



Annual Report
2005

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Foreword

At Powergen we are committed to helping those who may be at risk from fuel poverty. As the UK's second biggest energy supplier, Powergen has led the way in helping combat fuel poverty and we are committed to removing 250,000 households from fuel poverty by 2010.

In the last five years as the Warm Front Scheme Manager in the East of England, East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside, Powergen Warm Front has installed over 430,000 measures and helped nearly 300,000 households on a not-for-profit basis. However, we have been unsuccessful in our bid to retain our position as Scheme Manager for the next phase of Warm Front. We are naturally very disappointed by this but Powergen remains committed to achieving our 2010 target.

Eradicating fuel poverty requires a joined-up approach between Government and the energy and building industries, and I look forward to continuing to work towards that goal.



Paul Golby
Chief Executive
E.ON UK





Welcome

I am delighted to introduce the Powergen Warm Front Annual Report for the year April 2004 to March 2005, focusing on the activities and achievements of the Powergen Warm Front team during the fifth and final year of the current scheme.

The team has worked closely with key organisations and influencers, including local authorities, voluntary groups, health, and energy efficiency professionals to help nearly 68,000 homes to become warmer and healthier places to live. The measures provided by the scheme also have the potential to reduce energy bills by an average of £150 per household per year, and reduce CO₂ emissions by over a tonne per year per household, helping to improve the health and quality of life of many vulnerable people.

Powergen Warm Front has consistently met and exceeded targets Defra set within budget and we are very proud to have achieved outstanding results in overall scheme management from Defra's independent auditors. In this last year we have assisted 135% of our Defra target by integrating with other schemes.

This is the final year that Powergen Warm Front will manage the scheme in Lot 2 as Defra announced in February 2005 that the Eaga Partnership has been awarded the contract to manage the next phase of the Warm Front programme throughout England.

At the end of this five year scheme we are proud to have helped nearly 300,000 homes, on a not-for-profit basis, and to have worked closely with Defra to shape the Warm Front programme.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the scheme, you have all made a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable people, and in the fight against fuel poverty.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garry Worthington".

Garry Worthington
General Manager
Powergen Warm Front

Aims of the Warm Front scheme

To provide warmer, healthier homes to vulnerable people who are at risk from fuel poverty and who own or privately rent their homes. Older people (aged 60 or over), children and those who are disabled or have a long-term illness are especially vulnerable.

To assess, recommend and install the best energy efficiency improvements available within the scheme, to help vulnerable households to be warmer, healthier environments.

To raise awareness of the scheme and improve the effectiveness of targeting eligible households.



Objectives for the scheme

To assist 50,400 households by providing a range of energy efficient measures, including heating and insulation, in the region managed by Powergen Warm Front.

To increase fuel savings by improving the energy efficiency of homes, delivering affordable warmth to those who need it most.

To continue to deliver quality referrals for home assessments and installations to privately owned and privately rented households.

To continue to develop relationships with a range of organisations through the referral networks, to make sure the most vulnerable people are reached.

Summary of work completed

Our performance in Year 5 exceeded all targets set by Defra:

We assisted nearly 68,000 homes, 135% of our target of 50,400 and as a result:

- We installed central heating in 690 more homes than our target
- We installed loft insulation in 9,500 more homes than our target
- We installed cavity wall insulation in 4,000 more homes than our target
- We carried out repairs, replacements or other heating measures in 1,600 more homes than our target.

We were able to assist nearly 68,000 homes by providing:

38,700 with loft insulation

19,700 with cavity wall insulation

15,800 with draught proofing

7,700 with hot water thermal jackets

4,800 with gas central heating systems

350 with electric central heating systems

2,300 with storage heaters

4,000 with replacement heating boilers

1,400 with repairs to existing heating systems

900 with gas balanced flue heaters

900 with dual immersion water heaters

900 with other heating improvements

The average Warm Front grant offered by the scheme was £450 for Year 5, increasing to £802 for customers over 60 who received a Warm Front Plus grant.

Timelines and quality control

The number of working days between the time of survey and job completion averaged at 80 for gas central heating, 93 for heating measures excluding repairs, and 96 for heating measures including repairs, all of which we successfully completed within the 120 working day timeline.

Insulation averaged 36 working days between the survey and job completion. This is also within the timelines set.

The quality of the installation is another key indicator of the performance of the Warm Front scheme. This year the first time pass rates of the Quality Control Inspections of gas central heating installations averaged at 97%, and insulation installations averaged at 91%.

