

Community Energy Programme

Evaluation Report



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1. Introduction

Age UK received £450,000 from ENGIE (previously known as GDF Suez) to deliver a programme of energy-related activities that aimed to reduce fuel poverty and enable older people to stay warm in their homes.

A small part of the funding (£5,500) was used between January 2015 and March 2015, to support several local Age UK Brand Partners in England and one local Age Cymru partner, who were already delivering a basic energy service to deliver winter events in their local communities to help raise awareness of the effect of cold weather on homes.

The remaining funding was used to pilot a service that ran between May 2015 and February 2016, and involved seven local Age UK Brand Partners in England recruiting fully-qualified Energy Advisers to deliver support to older people to help them have a warm home. The support provided ranged from providing advice on energy-related issues to support with switching energy tariffs or applying for grants to installing energy efficient equipment, and was complemented by the running of additional activities such as extra lunch clubs through the winter months.

This report provides the findings of the evaluation of this pilot, including the lessons that need to be considered by future services that are aimed at supporting older people have a warm home.

This report is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the evidence of the adverse impact of cold homes on older people's health. Section 3 describes the delivery model. Section 4 discusses the aims of the evaluation and the research methodology employed to carry out the evaluation. Section 5 presents the findings from the evaluation. Section 6 presents a discussion of the findings, and Section 7 concludes this report with a summary of the overall assessment of the success of this project in meeting its aims and the recommendations that draw from the evaluation findings.

2. Cold Homes and Poor Health

Every year, tens of thousands of older people die or become seriously ill in England because of the cold. Cold weather, and in particular cold homes, is believed to be the main reasons behind increases in respiratory and circulatory diseases in winter. Circulatory diseases are believed to cause around 40% of excess winter deaths, with respiratory diseases causing around one-third (Marmoth Review Team, 2011).

Older people are more likely to suffer from cold weather because they have existing medical conditions, and their internal temperature control is weaker due to having less subcutaneous fat. Older people may also live in cold homes, with many being unable to afford to keep their home heated to an adequate temperature (i.e. living in fuel poverty). This can affect the quality of life by requiring older people to choose between or limiting other basic items (i.e. choose to eat or heat) and social interaction (i.e. not able to afford to get out and about) (Marmoth Review Team, 2011).

How cold affects the health of older people

- Exposure to cold through the hands, feet, face or head can rapidly lead to a drop in core body temperature.
- Cold air can narrow airways, making it harder to breathe.
- Cold air increases the risk of respiratory infection.
- Cold lowers heart rate but raises blood pressure much more.
- In older people raised blood pressure may last many hours.
- Cold increases the risk of blood-clotting.
- Blood-clotting and raised blood pressure both increase the risk of heart attack or stroke.
- The longer someone is exposed to cold, the more at risk they are of all these effects.

Source: Age UK, 2012, p9

Cold weather has shown to increase the demand on the health service, with the cost to the NHS from cold homes estimated to be around £1.36 billion per year. This estimate includes the cost to both primary care and hospital treatment, but not social care which would suggest an even higher cost to the health & social care budget (Public Health England et al., 2014).

The personal and family costs from becoming seriously ill or from a premature death because of the cold can be devastating. Evidence however suggests that such an impact is not inevitable. Many countries colder than England have lower excess winter deaths and research using a control group has shown that improvements in the thermal efficiency of housing can significantly improve circulatory health (Marmot Review Team, 2011).

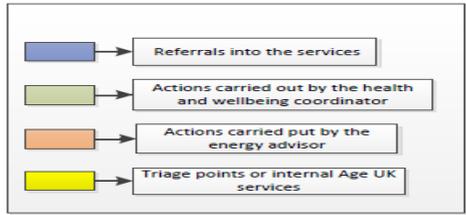
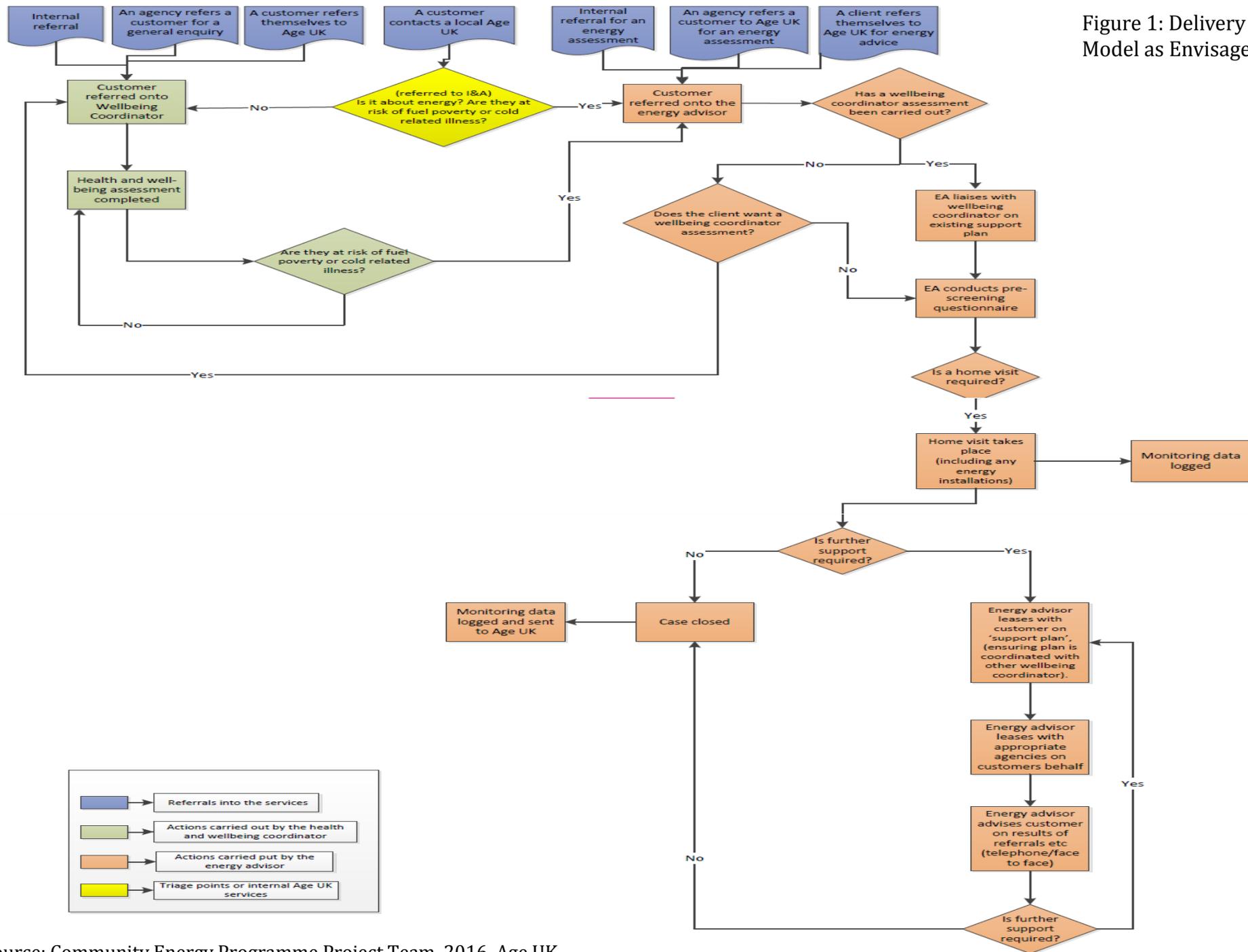
3. Project Delivery Model

Referral Pathway

The Community Energy Programme was a pilot project aimed at testing the concept of having fully-qualified Energy Advisers within local Age UK Brand Partners to deliver support to older people to help them have a warm home. The pilot was delivered in six areas in the northeast and northwest of England. The six local Age UK partners chosen to deliver the project were: Cheshire, Darlington, North Tyneside, South Lakeland, South Tyneside and Teesside.

The envisaged delivery model for this pilot (figure 1) was that referrals to the Energy Adviser would come from three routes: the first route would be **well-being coordinators** who having carried out an assessment of an older person referred into them and identified energy as an issue; the second route would be **information & advice (I&A)** who would refer older people seeking advice on energy-related issues to the Energy Adviser; and the third route would be **direct referrals to the energy adviser**. It was envisaged that for referrals made from I&A, or directly to the energy adviser, the older person would be made aware of the opportunity to receive a well-being assessment. The Energy Adviser (liaising with the well-being coordinator where relevant) would carry out a screening questionnaire, and on the basis of this decide if a home visit is required. Then there would be a number of other energy-related steps as presented in figure 1.

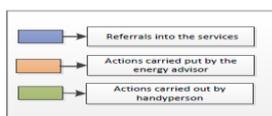
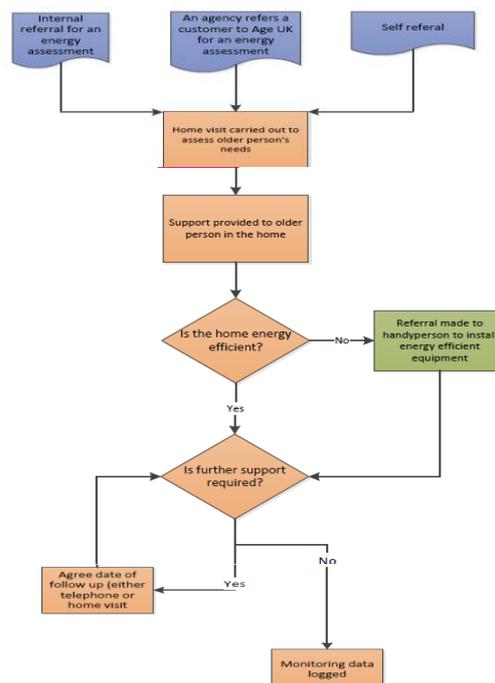
Figure 1: Delivery Model as Envisaged



