

## Where can you find help to stay warm and well?

*This is an information article written by  
John Read, Chair of Hilary Cottage Surgery Patient  
Participation Group*



Medical practitioners know that staying warm, particularly in winter, can help us all to stay well. Living in a cold damp house can seriously impact health.

Perhaps you know of someone who is in what is termed 'fuel poverty'. It would be surprising if you did not because it is estimated that in Gloucestershire 11% of the population is 'fuel poor'.

What do we mean by this term? Simply it is the inability to pay fuel bills: this results in a cold, damp, unhealthy house. To make do, people will perhaps live in one room and wear extra clothing. Often it is a choice between paying the fuel bill or paying for gas and electricity. Sometimes people are disconnected because they cannot pay their bills.

There is help available for people who find themselves in this situation. The Severn Wye Energy Agency runs a help organisation called **Warm and Well**. They can offer the following **free of charge**

- A free home visit to see how a home can be run more fuel efficiently including installing free energy saving devices such as radiator foils
- A free report detailing savings which can be made
- Free phone calls to give impartial advice
- Tips for saving energy and staying warm
- Information about grants and loans for cavity wall and loft insulation and boiler replacements
- Links to a network of installers and tradespeople
- Switching energy tariffs and suppliers
- Information about smart meters which give accurate bills without having to read a meter and which can help to save energy

**Warm and Well find that an average of £400 a year can be saved** by following their advice. In addition those people on Pension Credit or low income can get a £140 discount off this winter's gas or electricity bill. If they are pensioners, disabled or suffering from a chronic illness or have a visual or hearing impairment they may be eligible for the Priorities Service Register. This gives access to the following

- Nominated people can help them pay their bills,
- meters can be moved to an accessible position,
- large print, Braille or talking bills can be provided
- a meter reading service can be provided
- a free annual safety check can be provided
- and priority will be given in an emergency which could include providing alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of a disconnection

**You can contact Warm and Well:**

**By telephone: 0800 500 3076**

**Or through the web site : [warmandwell@severnwe.org.uk](mailto:warmandwell@severnwe.org.uk)**