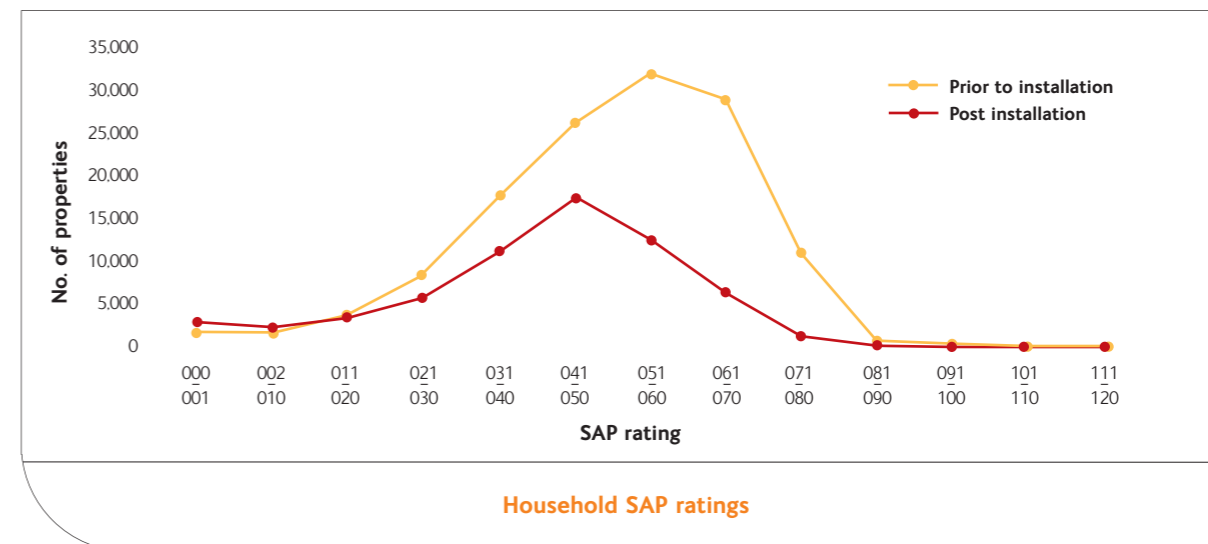
Energy efficiency improvements

In the year 2004-5 there was an average household improvement in SAP of 11 points, from 40 to 51.

There was a corresponding reduction in the average household fuel bill of £146 per annum and an average reduction in CO₂ emissions from 6.09 tonnes per year to 5.08 tonnes per year, an average improvement of 1.01 tonnes per home per year.

NES is proud to have worked closely with Powergen Warm Front to deliver these achievements. As well as helping to improve the lives of many vulnerable households, the scheme has provided training and employment to a significant number of individuals, including 150 Home Energy Advisors trained by NES during the course of the scheme. It has been a pleasure working with Powergen Warm Front to help thousands of vulnerable households.

Brian Scannell
Managing Director, National Energy Services

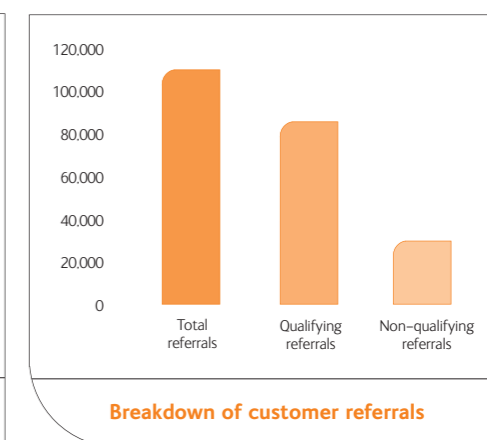


	At survey	Job complete	Improvement
Average SAP	41.53	50.39	8.86
Average CO ₂ reduction (tonnes)	5.96	5.18	0.78
Average running cost reduction (£s)	685.65	570.65	115.00

Household ratings including light bulb only installations

	At survey	Job complete	Improvement
Average SAP	39.85	51.36	11.51
Average CO ₂ reduction (tonnes)	6.09	5.08	1.01
Average running cost reduction (£s)	705.88	560.24	145.64

Household ratings excluding light bulb only installations



Reaching vulnerable people

Our Community Marketing Team was responsible for creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders who have a direct or indirect relationship with potential customers.

Building and developing local alliances and working in partnership to target the areas worst affected remains the most effective technique to addressing fuel poverty. Our Community Liaison Managers worked in conjunction with a number of local authorities and other organisations to ensure our message reached those customers most in need of support.

Alliances forged through Warm Front included:

- Local Councils and Local Authorities
- Charities
- Hospitals
- Primary Care Trusts and local GP surgeries
- Voluntary groups
- Community schemes
- Schools
- Parish/Rural councils
- Women's Institutes and local groups
- Job centres.

Engaging with local alliances often allowed direct access to eligible customers and many of our best results came from mailings through local councils. A typical response rate was 10%–12% which shows the benefit of being able to reach these customers through a trusted source. As a comparison, a direct mail response rate across the board would be between 0.25% and 1%.

As an example, we worked with Bradford District Council to organise a targeted mailing. On the back of this, the council also promoted Warm Front in the local press. The mailing resulted in a 16% response rate with the local adverts encouraging further applications.