Source: Community Energy Programme Project Team, 2016, Age UK

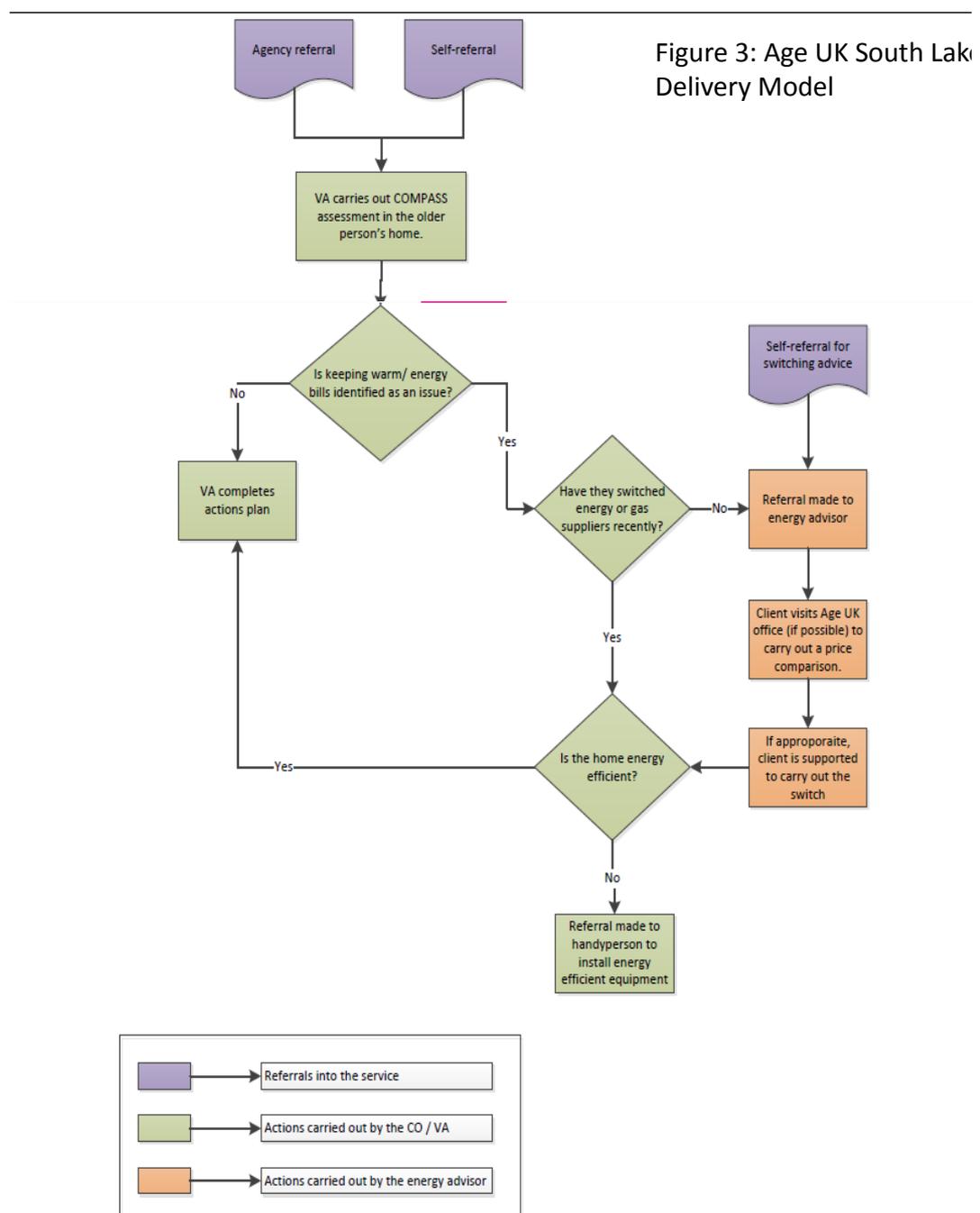
The envisaged delivery model turned out to be a model that was not fully consistent with the delivery models of the six local Age UK Brand Partners chosen to pilot this programme. The actual delivery model for the pilot (figure 2) was simpler in concept yet still consistent with the principles of the envisaged model. Energy Advisers received referrals from three routes: **internal local Age UK teams; external organisations** and **older people self-referring** for energy related support. The Energy Adviser then tended to make a home visit to carry out an assessment, and agreed a plan of action where needed. Although not presented in figure 2, Energy Advisers did feedback to other teams within their local Age UK if other issues were identified during the home visits. So in essence that feedback mechanism envisaged as part of the delivery model, with the well-being coordinator in the centre, existed but with the coordination not necessarily being performed by a person labelled a well-being coordinator.

Figure 2: Actual Delivery Model



Source: Community Energy Programme Project Team, 2016, Age UK

Age UK South Lakeland’s delivery model was a little different to the others because their organisational delivery model has a case manager for each older person who requires a substantial amount of support. This case manager coordinates their support. As presented in figure 3, the Energy Adviser also received referrals directly from older people seeking energy related support.



Source: Community Energy Programme Project Team, 2016, Age UK

Energy Advisers

The Community Energy Programme was a pilot project aimed at testing the concept of having **fully-qualified Energy Advisers** within local Age UK Brand Partners to deliver support to older people to help them. Three of the six local Age UK Brand Partners recruited one full-time adviser with the other three recruiting two part-time Energy Advisers¹; some of these people recruited had previous experience in providing energy-related support, some had previous experience of working in a local Age UK, some had both of these experiences and some were new to working for a local Age UK Brand Partner and to the field of energy support.

The recruited Energy Advisers were all required to attend a six day training programme designed and delivered by the National Energy Action. They were also expected to pass a three part exam which would lead them to receiving two City & Guilds qualifications – Level 3 Award in Energy Awareness 6281-01 and Level 2 Award in Fuel Debt Advice in the Community 6281-16). It is attending the full training programme and having these two qualifications that was the definition of a fully-qualified Energy Adviser².

The **training** provided to Energy Advisers was comprehensive and covered a diverse range of topics and as one Energy Adviser said covered *“meter reading, how to spot the damp and save money by switching and the priority service...discounts, the insulation, the equipment”* and more including the health impacts of living in a cold home and how to deliver presentations in the community. The training programme and exam process are presented in Annex A, B and C.

In five of the local Age UK Brand Partners the Energy Advisers had only one responsibility, and that was delivering energy-related support to older people. In the one other local Age UK Brand Partner, the Energy Advisers were also I&A Advisers and their time was split in half between the two roles.

¹ Age UK North Tyneside, Age UK South Lakeland and Age UK South Tyneside recruited one-full time Energy Adviser; Age UK Cheshire, Age UK Darlington and Age UK Teesside recruited two part-time Energy Advisers

² Local Age UK Brand Partners did not contribute to the cost of the training as it was covered by the overall budget for the programme held by the Community Energy Programme Project Team at Age UK National

Other Activities

The Energy Advisers, in addition to their primary role of supporting older people with energy-related issues, were also tasked with delivering a portfolio of complementary activities. These activities included: **community awareness raising events** (to help increase awareness of cold-related health problems and to help identify older people at risk from the cold); **training Age UK staff and external professionals** on the effects of cold weather on the health of older people and how to identify whether someone is at risk from the cold; **delivering befriending services and hosting extra social clubs** during the winter months; **electric blanket testing** and distributing to those most in need; and **distributing emergency winter hampers** (containing essential items such as blankets, food, warm clothing and a thermometer).

4. Research Methodology

The aim of the evaluation of the Community Energy Programme has been to understand how the programme has been delivered and how successful the concept of a fully-trained Energy Adviser is at reducing the risk of cold-related illness amongst older people. Annex D presents the theory of change model and the outcome framework developed at the beginning of the evaluation.

The research methodology employed to carry out the evaluation involved a mixed-method approach that has involved:

- documentary analysis including reviewing the original Age UK proposal to ENGIE seeking funding, the applications of the six local Age UK Brand Partners participating in the programme and case studies and meeting notes.
- monitoring data collected that included information on the number of older people supported, the support they received, their characteristics, how they were referred to the Energy Adviser, a profile of financial expenditure, and other activities delivered
- interviews with Energy Advisers and project managers at the each of the participating local Age UK Brand Partner
- analysis of a survey of older people supported by Energy Advisers

Qualitative data was analysed using a thematic framework, with each piece of information reviewed and coded manually before being interpreted. Further information on the research methodology employed is presented in Annex E.

5. Evaluation Findings

Project Achievements

Number of Older People Supported

The Community Energy Programme supported a total of 944 older people between the six local Age UK Brand Partners. The number of older people supported by the Energy Advisers in each individual local Age UK Brand Partner ranged between close to one hundred and close to three hundred. Table 1 (below) presents the number of older people supported by Energy Advisers by local Age Brand Partner. Annex F provides socio-demographic information about the older people supported.

Table 1: Number of older people supported and proportion of who feel cold impacts on their health

	Number of older people supported	Proportion of older people supported who feel cold has impact on their health
Cheshire	81	79%
Darlington	66	27%
North Tyneside	184	100%
South Lakeland	278	48%
South Tyneside	158	86%
Teesside	177	90%
Total	944	74%

Table 1 also shows the proportion of older people supported who stated that the cold impacts on their health. Four of the six local Age UK Brand Partners were supporting older people, the majority of who stated that the cold impacted on their health. The other two local Age UKs supported older people, most of who did not feel that the cold impacted on their health³.

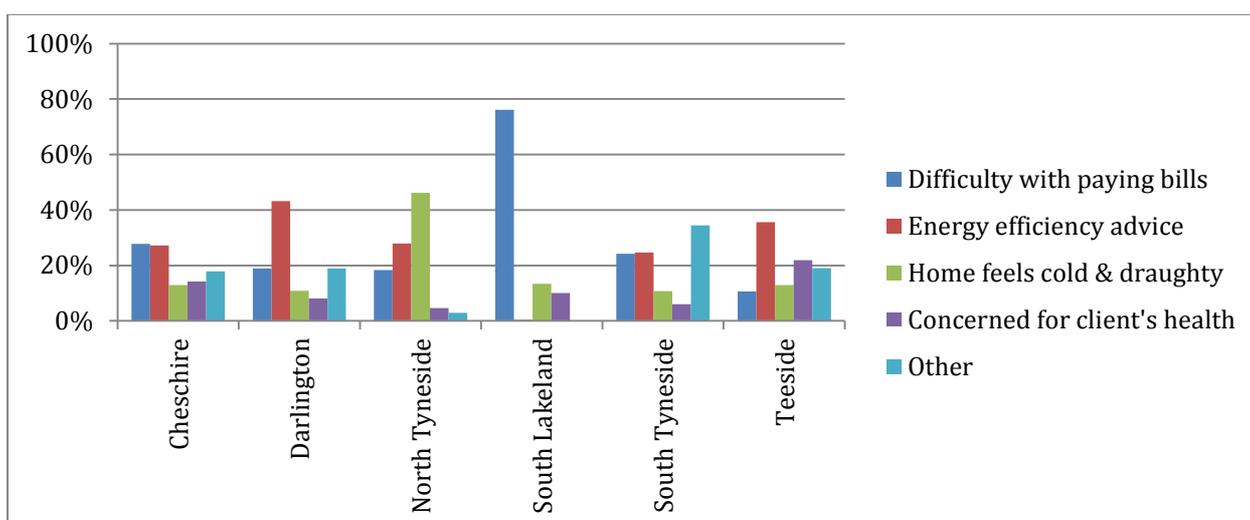
³ It is not clear that a feeling that the cold does not impact on health is a reasonable proxy for the cold not physiologically impacted on the health of an older person. It also does not mean that an older person does not have an energy-related issue because they do not feel that the cold impacts on their health

Needs of Older People Supported

For the Community Energy Programme as a whole around one-third (34%) of the reasons for seeking energy-related support was because of difficulty with paying bills. Almost one-in-four (24%) of the reasons for seeking support was wanting energy efficient advice and almost one-in-five (19%) because home feels cold and draughty. As little as one-in-ten (12%) of the reasons for seeking energy-related support was because of older people being concern for their health.

For many of the local Age UK Brand Partners the distribution of the reasons that older people they supported sought energy-related advice differed from that for the programme as a whole. For example, for older people supported by Age UK South Lakeland, almost four-fifths (78%) of the reasons for seeking energy-related support was because of difficulty with paying bills; whereas for Age UK North Tyneside almost half (48%) of the reasons was because of homes feeling cold and draughty. Figure 4 (below) presents the reasons older people sought energy-related support.

Figure 4: Reasons for seeking energy-related support



Services Received By Older People Supported

The support received by older people varied from advice on energy related issues to support with switching energy tariffs or applying for grants to having energy efficient equipment installed. For the programme as a whole 252 older people received support with energy bills, 86 older people with support reading meter and 153 older people with support with using heating systems effectively.

Almost 400 older people received support switching energy tariffs (saving an average of £203 per year), almost 40 older people received support with fuel debt, and 14 older people received support to successful claim the Warm Home Discount applications (each receiving £140).

Almost 340 pieces of energy efficient equipment was installed, including insulation form, light bulbs, draught excluders and radiator panels.

