

# Warm Homes Newsletter

## Issue 4

**This offer  
is subject to  
availability  
so act fast!**

**With the average home energy bill now being £1,340 per year, the Warm Homes Campaign from Durham County Council helps residents to have a warmer home and lower energy bills.**

### Managing Money Better

**Need help with your energy bills and energy debts?**

Free and impartial advice to help you save money on your energy bills and keep your home warm is available from us.

An experienced energy advisor from the councils Managing Money Better service can help you reduce your energy bills by finding a more competitive tariff and switch energy supplier, as well as offering fuel debt advice and making sure you understand your heating system and controls.

As several Energy Companies recently have gone bust, it's very important that you check your energy bills regularly. This is to ensure your payments are keeping up with your energy usage and you are not underpaying and falling into fuel debt with your Energy Company.

### Grants for new gas boilers and home insulation

Act now as this scheme may be changing from April 2022. The Government Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme provides low income households and households in receipt of a qualifying Benefit with grants for energy efficiency improvements such as new gas boilers, cavity wall insulation, party wall and loft insulation\*\*. Contact us and ask for information on the ECO schemes currently available.

### What to do if an energy company goes into insolvency

If the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) revokes an energy company's supply licence (usually because of insolvency), it can appoint a 'supplier of last resort' on a case-by-case basis to take over the supply of gas and/or electricity to the insolvent supplier's customers. See <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households> for guidance if an energy company has gone into insolvency and to find out what Ofgem has in place to assist customers of that company.

### Free Boiler Service

If you are an owner occupier with an income less than £30,000 and have health issues, you could qualify for a free gas boiler service from Durham County Council. If you would like to find out if you qualify for a free boiler service contact the Council using the details shown on the back page of this newsletter.



Warm Homes

# Air Source Heat Pump

## What is an Air Source Heat Pump?

Air Source Heat Pumps are a form of heating which extracts warmth from the air, even when it is very cold outside and uses warmth to heat your home and provide you with hot water.

An Air Source Heat Pump works in a very similar way to gas central heating, with a unit attached to the side of your home converting the heat in the outside air to room heating and hot water.

For homes that are not connected to the gas network, an Air Source Heat Pump can be a very efficient form of heating saving up to 40% on energy bills as compared to heating your home with oil or electricity.‡