Other successful activity with local alliances included:

- Localised PR in press/radio/television
- Hot spot campaigns
- Generic door drops
- Community television
- National awareness raising with other energy efficiency partners – i.e. Energy Saving Trust/National Energy Action
- Integration with national campaigns such as Energy Efficiency Week/Warm Homes Week/International Day of Older Persons/Flu Jab vaccinations
- Warm Front led PR campaigns e.g. Cold Nose and Hospital Radio
- Lot-wide direct mail campaigns.

In the summer of 2004, five areas were identified for concentrated activity. Activity included:

- Local radio advertisements
- Handouts in town centres
- Advertising in local and free press
- Localised PR.

All the press adverts and leaflet handouts were endorsed with the local council logo of that area to add recognition and weight to the communication as well as bringing a regional feel to what the reader was seeing.

We also engaged all local voluntary centres and community networks in the selected regions encouraging them to promote Warm Front during the campaign period and provided them with materials in anticipation of increased requests for information.

This activity generated:

- Direct referrals from third parties
- Word of mouth referrals
- Referrals through leaflet pick ups
- General awareness of the Warm Front scheme amongst customers and other stakeholder groups.

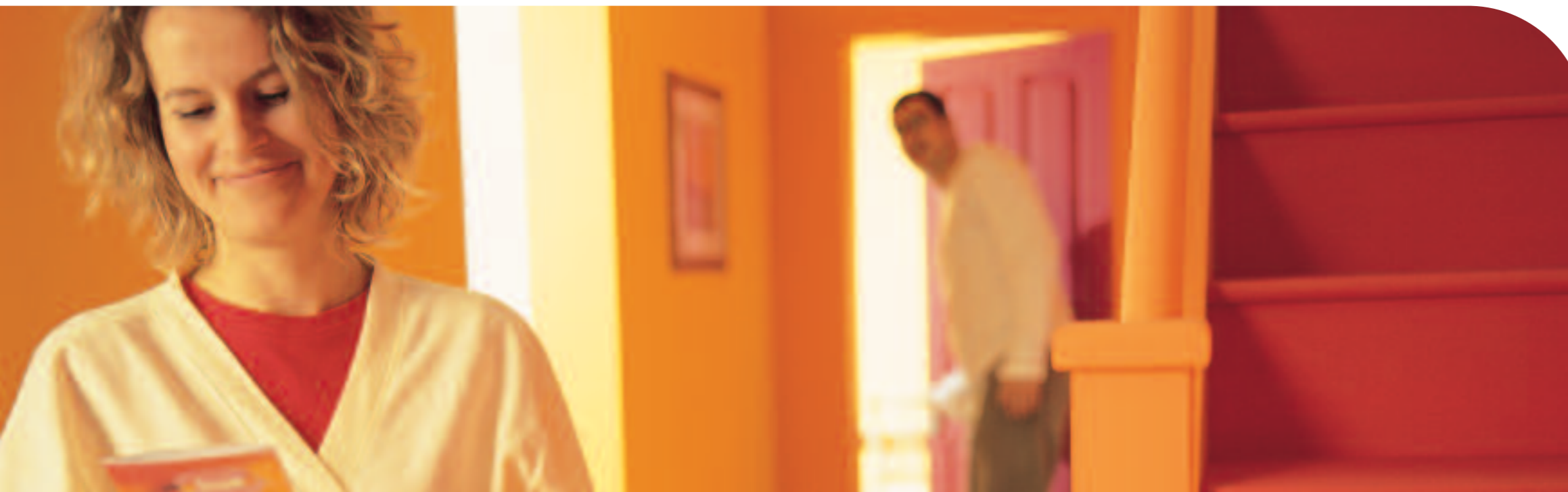
To make contact with the vulnerable groups as defined by the scheme we worked closely with different organisations and government departments in key strategic areas to reach:

- Communities in areas with high levels of fuel poverty
- Customers living in rural locations, with hard to treat homes, such as those not connected to the gas network
- Black and minority ethnic communities, where culture and language are main barriers to communication
- Disabled people or those most vulnerable to poor health or long-term illness.

“The entire team from Powergen Warm Front has proved to be exemplars in delivering on-the-ground help to many hundreds of thousands of people. Between them, the team has demonstrated that it is still possible to deliver an efficient, effective and above all personal service to clients, whilst remaining a positive flagship for the best of multinational corporate activity. There can be no finer valediction.”

Andrew Warren

Chairman, Association for the Conservation of Energy





Rural and hard to reach customers

Rural communities are generally considered to be small community villages and towns that often have limited facilities in entertainment, transport and amenities. Extreme rural areas may have limited access to amenities such as gas network connections. In some areas, the housing stock contains older properties which provide little opportunity for improvement.