The support provided to older people seeking energy-related advice varied between the local Age UK Brand Partners. This reflected the needs of older people seeking support, and the variety and complexity of some of the support required is presented in the illustrations below. Annex H provides detailed stories of support older people received from Energy Advisers and Table 2 below shows the number of older people supported by type of service received by local Age UK.

Illustration 1 – Example of Support Provided (national database issue)

A lady had wished to switch her electric and gas supply. She went through the process and her electric supply was switched. Her gas supply was however not switched. The reason for this was that her house name and postcode on the national database was incorrect, which meant the new supplier she wished to switch to could not take her on until the details on the national database were correct. No one had however told her this. She came to see the Energy Adviser and explained to him that her electric supplier had been changed but not her gas supplier. The Energy Adviser, after making between 12 to 14 phone calls, managed to identify the issue and submitted for the lady's information in the national database to be updated, which can take up to three weeks to complete.

Table 2: Supported Received by Older People⁴

	Cheshire	Darlington	North Tyneside	South Lakeland	South Tyneside	Teesside
Support with Energy Bills	54	-	93	2	-	103
Support with Reading Meter	18	-	14	3	-	51
Support to use heating system/control effectively	45	-	83	0	-	25
Support with Switching	20	34	40	114	75	112
Average saving per older person switching	£259	£53	£138	£267	£232	£179
Support with Fuel Debt	9	4	2	-	12	12
Successful claiming WHD	7	1	4	-	2	-
Energy Efficient Equipment Installed	-	39	120	0	41	136

Illustration 2 – Example of Support Provided (acts of god)

A gentleman had visited an Energy Adviser and following an assessment and discussion he decided to switch energy and gas suppliers. The application was made and the switch completed. Soon afterwards his house was flooded and he had to move temporarily to another place. The gentleman rang the supplier to advice that he wanted to reduce his direct debit payment. The supplier asked for his account number, which the gentleman did not have because it had been washed away. The gentleman approached the Energy Adviser again. The Energy Adviser rang the supplier and managed to get them to send all copies of his original paperwork to his new temporary address. The Energy Adviser also managed to get the direct debit down to standing order only.

⁴ A full list of the activities carried out to provide the different type of support to older people is listed in Annex E

Older People Satisfaction of Support Received

Almost half of the 169 older people contacted in February 2016 completed a short five question feedback survey administered by the Community Energy Programme Project Team at Age UK National. The survey questions asked and a summary of responses can be found in Annex I.

All the older people responding to the survey, except one, found the advice and support provided by Energy Advisers useful; and all (including the one who did not find the advice and support useful) felt the overall service their received to be good or very good. Overall around 90% of older people responding rated the service received 5 out of 5, with the remainder rating it 4 out of 5.

Table 3 (below) presents the ratings of the overall service provided how by local Age UK.

Table 3: Service Rating

Rating (score out of 5)	Cheshire	Darlington	North Tyneside	South Lakeland	South Tyneside	Teeside
1 = Very Poor	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4	20%	20%	0%	14%	0%	4%
5 = Very Good	80%	80%	100%	86%	100%	96%

The reason that the older people responding rated the service so highly was because of the way the Energy Advisers politely and patiently interacted with them, and articulated things in an easy to understand manner. The one person who did not find the advice and support useful said *“I was supposed to have foil fitted behind my radiator and rubber fitted around my doors but this never happened. I went into hospital following a stroke and never heard from the man and have had no work done”* which reflects that this persons did not receive the service that was identified for her.

Other Activities Delivered

For the programme as a whole 25 training sessions were held within Age UK Brand Partners, attracting 183 Age UK staff and volunteers; with another 28 training sessions held attracting 214 external staff and volunteers. The number of sessions and attendees varied by local Age UK Brand Partner as presented in table 4 (below). Each local Age UK also engaged external organisations as part of the programme, with the numbers varying between them.

Table 4: Awareness Raising Sessions & Organisations Engaged

	Cheshire	Darlington	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	South Lakeland	Teesside
No. of internal training sessions held	-	2	6	4	3	10
No. of internal staff and volunteers attended	-	6	49	12	32	84
No. of external training sessions held	1	3	6	0	-	18
No. of external staff and volunteers trained	10	20	114	0	-	70
No. of external organisations successfully engaged with	20+	29	5	6	2	65

The Community Energy Programme also involved other activities including winter awareness raising events, distribution of winter hampers and electric blankets and the provision of social activities such as befriending, coffee mornings and lunch clubs. Table 5 (below) shows local Age UKs varied in the number of these activities that they delivered as part of this programme. For the programme as a whole 71 winter awareness raising events were held attracting 2830 people; 436 winter hampers were distributed; 144 electric blankets were distributed and 26 electric blankets were tested; 1750 befriending visits were completed and 84 coffee or lunch clubs. Many of these activities are those that local Age UKs already provide as part of their support service.

Table 5: Other Activities Delivered

No. of winter awareness events held	19	5	13	12	16	6
No. of people that attended the events	375	500	285	420	1000	250
No. of winter hampers distributed	150	50	50	130	40	16
No. of electric blankets distributed	-	100	44	-	-	-
Electric blanket testing event	-	1	-	25	-	-
No. of older people that have received benefit sessions	-	468	392	-	-	35
No. of befriending visits completed	-	1600	-	-	-	150
Winter lunch clubs	-	60	-	-	-	-
Weekly coffee mornings	-	24	-	-	-	-

Project Learning

The Community Energy Programme ran for ten months and supported almost one thousand older people with a range of services; all those older people responding to the feedback survey rated the Energy Adviser service highly and almost all found it to be useful. These achievements have been accompanied by learning about the delivery model.

Raising Awareness of Energy Adviser Service

The fully-trained Energy Adviser enabled local Age UKs to offer services beyond that they were offering, and to make the most of this resource in supporting older people, awareness of the service had to be raised to develop appropriate referrals. It was expected that Energy Advisers would spend half their time raising awareness of the service (including the effect of the cold on older people's health). The approaches taken by the six local Age UK Brand Partners participating in the programme differed depending on their organisational delivery model, and the existing energy-related services they offered.

The different approaches taken to raise awareness of the service involved speaking with colleagues within the local Age UK Brand Partner, speaking with external stakeholders and holding awareness raising events.

“One of the first things that I did when I came back in was having a chat with everybody in the building to let them know what I was doing, the fact that I was here, the type of service that you and I wanted to offer, you know, what the sort of project was...because I think with energy, there seems to be a common conception that it's about sorting people's tariffs out and doing switching, whereas – that is a lot of it, but there's a lot more to it than that”

“What we're doing is a series of mini popup workshops internally to spread the message about the energy adviser, so that every one of our coordinators who goes out and talks to their own customer pocket will also be talking about energy advice”

“[Energy Adviser] would go out and speak with social care teams and hospital teams and raise awareness at hospices and GP surgeries and things like that. So stakeholders and the organisations throughout the borough had some awareness of what he's doing and what they were referring to”

“We hired a venue, we spent the money, we did the advertising and organized partners to come along for stands and things like that. And a lot of effort went into that. And for very few people coming...So since then we have not invested that time and energy and effort and money into that...we've kind of piggybacked on other people's events”

In a rural location with many small villages, successfully delivering the energy-related support has raised awareness through word-of-mouth. As one energy adviser said *“I've gone out and done a few people in one particular area where there's been quite large savings...word has got around the community and people have made direct approaches to us”*

In raising awareness of the service there was concern amongst local Age UK Brand Partners involved in the programme about the capacity to deal with referrals, with one of the project managers saying *“We couldn't raise awareness too much because we wouldn't have the capacity to meet it”*

Challenge: Raising awareness of the Energy Adviser Service

Possibility: Raising awareness amongst teams within the local Age UK (especially those that have regular contact with older people), amongst stakeholders who could be key to identifying people at risk of cold-related illness and directly with the wider community by latching on to organised events. Regularly reminding internal and external stakeholders could be important, especially through warmer months when the issue of cold-related illness amongst older people may not be at the forefront of their mind.

Limitations: Capacity to manage the referrals made into the service

Energy Adviser Training

Energy Advisers all attended a six day training programme, and successfully completed a three part assessment leading to them receiving two City & Guilds qualifications. The breadth and depth of the training was considered essential and valuable by Energy Advisers, who said:

“The training was crucial. It was critical to the role. I don’t know anything really beforehand, and it really did equip me. I think it was probably just about right, because the kind of clients I’ve dealt with, I think what was covered on the training day has certainly sufficed for everything I’ve had to deal with.”

“So I think if it’s rolled out again, I would say it’s an absolute must. It’s an absolute must. You can’t work as an energy adviser without some sort of training, because you’re really advising people.”

“The training at the outset I would say is really important and integral to the whole role”

The variety of issues that Energy Advisers dealt with also meant that much of the training was supplemented by on the job learning, and for some Energy Advisers being able to have a peer – another Energy Adviser – to share experiences and bounce ideas off was helpful.

“Every client is slightly different, every client has different needs....you’ll get a new client that will completely throw you, you know, it’ll be like a new thing that you’ve dealt with. And then you have to kind of either refer back to your notes or confer with your colleague or go online to get help....I think that’s why I have enjoyed it...been constant learning”

“I do think though that like a buddy system would be good where you can actually – not all the time, but may be once every month – link up and work with another energy adviser in another area, go out with them and actually see what they do. You can always pick up things from everybody”

Energy Advisers noted that it is important to also keep up to date with changes that occur in the energy industry, and mentioned regular information may be helpful. The possibility of online training, that is kept up to date, was also noted as a possible useful source of information to refresh and maintain knowledge.

“You need to keep up to date with the industry as well, because things change...you know, tariffs change, OFGEM regulations change regularly, so you have to keep up to date with that. So I don’t know, like a newsletter or something like that to keep up to date with things. ”

“Information needs to change after a year or two years...things change, grants change, energy efficiency measures change...we’ll need to maintain being on the ball with that, which could be difficult....[Online training] there would [be value to having] as long as that was current and updated regularly...that would be really beneficial”

Challenge: Maintaining, refreshing and updating knowledge and skills required

Possibility: Shadowing other Energy Advisers on a regular basis to learn from what they do; having a network to tap into to share experiences and seek support; a regular newsletter with updates on energy-related news and electronic training modules to help refresh (and at times) update knowledge on specific topics

Limitations: Capacity to participate in shadowing and engage with a peer network; not wanting to dilute value of full training by having electronic training

Identifying Older People

The aim of the Community Energy Programme was to pilot a service that involved local Age UK Brand Partners using fully-qualified Energy Advisers to deliver support to older people to help them have a warm home. The observations from local Age UK brand partners involved in the programme are that there generally is a demand for this type of service and many older people needing support have been helped. The challenge arising is with limited resources how can these be best used to support those most at need – or likely to benefit most – from the service.

“I don’t think I’ve found so many really fuel poor people...we haven’t really touched as many needy people as I would have hoped”

“We talked about at the final meeting...identifying people who are most at risk, and how do we define what the risk is. I think energy companies look towards people in fuel poverty...I think Age UK should be looking at people at risk of cold-related ill health, which is slightly different, because finance isn’t the only thing that you’re looking at...people might not be the poorest, but they don’t understand the heating or they’re not putting on the heating and therefore they’re still at risk”

Challenge: Identifying older people at most risk of cold-related ill health

Possibility: Targeting referrals of those with conditions that are most exacerbated by cold weather which may mean attempting to engage closely with health and social care services (e.g. during flu jab season nurses may inform older people of opportunity for support on energy-related support or through a hospital-to-home service or activities that come in contact with group of older people being targeted)

Limitations: Older people not most at need may still benefit greatly from support, and preventative nature of support can have greatest impact

Home Visits

Energy Advisers carried out energy assessments with older people referred to them in the older person's home, the local Age UK offices or over the phone. Energy Advisers felt that visiting an older person at home to carry out an energy assessment added value to the service they offered, saying:

"By going in their own home you see straightaway sort of whether the house is cold or any problems they have...because they don't necessarily totally open up if they're coming into the office. So by being in the house itself, you see it sort of first hand."

