



RUSHCLIFFE

AFFORDABLE WARMTH

STRATEGY

2002 – 2010

Environmental Health Service
April 2003

CONTENTS

1	Executive Summary	3
2	Glossary of Terms.....	4
3	Introduction	6
3.1	What is fuel poverty?	6
3.2	What are the causes of fuel poverty?.....	7
3.2.1	Energy inefficient dwellings.....	7
3.2.2	Low income.....	7
3.2.3	Fuel price	7
3.2.4	Under-occupancy.....	7
3.3	What are the effects of fuel poverty?.....	8
3.3.1	Ill-health	8
3.3.2	Poor quality of life	8
3.4	What is the answer to fuel poverty?	8
3.5	Fuel poverty in Rushcliffe	9
4	Policy Context.....	10
4.1	National Policy	10
4.1.1	UK Fuel Poverty Strategy	10
4.1.2	Energy Efficiency Commitment and Social Plan	10
4.1.3	Beacon Council theme.....	10
4.1.4	Decent homes and fit homes	10
4.1.5	Warm Zones	11
4.2	Local Policy Initiatives	11
4.2.1	Rushcliffe Home Energy Conservation Strategy	11
4.2.2	Rushcliffe Community Partnership.....	11
4.2.3	Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal	12
5	Housing Conditions.....	13
5.1	Private Sector Housing	13
5.2	Former Council Housing	13
6	Rushcliffe’s Vision for Affordable Warmth.....	14
7	Review Arrangements.....	15
8	Consultation and Partnership	15
9	Action Plan	17
	Appendix I Profile of Rushcliffe Borough.....	22
	Appendix II Energy Efficiency Achievements in Rushcliffe.....	23
	Appendix III Extract from Decent Homes Standard – Thermal Comfort	25
	Bibliography	26

1. Executive Summary

This document sets out the approach Rushcliffe Borough Council and partner organisations will take over the next 8 years to reduce the number of households living in fuel poverty. A fuel poor household is one that needs to spend in excess of 10% of disposable income in order to maintain satisfactory warmth and comfort. It has been estimated that approximately 4 million households in the UK are living in fuel poverty. Where fuel poverty affects the elderly, young people and sick and disabled people this can result in serious health effects.

The Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 and UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001, introduced a commitment to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable groups by 2010 and in other households once progress has been made with the priority groups.

Rushcliffe Borough Council's Housing Strategy aims "to ensure the existing housing stock provides decent homes for residents of the Borough by being in good repair, affordably warm, safe and with adequate facilities". Under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) the Council is committed to reducing energy consumption in housing by 30% by 2010 and the promotion of affordable warmth initiatives will contribute to these.

Locally, considerable achievements have been made in improving the energy efficiency of housing through direct capital investment, education and the active promotion of bulk purchase schemes or other initiatives. This approach however has not necessarily reached all sectors of the community and future efforts need to be targeted to the harder to reach private rented and owner occupied properties.

With the support of partner organisations significant progress can be made in eradicating fuel poverty within Rushcliffe. In order to improve the health and quality of life of people living in Rushcliffe by means of this Affordable Warmth Strategy we are committed to:

"Working together to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable groups by 2010."

This will be achieved by providing the opportunity for all households to achieve affordable warmth through advice, assistance and, where appropriate, financial aid.

A detailed action plan has been developed in order to secure an effective partnership approach to affordable warmth, ensure that information is systematically gathered and disseminated and that financial or other assistance is effectively targeted and promoted.

2. Glossary of Terms

DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECA's	Energy Conservation Authorities
EEC	Energy Efficiency Commitment
EEP	Energy Efficiency Partnership
EHCS	English House Condition Survey
HAZ	Health Action Zone
HECA	Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
HHSRS	Housing Health and Safety Rating System
HIMO's	Housing in Multiple Occupation
HIS	Health Information Service
HRA	Home Repairs Assistance
LA	Local Authority
LAEP	Local Authorities Energy Partnership
MEAC	Mobile Energy Advice Centre
NEA	National Energy Action
NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
NHS	National Health Service
OFGEM	Office for Gas and Electricity Markets
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RBC	Rushcliffe Borough Council
RHA	Registered Housing Association
RCVS	Rushcliffe Council for Voluntary Service
RPCT	Rushcliffe Primary Care Trust
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
BMEG	Black Minority Ethnic Group

2. Glossary of Terms continued

SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure
SEDBUK	Standard Energy Ratings for Domestic Boilers in the UK
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
UK	United Kingdom
WFT	Warm Front Team