During summer 2004 we worked on a joint project with Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council and the local District Council to promote Warm Front at a local level through parish council and village hall committees. The committees were encouraged to be proactive by offering incentives of energy and environmental related rewards to the village halls, such as energy efficient heaters, tea urns and plants to benefit the local community.

During winter 2004 over 20,000 postcards were delivered to areas with a high risk of fuel poverty in Lincolnshire, Hertfordshire, Scarborough & Stevenage. The postcard gave information on the scheme and had a tear off reply slip to apply for a Warm Front grant. Where possible the local council's logo was added as an endorsement.

Another way we were able to reach customers in rural locations was through local council's mobile library networks who visit local villages and hamlets.

John Walker, in Leicestershire, got a leaflet from his mobile library and decided to call and see what he was entitled to. "I answered a few questions and then someone from Warm Front came to visit me to see what would help me keep warm." He had a new heating system installed at the beginning of March.

"I had quite a lot of clutter around the house and so the engineers gave me time to sort things out. They were very helpful when they came to install the system and moved things around for me. The work was done very quickly and everything was left very tidy.

"The house is lovely and warm and I know I'll feel the benefit during the colder weather. I will definitely be telling my friends about it."

I have been very happy to work alongside Powergen Warm Front for the past five years, they have always provided excellent service to me and my householders in what sometimes have been almost impossible situations. It is unfortunate that this great partnership cannot continue, however I personally would like to thank Garry and his dedicated team for a job well done. They and Powergen can all be immensely proud of themselves.

Bruce Pittingale

Energy Manager for Fenland District Council and Chair of the UK Home Energy Conservation Association.

Working with the health sector

In a typical winter, 2.5 million households in England occupy homes cold enough to increase the risk of ill health and in a very cold winter that figure can rise to 3 million. The cost to the NHS is estimated at £1 billion each year.

Our Community Liaison Team worked with Fenland District Council and Fenland Primary Care Trust (PCT) to produce information and referral packs and provide training for health professionals to enable them to recognise potential patients in need of help from Warm Front.

Powergen Warm Front also took to the airwaves after teaming up with the Hospital Broadcast Association to raise awareness amongst patients. Hospital radio plays an important role in keeping people in touch with their local community and letting them know about services that can make a difference.

A targeted mailing to the heads of the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Chief Executives of town councils and local authorities to encourage them to promote Warm Front through their organisations had an excellent response, which resulted in us sending materials to over 60 councils and encouraged interest to work with Warm Front during the flu jab campaign.

Many PCTs worked with us to promote the scheme during the flu jab campaign. In total around 500,000 vulnerable people received Warm Front information through the health sector.

Sheffield City Council and the Sheffield Lions Club teamed up with Powergen Warm Front to encourage people in the city to apply for a grant. This was done via the 'Message in a Bottle' scheme, which provides a vital lifeline for local people, particularly the elderly and the vulnerable at home.

The 'Message in a Bottle' scheme supplies a plastic bottle to be kept in the fridge, in which vital information on medical conditions, medication and carers can be stored for use by the emergency services. Stickers on the inside of the front door, back door and the door of the fridge will alert police, ambulance, fire crews and emergency doctors that the person is a member of the scheme.

Our work with groups across Sheffield puts us in daily contact with health workers and caring organisations and we know how important it is for vital information to be instantly available in an emergency.

The free bottles were made available from Age Concern, Carer Centre, Agewell Lunch Clubs, Radio Sheffield, chemists, surgeries and other organisations in the Sheffield area.

Shirley Ledger, President of Sheffield Lions said: "We are delighted to receive support from Sheffield City Council and Powergen Warm Front for this scheme. It'll provide a vital lifeline for some of the most vulnerable people in our community."

People with disabilities or long-term illnesses

People with disabilities, lack of mobility or those who have a long-term illness may be more vulnerable to infection from the cold and may be at home more often meaning they may be using more heating than those who are away from their homes during the day. Energy efficiency and fuel saving are therefore of particular interest.

A successful alliance began when Motability approached Powergen Warm Front after seeing a campaign on Anglia TV. A pilot mailing to 10,000 households in Lot 2 was supported with PR which generated a 16% response rate and interest including radio interviews, in Rutland, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Additionally an article in Motability's Lifestyle Magazine was received by 400,000 customers in October 2004.

A week-long campaign to distribute information to Scope shop customers took place in spring 2004. Following this activity a newsletter with the aim of engaging shop staff/volunteers to be proactive in raising awareness of Warm Front was distributed. This included a feature on a Scope employee who had benefited from a Warm Front grant.

It was the Disability Benefits Office that first brought David Prince's attention to the grants available.

"We were delighted to find out that we could benefit from loft insulation and cavity wall insulation. A few of the rooms in our bungalow would get very cold in winter because of the direction the walls face, one of which was our bedroom.

"The loft was already insulated but did not have nearly enough so Powergen Warm Front arranged for an extra layer to be put down. I almost cancelled the work on the loft because I was unable to empty it myself but the workmen went above and beyond the call of duty by clearing the loft, before laying the insulation.