Energy Advisers also felt that home visits provided the benefit of being able to identify other needs that older people may benefit from being supported with, saying:

"We can also then keep an eye for other services that might be of use to them from Age UK as well, or indeed organisations outside of Age UK. So it's a bit more of a holistic service rather than the pure just energy advice itself."

Home visits are costly both in terms of the time required traveling between older people's homes, and the financial cost of either public or private transport. The mode of transport available to an Energy Adviser and the geographic size of the area being covered, along with unforeseen acts of nature, can influence the number of older people an Energy Adviser can support as well as in which location is most productive to meet older people.

"I travel by public transport, my colleague has a car. So that's why he's seeing more clients. It's easier...I don't see as many clients because I spend longer travelling on public transport."

“The problem is that the area is so remote and rural that somebody who is 25 miles away up a farm track isn’t the easiest person to get to in terms of giving your all...and unfortunately at times it’s a case of well, I could see three or four people in the office...in the time that it would take tyo get to wherever and back”

“I’ve had appointments for people to visit me which they’ve had to cancel because the roads have been flooded”

The length of time assessing an older person referred to the service can vary depending on their needs and the location of assessment, and the number of times that an Energy Adviser has to make contact with an older person is dependent on the complexity of the case. To maximise this part of the role, local Age UK Brand Partners have found it useful to provide admin support to the Energy Adviser to offload some of the tasks such as *“the paperwork side of it, booking the appointments, organising for the handyperson.”*

Challenge: Carrying out energy assessments at home

Possibility: Visiting an older person’s house to carry out an energy assessment is very useful, as the picture built up by being in someone’s home can provide additional information on the older person’s needs

Limitations: The size and rural nature of some geographic areas, and the available mode of transport, can sometimes make it more effective to carry out an energy assessment in the office or over the phone

Engaging Older People

Energy Advisers observed that energy is not an issue that always engages people and some of the jargon within the industry can be difficult to understand. Building a relationship with an older person is important; the need to make the older person feel at ease and part of a conversation is a skill that is needed in drawing out information from the older person.

“Half the battle with this role is just making customers sort of relaxed and feeling comfortable to just talk”

“I did have prompts that I would use...but now, because I’ve been out seeing so many people, it’s just a case of getting out there and just starting talking and picking up on all the different things that are said...I do have a sheet that I devised myself, just basically to jot down notes for different areas, because I certainly don’t do it as like a tick list type of thing. I just try and get a very general conversation going, and then take it forward from there”

“When I go out and speak to people, I try to break it down into very, very simple language, and I try to use analogies that when we are talking about potentially switching and going to a different provider, I think it’s very important to say to people it’s very much like, forget about the jargon, the point is, it’s about things like unit price. Can we find you a unit price cheaper? It’s exactly the same as going to the shop, going to Tesco and finding beans, but then going to Asda and finding beans cheaper. That’s all they’re doing...your gas and electric will still come through the pipe the same colour, it’ll still travel at the same speed, just the bill that you receive will look different”

Challenge: Engaging older people into a conversation

Possibility: Talk about something general and of interest to the older person to build up a rapport before beginning to discuss and immerse into discussions about energy use

Limitations: Not having the *gift of the gab*

Support Provided to Older People

Older people were provided support that ranged from advice on energy related issues to support with switching energy tariffs or applying for grants to having energy efficient equipment installed. The experiences of Energy Advisers provide a telling story about some of the challenges older people face and why they value support, with switching and engaging with energy companies providing some insightful stories:

“I think there’s a lot of people that are keen to do switching but they haven’t got the confidence to do it themselves. They maybe don’t use a computer...sometimes they just haven’t got the confidence to pick up the phone and go through the different press options and that type of thing.”

“If you’re going to do a switch, especially if you do a home visit, you have to do it in two bits. So you have to do the initial sort of phone up the comparison people, it has to be on a speakerphone so the person has to agree to everything, because you have to do data protection, that’s really important that they can hear everything that’s being said. And the other side of a visit, you must go back and do the opening reads...a lot of the older people that I see, they can’t read meter readings, they’re in places they just can’t get to...I’ve always, whenever I’ve done a switch, I’ve gone back, I’ve taken the opening reads and rung them in so that they’re happy with that.”

“Spend an awful lot of time sitting on the phone on hold...you can be sitting on the phone for half an hour waiting to get through on them. Or if you’re transferring from one department to another, you sit for another period of time. So it’s frustrating...rather than challenging.”

The support that Energy Advisers were able to provide older people seeking help was limited by what grants were available locally, and the energy efficient equipment that they had at their disposal and in some instances the willingness of older people to accept free equipment.

“Big challenge in terms of funding, be it grants being available locally, so obviously the energy advisers are restricted by what’s available. They don’t have any more money to actually make repairs or do the insulation themselves. They’re applying for grants. The grants that they did apply for took quite a long time to come through.”

“The equipment, we ordered a selection of equipment, because we didn’t really know who was going to want what, when, why, how, you know, we had to kind of just order across the board...some stock has not been going at all”

“One of the problems we had was...distrust around the free equipment...it’s convincing people that there wasn’t a catch, it was actually free equipment that they were entitled to”

In addition to directly supporting older people seeking help one of the other roles of the Energy Advisers was to deliver other activities such as hosting extra social clubs for older people to meet and socialise, testing of electric blankets and distributing of emergency winter hampers. The need for this part of the service was limited, with only one local Age UK Brand Partner finding the social clubs and electric blanket testing useful. In many other areas these activities were already being provided by either the local Age UK (social clubs) or other organisations such as the fire service (electric blanket testing).

“The hampers haven’t gone well at all...haven’t really found needy people...most of the people we go and visit could really purchase those items themselves”

“Most people don’t want electric blankets...even when we’ve tried to liaise with the Fire Brigade, for example, and try to donate them for gifts to use, they said they’re trying to use their own hamper as safeguard this year and they’re having trouble even getting those out”

“The electric blanket event was successful...coffee morning...we’ve got a lot of people attending...we’ve actually made new partnerships as we did before, particularly the fire service...going on to work with them around safer homes, keeping people safe and well.”

Challenge: Providing older people with required support

Possibility: Focus resources on directly fulfilling the identified needs of older people

Limitations: Availability of appropriate equipment; length of time engaging with energy companies and awaiting decision of grant applications

Support Time and Budget

The range of support provided to older people and the variety and complexity of some of this support has been reflected in the length of time needed to support older people. At the outset of the programme it has been assumed that the total amount of time that would be needed to provide support to an older person would be on average 2½ hours⁵. The delivery of the service has shown that in practice the total amount of time required by Energy Advisers to support an older person was on average an hour less, at 1½ hours. This figure does not however reflect the time loss from some older people cancelling appointments or not being at their home at the appointment time.

“When we originally were looking at this, I think within the role, it was looked at may be two and a half hours an appointment. This does happen now and then, but I would say that happens from having to have a series of multiple appointments as opposed to one appointment. I don’t think I can ever think of a time where I have been in someone’s house for two and a half hours, but I have been with customers for that period of time over a number of different appointments...So taking into consideration travel, and you’re probably talking about each appointment being round about one and a half hours”

The importance of this assumed amount of time needed to support an older person is reflected in that it was the basis of estimating the target number of older people each local Age UK Brand Partner agreed to achieve. Each local Age UK Brand Partner agreed to support 178 older people (with the exception of Age UK Darlington who agreed to support 214 older people based on having more than the equivalent of one full-time Energy Adviser role)⁶. Three of the local Age UK Brand Partners exceed the target number of older people to support, with one local Age UK Brand Partner just short, and two local Age UK Brand Partners supporting less than one hundred older people (see table 1,p17). The basis of using the assumed amount

⁵ This included not just the direct time spent with an older person but also the time required to travel to and from an older person and the time required to completed administrative tasks including making calls and following up on enquiries

⁶ The target number was calculated as follows: it was assumed delivery would take place between August 2015 and February 2016, representing 0.58 of the year. It was assumed that a full working week would be 35 hours and that people work for 44 weeks in any one year. Multiplying these figures (0.58*44*33) equates to 893.2 hours of total working time. This figure is then divided by 2 (equating to 446.15 hours) to reflect that only 50% of the Energy Advisers time was expected to reflect activities directly supporting older people with energy related issues. This figure is then divided by 2.5 hours to given total number of people supported by the equivalent of one full-time Energy Adviser being 178.46 (which is rounded down to 178)

of time to estimate the target number of older people to support has been questioned by all parties involved in the programme.

“I think the challenge for us in the beginning was setting targets for partners and the way we worked the targets out was we worked out the staff time across the year, and we worked out the average energy session would be 2½ hours, so we divided the staff time by 2½ hours, which obviously isn’t feasible, because you’ve got travel time, you’ve got people that cancel or turn you turn up and they’re not in, and you also might have 45 minutes at the end of one day, like your day doesn’t equal out into 2½ hour exact slots, so that wasn’t the most efficient way of working it out”

“The problem that you’ve got is its very difficult to go from one appointment to another appointment to another appointment. So within a day, it doesn’t really work out that every second of your day can be counted within the overall total of time that you’re using...there might be a period of half an hour in between times where its sort if unaccounted for in the calculation for the time between one customer and another customer”

There was also an acceptance of needing to understand the previous and current provision of energy-related support for older people in the locality and the need try new avenues of reaching older people who may require energy-related support. As one project manager said *“we’ve actually worked on something...for nine years...so we have been doing this for nine years, and we’ve actually put hundreds of people through...so it’s actually trying to get new people...the challenges were the numbers...we seem to have reached saturation level...but there were areas where we didn’t, we weren’t as proactive as we might have been...could have done more, probably hospital discharge”*

Energy Advisers, as the conduits of providing support to older people, represented the highest share of the budget that local Age UK Brand Partners received to deliver the programme. Four of the six local Age UK Brand Partners received around £40,000 to the delivery the programme for a ten month period, with the remaining two receiving around £34,000. In addition to the cost of Energy Advisers the budget included spend on a project manager, the cost of travel and accommodation for the Energy Adviser training course, the purchase of energy-efficient equipment, marketing and publicity material and a range of other items. Although there was a variation in the budget received by each local Age UK Brand Partner, the core elements of delivering the Energy Adviser service cost a similar amount across these partners, suggesting that the service could be delivered for an annual budget of between £35,000 and £40,000. It should however be noted that the six local Age UK Brand Partners involved were in the North of England where wage costs tend to be relatively lower than the south of England.

Challenge: Planning the amount of time required to support an older person and estimating the budget required to deliver the service efficiently and effectively; and having local Age UK Brand Partners being proactive and willing to try new approaches to reach older people

Possibility: Assume that on average the amount of time required to support older people with energy related issues is around 1½ hours; and that to deliver the Energy Adviser service effectively and efficiently requires an annual budget of between £35,000 and £40,000.

