Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Warm Homes Healthy People Financial Assistance Policy for Energy Efficiency Works in Private Sector Housing

1. Background
According to the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2010, private sector housing within the Borough has lower levels of energy efficiency than social housing, with the private rented sector having the lowest levels of all. The Better Homes Barnsley scheme is the latest council-endorsed energy efficiency scheme, operated in partnership with Keepmoat, which offers improvements such as wall insulation, loft insulation, boiler replacements and room in roof insulation to all private sector residents.
Central government funding to support the installation of energy efficiency measures has been cut over successive years which means that customers will be expected to contribute towards the cost of having works completed in the majority of cases. Barnsley council have sought out alternative funding sources which can be used to contribute towards these costs and have recently received £18,750 from the NHS Pioneer Fund specifically aimed at improving health by tackling cold homes through improving energy efficiency.

2. Objective
The NHS Pioneer Fund allocation is being used to establish a Warm Homes Healthy People pilot project whereby applications can be made for financial assistance to improve the energy efficiency of properties from residents who are suffering from a long-term health condition made worse by living in a cold home. The pilot project will also access any central government funding available for energy efficiency works in private sector properties to minimise the cost that the resident would need to pay for the works.

3. Making a Claim
Access to the Warm Homes Healthy People fund can only be obtained via the quality assured and Council-endorsed Better Homes Barnsley scheme. The claim will be submitted by the Better Homes delivery contractor on behalf of the resident following an assessment at the property.
If residents enquire about help towards the cost of energy efficiency works, they will be referred to the Better Homes delivery contractor in the first instance.
All claims will be assessed by the BMBC case worker and approved by a Group Leader within the Housing & Energy service. This will be done in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out below.

4. Eligibility
The eligibility criteria has been based upon the NICE guidance NG6 on “Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes”.

The householder must meet the following criteria:
- Private home owner or rent from private landlord

And meet one of the following criteria:
- Aged over 70

OR
- Have a low household income (less than £20,000 p.a.) and;
- have a long term health condition made worse by living in a cold home;
A declaration form will be given to the resident to obtain sign off by their GP confirming the existence of any relevant health condition. The application will be progressed once the completed declaration has been returned.

4.2 Low Household Income
Residents wishing to access the Warm Homes Healthy People funding will be asked to complete a declaration stating the current level of household income. The Better Homes delivery contractor will ask to see proof of this income level during the initial assessment visit by viewing documents such as bank statements or wage slips.

4.3 Capital
The Warm Homes Healthy People fund is designed to assist the most vulnerable residents in the Borough and so applicants with savings or capital above £6,000 will not be considered. The £6,000 level has been set in accordance with the guidelines used for calculating Local Housing Allowance entitlement.

5. Level of Award
Barnsley MBC will provide a grant to cover 75% of the customer contribution up to a total cost of £2000 (maximum grant payable is £1500 per property, the applicant pays the remainder after any funding obtained via other routes has been deducted)

The level of assistance offered may vary in very exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Head of the Housing & Energy service.

6. Payment of Grants
On satisfactory completion of the works, the discretionary fund payment will be made directly to Keepmoat.