"We also benefited from cavity wall insulation and it has made such a difference. The rooms are much warmer and we have found that we don't need to put the heating on as much so our bills are lower too."

Over 60s

The over 60s are a particularly vulnerable group as they can suffer the most in the cold weather if they have inadequate heating in their homes.

In the winter of 2003/04 there were an estimated 23,500 more deaths in England and Wales than expected.*

Many deaths in winter are due to cold related illnesses, but by working with local authorities to reach older people we were able to continue to highlight the benefits of having a warm, healthy home.

In some areas, drop-in sessions were organised allowing pensioners an opportunity to have face to face contact, if they had any questions about Warm Front, before applying. These proved particularly popular with older people who need that extra reassurance.

Age Concern 'We Test You Rest' events ran throughout September to December offering over 60s the chance to have their electric blankets tested and replaced if faulty. The campaign sponsored by Powergen won a Business in the Community Award for its innovation and community involvement.

Powergen Warm Front also part sponsored production of, and appeared in, a video about distraction burglaries with Age Concern.

New relationships with Friends of War Memorials, and the Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association (Rukba), a benevolent charity offering financial help to those in desperate need, began this year. Friends of War Memorials invited Powergen Warm Front to contribute to their quarterly newsletter which was sent to 6,000 ex-service men and Rukba endorsed a mailing to their clients.

Our Community Liaison Managers attended many events across the region to raise awareness of the scheme including two PCT older person forum days in Northamptonshire, five local Pension Service events, across Suffolk & Essex, and eleven 'We Test You Rest' events across the region.

*<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=574&Pos=2&ColRank=2&Rank=448>

Powergen Warm Front has played an active role in the Warmer Luton Partnership for a number of years now. They have been highly supportive contributing to the work that we do in Luton to ensure that all vulnerable households receive the help to which they are entitled whether it's Warm Front grants, help with welfare benefits or assistance for older people with independent living.

Since Powergen took over the delivery of Warm Front we have found their customer services to be greatly improved. They have facilitated easy access for the Council to make referrals on behalf of vulnerable householders and have always been extremely helpful and co-operative whenever we have had need to call them.

We have carried out a number of highly successful mail outs to households in receipt of qualifying benefits and are currently embarking on a project with the Fire Service to help all households who have received Warm Front grants to access free home fire safety checks and smoke alarms.

The work that we have done with Powergen Warm Front would not have been possible without the active involvement, enthusiasm and co-operation of Simon Church who is a much valued member of our alliance and has always helped us to navigate the complex world of Warm Front regulations with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for clients.

Sarah Allen

Social Inclusion Policy and Projects Manager, Luton Borough Council.

Ethnic groups

There are thousands of eligible customers from ethnic groups that could greatly benefit from Warm Front grants. They are very close knit communities and tend to populate small pockets in different towns.

Ethnic groups rely on local knowledge and recommendation and very much tend to socialise, source and gather information in their own communities and locality. Language specific literature is crucial in creating awareness for Warm Front.

In order to reach these households, we worked directly with organisations that already have good relationships and trust within the local community. Manningham's Healthy Living Initiative works in its local area to bring a better quality of life and health to its residents. We worked with the Health and Housing section of the Initiative to help us promote Warm Front in the local community. A number of activities took place in the area including:

- Three events to raise awareness where a local interpreter was available to provide information and help with grant applications
- Language-specific door drops in the area with a direct referral point back to Manningham's Healthy Living Initiative
- Flu jab mailings through the initiative to over 6,000 ethnic minority households. This activity returned an 11% response rate.

During October and November 2004 we advertised in the largest Asian publication in the Bradford area, the Asian Express newspaper, and across the region during Ramadan radio stations highlighted the benefits of Warm Front grants.

Akbar Ali, a leading member of the Bangladeshi community in Bradford lived in a cold damp house, but during one of his regular visits to his community centre he realised that the Powergen Warm Front leaflets on display might be applicable to him and his family.

Mr Ali got in touch with Manningham's Healthy Living Initiative to help him apply and was pleased to learn that he was eligible to receive a Warm Front Plus grant which enabled him to have a full central heating system installed in the home he and his family have lived in for over 20 years, without proper heating.

He explains, "Before we had Warm Front, the health of my family suffered badly from the cold and damp and my grandchildren were missing school due to illnesses related to the cold. Now we have proper central heating, it has made a real difference to all our lives. Our health has improved, the children are much better and the house is so much warmer."

Akbar Ali's standing in the community means that he has already spread the word about Warm Front to friends and neighbours. He continues, "Many of the elders in the community were missing out on the benefits that a Warm Front grant brings. But I'm now able to tell them from experience how it all works."

Families & expectant mothers

Parents with young children and expectant mothers on low incomes are very cost conscious as they are trying to raise a family on a tight budget. Keeping their children warm and healthy is a priority.