Limitations: The estimated support time and budget is based on specific models all delivered in the North of England. The staff (and other) costs of delivering the service may differ across the country as may the characteristics of older people needing support (and the type of support required). Some local Age UK Brand Partners may be unwilling to be proactive and try new approaches to reaching older people in need of energy-related support.

Sustainability

Energy advice is not an income generating activity for local Age UK Brand Partners. The investment in training up individuals to be fully trained Energy Advisers is considerable (at approximately £1000 per person) and the benefit and value placed upon their service by older people highlights that it is meeting a real need.

Five of the local Age UK Brand Partners recruited Energy Advisers whose sole role was energy advice, and there has been a feeling amongst partners of not wanting *“to water down that knowledge from a specialist Energy Adviser”*. However, with funding for some partners involved not forthcoming the role of the Energy Adviser has had to be removed. In some cases the individual in that role has remained with the local Age UK and so the knowledge remains in the organisation, but with that person performing another role the *specialist element* that partners were keen on is removed.

One of the local Age UK Brand Partners recruited two of their Information & Advice officers to spend half their time being Energy Advisers and reported that they found *“huge benefit in our energy advisers also being information advice advisers, because they were able to pick up on the benefit side as well.”*

One local Age UK Brand partner with a specialist energy adviser was keen *“to ensure that energy was considered as a regular link with information and advice as opposed to a stand-alone process”* and one Energy Adviser at a different local Age UK Brand Partner would have welcomed *“specific training [in] information and advice”*.

The Community Energy Programme Project Team with previous experience of delivering energy programmes observed that *“we’ve tried to tag energy on the back of benefits advice which hasn’t work....if you’re promoting benefits check you can’t just at the end of the session say, would you like energy advice...but if you promote it as energy and benefits then they might come for both”*

The local Age UK Brand Partners involved in the programme have attempted to ensure knowledge is captured by sharing information across their organisation. For example, at one local Age UK Brand Partner with coordinators based in the community who carry out assessments these coordinators were given knowledge about *“draught-proofing and the equipment we offer and the ways of preventing the draught and condensation and things like that so that they can conduct a lot of that support at their holistic visit”*. At another local Age UK Brand Partner with a *front of house team* who take calls from customers, they were made aware that *“when a customer was talking to them about, for instance, a benefits check thing that, you know, times were tough...also [promote] the energy service as a means to help that customer maximise their income.”*

Challenge: Sustaining the role of specialist Energy Adviser

Possibility: Have a Benefits & Energy Advice Service – older people seeking to maximise income can benefit from reducing energy bill or receiving energy discounts; and continue to have a specialist Energy Adviser, who is also either an Information & Advice (I&A) adviser or provide the Energy Adviser with basic I&A training, so during the cold months the Energy Adviser focuses on energy-related issues but during less cold months can help with I&A service

Limitations: Risk of diluting specialist Energy Adviser role, especially benefits of focusing on energy related issues during warmer months

Programme Timing

The Community Energy Programme ran between May 2015 and February 2016. The local Age UK Brand Partners involved in the programme observed an increase in demand for energy-related services from older people from January 2016, which followed the change to more wintery weather. This meant that local Age UK Brand Partners had to begin reducing the service they offered, because of funding coming to an end in February 2016, just as the wintery weather was embedding itself.

“One of the real problems with this particular project was the weather. [The programme] started in July. And July, August, September, October, November...were the mildest, as was December. It certainly took off January/February when it got a lot cooler. I think had it been like in previous years where it was cold from October, I think we might have seen a different set of figures”

“We are finding now that...more and more people, you know, banging on our door for energy advice, which we are going to give them, but the amount of people that we can help has been reduced because...we’re going to lose a member of staff”

“I would have started probably towards the back end of September and gone right the way through to the end of April, may be May because you can have snow in April, as we’ve had in the past up here”

The local Age UK Brand Partners involved in the programme observed that there could be benefits for older people from running this type of programme all year round, and during the summer months, linking closely with Information & Advice colleagues could add value.

“Continued momentum right through the year. And although people might not think about being cold during the summer in the same sense, there are still some people who are still cold during the summer, because they need their heating on and various things like that, and they don’t always think to do that...It will be preventative as well...And by the time the winter comes, you’ve got less people who may fall into that real, severe crisis area, where it culminates in unnecessary deaths”

“In the summer people forget about energy...whereas really it’s the time when people should be looking at it so that they’re ready for winter. So going out with an I&A adviser and doing a joint visit at that time of the year really does raise awareness of that sort of thing...I found that really beneficial”

Local Age UK Brand Partners involved in the programme and the Community Energy Programme Project Team both observed that the requirement to spend the funding within one year tends to hinder the number of older people that can be supported and the sustainability of the service. The disruption from setting up a service and winding it down within a calendar year can mean resources are taken up in these administrative tasks and not supporting older people, whereas a longer timeframe for spending the funding received could see longer term benefits in terms of sustainability and number of older people support without additional costs.

“So really you’d want to set up the service just before, like September and then run for may be two winters. Because I felt as well they were just getting to be known in the area and then they had to close down. So if we could fund the service for two winters then I think we’d be more embedded and people would get more referrals...And for them to be commissioned locally...it’s too much to expect them to deliver a project in nine months and then have all the evidence and structure to get commissioned locally.”

“OfGEM put the requirements on the energy companies to spend fines within a year, but OfGEM’s goal is to make it better for vulnerable people...so I think we should be doing more to influence OfGEM”

The need to provide sufficient time to set up a new service, embed and deliver it has led to observations around how Age UK National can best use energy-related funding. Age UK Brand Partners involved in the programme and the Community Energy Programme Team have observed that recently received funding from British Gas Energy Trust may have been best used to continue to support all six local Age UK partners (rather than just three) in this programme for another two years, to build on the learning emerging, and build the evidence to seek other funding streams. The decision not to do this means for some it *“feels like a bit of waste of time, setting up new services when another service is falling...could have just extended the service for two years and had a better impact”*

The value of continued support is demonstrated by one local Age UK Brand Partner in this programme who received funding from Age UK National as part of the funding received from British Gas Energy Trust. Building on learning from this programme that local Age UK Brand Partner is to use the funding to create an additional two specialist Energy Advisers, one being the Information & Advice coordinator and the other being an employee who works in the hospital team.

For those local Age UK Brand Partners who did not receive further funding from Age UK National, experience was one of *“it takes time then to get the bid together, and then you lose momentum, because you’ve got to try and regroup...is not, wasted is not the right word...but it’s a better use if those resources because you’re not reinventing going through the same process over and over again”*

Challenge: Delivering the programme to maximise learning and impact, and provide greatest possibility of finding funding to continue the service

Possibility: To run over two winters, to enable services to be set up, delivered, embedded, improved and evidence to be gathered enabling other funding streams to be sourced - with summer a good time to put preventative work in place

Limitation: OFGEM requirements for funding from fines imposed on Energy Companies to be spent within one year

6. Discussion

The Community Energy Programme was a pilot project aimed at testing the concept of having fully-qualified Energy Advisers within local Age UK Brand Partners to deliver support to older people to help them have a warm home. The pilot ran between May 2015 and February 2016. The short timeframe for the pilot, and the case that it ended before winter tends to draw to a close, has meant that the true value from this pilot has not been realised. This is supported by the actions of one local Age UK Brand Partner, who having received further funding for another two years, has taken the lessons from this pilot and incorporated them into the delivery model for a further two years.

The Community Energy Programme pilot, starting in the spring of 2015, meant that the first few months were about setting up the delivery model from recruiting individuals who receive training to become fully trained Energy Advisers to raising awareness of the service to ensure appropriate referrals are received. As a result Energy Advisers did not carry out many activities that were directly supporting older people through the summer periods. This has meant that the concept of fully trained Energy Advisers, and the potential preventative impact they could have by resolving issues and providing advice before the cold winter months, has not been tested.

This has provided support to the views of many that running an energy-related project, especially a pilot, over two winters is beneficial both in terms of really testing out the delivery model and what works and providing the space and time for local Age UK Brand Partners to demonstrate the benefits of their service (if that is the case) to seek further local funding to carry on providing the service. The current process of receiving funding for at most one year is an ineffective way to use funding, and represents poor value for money which limits the benefits that older people can receive.

The funding for this pilot came from ENGIE, and as required by OFGEM, the condition placed on it was that it had to be spent within one year. OFGEM wishes to use the funding from energy companies to support

vulnerable people and one way of achieving this would be to make better use of limited funding by enabling the same level of funding to be spent over two years to rigorously develop, test and revise the delivery model. The value from this would be that the learning of what works and does not can then be shared allowing further funding to be more effective, since it could be built on the lessons emerging of what works and does not work.

The Community Energy Programme with its fully trained Energy Advisers is not an income generating service, and can therefore only be delivered if funded. This makes it similar to the Information & Advice (I&A) service that local Age UK Brand Partners provide. It is also akin to the benefits aspect of the I&A service in that it is about indirectly maximising income by lowering energy bills (either through lower energy unit prices or more efficient heating systems and homes). For older people what is important is not income per se, but *disposable income*, and therefore there is real value in thinking about incorporating Energy Advice as part of the I&A service through a **benefits and energy advice service** – i.e. maximising disposable income by receiving the benefits entitled to and reducing expenditure by reducing energy costs.

Energy Advisers who are fully-trained and specialise solely on providing energy-related support to older people provide considerable benefits and value. Being fully trained enables Energy Advisers to provide the most appropriate advice, and focusing on this aspect of an older person's needs provides them the opportunity to be flexible about the amount of time they spend on an older person's energy-related issue. In particular the ability to visit older people's home provides considerable insight into the energy needs of an older person. Being inside an older person's home can also help identify other needs and it is therefore crucial that an Energy Adviser has some training about other things to look out for and who to refer onto within the local Age UK organisation. There is also a need to provide sufficient training – not necessarily as comprehensive as that provided to Energy Advisers – to those local Age UK staff having contact with older people about the signs that they may benefit from energy-related support so they can be referred to the Energy Adviser.

The Energy Adviser training has been seen to be crucial in the ability to provide the breadth and depth of energy support delivered in this pilot project. There is however concern about keeping up to date with

knowledge and changes to the energy sector, and some form of electronic learning pack or regular updates could be of value, as could be the opportunity for a peer-network where Energy Advisers shadow each other from time to time. The one other important concern is how fully-trained Energy Advisers can be funded so that the value of their training is truly beneficial to older people. In this pilot project for those local Age UK Brand Partners not receiving additional funding, the training received by their Energy Adviser has only been utilised for less than one year; funding a project to run over two winters is one solution and some have considered incorporating the service by training I&A staff to spend part of their time being Energy Advisers. This lends itself to the challenge between having a specialist Energy Adviser and one who has another role.

One suggestion for making the fully-trained Energy Adviser role sustainable is to have it within the I&A team (or other relevant teams), with the Energy Adviser having some basic I&A training, but focusing primarily on energy-related support (especially over the winter months). In some local Age UK Brand Partners who have the capacity all I&A staff, and perhaps more effectively those staff who visit older people (such as coordinators or village agents or urban angels or home from hospital staff), could be fully trained Energy Advisers.

The challenge of making fully-trained Energy Advisers sustainable, or at least making most use of the knowledge they have been taught by embedding and sharing it, is complemented by how best to make use of limited resources (i.e. targeting those most in need). There is a need to target the support that fully-trained Energy Advisers provide to those likely to benefit from it most and so perhaps those suffering from illnesses most likely to be triggered or affected by cold-weather and those struggling with money issues could be prioritised. The trade-off from such prioritisation is that advice provided to those who may not be at most risk could be contributing to preventative measures that are likely to be more cost-effective in the longer term.