## Grants for Air Source Heat Pumps

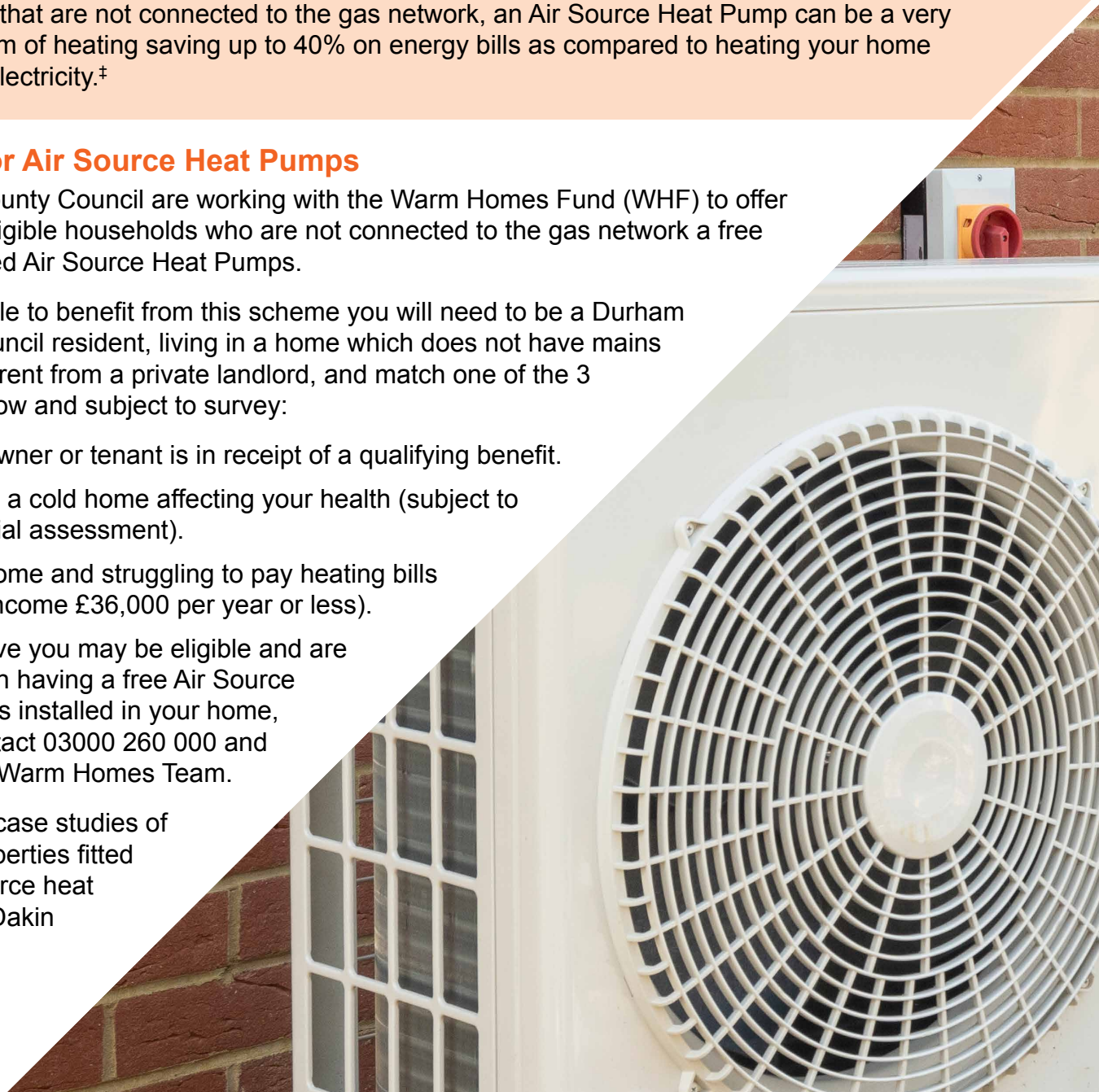
Durham County Council are working with the Warm Homes Fund (WHF) to offer grants to eligible households who are not connected to the gas network a free fully installed Air Source Heat Pumps.

To be eligible to benefit from this scheme you will need to be a Durham County Council resident, living in a home which does not have mains gas and or rent from a private landlord, and match one of the 3 options below and subject to survey:

1. Home owner or tenant is in receipt of a qualifying benefit.
2. Living in a cold home affecting your health (subject to a financial assessment).
3. Low income and struggling to pay heating bills (gross income £36,000 per year or less).

If you believe you may be eligible and are interested in having a free Air Source Heat Pumps installed in your home, please contact 03000 260 000 and ask for the Warm Homes Team.

‡Based on case studies of off-gas properties fitted with air source heat pumps by Dakin since 2016.



# Watch out for the silent killer

You can't see it, taste it, or smell it, but Carbon Monoxide (CO) can kill.

## What is CO?

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that is produced when gas, oil, solid fuels and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) do not burn fully. It can occur when an appliance has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained.

## Spotting the signs



Lazy yellow or orange flames (rather than crisp and blue) on a gas appliance



Pilot lights frequently blowing out



Dark staining or sooting around/on appliances



Increased condensation on windows



# What should I do if I suspect CO poisoning?

1. Call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**
2. Turn off gas appliances immediately, open doors & windows and leave the property
3. See your doctor immediately or go to the hospital

## Recognising the symptoms

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Breathlessness
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness



## Smell Gas?

Call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999**

 [northerngasnetworks.co.uk](http://northerngasnetworks.co.uk)

# Stay safe...

## At home

- Install an **approved** audible CO alarm fitted to British Standard EN 50291
- Get your appliances serviced by a qualified engineer once a year.
  - **0800 408 5500** or visit Gas Safe Register [gassaferegister.co.uk](http://gassaferegister.co.uk) (gas appliances)
  - **01684 278170** or visit Heating Equipment Testing & Approval Schemes (HETAS) [hetas.co.uk](http://hetas.co.uk) (solid fuel)
  - **01473 626 298** or visit Oil Firing Technical Association (OFTEC) [oftec.org](http://oftec.org) (oil appliances)

## On the water

- In large boats, such as houseboats, it is important to make sure that any gasoline-powered engines on boats are checked regularly