As in previous years, a voucher was included within the Bounty packs provided to all mums-to-be. This was supported by press releases which culminated in several radio interviews with the Community Liaison Managers.

A voucher in the 'Schools Plus' booklet was also distributed to schools in the Powergen Warm Front area, offering parents a number of ways to save money on children-related products. Over 50,000 booklets were distributed by schools over the school year.

We complemented this activity with localised PR in the areas in which the booklet was distributed and an editorial piece in Primary Times, a free magazine distributed by schools to children at the end of each term.

Single-parent Jeanette Hutchinson lives in a remote area of Brigg and read about the Warm Front scheme in her local newspaper. Jeanette, who receives income support, was eligible for cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, and draught-proofing.

Powergen Warm Front arranged for a local approved installer to begin the improvement work in Jeanette's home, which was all carried out at no cost to her. "From the moment the work was done the temperature in the house improved dramatically and our fuel bills are now much lower. Instead of having to stay in just one room to keep warm, my daughter and I are able to use the whole house!

"The work was carried out quickly and efficiently in just a day and has made my house much cosier. I have recommended the scheme to all my neighbours and friends because the grants have made a huge difference to the warmth of my home and also to my purse."



Warm Front customer Jeanette Hutchinson (centre) with Ian Cawsey MP for Brigg & Goole (left) and National Energy Action representative Neil Hartwell (right)

Other activity

Preventing cold noses

The Powergen Warm Front team 'nose' all about grants to keep homes warm – and to prove it they donned 'cold noses' at a series of events to promote Warm Front during Energy Efficiency Week.

Across the region, members of the Warm Front Team put on the noses and encouraged our partners, who help promote Warm Front grants, to do the same and highlight the plight of people who live in cold homes. A number of local MPs also joined in.

Among the many events attended, our Community Liaison Managers took part in the Norfolk & Suffolk launch of energy efficiency week in Ipswich and Norwich, organised an energy efficiency event in Sheffield, and hosted drop-in sessions at libraries in and around Barnsley.



Powergen Warm Front's Gale Marriott (centre) shows Paul Bourgeois from Broadland Council (left) and MP Ian Gibson (right) how to avoid a cold nose.

Constituency campaign

Powergen Warm Front continued our campaign to involve MPs in encouraging their eligible constituents to apply for Warm Front grants.

This year the campaign engaged MPs across the region to visit constituents who had benefited from the scheme so they could see for themselves the benefits Warm Front provides and hear directly what difference the scheme can make. The campaign proved to be popular once again, with some MPs wishing to highlight the benefits of Warm Front in their constituencies on more than one occasion.

Powergen Warm Front also supported National Energy Action (NEA) during Warm Homes Week 2004 by organising a number of visits from MPs to those who have benefited from Warm Front measures in their constituencies.

To assist MPs and Government Offices, in having access to updated information, works completed were introduced onto our website this year. The work completed is reported by number of households assisted by constituency and by Government Office Region.



Warm Front customer George Gooch (centre) with Powergen Warm Front Scheme Manager Caroline Pennington (left) and MP Norman Lamb (right)

Landlords

Landlords provide an indirect route to eligible customers. Their permission is needed before any work can commence in their properties so their understanding and approval of the Scheme is critical to enable Warm Front to reach their tenants. 80% of all landlords approached gave their consent for the installation of measures under Warm Front.

A high proportion of the landlords on our database have multiple properties. Part of our on-going activity is to write to any new landlords about the benefits of the scheme and to see if they have any further tenants that could be entitled to a grant.

Opportunities to present details of the scheme and network with landlords are welcomed, and we regularly attended a number of regional landlord events, held by local councils, to stay in contact with this vastly growing group.

As around 15% of fuel poor households live in private rented accommodation, the education and involvement of landlords is vital in tackling this issue. Powergen Warm Front recently took part in a national programme of research looking at landlord take up of energy efficiency measures. The research, carried out in February 2005, sought to identify possible factors that would increase or decrease landlords' likelihood to take up measures.

The results will be released by National Energy Action (NEA) later this year, and it is hoped that this project will enable the energy efficiency industry to gain vital information about landlords.



Dearle & Henderson are pleased to have had the opportunity of working with Powergen Warm Front for the last five years. Working together we have built up a dedicated team, which has made a significant contribution towards the elimination of fuel poverty in Eastern England.

Malcolm Souch
Managing Director, Dearle & Henderson Energy Ltd

Impact of our work

Media attention

The total number of press articles for the year was 430. This equates to a total readership of more than 43 million and an advertising equivalent value of £69,000. This equates to a total editorial value of £207,000.

As well as coverage in newspapers, there were a variety of local radio pieces and interviews and community television pieces on local stations.

Customer satisfaction

Powergen Warm Front is committed to providing excellent customer service, and results from our quarterly customer satisfaction surveys showed that customers continued to be impressed by the service they received.