3. Introduction

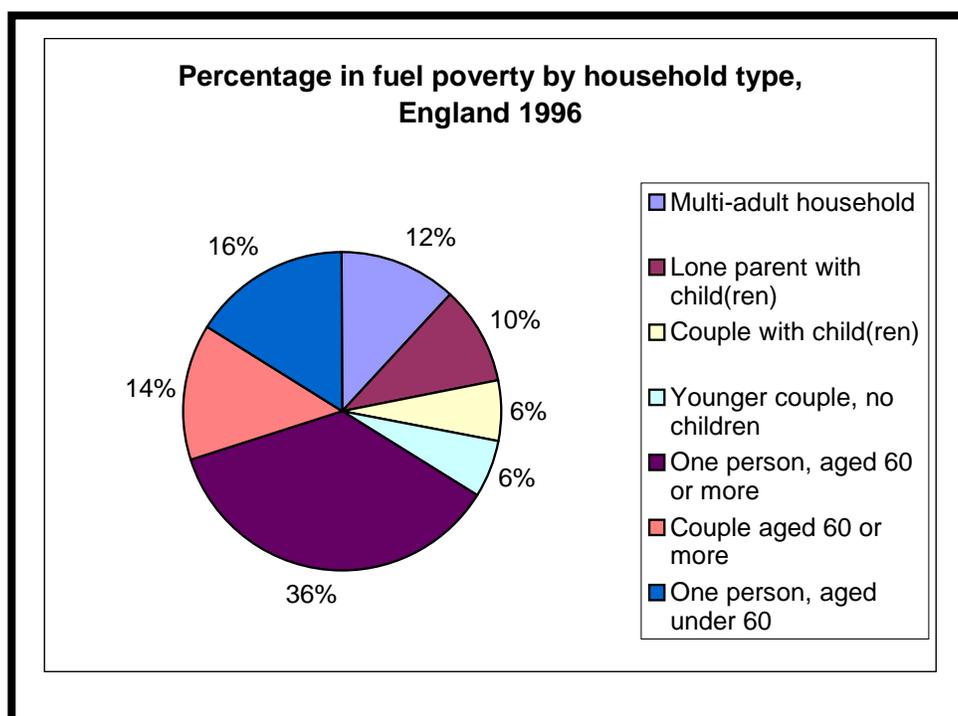
3.1 What is Fuel Poverty?

Fuel poverty occurs when a household is unable to afford sufficient energy for health and comfort, commonly due to the combined effect of low household income, inadequate and expensive forms of heating and poor insulation. It affects approximately 4 million households in the UK and has serious health consequences for elderly people, young children and sick and disabled people.

The commonly applied definition of a fuel poor household is one which needs to spend in excess of 10% of disposable income (after housing costs) to maintain satisfactory levels of warmth and comfort.

Fuel poverty differs from general poverty; although both can be alleviated through additional income support, to encourage unnecessary fuel consumption is wrong and such measures should be seen as short-term palliatives only. In the longer-term, fuel poverty can be alleviated most effectively by investing capital in energy efficiency measures, such as better insulation and more efficient heating and lighting appliances.

The effects of fuel poverty are seen in cold, damp homes as exacerbated ill health, debt, utility services disconnection and issues of social exclusion.



3.2 What are the causes of fuel poverty?

There are four main causes of fuel poverty: energy inefficient dwellings, low incomes, under occupancy and the cost of fuel.

3.2.1 Energy inefficient dwellings

The energy efficiency of housing is conveniently

measured by the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), the Government endorsed home energy rating, on a scale from 1 to 100 (the higher the number, the more energy efficient the

house). Houses built today will typically achieve ratings of above 70 by having good levels of insulation and modern, efficient heating systems. However, the 1996 English Housing Condition Survey found the average rating of existing dwellings to be less than 44, while there are over 500,000 dwellings with a rating of less than 10. The lower the rating, the greater the amount of energy required to maintain a satisfactory regime.

Fuel Poverty by household type % and English House Condition Survey 1996 data

Household type	Percentage	Number of people
Pensioner couple	24%	717,000
Single pensioner	63%	1,910,000
Lone parent	43%	553,000
All households	27%	5,272,000

Source: National Energy Action website

3.2.2 Low income

Low income is the other main cause of fuel poverty, with householders simply not having enough money to pay for sufficient energy to maintain a comfortable temperature. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that low-income householders are more likely to occupy the least energy efficient dwellings.

