

Fuel Poor Community Programme

Aims

- To connect 2500 customers to mains gas in the most socially deprived communities in our region over the next 4 years.
- To maximise take up of new gas connections across the whole community by targeting the “hard to reach” private landlords and households as well as social landlords.
- To work with other partners to secure funding and maximise support for in-house works.

What have we delivered so far in 2009/2010?

- 6 community based projects have been undertaken all located in the top 20% most deprived areas in the country.
- Over 700 properties have been connected to mains gas.
- Over 200 gas central heating systems have been installed.
- A further 50 customers are in the process of having gas central heating systems installed via Warmfront.
- Over 50 benefit assessments have been carried out.
- Over 5000 tonnes of CO2 have been saved.
- An average of 38% improvement on SAP ratings to properties that have had in-house works completed.

Work will continue on all these projects for at least the next 12 months.

Mrs Dianne Willey of Clyde Walk, New Wortley, Leeds. She was the first resident in the area to get a new gas central heating system.

How have we done this?

• Partnership with Key Stakeholders

NGN’s commitment to work with these organisations reflects our ‘whole community based approach’ whereby we have worked in some of the most challenging areas within our region

• Community Energy Solutions (CES)

An innovative partnership with community interest company CES has been established to identify and deliver relevant projects. CES act as project co-ordinator and lead the work on identifying projects, obtaining other sources of funding and project managing in-house work delivery for private residents.

• Local Councils/Housing Providers

Partnerships with various local councils have been established presenting them with opportunities to tackle issues that help them improve the quality of life for a large number of their tenants.

• NGN’s delivery Contractors

Working with our network operations provider, United Utilities and various infrastructure providers such as Carillion, Morgan Est and Morrisons, we have been able to successfully design and construct network extension works in a safe and cost efficient manner.

• Residents Associations

Relationships with local residents associations have been built so they can support NGN in engaging with the community. This has been vital.

• Benefit Advice Centres

NGN has partnered with local benefit advice centres.

• Key opinion formers

Relationships have been built with local MPs and Councillors to help promote the scheme and maximise resident uptake.



Fuel Poor Community Programme

- **Delivering investment and other funding sources**

To deliver the projects, a wide variety of funding sources have been utilised.

- **NGN capital investment**

NGN has invested over £750,000 of capital expenditure in order to extend the network into 6 fuel poor communities, laying over 5,500 metres of new gas mains.

- **CES funding**

CES costs associated with the fuel poor community programme have been fully funded by NGN at a cost of over £100,000.

- **Warm Front funding**

Over 50 private residents will have the in-house works funded through Warmfront and will benefit from the government funded grants that are available through EAGA.

- **Local Authority funding**

Various grant schemes have been used to cover in-house works dependent on the Authority involved, though none cover the full cost.

- **Fuel switching allowances**

Supplier funding under CERT for switching to more energy efficient heating systems has been provided.

- **Redevelopment funding**

Additional funds were provided by English Partnerships, the National Regeneration Agency, to fund the costs of gas mains and installed services to the off-gas village of Fryston, Castleford.

- **Reduced cost heating systems**

Discounted rates from a contracted installer have been used to provide central heating to private residents at below normal cost.

- **Comprehensive communications strategy**

- **Communicating with residents**

A range of communication channels were used to keep local residents fully informed of progress and to encourage take up of gas connections and central heating.

- **Learning lessons and listening to feedback**

- **Customer and Stakeholder feedback**

All private residents and social tenants are sent a 'Customer Impression Card' concentrating on the service provided when supplying a gas connection to their properties. NGN record and monitor this feedback, targeting and resolving any issues or complaints that have arisen throughout the project, along with feedback of positive recommendations to individuals.

CES also undertake a post-project survey for residents after the gas central heating system has been installed. This will be used to identify a fuller picture as to which private sector households have installed gas central heating, and to identify any barriers to installation. This information will be used to make improvements to the processes for future projects.

- **Post project review meetings**

A post project review meeting is scheduled after every project to help NGN and CES gauge how successful the management and administration of the project has been. As a result of these reviews a number of improvements have been made to the design and quotation process.

What are we doing next?

A further 36 potential projects are being assessed.

Teamworking: Basil Scarsella, Chief Executive Officer of NGN, standing left, with from left: Cllr Alison Lowe of Leeds City Council, Terry Lacy from WNWHL, Chris Leek, Chief Executive of CES, watch as an engineer from Morgan Est fits the first pipe.



Fuel Poor Community Programme - Supplementary Information - New Wortley Project

The New Wortley estate consists of around 300 properties originally built as a local authority estate in the early 1960s. The area is highly urbanised with around two thirds of the properties remaining under local authority management. The Index of Multiple Deprivation score of 58.22 ranks the estate in the top 4% most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England.

As an 'all-electric' estate many homes were still reliant upon the original partial electric under-floor heating system with supplementary electrical heating in various forms. In many cases full house heating was not present.

This technology is characterised as being inefficient, poorly controllable, ineffective for full house heating and expensive to run.

Residents on the estate were sceptical of regeneration projects because a number of broken promises, for a variety of previous projects, were still fresh in their memory.

What has been delivered so far?