One approach to make most use of limited resources is to focus expenditure from funding purely on activities that directly support older people with energy-related issues. Some funding will be required for purchasing equipment and raising awareness – the latter best done through existing contacts and

participating in existing activities – but other activities such as delivering additional social activities and the like should not be the responsibility of the Energy Adviser or be funded through energy companies.

The Community Energy Programme has directly supported almost one thousand older people, at an average cost of around £140 per older person (only including staff costs and cost of travel). The average cost netting off the average saving per older person from switching energy suppliers (of around £85) is £55 per older person supported⁷. This compares to the average cost of one GP visit of £33 per face-to-face consultation⁸ and the average cost of a hospital visit of between £115 and £168⁹. The average cost of support per older person is likely to be lower than the figures from this programme suggests because the programme had to begin winding down just as demand was rising; however, there could be cost pressure in the other direction if additional older people supported present with more complex cases.

The achievement of the programme is demonstrated by older people supported rating the service highly, and the richness of learning observed. Nonetheless the limited timeframe for the programme is likely to mean the effectiveness of the support delivered (and the extent to which it achieved warmer homes for older people) and learning borne is limited.

⁷ The cost of staff and travel for the pilot project totalled around £133,000. The total number of older people supported was 944. Therefore the average cost of support per person was around £140 (£133,000 divided by 944). The total amount of saving from switching energy suppliers totalled around £80,300. Therefore the average saving per older person supported was around £85 (£80,300 divided by 944). It is important to note not all 944 older people supported benefitted from switching energy suppliers, and so the average saving per person switching energy tariffs is around £200.

⁸ Sourced from Unit Cost of Health & Social Care 2015 (p177); uprated 2014-15 cost for average 11.7 minute face-to-face consultation with GP by GDP Deflator (Nov 2015)

⁹ Sourced from National Schedule of Reference Costs 2011-12 for NHS trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts; uprated 2011-12 cost for A&E attendance that does not lead to admission and A&E attendance that does lead to admission by GDP Deflator (Nov 2015)

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Cold weather has shown to increase the demand on the health service and with cold homes in particular, it is believed to be the main reason behind increases in respiratory and circulatory diseases in winter. Older people are more likely to suffer from cold weather and in addition to affecting their health it can also potentially adversely affect their quality of life.

The Community Energy Programme ran between May 2015 and February 2016, and was a pilot project aimed at testing the concept of having fully-qualified Energy Advisers within local Age UKs to deliver support to older people to help them have a warm home. It supported almost one thousand older people, delivering support ranging from advice to switching energy tariffs or applying for grants to having energy efficient equipment installed.

The older people supported by the Energy Advisers rated the service their received highly and all but one older person found the support offered useful. Almost a quarter of older people supported would not have sought help elsewhere, and not all the remainder may have found the help their needed. The Community Energy Programme can therefore be seen as successful from this aspect, however, the timeframe that it ran limited the learning that could be drawn.

The learning that has been observed from this pilot project, and needs to be considered in the development of future energy programmes, is as follows:

- **Fully-trained Energy Advisers are a real asset** to the delivery of an energy-related service. The breadth and depth of their knowledge means that they have the skills to deal with all types of energy-related issues, enabling local Age UKs to provide a comprehensive energy-related support service. With their focus being on energy-related issues they can take the time and space required to fully support an older person with these issues, visiting them at home and engaging with energy companies which can be time consuming

- **Energy Advisers need the *gift of the gab*** to be successful in this role. They need to be engaging and patient and be able to put older people at ease and build trust with them. They also need to be able to step back and be objective. The ability to build a general conversation and identify those key bits of the conversation that provide a route into discussing energy-related issues is crucial
- **Home visits are beneficial** for Energy Advisers because many times the signs of particular energy-related issues come from observing the living space of an older person; as such Energy Advisers can also be the eyes-on-the-ground and **provided with additional training on what to look for Energy Advisers can spot other issues and refer to appropriate Age UK colleagues**
- **Prioritising the support** of Energy Advisers to older people who may benefit from it most (such as those suffering from the cold or have illnesses that can be aggravated by the cold or have heating equipment issues) can help maximise the benefit from this resource
- **Complementing existing local support** should be the guide for Energy Advisers so that local Age UKs are not using resources to duplicate existing provision, if not required
- **Energy Service funding should be focused on delivering energy-related support** (such as staff costs, travel costs and cost of purchasing equipment) with all other activities provided from within existing local Age UK services including making use of planned awareness raising events to include an energy element
- **Sustaining the service** is a challenge because energy advice is not an income generating service and therefore consideration needs to be given to how best to utilise a fully-trained energy adviser within the organisation and the knowledge they hold

- **Funding energy-related services for two winters** is important to establishing a service that works more effectively based on learning through delivering, it provides greater justification for cost of training Energy Advisers and enables testing the value of a focused resource on energy advice through the year (and not just the winter months)

The learning that has been observed from the pilot provides several recommendations:

- Energy Advisers, receiving the level of training received in the pilot programme should be part of an energy service provided by local Age UK Brand Partners. These Energy Advisers should have the *gift of the gab* and have the transport to most efficiently visit older people at home. The Energy Advisers should also be provided with knowledge of other signs to look for and services that Age UK provide to enable identification of other issues that older people may be experiencing
- A basic version of the energy adviser training should be piloted with those Age UK staff who have contact with older people (perhaps in teams that have contact with older people most likely to benefit from warm homes) so that they can spot the signs of older people who may benefit from energy-related support and provide low-level support, freeing up the Energy Adviser to focus on more complex and time consuming cases
- Energy Advisers should target awareness raising of the service to Age UK staff and volunteers and external organisations who are likely to have contact with older people that may benefit most from energy-related support; general awareness raising of the service should be attached to other Age UK awareness raising events
- Funding for energy-related services should prioritise energy-related support to activities that are most likely to reduce older people living in cold homes – resolving existing issues and supporting actions that may help prevent such issues arising

- A *Benefits and Energy Service* model should be tested to understand the benefits and value of a delivery model that aims to maximise disposable income by both increasing income and reducing expenditure
- Age UK National should attempt to persuade Ofgem to remove the requirement that funding from energy companies needs to be spent within one year – it should ideally be available to spend over two years that that incorporate two winters
- Age UK National should attempt to persuade energy companies to use their database to identify older people whose energy use or bill is above a certain threshold – such as the median and mean energy use or bill of their peers – to help identify older people who may benefit from energy related advice and support

Annex A – Energy Adviser Training Module

Energy awareness + module on behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency and appropriate use of heating and hot water systems, and the functions of heating controls • Interpret domestic fuel cost data using reference materials • Advise clients on how to record gas and electricity consumption, work out costs and inform of payment options • Identify the potential to improve energy efficiency in a range of dwellings • Explain Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation • Advise clients on how to avoid condensation and how to take remedial action
Fuel debt advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is fuel debt and its causes • Responsibilities and payment options • Contacting the supplier • Complaints procedure • Exam to take away • Switching suppliers • Grants and assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Priority Services Register ○ Warm Home Discount Scheme ○ Grants and trusts
Identifying vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of vulnerability • Risk factors and triggers to help identify vulnerable customers • Examples of good practice when engaging with vulnerable customers
Fuel poverty awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what fuel poverty, its causes and impact on health/ Understand who is at risk of fuel poverty • Be able to recognise fuel poverty indicators over the phone, in a client’s home or in the community • Know about and identify which energy efficiency equipment is appropriate for the client • Know all the options for referrals, and identify which are appropriate for a particular situation • Understanding fuel poverty and fuel debt in social housing
Delivering community presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful presentation techniques to make the most of existing energy awareness/ fuel debt knowledge • Present information on fuel poverty and domestic energy efficiency in an invigorating and interesting manner • Utilise training resources: presentation slides, handouts, group exercises and back-up notes which can be used to deliver presentations, training sessions and briefings.
Overall programme delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of the programme • Monitoring requirements • Q&A • To be delivered by Age UK.

Annex B – Energy Adviser Exam

NEA/ City & Guilds 6281-01 Energy Awareness

Examination Programme

Candidates must bring appropriate identification to the exam. Examples include:

- Credit/ debit card
- Driving Licence
- Passport
- Photographic ID Card
- a utility bill

Registration/ introductions	
PART ONE	
Written Paper One (75 mins)	
Section 1	Home Heating
Section 2	Bills, Meters and Paying for Fuel
Break	
Written Paper Two (75 mins)	
Section 3	Cutting Down Heat Loss
Section 4	Condensation and Dampness
<i>Candidates must gain 70% in each section to achieve an overall pass. Where candidates fail in one section they will be required to re-sit the whole paper. Re-sits will be arranged at a later date.</i>	
Lunch	
PART TWO	
Practical Test (30 mins)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Calculating running costs of household appliances. ➤ Setting central heating programmers. (Programmers will be available during the lunch break to practice with). 	
PART THREE	
Simulation (10 mins)	
Role-play	
<i>Candidates must gain 100% to achieve an overall pass in the practical and simulation assessments.</i>	
<i>Where candidates fail to achieve a pass in these sections, a re-sit will be available on the same day at the discretion of the examiner.</i>	

Results will be given in writing within 7 working days.

Annex C – Fuel Debt Exam

Level 2 Award: Fuel debt advice in the community 6281-16

This course is an ideal introduction for advice workers involved with clients who are in fuel debt or for the more experienced advisor as an update. It covers the main issues, raises awareness and aims to give delegates a clearer understanding of the pathways involved in resolving fuel debt.



Course outline

- What is fuel poverty and fuel debt?
- Causes of fuel debt
- Responsibilities (customer, fuel supplier, landlord)
- Payment options
- Switching suppliers
- Things that go wrong and how to rectify them
- Billing errors
- Meter problems
- Contacting the supplier
- The complaints procedure
- Grants and assistance
- Priority Services Register
- Warm Home Discount scheme
- Grants and trusts