3.2.3 Fuel price

Though fuel costs are at around their lowest point for many years as a result of liberalisation of the energy markets (with suppliers competing for customers since the late 1990's) and the reduction of VAT on domestic fuel to 5%, low-income householders may not have the same access as others to the most economic tariffs. Many, because of past payment difficulties or for other reasons, may have to use prepayment meters for their fuel, which usually means both a higher unit price and a higher standing charge than fuel paid for by direct debit or quarterly bill.

3.2.4 Under-occupancy

The fourth cause of fuel poverty is under-occupancy, which is where the size of the dwelling is larger than necessary for the inhabitants. This is typically taken to be the case where there is more than one spare bedroom. Under-occupancy exacerbates the effects of energy inefficiency and/or low-income, because the householder has to pay more for fuel than in a more appropriately sized house of the same standard. Under-occupying households are often single-person or elderly people households.

3.3 What are the effects of fuel poverty?

3.3.1 Ill-health

The most emotive representation of fuel poverty is that of the pensioner suffering from hypothermia. However, in clinical terms, actual cases of hypothermia deaths are comparatively rare (250 to 300 per year).

Of greater significance are incidences of cold related illnesses. Cold homes have been known to exacerbate existing cases of illness such as asthma and reduce the resistance to respiratory illness such as influenza, pneumonia and bronchitis. The risk of heart attacks and strokes is also increased by cold conditions in the home. The result in the UK is an extra 30-40,000 excess winter deaths. A recent paper produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation detailed 23% excess winter deaths from heart attacks and strokes, much of which is attributed to cold.

The fact that other countries with more severe winter conditions than the UK, for example, Sweden, Germany and Norway, experience comparatively low variations of mortality across the seasons suggests that poor housing standards and low incomes are the crucial factors. It has been suggested that for every 1°C that the winter temperature drops below the average, there will be an associated 8,000 excess winter deaths.

Excess winter deaths:

Germany	– 12%
Sweden	– 14%
Norway	– 10%
UK	-- 31%

The use of old, inefficient, inappropriate or dangerous heating systems contributes to accidents and injury, including carbon monoxide poisoning and fire.

3.3.2 Poor quality of life

By having to use a larger portion of income to keep warm than other households, those suffering from fuel poverty have an impaired quality of life. Anecdotal evidence exists, for example, of pensioners who heat and live in one room during the winter, because they are afraid of running up high fuel bills, and of single mothers stapling their curtains closed to try to keep some heat in. There have been studies identifying that educational achievement is reduced in children living in cold, damp homes.

3.4 What is the answer to fuel poverty?

Affordable Warmth is the answer to fuel poverty. As a goal it aims to ensure that all households are able to achieve and maintain healthy and comfortable temperatures at a price that they can afford. The temperatures that are generally recommended are 21°C in the living room and 18°C in all other rooms.

Sir Donald Acheson, in his independent enquiry into health in 1998 stated:

“Improvements in energy efficiency in homes is likely to improve the health of occupants both directly and by releasing their financial resources for other uses” and recommended the development of “policies to improve insulation and heating systems in new and existing buildings in order to reduce the prevalence of fuel poverty”.

An affordable warmth strategy should tackle the root causes of fuel poverty. It must look at:

- Providing energy efficient homes
- Providing adequate and efficient heating systems
- Maximising income
- Reducing the amount people have to pay for fuel
- Advice and information on the use of heating systems and maximising energy efficiency

Measure	Annual saving	Cost	Payback period
Hot water tank insulation	£12	£10	1 year
Loft insulation	£65	£200	3-4 years
Draughtproofing	£15	£130	8-9 years
Cavity wall insulation	£65	£350	5-6 years

Source: National Energy Action website

3.5 Fuel Poverty in Rushcliffe

The extent of fuel poverty will change, year on year, as people improve their homes, move house, or their financial circumstances change. However, Rushcliffe has a significant proportion of older, large dwellings, with solid walls and poor standards of insulation, which together with a high level of under occupancy, are likely to be an ongoing source of fuel poverty. For this reason fuel poverty is likely to be a significant issue at some stage for owner occupiers and private tenants alike.

A survey of the private housing stock was carried out in 1996. The results of that survey indicated that 75% of private housing fell short of the acceptable SAP target for affordable warmth (target - 55). Since that time over 1000 households have benefited from Warm Front (or equivalent) Grants and over £300,000 has been spent by Rushcliffe Borough Council on energy efficiency improvements through the private sector grants.

