the boiler is old and inefficient – can I apply for funding to upgrade it or does my landlord have to do this instead?***

Home owners and private tenants can apply for a new boiler through the ECO (Energy Company Obligation) boiler replacement scheme however private tenants

will need to get permission from their landlord first, contact me for further details and I can help with the eligibility and application process

***I am on a low income and cannot afford to replace my antique boiler, what funding might be available to me?***

Free and/or subsidised boilers are available through ECO, contact me for further details.

***My village hall has a plaque on the wall saying they are a Warm Hub, can they help me with fuel debt advice?***

Yes of course, as part of the warm hub scheme we can offer one to one support and provide individuals and hubs with information leaflets, energy saving advice and fuel debt advice. Fuel debt can be worrying but with help we can work with your energy supplier to either set up an affordable payment plan or even have the debt written off, but the first thing would be to check the accuracy of the bills and ensure you aren't over paying.

***My cottage is freezing in winter and my landlord refuses to insulate it more, what can I do to help myself? I am on state benefits and have small children.***

Insulation can be complicated and depends on the type of property, but it can be tailored to suit your particular home. Insulation can be available through the ECO scheme free or subsidised but there would be eligibility criteria. What type of heating do you have and how efficient is your heating? Firstly, you should identify draughts, check windows, doors and around skirting boards. Draught excluder can be bought fairly cheaply. Check for loft insulation – if it is not insulated to the recommendation of 250 -270mm thickness. I suggest you try speaking to the landlord again about this as a well-insulated loft conserves a significant amount of heat. If you have a hot water tank check it has a cover fitted. It might be worth letting your landlord know that grants are available. There are also trusts who issue small grants to help with energy savings and efficiency measures. Check out our top tips in the magazine on page 6.

## ABOUT WARM HUBS

### About Cosy CAN

Cosy CAN is a newsletter from CAN aimed at sharing some tips on energy efficiency and keeping warm as well as publicising some of the fantastic events going on around the county as part of our Warm Hub scheme and energy projects.

This newsletter has been funded by Northumberland County Council through the Warm Homes Fund.

### About Warm Hubs

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

### 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: [christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk)  
Telephone: 07827 403837

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



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