Assessment

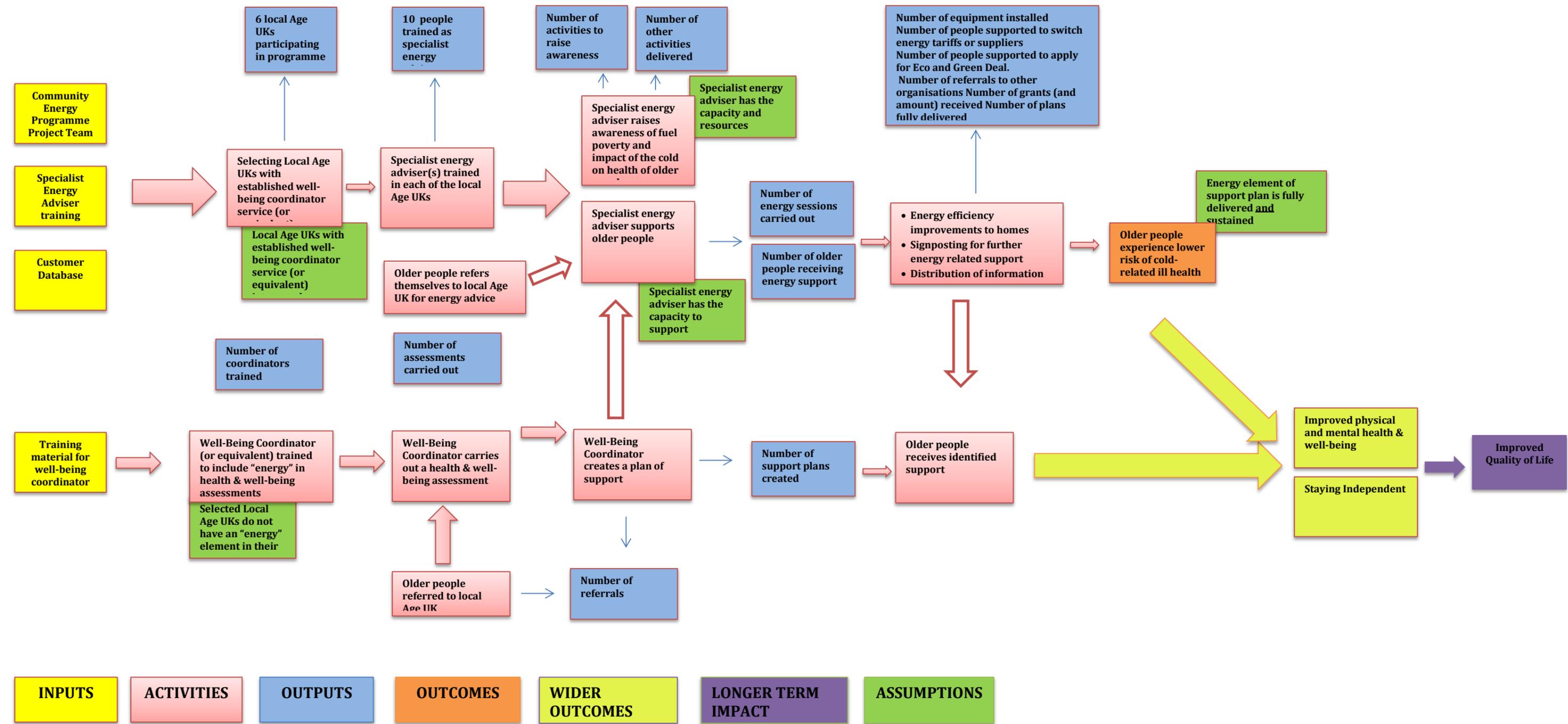
An open book exam which will take a maximum of three hours to complete; candidates are encouraged to use their course handouts to help complete the exam.

Duration

One day (a half-day course is also available).

This course can be delivered in-house to organisations wishing to train a group of staff.

Annex D – Theory of Change Model & Outcomes Framework



Evaluation Outcome Framework

Vision	All older people to be healthy, happy and independent in their homes					
Aim	Help older people save energy, heat their homes more effectively and keep warm during winter by embedding energy advice into well-being coordinator services					
Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumption	Who will collect the data	When and how often will the data be collected	Where and when is the information stored / available
Older People achieve reduction in risk of cold-related ill health	Proportion of older people assessed as needing energy advice who are fully supported to stay warm (i.e. identified support is fully delivered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Information 	Improved heating efficiency and information & advice on how to stay home and save energy are all heeded by older people and lead to warmer houses that lead to a reduction in the risk of cold-related homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Age UKs 	During the process of contact: from first contact with well-being coordinator service to end of delivery of energy element of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Age UK customer database
Community Energy Programme is successfully delivered	Feedback from key stakeholders on the success or otherwise of the programme (including element of the training provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons Learning Document Interview with key programme personal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age UK Project Team Age UK Research Team 	Throughout project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age UK database

Evaluation Monitoring Framework

Monitoring Information	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumption	Who will collect the data	When and how often will the data be collected	Where and when is the information stored / available
Socio-demographic information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Gender • Ethnicity • Disability • Religion or Belief • Marital Status • Geographic Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring information based (ideally) on standardised questions use in national level surveys 	Database being used by local Age UKs able to capture this information at individual person level , which can be aggregated	Local Age UKs	To be collected at well-being assessment stage	Local Age UK Database
Socio-demographic contextual information (older people only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Alone • Housebound or not • Medical Condition • Housing Condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring information based (ideally) on standardised questions use in national level surveys 	Database being used able to capture this information at individual person level , which can be aggregated	Local Age UKs	To be collected at well-being assessment stage	Local Age UK Database
Older people participation Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of older people assessed by well-being coordinator • Number of older people assessed as needing specialist energy advice • Number of older people receiving specialist energy advice • Number of older people receiving all the support identified¹⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring information 	Database being used able to capture this information at individual person level , which can be aggregated	Local Age UKs	As and when these things happen for each individual	Local Age UK Database
Well-being coordinator Service Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of coordinators trained to identify “energy” need • Number of specialist energy advisers trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring information 		Age UK Project Team	As and when these things happen for each individual	Age UK Database

¹⁰ Helpful to capture the support plan developed for the individual, in particular for the energy element what elements were achieved

Annex E – Research Methodology

The findings of this evaluation are based on documentary analysis, monitoring information collected by the Community Energy Programme project team, interviews with Energy Advisers and Project Managers at the local Age UKs participating in the programme, attendance at partner meetings, a survey completed by older people who had received support from Energy Advisers and case studies presented by local Age UK partners.

Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis involved reviewing the original Age UK proposal to ENGIE seeking funding, the applications of the six local Age UK partners participating in the programme and their mid-year reports, the 22 case studies produced in total by the local Age UK partners and the 4 notes of meetings (2 of which I attended in person) between Age UK National the local Age UK partners¹¹.

Monitoring Data

Monitoring data was collected by the Down Memory Project Lane team on a monthly basis and consisted of information on the number of older people supported, the support they received, their characteristics, how they were referred to the Energy Adviser, a profile of financial expenditure, and other activities delivered.

Interviews

Interviews were carried out with one Energy Adviser in each of the local Age UKs, with the exception of Age UK Darlington for who both Energy Advisers were interviewed; in addition each of the project managers at each of the local Age UKs responsible for their individual project were interviewed.

Older Person Survey

The older person survey was administered by the Community Energy Programme Project Team and further information can be presented in Annex F.

¹¹ Attended meetings on 17th September 2015 and 24th February 2016; did not attend the meetings at the beginning of the programme on 15th May 2015 and 4th June 2015

Annex F –Older People Supported (Socio-Demographic Information)

The Community Energy Programme has supported 944 older people. For the programme as a whole, most of the older people supported were aged between 65 and 84, and not many received mean tested benefits or suffered from health issues that have been shown to be aggravated by cold weather. This picture differed by local Age UK as presented in Table 6 (below). For example, almost 80% of older people supported by the Energy adviser in Cheshire suffered from heart conditions and over half with Arthritis and mobility; similarly over half of those supported by Energy advisers in Teesside suffered from Arthritis and mobility problems.

Table 6: Socio-Demographic Information

	Cheshire	Darlington	North Tyneside	South Lakeland	South Tyneside	Teesside
50-64	4%	3%	22%	14%	13%	8%
65-74	22%	9%	35%	24%	34%	23%
75-84	35%	12%	29%	39%	29%	32%
Over 85	17%	9%	14%	13%	18%	12%
Disability	57%	29%	53%	46%	14%	55%
Mean Tested Benefits	22%	11%	6%	32%	35%	29%
Heart condition	79%	3%	16%	10%	23%	33%
Respiratory condition	0%	8%	16%	12%	19%	36%
Arthritis	56%	12%	18%	16%	48%	64%
Mobility	54%	9%	31%	31%	43%	55%
Other (specify)	28%	0%	18%	4%	8%	68%

Notes: monitoring data was not recorded or all fields for for all older people supported, that is why the percentages (where relevant such as for age categories) do not sum to 100%; also for health conditions older people could tick more than one and this why these total can sum to more then 100%

Annex G –Activities Carried Out By Energy Advisers

Energy Advisers carried out a range of activities in providing support to older people with energy-related issues. These activities included:

- Providing support to submit metre readings
- Providing support to use heating system and/or controls properly
- Providing support to switch energy supplier, tariff or payment method
- Providing support to help understand and sort out bills (i.e. contacting energy companies; finding out about any debt on the account; resolving issues or confusion; making complaints; amending amounts on direct debits; enquiring about getting metres moved and/or changed)
- Applying for Winter Home Discount and signing up to Priority Services Register
- Advising on energy efficiency within the home
- Installing small scale energy efficiency equipment
- Advising and supporting with condensation and mould growth
- Supplying emergency portable oil filled heaters
- Applying for grants for new boilers and/or insulation or to cover debt (e.g. Local Authority; ECO; British Gas Trust; EDF Energy trust; Npower Health through Warmth Scheme; E.ON energy trust; Charis Grant; Warm Zone; GO WARM; Housing association)
- Applying for other grants (e.g. to repair radiators (Council); Home Assistance Hub; grant for insulation as a park home; McMillan grants; NASUWT Benevolent Fund)
- Applying for grants for large scale energy efficiency measures (i.e. solid wall insulation; loft insulation)

Annex H –The Stories (Support Received by Older People)

The Story - Switching

Mr M had a severe stroke at the age of 7. He used to get help from a Social Worker, as he struggles with paperwork, but this had stopped a few years ago. His mobility is extremely limited and finds communication difficult and tiring. He had approached AgeUK [partner name removed] for assistance as his Blue Badge was about to expire in a few days.

Energy Adviser visited Mr M at his home and helped him complete his Blue Badge renewal form. Whilst there, Mr M expressed his concern that he is paying too much for his energy. Mr M was delighted to be told that by the Energy Adviser that she had a colleague that could investigate that for him so he handed his most recent bills to the Energy Adviser for further investigation.

Due to Mr M's mobility issues and outstanding Blue Badge renewal, the Energy Adviser visited Mr M at his home 2 weeks later. Mr M felt at ease as a result of having previous contact with Age UK [partner name removed], and the energy Adviser went through all the options available to him using his laptop showing him the savings that could be made through different suppliers and tariffs.

In the end, it was found that by putting both his gas and electric onto a dual fuel package – it would save him over £600 per year, reducing his paperwork by half (one provider instead of two) and therefore only one point of contact if he required assistance. The Energy Adviser also arranged to put him on the “Priority Service Register” due to his health issues, which gives him additional entitlement and benefits.

Mr M was extremely grateful for all the help he had received from Age UK [Partner name removed] in such a short space of time, what had started out as a simple Blue Badge renewal had resulted in being offered a wide range of services and assistance for any future enquiries as well as significant reduction in expenditure and improved energy benefits.

The Story – Incorrect Billing

Mr X came into the shop in June. He had been negotiating with EON regarding a ridiculous amount of paperwork and bills which had been sent to his elderly mother in [name of place removed]. Unfortunately, during this time, she had passed away, yet the situation continued and Mr X had got as far as he could in trying to resolve this situation.

Mr X's mother lived in a block of flats on the coast. At some point, someone had moved into another flat in the same block and had requested that the electricity be transferred into their name. EON had transferred Mrs X's service in error, backdated all the charges (for about a year), cancelled her direct debit, produced a "Final Account" and refunded her over £1000. When the mistake came to light, EON then rebilled her but used the wrong meter readings, wrong dates and sent out pages upon pages of billing information requesting immediate payment of over £1200.

However, it was around this time that Mrs X passed away and Mr X (her son) took over all the paperwork. He had written to EON but they had failed to address most of the points raised and failed to explain the complicated billing breakdown.

Energy Adviser took over all the bills and paperwork and entered all the meter readings, billing dates and payments into a spreadsheet to try and clarify everything. Only when armed with this spreadsheet was I able to start explaining the billing process to Mr X. EON had made a complete mess of trying to resolve their error and had failed to give an acceptable explanation to Mr X.