In 1996:

- 23% of housing were built before 1919
- 13% were built between the wars
- In West Bridgford 51% of houses were pre-1919

In 2001 the survey of the former council housing stock indicated a SAP rating of 60 has been achieved due to investment in loft and cavity wall insulation.

In 2002 a questionnaire survey indicated that the energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock might have improved substantially over the intervening 6 years. Whilst this is positive news, it does not mean that there has been a proportional reduction in the number of fuel poor households. Data from a range of sources needs to be identified, collated and updated in order to obtain an accurate picture of the current extent of this problem in Rushcliffe.

Warm Front

Provide energy advice and specified packages of insulation, draughtproofing, heating and energy saving equipment to the over 60s and families on benefit

4. Policy Context

4.1 National Policy

4.1.1 UK Fuel Poverty Strategy

The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy, published in November 2001, sets out measures to end fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010. Vulnerable households are defined as those with elderly, very young, disabled or long-term ill inhabitants. By 2004 it is expected that over 1.1 million UK households will have received improved heating and insulation through specific fuel poverty programmes. Progress on energy efficiency and fuel poverty measures will be monitored and an annual report published. The common UK approach is to tackle fuel poverty through:

- Home energy efficiency programmes
- Continuing action to keep fuel bills low, ensure fair treatment for the less well-off, and supporting industry initiatives
- Continued action to tackle general poverty, low incomes and social exclusion

The Government anticipates that 800,000 vulnerable households will have received assistance through the Warm Front grant scheme by 2004.

4.1.2 Energy Efficiency Commitment and Social Plan

All major energy suppliers have a duty under the Energy Efficiency Commitment to promote energy efficiency and achieve certain improvement targets. Many schemes offer grant funding to low-income households and from March 2002, £170 million each year will be invested, with 50% being targeted at customers receiving benefits or tax credits.

In addition, OFGEM (the gas and electricity regulator) has a duty to implement a Social Action Plan including the development of major initiatives by energy companies to address the needs of the fuel poor. An example is Powergen's partnership with Age Concern which targets energy efficiency measures to older people as well as providing free heating when the temperature falls below freezing.

4.1.3 Beacon Council theme

In February 2001 it was announced that 'Tackling Fuel Poverty – Affordable Warmth Through Energy Efficiency' would be one of the 11 new Beacon Council Themes for 2002. This aims to improve a range of public services central to peoples' day-to-day lives by sharing good practice.

4.1.4 Decent homes and fit homes

The Government has set a target of ensuring 'all social housing meets set standards of decency by 2010'. A decent home must provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort and this criterion is not met if the household is fuel poor. This target currently applies to social housing, although it is likely to be extended to cover the private sector in the near future.

The proposed Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) will replace the Housing Fitness Standard. Local authorities will be able to use this as the basis for action against unfit homes, to guide the declaration of renewal areas and other

purposes such as the assessment of housing stock condition. HHSRS will focus on the outcomes of the condition of houses giving a rating for the property. The rating will reflect the hazards associated with damp and mould growth, inadequate lighting and excessively cold temperatures, and thereby highlight properties contributing to fuel poverty and ill-health.

4.1.5 Warm Zones

Originally developed by the Eaga Partnership, Warm Zones draw together local partnerships involving local authorities, energy suppliers and voluntary groups in a co-ordinated effort to address affordable warmth in a small area. The partnerships aim to bring together all available sources of funding in the zone and to reach all households in the area. There are currently five pilot schemes in the UK and it is hoped that more will be rolled out in the future.

4.2 Local Policy Initiatives

4.2.1 Rushcliffe Home Energy Conservation Strategy 1996-2010

Since 2000, Energy Conservation Authorities (ECA's) in England and Wales have been required to report on fuel poverty activities under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA). The act focuses Local Authorities' attention on improving energy efficiency of all homes and in doing so seeks to tackle the two very serious problems of fuel poverty and climate change. It places a duty on ECA's to draw up strategies to improve domestic energy efficiency in all housing and to report progress made.

Rushcliffe Borough Council has been working towards achieving a 30% reduction in domestic energy consumption since 1996. A list of achievements is detailed in Appendix II.

4.2.2 Rushcliffe Community Partnership

The Local Government Act 2000 provides local authorities with new powers to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well being of the area. It has also put a duty on local authorities to prepare a community strategy in order to achieve sustainable development.