Customer satisfaction surveys were sent to all Powergen Warm Front customers once their installations were complete. Results from 2004/05 showed that:

- 98% of respondents would recommend Powergen Warm Front to a friend or family member
- 94% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the work carried out, and
- 87% of respondents noticed an improvement in the warmth of their homes since the installation had taken place.

As highlighted in Defra's publication "Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action", published in November 2004, our quarterly surveys also analyse income data and show that 74% of all Powergen Warm Front customers have an annual household income of £10,000 or less and 26% have an annual household income of £5,000 or less. These results show that Powergen Warm Front continues to reach a large number of households on very low incomes – a likely indicator of fuel poverty.

Continued excellence for Powergen Warm Front

Throughout the year Powergen Warm Front continually received excellent audit results from Defra's Independent Quality Assessors, White Young Green.

Thanks to our continuous improvement and the hard work of all involved in the Warm Front scheme, we were reported to have exceeded contract requirements for six categories including Marketing, Communication, Timelines and Targets, Quality Management Systems, Complaints and Customer Relations, and overall Scheme Management performance.

White Young Green's report said: "There is continued evidence that the Powergen Warm Front team is continuing to satisfactorily deliver the scheme effectively whilst endeavouring to ensure that opportunities for continual improvement are captured and developed."

Benefits Entitlement Checks

Since Powergen Warm Front launched their Benefits Entitlement Checks (BEC) in December 2003, this service has helped many people who at the time of application to Warm Front do not claim the benefits they are entitled to and as a result they are not eligible for a Warm Front grant.

Based on the information provided at the time of the check, results showed that 56% of the householders using this service were able to maximise their income by an average of £9.77 per week for personal benefits and £24.52 per week for family benefits. Of these householders, 81% could be eligible for a Warm Front grant if they were to apply for the benefits the check identified.

When Violet Haynes' boiler broke down she was extremely concerned about how she would pay for a new one. A plumber fixed it temporarily but said that she would have to have it replaced, and drafted a letter condemning the boiler.

Luckily her niece noticed an advert for Powergen Warm Front in the local newspaper and mentioned the scheme to Mrs Haynes. She immediately sent the plumber's letter to Powergen Warm Front and asked if they could help.

A member of the grants team contacted Mrs Haynes and took her through a Benefits Entitlement Check, which revealed that she was entitled to Council Tax Benefit and informed her that once she was in receipt of the benefit she would be eligible for help from the scheme.

Mrs Haynes explains: "As soon as I began to claim my Council Tax Benefit, a surveyor came out and told me that I would be eligible for a new boiler as well as loft insulation and draught proofing. I was delighted because my husband had recently died and I was worried about how I would cope.

"I was promised a new boiler by December but it was replaced much earlier. The work was completed in a day and the workmen were fantastic. I could only describe them as gentlemen and workers, they never stopped.

"I still can't believe that I haven't had to pay for the boiler. I'm almost 80 and I've never had anything free in my life. When I come home now it is so warm and welcoming. I cannot praise Powergen Warm Front and all the people that work for the scheme enough."

Installer recognition

A reception in London in May 2005 recognised Powergen Warm Front installers for the valuable contribution they make to the scheme.

At the reception, Garry Worthington, General Manager of Powergen Warm Front, commended the achievements of all Warm Front installers and went on to present the Powergen Warm Front Installer Awards 2005 for three categories Heating, Insulation and Electrical.

The winner of the Heating Installer Award 2005 was Paul Brant Plumbing and Heating from Leicester, for the second year in a row, and the runner-up was Yorkshire Plumbing and Heating from Doncaster. The winner of the Insulation Installer Award 2005 was Staywarm Insulation from Bedfordshire, for the second year in a row, and the runner-up was Homecare Home Improvements from Bradford. The winner of the Electrical Installer Award 2005 was Eastern Contracting from Bury St Edmunds and the runner-up was Mansfield Electrical Services from Nottingham, who won the runner-up award for the Heating category in 2004.

Garry Worthington said: "These Installer Awards acknowledge and reward those installers who work hard to meet all the expectations of the scheme. And this year's participants exemplify all that's good about Warm Front."

The installers were measured on the following categories:

- Quality of work
- Delivery within timelines
- Customer service
- Dealing with complaints.

Work with other initiatives

Energy Efficiency Commitment

Powergen Warm Front continued to trade measures with Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) suppliers to bring additional funding into the scheme. This extra money was used to increase the number of measures installed and reduce the amount of customer contributions where the grant level was exceeded.

The measures traded enabled us to assist an extra 17,500 more homes and install over 31,000 additional measures.

Energy monitoring project

Following their successful involvement in an earlier exercise managed by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) on behalf of Defra, Powergen Warm Front was invited to participate in co-managing a further project.