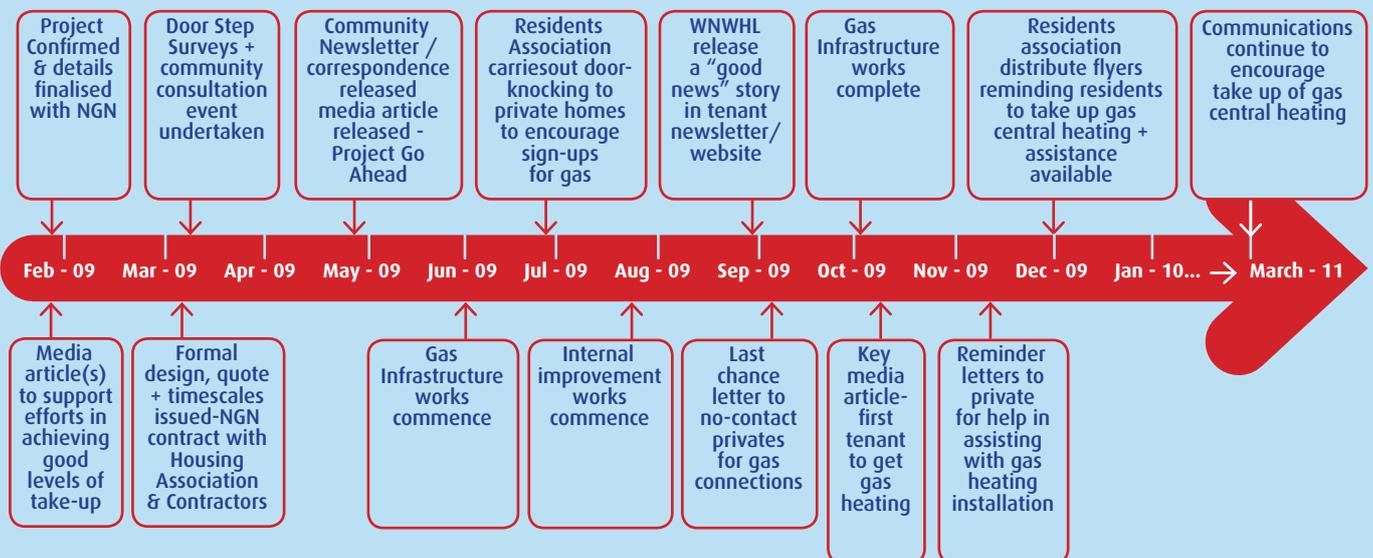
- Over 90% of the properties on the estate have a gas connection.
- Over 70% of private residents and landlords have a gas connection.
- Over one third of the households have already had new gas central heating systems installed. This is despite no full grant available from the local authority.

- Over 65% of private residents connected have been referred to receive financial assistance to have gas central heating installed.

Work will continue by various stakeholders until at least March 2011 to install new heating systems. Should a social housing property become vacant, having the gas connection pre-installed will enable the housing manager to use the opportunity to bring the property up to specification before letting. As more residents in the area see friends and neighbours with gas central heating and as others move into the area, the uptake of gas central heating will increase.

How have we done this?

- Timeline of Project



Fuel Poor Community Programme - Supplementary Information - New Wortley Project

• Project team/organisation

A Project Team was established and conducted monthly meetings to discuss progress on connections and in-house works, potential issues, communications, siteworks, milestones etc... The project team consists of an appointed employee from the main stakeholders, NGN, CES, Contractors and the Housing Association

• Partners involved

Partners involved in the New Wortley Project were as follows.

- Community Energy Solutions (CES) – Project coordinator, doorstep assessments and delivery of assistance to private households.
- Northern Gas Networks (NGN) – Fuel Poor funding provider.
- United Utilities – Design, delivery and management of new gas infrastructure/services.
- Morgan Est – Contractor responsible for installation of new gas infrastructure/services.
- West North West Homes Leeds (WNWHL) – Lead client, delivery of assistance to social housing.
- Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) - Directly assisted in persuading residents to sign up for gas connection and central heating.
- Property Management Services (PMS), part of Leeds City Council – Technical Services to WNWHL.
- British Gas – installer of heating systems: WNWHL and Private ‘able to pay’.

- Warm Front – provider of grant funding for energy efficiency measures to eligible households.
- Leeds Benefit Service, part of Leeds City Council – Benefit checks.

Testimonials

• Leeds City Council

Nasreen Lowson, Head of Property Investment (on behalf of Leeds City Council). “Following community consultation and further planning, NGN was able to present LCC with a nil-cost contract. CES has since gone on to help us develop plans to draw down on further funding, to allow WNWHL to invest further in this community. I strongly feel that had it not been for NGN bringing the project to us and helping us through each step of the process we wouldn’t have had the resources to even consider a project such as this. It’s opened up a whole new world of opportunities and we’ve already signed up for another, even bigger project.”

• West North West Homes Ltd

Stuart Roberts – Project Manager. “We are thrilled NGN are working with us to help our commitment on improving the homes and lives of residents in New Wortley.”

• Resident

Mrs Dianne of Willey of Clyde Walk, New Wortley “Many people shy away from this change as it is the unknown, but the team delivering the package are simply marvellous. The whole process both inside my own house and outside on the roads has been less disruptive than I could ever have thought. In fact, there was more disruption when we had the street lights replaced! I am looking forward to welcoming my other two children along with my grandchildren to my home, especially at Christmas when we will be all snug and warm! I’ve never had heating in the bedrooms, so it doesn’t matter how cold it gets this winter, I know my husband and I will be nice and warm at home.”

• Councillors

James McKenna, Councillor.

“This is fantastic news and can only be of benefit to all the residents in New Wortley. I’d urge each and every one of them to make sure they receive the help which is kindly being offered by Northern Gas Networks”.

Alison Lowe, Ward Councillor.

“This means a lot to people in the area. For them to finally have access to gas central heating and cooking is a tremendous boost.”

**Clyde Walk, New Wortley, Leeds.
This 1960s built, all-electric estate,
is in one of the most deprived
areas of the country and did not
have the benefits of a natural gas
supply until NGN developed an
innovative partnership approach.**