The Rushcliffe Community Partnership has produced a Community Strategy, which aims to improve the quality of life for everyone in Rushcliffe. In order to achieve this the Strategy has a number of broad focus areas on which future partnership activity will be targeted. The aims of the Affordable Warmth Strategy are linked to two of the social focus areas, namely:

- To provide, support and sustain healthy communities and lifestyles; and
- To provide access to affordable and healthy housing

4.2.3 Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal

There are a number of historic and current housing initiatives and programmes addressing neighbourhood and housing renewal, which also aim to improve poor housing and, indirectly, fuel poverty. Health Action Zones (HAZ's), consisted of a partnership between the NHS, local authorities, the private and voluntary sectors, and have, until recently, aimed to tackle social exclusion and health inequalities in areas of deprivation. Four wards in Rushcliffe, Lady Bay, Musters, Manor and Ash Lea, formed part of the Health Action Zone covering the former Nottingham Health Authority area. Affordable Warmth was a specific action area which received targeted funding in order to improve the uptake of Warm Front grants and other energy efficiency measures.

Rushcliffe Borough Council's Housing Strategy 2003-2006 sets out the authority's housing aims and priorities for action in partnership with other service providers. The Strategy has a number of strategic aims, one of which is "to ensure that the existing housing stock provides decent homes for the residents of the Borough by being in good repair, affordably warm, safe and with adequate facilities". Improving the energy efficiency of private sector homes is tackled in a number of ways:

- The provision of grant assistance to people on low incomes to renew heating systems and insulate their homes
- The operation of a registration scheme and inspection programme for houses in multiple occupation
- The development and ongoing support for landlords' and private tenants' forums, providing the opportunity to target energy efficiency advice
- Supporting the Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme aimed at raising the standard of shared houses occupied by a population almost entirely on low incomes.

5. Housing Conditions

5.1 Private Sector Housing

A private sector housing survey, carried out by Rushcliffe Borough Council in 1996, showed that 23% of the stock was built pre-1919 and a further 13% of the stock pre-1944. The energy profile of the private sector stock was assessed and found to have an average SAP rating of 44. However, 75% of the stock was considered to fall short of the acceptable standard of 55.

Over 86% of the owner occupied stock was found to be under-occupied. With the increasing number of elderly people, this is likely to result in many single occupants not achieving affordable warmth, since people on lower incomes find difficulty in meeting heating costs, particularly for under-used rooms.

The private rented sector accounted for 10% of total stock, with approximately 700 Houses in Multiple Occupation having been identified through planning controls, enforcement activity and surveys. The 1996 survey found that over 90% of dwellings in this tenure had SAP ratings below acceptable standards (55).

Registered Social Landlords have approximately 400 rented and 80 shared ownership houses, almost all of which are relatively new. However, 25% were found to have SAP ratings below acceptable standards.

Over the last six years it is estimated that homes in Rushcliffe have improved their energy efficiency by 9.5%

In June 2002 a questionnaire survey of 4,000 properties indicated that further improvements had been made in improving the energy efficiency of the private housing stock during the previous 12 months.

SAP Profile % - June 2002

	<10	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
%	0.3	0.4	0.9	4.7	31	27.2	26	8.3	1.1	0.1

(This profile only reflects the sample surveyed and does not accurately reflect the SAP profile of the Borough)

5.2 Former Council Housing

The housing stock currently owned by Rushcliffe Borough Council was transferred to Rushcliffe Homes, a newly created housing association, in January 2003.

In 2001 a report on the condition of the former Council stock was published, revealing that the average SAP rating was 60, due to the comprehensive improvement and insulation programme carried out by Rushcliffe Borough Council over many years. Rushcliffe Homes remains committed to an ongoing property improvement programme, which will continue to contribute to the achievement of affordable warmth.

6. Rushcliffe's Vision for Affordable Warmth

The purpose of this Strategy is to draw together the work that is currently being carried out by various agencies and to ensure that a local focus is provided to optimise the effectiveness of future activity. In order to achieve the overall aim of this Strategy it will be essential for service providers and community groups to pool their resources and contribute to the actions set out later in this document. Progress against the targets in this Strategy will be reviewed and reported annually to key partner organisations.

Strategic Vision

“Working together to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable groups by 2010.”

This will be achieved by providing the opportunity for all householders to achieve affordable warmth through advice, assistance and, where appropriate, financial aid.