## Camping and barbecues

- Even when the flames have gone out smouldering coals can still kill. Never bring a barbecue or camping stove inside an enclosed area, such as a tent
- If you are heading on a boat trip or camping holiday, pack a CO alarm

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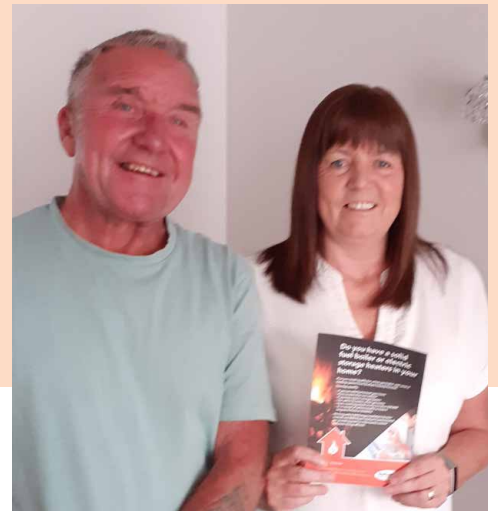
**we are  
the network**



# Some of Our Happy Customers

## Mr and Mrs Simpson said:

“We are delighted with their new efficient heating system and the help from the Councils Warm Homes Team and Managing Money Better Service.”



## Mrs G said:

“The help to reduce my energy bills was excellent and on top of that I received a free carbon monoxide alarm and free boiler service as my boiler was old.”

## Mrs S said:

“Having instant hot water is amazing from my new boiler, thank you. I highly recommend the whole process and can hardly believe the boiler was fitted free.”

## Mrs B said:

“Peace of mind for all the family, my Mam loves how clean the new boiler is and fitted so quickly without any mess.”

## Mrs W said:

“Couldn't fault any part of the process when they put in the new boiler and I didn't have to pay anything as I received a grant from the Council. The installers worked really hard.”

## Mr A received a grant for a new boiler and loft insulation said

“I hadn't realised how cold our home was – I love it now, it's so warm.”



## Do you have cold related ill health?

Our warm and healthy homes scheme can help private households who have a cold related illness (including Long COVID and premature babies from 34 weeks to 9 months) and are having problems with their gas boiler\*. You will need to complete our application form and also get it signed by a health or social care.



## Warm Homes Discount

Energy companies must, by law, offer extra help to their most vulnerable customers during the winter months. If you're a pensioner, or you're on a low income, you could qualify for a rebate of £140 off your energy bill. Residents can contact us for advice on how to find out if they qualify for a Warm Homes Discount.

## What is the Priority Services Register?

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a service from your Energy Supplier to provide free support to people who may be vulnerable – perhaps because of their age, health or disability. It ensures individuals with special requirements have access to additional support from their energy supplier as and when they require it. This support varies by supplier and by an individual's circumstances and includes:

- Large-format or Braille bills
- Priority in a power cut
- Advanced notice of service interruption
- Quarterly meter readings

Contact us if you want to find out if you can register for the PSR.

## Gas central heating scheme

The free gas central heating scheme with EON Energy and 0800 Repair ended on 30th November 2021. If you applied before that date please contact EON Energy on 0333 202 4481 to check the progress with your application.

## How to contact us

To find out more about any of the above schemes contact us on **03000 268000** and ask for the Warm Homes Team or e-mail, [warmhomes@durham.gov.uk](mailto:warmhomes@durham.gov.uk) or log onto [www.durham.gov.uk/warmhomescampaign](http://www.durham.gov.uk/warmhomescampaign)



\*\*Your current boiler needs to be deemed as inefficient by a registered ECO Contractor. Only customers who meet the eligibility requirements will qualify for the grant offer. Only applies to boiler and insulation measures recommended by a registered ECO Contractor appointed surveyor. The grant offer is subject to availability and change or withdrawal at any time. To qualify for a grant households must be receipt of one of the following benefits: DLA or PIP; Attendance Allowance or Pension or Tax Credits; Income Related Employment and Support Allowance; Income based Job Seekers Allowance; Income Support, State Pension Credit; Tax Credits (income thresholds apply); Universal Credit (income thresholds apply); Carers Allowance or Industrial Injury or ESA income related; Council Tax Reduction Benefit and/or Housing Benefit or have a total household income less than £30,000. DCC does not fund or manage the ECO grant programmes.