At this point the Energy Adviser contacted the Complaints Resolution Manager at EON, who was very helpful, but was also struggling to give me an accurate explanation of the bills and accepted that the matter could have been dealt with in a simpler way. Over that afternoon, he had to go away, get answers to queries and get back to Energy Adviser on four separate occasions, such was the complexity of the situation.

By the time the manager and the Energy Adviser had come to an amount on which they both agreed, it was about £50 less than the amount that EON had been asking. It was at this point that the Energy Adviser asked that if Mr X was to make an offer of £1000, would this be accepted in "Full and Final Settlement"?

Mr X came back into the office 2 days later where Energy Adviser broke down the original bills and explained how the charges were accrued and that EON had accepted the £1000 offer to close the case and waive the remainder (£218) as a goodwill gesture in lieu of the distress caused both to Mrs X and her son.

The Story - Boiler Not Working

Energy Adviser visited an elderly gentleman who had been referred to Age UK [name removed] through the local Adult Social Care team at [Name Removed] Council. He had an extremely old boiler (possibly over 40 years old) that was not working at all and the fire in the main living area was not working at all as it had been condemned and disconnected. Due to the clients situation the Energy Adviser arranged for a benefits advisor to come out with him to the property to try and do a full assessment of the client's needs.

When at the visit Energy Adviser checked the boiler situation and nothing was working and the client had no hot water, and it was not known how long this had been the case. Due to the relationship with the local [Name Removed] team the Energy Adviser was able to make an urgent referral to them to see if they could help with part funding a new boiler. During discussions with the client the energy Adviser was also able to ascertain that he was an ex-serviceman and so made a referral to SSAFA to see if they were able to offer a grant to cover the rest of the cost of a new heating system

[Name removed] replied quickly saying that due to clients situation they had some funding that would allow us to get the new heating fitted free of charge if it could be done in a very short space of time (within a week). Energy Adviser arranged to be present when the contractor came out to quote and also liaised with client regularly as to when they would be arriving to complete the work that would take 3 full days. Energy Adviser was present when the contractors arrived on the day the work started.

Due to the benefits adviser also being present she did a full assessment of the clients needs as he had significant health issues and lived alone. A care package was put in place through the local adult social care team for the client. Furthermore, the client was awarded higher rate Attendance Allowance and then a claim was put in for Pension Credit which resulted in this being awarded as well as the Severe Disability Premium. This resulted in the client not only receiving these benefits but also getting full council tax exemption and full housing benefit

After the heating had been installed Energy Adviser returned to the property and completed a check of the clients' energy bills etc. While Energy Adviser was not able to convince the client to switch to a monthly direct-debit save him more money the Energy Adviser was able to check his tariff with his energy provider and switch his gas tariff to a cheaper fixed deal to make sure he was paying the least he possibly could

The Story – No Central Heating and Payment Demands

Energy Adviser visited Mrs X initially in September 2015, following a referral from Age UK [Name Removed] Wellbeing Co-ordinator. Mrs X is in her early 80's and currently has no central heating in the property. The only source of heat is from a mobile oil-filled electric heater positioned in the lounge. Mrs X has never had central heating, and has managed all her life without it. However, due to a range of illnesses during 2015, Mrs X now spends a lot of time sat and is not very mobile/active. Mrs X has been in and out of hospital several times since September 2015. She therefore now feels the cold and it is having an impact on her health. Mrs X is on a low income and also receives Attendance Allowance. Her daughter has moved back into the property to look after her for the foreseeable future.

Energy Adviser advised Mrs X that would look at what grants were currently available to obtain a new central heating system without Mrs X incurring any costs. After some research, Energy Adviser decided to apply to Npower for their Health Through Warmth grant. The grant application was completed by Mrs X with the help of her daughter, and Energy Adviser then processed the paperwork. Npower confirmed in November 2015 that the application had been passed onto "Warmzone" to access one of their grants. In December 2015 it was confirmed that the application had been successful. On 4th January 2016 the central heating engineers arrived to fit the central heating and this was successfully completed on 6th January 2016.

During second home visit to Mrs X in November 2015, Energy Adviser was made aware that due to her illness and stays in hospital they had not paid anything to their energy provider since September 2015, and were now in debt with them for approximately £200. Mrs X's current method of payment is via a payment card, which she puts credit on at her local corner store. Mrs X's daughter explained that the day before my visit, the energy provider has phoned her and had made demands that they must settle the debt as a matter of some urgency and that if it wasn't, it may be passed onto a debt collector to obtain the outstanding amount. Mrs X's daughter explained about my visit and said that she would get me to ring them up the next day. However, under pressure, she also agreed that she would settle the debt by 1st December 2015, as had been requested during the phone conversation.

Energy Adviser phoned the Energy Provider and explained that currently Mrs X was a “vulnerable person” and under their agreement as an energy provider with OfGEM they should not be threatening Mrs X with debt collectors. Energy Adviser explained that Mrs X had been in and out of hospital and that the energy bill had just been forgotten and it was not intentional to not pay this bill. Energy Adviser explained that they would not be able to pay the outstanding amount by 1st December, and that they would apply to the Charis Grant Trust to get the outstanding debt written off, but that this would take time to do. The energy provider agreed to put the account “on hold” until January 2016. Energy Adviser advised Mrs X’s daughter, that as a goodwill gesture, if they could afford to pay £10 on their payment card throughout December to do so. She agreed that this would be possible, and indeed she had paid £10 a week during December and into January.

In the meantime, Energy Adviser sent Mrs X an application form from Charis Grant Trust Fund to try and get the outstanding debt written off. Mrs X’s daughter duly completed the form and sent it off at the end of November. She had been advised that the application form could take up to 6 weeks to process and as at 11th January we are still awaiting the outcome. The energy provider has not been in touch again.

Energy Adviser visited again on 26th January. The house was lovely and warm and Mrs Reade was very grateful to me for sorting the grant out on their behalf. Mrs Reade has decided not to pursue getting the grant from the Charis Grant Trust Fund, but will pay the outstanding debt off this week, as she does not want it “hanging over her” any more. Mrs Reade said that she would like to switch to a different energy provider. Energy Adviser suggested that she sets up a direct debit with the new provider as she will get a cheaper deal. After discussing this further, she agreed that this would be a good idea. We looked at the options for different energy providers, and she decided that she would like to go with the one that the local authority is operating. Energy Adviser told her would make a referral to the person running this and they would be in touch to come along and do the switch for her. She was very happy with this arrangement.

Energy Adviser emailed the contact at [Name Removed] Council on 27 January, to refer Mrs Reade for switching to their energy company.

The Story – Inefficient Heating

Energy Adviser visited Mr X in November 2015 following a referral from a member of Age UK {Name Removed] Advocacy team. Mr X's boiler was very old and very inefficient and the majority of the radiators were either not working or working inefficiently. Mr X is in his 70's and has many health conditions including COPD, so the cold has an impact on his health. Mr X confirmed that he was receiving Pension Credit.

Energy Adviser referred Mr X to a local company who specialise in accessing and processing ECO grants for new boilers. The Company confirmed that Mr X met the criteria for the ECO grant, but as the boiler would need to be relocated and Mr X had also requested the installation of new radiators, the shortfall of the ECO grant amounted to approximately £1500.

Energy Adviser contacted [Name Removed] Council Growth and Regeneration Department to see if they had any grants which could top up to meet the shortfall. Energy Adviser passed the relevant grant application forms onto Mr X who duly completed them and returned them to me. Energy Adviser then passed the completed forms back to [Name Removed] Council.

An ECO grant and top up grants totally approximately £3300 was approved on 9th January 2016 which includes installing a new combi boiler plus 8 radiators with no expense to the client. The new boiler and radiators were installed on 20th January 2016.

Annex I –Survey of Older People Supported

The Community Energy Programme Project Team at Age UK National administered a survey of older people supported by Energy Advisers. The survey consisted of five questions and was designed in collaboration with the author of this report. The survey was circulated to 169 older people supported in February 2016.

The five questions in the survey sought to understand the support received by the older people, whether they found the service useful or not, whether they had views on how the service could be improved, they experience of the overall service provided and whether they would have sought similar support elsewhere if Age UK did not provide the support received.

The number of older people responding to the survey equated to 47.9% of older people surveyed. Table xx presents the number of respondents by local Age UK.

Table xx: Number of older people returning the survey by local Age UK

Cheshire	10
Darlington	10
North Tyneside	11
South Lakeland	21
South Tyneside	17
Teesside	12
TOTAL	81

Question 1: Advice and support received

The first question in the survey asked for information on the advice and support provided by the Energy Adviser to the older person completing the survey. Seven options were provided and the older person completing the survey could tick as many as the seven options that applied to them. Table xx presents the proportion of older people responding who received the stated advice and support.

Table xx: Proportion of older people receiving support by type of advice and support received

Ensure of best payment option with energy supplier	57%
Support to switch to cheaper energy supplier	48%
Help to receive discount on energy bill	38%
Help resolve other issue with energy supplier	22%
Offered practical tips on how to save money	41%
Arranged fitting of energy efficiency equipment	23%
Sign-posted to other support services available	31%

Note. Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could tick more than one option

Question 2: Usefulness of Advice & Support

The second question in the survey asked for information on how useful the older person found the advice and supported provided to them by the Energy Adviser. The older person could tick two options, and then provide reasons for their thought if they wished to. Table xx presents the responses provided by older people to question two.

Table xx: Proportion of older people finding advice and support provided useful

Yes – found useful	74%
No – did not find useful	1%

Note: percentages do not sum to 100% because some respondents did not answer this question

Question 3: Suggestions for improving service

The third question was an open-ended question older responding for their views on how the service could be improved. The majority of the comments received were all in appreciation of the service received. There were some suggestions for improvements these are provided below.

“Make elderly people more aware of the service”

“Better advertising of the service. I came across this by chance when visiting the library”

“Should be more widely advertised”

“Perhaps we could be kept up to date with new tariffs”

“Offer again in may be 2 years’ time to these people who declined the offer of help to switch energy supplier”

“Would have been better if we could have had the foil for all rather than just 3 radiators”

“...follow up could be improved as by keeping clients in the loop with what’s going on ”

“Provide independent financial advice”

“By giving time to think about options available to you before making changes ”

[add some quotes]

Question 4: Quality of Overall Service

The fourth question asked older people how they rated the service overall from a scale of 1 (being very poor) to 5 (being very good), and provided them space to provide an explanation for their view. Table xx presents the proportion of older people rating overall service received.

Table xx: Proportion of older people rating the service received

1 = Very Poor	0%
2	0%
3	0%
4	9%
5 = Very Good	91%

Question 5: Seeking support elsewhere

The fifth question asked older people responding whether they would have sought similar advice and support elsewhere if Age UK had not offered it. Table xx presents the proportion who would and would not have sought advice and support from elsewhere.

Table xx: Proportion of older people finding advice and support provided useful

Yes – would have sought support elsewhere	70%
No – would not have sought support elsewhere	22%

Note: percentages do not sum to 100% because some respondents did not answer this question

References

Age UK (2012) 'The cost of cold: Why we need to protect the health of older people'

Age UK (2014) 'Reducing fuel poverty – a scourge for older people: A time for renewed vision and ambition'

Department for Energy and Climate Change (2015) 'Cutting the cost of keeping warm – A fuel poverty strategy for England'

Marmot Review Team (2011) 'The Health Impact of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty'

Public Health England & UCL Institute of Health Equity (2014) 'Local action on health inequalities: Fuel poverty and cold home-related health problems'