In order to deliver this vision, key stakeholders including Rushcliffe Borough Council, Rushcliffe Primary Care Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services, the Benefits Agency and Registered Social Landlords, will need to build on the existing platform provided through local advisory and improvement services. It will be necessary for these organisations to commit resources in order to identify the extent of local fuel poverty and the mechanisms required to help priority groups, and to develop appropriate initiatives to reduce the rate of fuel poverty in the Rushcliffe community. The inclusion of Affordable Warmth within individual and shared strategic documents will ensure the commitment to action on fuel poverty.

In order to provide a very clear focus for action planning and future policy decisions this strategy has just two clear aims:

- ***To identify the level of fuel poverty in Rushcliffe; and***
- ***To reduce the level of fuel poverty in Rushcliffe.***

In order to make progress on the above, a plan has been prepared identifying a range of actions requiring the involvement of a wide variety of agencies and organisations. In most cases it has not been possible to set any meaningful targets however achievement of the task will contribute to the overall aims of the Strategy.

7. Review Arrangements

Progress with implementation of this Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually through the Council's scrutiny process. New actions, identified as part of ongoing work, will be included in the rolling action plan. The action plan will be revised and amended annually and forwarded to partners and consultees for information and comment.

8. Consultation and Partnership

The development of this strategy has been co-ordinated by Rushcliffe Borough Council with partners from Rushcliffe PCT, Rushcliffe CVS. The Nottingham Healthy Housing Project, Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services, Citizens Advice Supporting People and National Energy Action. The draft strategy produced was issued for consultation during December 2002 and January 2003, to the organisations detailed in the attached appendix. Positive feedback was received from nine consultees (one response was non-committal) and where possible, the final Strategy has been amended to reflect the responses received.

9. AFFORDABLE WARMTH ACTION PLAN

We will :	Partner involvement	Our targets	Timescale
<p>Incorporate affordable warmth into shared strategic documents.</p> <p>Publicise the Affordable Warmth Strategy to assist in its implementation and development of future actions</p> <p>Produce a database of stakeholders to use for the promotion of the Strategy, consultation and the development of future initiatives.</p>	<p>Rushcliffe PCT Rushcliffe CVS Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services Rushcliffe Borough Council Benefits Agency Housing Associations Landlords and Tenants Groups Stake holder groups for BME Disability support groups</p>	<p>Inclusion of affordable warmth in the Community Strategy Health Delivery Plan, Supporting People Strategy, Local Development Plan and within the Single Assessment Process framework</p>	<p>2003/2004 onwards</p> <p>April 2003</p> <p>April 2003</p>
<p>Train appropriate health, social and community workers on aspects of Fuel Poverty</p>	<p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Rushcliffe PCT Rushcliffe CVS Nottinghamshire County Council Nottingham Welfare Rights Service</p>	<p>To train 20 community based workers each year</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Identify partnership opportunities for joint work on the promotion of energy efficiency schemes</p>	<p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Local Authority Energy Partnership Energy Saving Trust Notts/Derby Energy Efficiency Advice Centre Landlords and tenants associations Partner local authorities Fuel utilities Warm Front Healthy Housing Project</p>	<p>.</p>	<p>2003-2010</p>

