



working together for warm homes  
in North Staffordshire

# NSWZ PRESS RELEASE

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## **Do the 'tiles test' to find out if YOUR heating bills are going through the roof...**

**WITH frost and snow on North Staffordshire rooftops, householders are urged to do the 'tiles test' – to find out whether they could make vital savings on their heating bills.**

A simple visual check is all that residents need to carry out to decide whether their home heating is being run as efficiently as possible.

Any sign of melting snow or ice on the roof of a property, and the chances are heat is escaping through the loft space, say North Staffs Warm Zone (NSWZ).

And as winter weather continues to tighten its grip on the area, that could be the equivalent of burning and wasting valuable pounds every time central heating systems, gas and electric fires are switched on.

"It's estimated that around 35% of household heat is lost through the walls of a property, and 25% through the roof," said Trevor Durber of NSWZ. "That means that while people enjoy the comfort that turning up their heating brings, the cold reality will be crippling gas and electricity bills early in the new year.

"However, properly-installed cavity wall insulation can save up to £160 annually on heating bills, and loft insulation up to £220.

"Our simple 'tile test' is an easy way of checking whether lofts are properly lagged, keeping the warmth inside the building."

NSWZ is continuing to work throughout North Staffordshire, offering FREE and cut-price home insulation measures to thousands of householders.

More than 50% of current applicants to the scheme are eligible received free insulation, whilst other householders can take advantage of the CHEAPEST

discounted offer in the area, at just £99 per measure.

As 2009 draws to a close, NSWZ's work so far has helped thousands of families across Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle Borough to slash their annual fuel bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

NSWZ has now completed its low energy lightbulb distribution scheme, with more than 235,000 low energy bulbs being sent out to North Staffordshire homes. These will save over 280,337,000KgCo2 in their lifetime use.

NSWZ's benefits advice team has assisted people to collect unclaimed benefits and entitlements now totalling over £2 million.

All areas of North Staffordshire have now been visited by NSWZ assessors, who are now returning to areas to catch any householder who may have been away previously.

Anyone wishing to apply for a free home energy survey can telephone NSWZ on 01782 479099.

To find out more about North Staffs Warm Zone, visit [www.nswz.co.uk](http://www.nswz.co.uk) – where you can also complete an online self-assessment.

**Notes to the Editor:**

- The North Staffordshire Warm Zone is a local partnership between Stoke on Trent City Council and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council, Scottish Power, National Grid and a range of local partners. It is delivered by Warm Zones cic, which is a Community Interest, not for profit Company, limited by guarantee. The North Staffordshire Warm Zone is a £10 million scheme.
- Warm Zones cic (WZc) is an independent, Community Interest Company set up by the Government in 2000 to explore new ways to combat fuel poverty and is operated as a social enterprise. It is a subsidiary of the fuel poverty campaigning charity National Energy Action an independent charity (No 290511) that has been campaigning to end fuel poverty since 1981. WZc has a track record of successfully delivering integrated and highly effective area-based schemes that deliver local benefits such as energy efficiency, carbon savings, fuel poverty reductions, benefits advice, health improvements, fire safety and employment skills and training. WZc is completely independent but it works in partnership with energy suppliers and a wide range of local partners, including Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern, Beat the Cold and Stoke PCT. In 2007-8 the current Zones will have reached a total population in excess of 2 million, with over a million households covered and we will have successfully carried out over 140,000 home assessments, across 50 Local Authorities. See <http://www.warmzones.co.uk>
- Scottish Power Energy People Trust have provided funding for North Staffordshire Warm Zone to provide Free Benefits Advice for families with children up to the age of 16 years of age.
- Free measures are available to households who are over 70, or who are on a qualifying benefit or deemed by the Warm Zone to be fuel poor, or to families with children deemed by the Warm Zone to live in an energy inefficient home.
- The energy efficiency of a home is often measured by its Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating. The Warm Zone is targeting help to all homes, but additional support is being made available to homes with a SAP rating of under 65.
- A household is considered to be fuel poor if it spends 10% of its income on fuel for adequate heating, hot water, cooking, lighting and electrical appliances.
- Adequate heating is defined as 21 degrees in the living room and 18 degrees in other rooms.
- NSWZ operate a benefits advice service to all homes in Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme.

**For further information please contact Sophie Thorley, Zone Director, North Staffordshire Warm Zone on 01782 238443 or 07545 904211.**