

## Councils' support helps to extend North Staffordshire Warm Zone for third year

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A GROUND-BREAKING project to help eliminate fuel poverty and boost energy efficiency across North Staffordshire is set to benefit (50) THOUSANDS more householders after being extended to a THIRD year.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Newcastle Borough Council have agreed to continue their support for the North Staffordshire Warm Zone (NSWZ) until December 2009.

NSWZ's programme - which provides FREE and cut-price insulation for privately owned or rented residential properties - was originally scheduled to run until the end of this year.

The 12-month extension means that work can now be completed in all remaining Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle Borough wards not previously covered during the scheme.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for many more householders and landlords to insulate their properties and contribute to reducing the area's carbon footprint," said NSWZ Zone Director, Sophie Thorley

"With energy prices rising sharply - and due to rise again - residents will benefit from the very real fuel savings that can be made from insulating their properties.

We are delighted that this has been made possible through the continued support from our local authorities and ScottishPower."

The new wards which will now be visited by the NSWZ team during the next 18 months include:

Audley and Bignall End; Clayton; East Valley; Halmerend; Hartshill and Penkhull; Keele; Loggerheads and Whitmore; Madeley; May Bank, Meir Park and Sandon; Newchapel; Northwood and Birches Head; Porthill; Ravenscliffe; Seabridge; Trentham and Hanford; Westlands; Wolstanton.

To find out more about the scheme, you can visit NSWZ's newly-launched website - [www.nswz.co.uk](http://www.nswz.co.uk) - where you can also complete an online assessment.

Alternatively, if you don't have access to a computer, simply telephone NSWZ on 01782 238443 to find out more about saving money and energy, or to arrange a home visit/assessment by a Warm Zone representative.

Residents living in wards that have already been covered can still contact NSWZ to benefit from the scheme.

Households feeling the pinch - particularly during the current 'credit crunch' - can also get advice from NSWZ on accessing benefits.

Councillor Joan Bell, Stoke-on-Trent City Council portfolio holder for community safety, said: "Our benefits advice team which has been strengthened thanks to funding from the Scottish Power Energy People's Trust (a charity funded by Scottish Power), now also focuses on families with children up to the age of 16. We can provide FREE ADVICE on increasing their income.

"Families may be eligible to a share of the tens of thousands of pounds worth of benefits that go unclaimed each year without realising it."

"We would urge families to come forward for a benefits entitlement check. They can access the service via the website or, again, by calling us on 01782 238443."