We will :	Partner involvement	Our targets	Timescale
<p>Identify the availability of essential data and funding opportunities for information collation.</p> <p>Build a database of private sector housing information.</p> <p>Establish a rolling property database of health, social welfare and housing information.</p> <p>Develop a geographical information system database to identify fuel poverty hotspots</p> <p>Measure the effectiveness of affordable warmth measures through the monitoring of local fuel poverty indicators</p>	<p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Rushcliffe PCT Rushcliffe CVS Nottinghamshire County Council Benefits Agency Health Information Service Energy Saving Trust Local Authority Energy Partnership Supporting People</p>		<p>October 2003</p> <p>October 2003</p> <p>January 2004</p> <p>March 2004</p> <p>October 2004 onwards</p>
<p>Make energy efficiency and affordable warmth a key feature of future Private Housing Renewal Policy</p> <p>Consider the development of a Home Improvement Agency with Affordable Warmth initiatives as part of the menu of services</p> <p>Promote Warm Front, benefit advice and local grants through direct mailing to low income households.</p> <p>Help residents access Warm Front</p>	<p>Supporting People Social Services Rushcliffe PCT</p> <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Warm Front</p> <p>Healthy Housing Project</p>	<p>To improve the energy efficiency and benefit take-up of at least 100 households annually</p>	<p>April 2003 onwards</p> <p>April 2004</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Grants. Make referrals to Warm Front	Social Services Rushcliffe PCT Rushcliffe Borough Council		
Help residents to access low cost finance for energy efficiency measures by identifying, investigating and publicising relevant schemes and qualifying criteria.	Rushcliffe Borough Council Financial service providers Local Authority Energy Partnership		April 2004 onwards
Consider partnership involvement with the Healthy Housing Project (Nottingham)	Rushcliffe Borough Council Rushcliffe PCT Rushcliffe CVS Nottingham Healthy Housing Project		December 2003
Review the energy efficiency requirements/advice to the developers of new homes and during housing works requiring building regulations	Rushcliffe Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide energy advice to all applicants carrying out works and requiring building regulations • Provide information to support energy efficiency improvements in new builds and review success 	October 2004
Review the accessibility of affordable warmth information to ensure that voluntary and under represented groups have access to information	Self help groups Voluntary sector community workers BME Groups Disability Support Groups		April 2003 onwards
Review the 'Keep well, keep safe and keep off the floor' scheme	Rushcliffe PCT Rushcliffe CVS		Jan 2004
Review the possibility of holding awareness events across the Borough focusing on Affordable Warmth	Rushcliffe Borough Council Nottingham County Council		

<p>Establish a programme of energy efficiency advice for schools Aim to link energy efficiency/affordable warmth with the citizenship aspects of the national curriculum</p> <p>Provide information to the private rented sector Feature fuel poverty as part of newsletters and forum meetings</p> <p>Provide information to all households in Rushcliffe on energy efficiency and fuel poverty</p> <p>Develop a directory of sources of practical energy advice and assistance</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire County Council</p> <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Landlords' Forum Private Sector Tenants' Forum Landlords Association Tenants Advisory Services</p> <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	<p>To deliver talks to three schools each year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide landlord and tenants newsletters • Review current accreditation schemes for promotion of Affordable Warmth 	<p>October 2004 onwards</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>October 2004</p>
--	--	---	---

PROFILE OF RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH

Population:	107,600
Population age split*:	21% are 60 years and over, 60% are 16-59 years, 19% are under 16 years
Households:	The total number of dwellings within Rushcliffe is 44,458. The largest housing association, Rushcliffe Homes, (former RBC stock) own 3445 properties, of which 1000 are sheltered accommodation for the elderly and vulnerable, a further 521 rented properties are owned by social landlords, with 250 properties in shared ownership, the rest being either owner-occupied or in the private rented sector.
Number of lone parents within the Borough:	1,065 forming 2.8% of households.
Number of state retirement pensioners within the Borough:	17,001, forming 15.8% of the population, of which 6,935 are single, forming 15.2% of households.
Total number of population on both Council Tax and Housing Benefit:	4,456
Total number of population on Council Tax Benefit only:	1,481
Total number of population receiving Income Support*:	3,580
Total number of population receiving Jobseekers' Allowance*:	1,350
Total number of population receiving Disability Allowance*:	2,450
Total number of population receiving Severe Disability Allowance*:	570
Total number of population receiving Incapacity Benefit*:	2,085
Total number of people receiving benefits in Rushcliffe	15,972
Unemployment:	Unemployment levels at 1.8% are lower than the national (3.5%) and County (4.1%) average

Source of data:

Housing survey data from the 1996 House Condition Survey

*Neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk August 1998

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RUSHCLIFFE

- Promotion of the Warm Front Grant (formerly HEES) has resulted in 1,137 grants being made since 1998.
- The Mobile Energy Advice Centre has been used to provide energy advice across the Borough as well as promoting the Local Authority Energy Partnership scheme discounted purchase arrangement for loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, radiator panels and low energy light bulbs.
- The SRB project in Cotgrave, operational since 1999, has resulted in the installation of cavity wall and loft insulation in 304 council properties and 168 privately owned properties.
- Partnerships have been developed within the Rushcliffe area. The Healthy Housing Project involves Environmental Health and Housing staff, Rushcliffe Primary Care Trust, Health Visitors, District Nurses, Social Services, Police, voluntary organisations and carers. This project aims to minimise the detrimental effect of a person's housing on their health whether through accident, hypothermia, dampness or lack of facilities. A cross referral scheme has been developed and basic training has been given to enable the visiting staff to identify potential problems and refer on to the appropriate agency or organisation. This work is part of the Health Improvement Programme and is closely linked to the Health Action Zone, Affordable Warmth and Accident workstreams.
- Welfare Rights training has been provided to sheltered scheme wardens and mobile officers regarding benefit awareness and uptake to improve the incomes amongst elderly people.
- Rushcliffe's first Energy Forum was held in November 2001 in conjunction with Warm Homes Week to promote energy and affordable warmth awareness.
- Rushcliffe Reports, E.Save and the Landlords' and Tenants' newsletters and forums have been produced and held on an annual basis and are used to promote energy efficiency and affordable warmth.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACHIEVEMENTS IN RUSHCLIFFE

