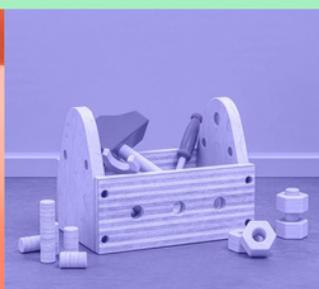




a place to call home:

# Energy and Homeowner Support Team

March 2021 Newsletter



## Big Boiler Scheme - Delivery begins ...

The Big Boiler scheme has been welcoming applications for a few weeks and demand has been high. The team has now sent out 176 applications to interested Wakefield residents. Of those residents who have applied so far, 56 have been approved for heating and/or boiler related work with another 12 approved to receive work to improve the insulation levels in their homes. Applications continue to come in and the work on installation is expected to start in April, to coincide with the end of the latest Lockdown and the finalisation of the delivery agreement with the project Contractors. Once the work has been completed, our residents will benefit from more effective heating to keep them warmer, plus reduced energy bills from the energy efficient measures being implemented.



## The Big Heater Amnesty Project - 1st wave of help now delivered

The project has now delivered the first wave of new portable heaters. This innovative project taps into the specific expertise of the Money Smart team at the Council, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Green Doctor project at Groundwork Wakefield. The project targets residents who are using old, portable heaters as their main form of heating and offers a free swap for a safe portable heater plus other help:

Think portable heaters are a cheaper way to stay warm at home? Think again ...

Trying to stay warm? Don't let your old portable heater be the death of you.

Using portable heaters to keep warm? The Big Heater Amnesty project is now live!

- the Fire Service giving "Safe at Home" advice to reduce fires in the home and especially to reduce the risk of fire related fatalities
- the Green Doctor project deliver the new heaters, remove the old ones and give energy advice, including helping residents to swap energy suppliers and tariffs, to reduce bills.
- the Money Smart team provide money and debt advice (for those with energy and wider debt, or those cut off from their supplier) plus link residents to wider projects to help supply mainstream heating so that they no longer have to use portable heating.

We have new leaflets plus information on our social media pages. Please get in touch if you would like some leaflets, to refer a client or to arrange for us to visit and talk about our schemes

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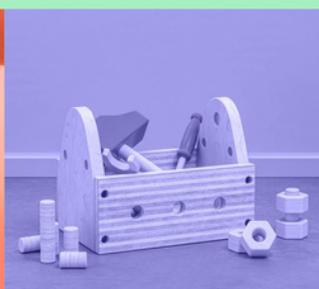




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## Compliments and feedback from residents...

a) The Energy Team received some nice feedback from the daughter of a resident who we helped, but who had sadly now passed away. The resident only had a coal fire and told us she was cold for most of the time. She had been using an electric heater to top up her heat but this was expensive. We provided a new boiler and full central heating system at no cost through the Fuel Poverty Fund. At the time the resident thanked the team and complimented them on how helpful they were in guiding her through the process and explaining everything clearly. In her e mail the resident's daughter again thanked us and said the work done had changed her Mum's life and made her last few months much more comfortable.



b) The Money Smart Team worked with a client living in poor housing conditions and struggling financially. At first he was reluctant to report the housing conditions (damp, cold, heating not working, water contaminated, and a window that would not shut). He eventually agreed and we linked to colleagues in the Housing Standards team who quickly took action. We helped the client to access help that got him rehoused very quickly into a 2 bedroom property (he was living in a basement flat), where his 8 year old son could also live with him. We linked to the Financial Welfare team to pay for the removal costs of £200 and gave him money advice. He told us that the move has made all the difference. He and his son are much happier, and he reports a real improvement in his mental health. They are loving the new house. He thanked the team for all the help and support received, telling the Officer who worked with him that she was a 'Star' and saying that he couldn't have done it without the help he received.

c) The Energy Team worked with other agencies to help a client whose boiler had failed. Arrangements were made to fast track an application and a new boiler was fitted. The referring agent told us that she had been in contact with the client who said "The boiler is due to be fitted soon and they had nothing but praise for your excellent work so I said I would pass this on to you. He said you were a lovely person and had done so much hard work on this scheme."

d) A Local Councillor referred a client to the Money Smart team, as she was struggling with her council tax. We completed a budget with her and looked at ways to access more help. As a result, the resident was awarded the maximum council tax reduction of 70%, which reduced her bills from £99 a month to £22.61 per month, saving her £916.79 a year. The resident was very pleased and sent her thanks to not only the team but also the Councillor who signposted her in the team's direction.

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