

Early Christmas present for competition winner

A Dagenham pensioner will find her fuel bills cut this winter thanks to a grant from Barking and Dagenham Council's Private Sector Housing Team to make her home more energy efficient.

The name of Bridget Hayes, 78, who lives in River Ward, Dagenham, was the first out of the hat in a prize draw competition run by the Council and East London Warm Zone, a not-for-profit organisation owned by the National Energy Action charity and supported by EDF Energy that helps vulnerable households with heating and energy.

Mrs Hayes had participated in a survey to gather information about the current level of energy efficiency in privately-owned homes across the borough.

As well as receiving the grant, Mrs Hayes has also won a brand new fridge freezer, which was delivered by Executive Member for Housing and Health, Cllr Liam Smith, on Friday, December 2. Five Four runners up have won £25's worth of Marks and Spencer vouchers and will also benefit from heating and energy grants.



Mrs Hayes and her fellow winners join 100 other Barking and Dagenham residents who have benefited from grants to make their homes more energy efficient.

The grants have so far paid for around £200,000's worth of heating improvements, including insulation, new windows and new central heating facilities.

The Council and Warm Zone have also raised an additional £100,000 for local people by helping private householders apply for other regional and national energy efficiency grants. It is believed that the grants will eventually be worth much more than their original value as local residents, particularly older residents who still own their own houses, see their fuel bills cut dramatically.

Officers hope that a reduction in fuel bills will encourage older people in the borough to use their central heating more during the winter. The scheme complements the national winter fuel payment of £200 for people aged over 60 years and £300 for people aged over 80 years.

Cllr Liam Smith, Executive Member for Housing and Health, said: "There are a range of grants, some local and some national, that can help the residents of the borough make improvements to their homes.

"It is particularly important that we reach older residents and make sure they are getting the benefit of all the help available to them. "I look forward to seeing many more households like these benefit from grants to make their homes warm, watertight and efficient."