- Private sector grant assistance is used to improve heating systems and insulation where appropriate. Since 1996 Rushcliffe Borough Council has spent £1.5 million improving and repairing private sector homes through Home Repairs Assistance (HRA)/ Renovation Grants. It is estimated that approximately 20 % of this expenditure has been on energy efficiency measures.
- A review of the grants policy for private sector renewal has been completed. Greater emphasis is now placed on energy efficiency measures, including heating provision. Grant aid in relation to energy efficiency and heating provision for those not eligible for the Warm Front grants, i.e. those under 60 on income related benefits and without children is now available through Home Repairs Assistance.
- In addition, an Energy Grant has been introduced for people on low incomes, but not in receipt of benefit, for cavity wall and loft insulation. Funding will be provided through the discretionary grant budget.

EXTRACT FROM DECENT HOMES STANDARD THERMAL COMFORT

Criteria d: It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

34. The revised definition requires a dwelling to have both:

- efficient heating; and
- effective insulation.

35. Efficient heating is defined as any gas or oil programmable central heating or electric storage heaters or programmable LPG/solid fuel central heating or similarly efficient heating systems which are developed in the future^[4]. Heating sources which provide less energy efficient options fail the decent home standard.

36. Because of the differences in efficiency between gas/oil heating systems and the other heating systems listed, the level of insulation that is appropriate also differs:

- For dwellings with gas/oil programmable heating, cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively) or at least 50mm loft insulation (if there is loft space) is an effective package of insulation;
- For dwellings heated by electric storage heaters/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating a higher specification of insulation is required: at least 200mm of loft insulation (if there is a loft) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavity walls that can be insulated effectively).

37. Loft insulation thickness of 50mm is a minimum designed to trigger action on the worst housing. Where insulation is being fitted, landlords should take the opportunity to improve the energy efficiency and install insulation to a much greater depth.

38. The Government is investigating the most effective means of improving the energy efficiency of hard to heat homes where the construction may preclude the installation of traditional cost-effective insulation measures e.g. in some houses with porous overcoat bricks. The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy, published in November 2001, announced a pilot project using micro Combined Heat and Power to test suitability of the technology for fuel poor households.

39. Where new heating systems are being installed or existing system replaced, landlords should take the opportunity to increase the energy efficiency of the dwelling if possible. This would be achieved through installing energy efficient boilers where possible. Energy efficient boilers are those with a SEDBUK A-C rating. Where this is not possible, cavity walls should be insulated where feasible.

40. If new heating or insulation is being installed, it is important that steps are taken to ensure the dwelling is adequately ventilated.

41. Specific programmes are now in place that provides social landlords with additional resources for carrying out energy efficiency programmes^[5]. These are:

- Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) - this is an obligation on licensed gas and electricity supplies to encourage or assist domestic consumers to take up energy efficiency measures.
- Transcos Affordable Warmth Programme - this programme has introduced Affordable Warmth leases targeted at RSLs and LAs. These leases make the installation of high-efficiency gas central heating and energy efficiency measures more financially attractive for both landlord and tenant.

[4] for example efficient heating based on renewable sources

[5] More information is available from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/index.htm>

Sourced from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on www.housing.odpm.gov.uk/information/dhg

9. Bibliography

- ❑ Rushcliffe Borough Council Housing Strategy 2003-2006
- ❑ Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
- ❑ Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Website (www.cieh.org.uk)
- ❑ National Energy Action Website (www.nea.org.uk)
- ❑ National Statistics Website (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)
- ❑ English Housing Condition Survey 1996, DETR
- ❑ Rushcliffe Private Sector Housing Condition Survey 1996
- ❑ Rushcliffe Fuel Poverty Report 2001/2002
- ❑ UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001, DEFRA
- ❑ Decent Homes Standard sourced from Office of Deputy Prime Minister Website (www.odpm.gov.uk)