The first phase of the project took place during winter 2004/05 and involved selecting 60 customers who were due to have insulation measures installed through the Warm Front Scheme. These customers agreed to have their cavity wall and/or loft insulation delayed for a period of twelve weeks during which time room temperature and energy consumption data would be recorded. Following completion of the insulation measures, further data was collected for an additional twelve weeks.

The purpose of this work is to improve the assumptions used to estimate energy savings in the UK housing stock.

The second phase of the project involved testing the above mentioned assumptions and the in-situ performance of cavity wall insulation. Powergen Warm Front selected 30 customers to participate in this project, which involved a detailed investigation of the benefits of cavity wall insulation. Monitoring included heat flow measurements across the wall before and after cavity wall insulation, thermographic and optical imaging, endoscopy of the wall cavity and an assessment of each installer's knowledge of industry regulations and workmanship.

Results for the temperature monitoring project will be reported in June 2005. For the in-situ cavity wall insulation monitoring, further monitoring is required next winter, with the final results being reported in February 2006.

“Powergen Warm Front has made a great contribution to the Warm Front scheme and has – by successfully integrating with other energy efficiency schemes – shown that a joined-up approach results in many more vulnerable customers receiving assistance. We know that much more needs to be done to eradicate fuel poverty in England but Powergen Warm Front has demonstrated effective ways of overcoming some of the challenges.”

Peter Lehmann
Chairman Fuel Poverty Advisory Group



Office of the Deputy Prime Minister research

In January 2005, we worked with the London School of Economics on research for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to establish the contribution of Warm Front to the Decent Homes Target.

The main aim of the work was to provide answers to two specific questions:

- What proportion of Warm Front grants and what proportion of grant expenditure is going to vulnerable private sector households living in homes that do not meet the decent homes standard on the thermal comfort criterion?
- What proportion of these dwellings meet the thermal comfort criterion following the measures installed under the Warm Front scheme?

We provided the following data for over 250,000 properties:

- the characteristics of applicants (type of household, age, postcode, tenure, region)
- the characteristics of the dwelling (dwelling type, construction date, etc)
- energy efficiency characteristics (heating system, thickness of loft insulation, wall construction and whether has cavity wall insulation, SAP rating)
- measures installed under Warm Front
- application date (year and month)
- qualifying benefit(s).

The research will be completed later this year.

Helping the environment

Environment management

Since the beginning of the scheme year, Powergen Warm Front has been committed to achieving our ISO 14001 certification and worked towards implementing an environmental management system across the business.

We operated an environmentally-friendly company-car and pool-car policy, with a fleet comprising of dual-fuel cars. To supplement this, the business operated a green-travel policy which required all employees to travel using public transport wherever possible.

A recycling scheme which ensured that all paper-waste; metal-waste; light-bulbs; batteries; printer/fax/toner cartridges and mobile phones were recycled was put in place in the office environment.

The aim was to encompass existing environmentally-friendly activities and to encourage us to continually work to improve environmental performance.



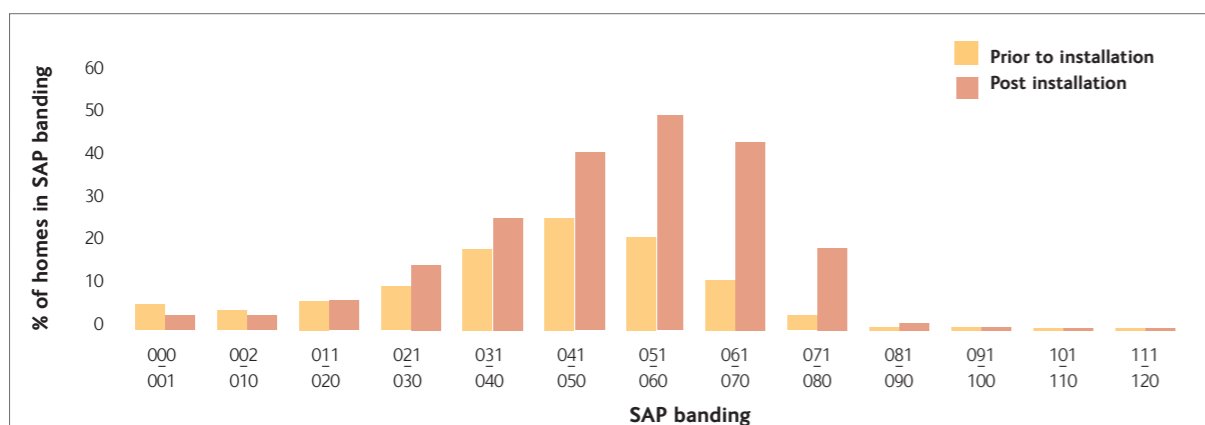
End of year summary figures

Grant type	Scheme year (01/04/04 - 31/03/05)	Scheme total (01/06/00 - 31/03/05)
Warm Front	36,012	187,481
Warm Front Plus	31,985	111,404
Total	67,997	298,885

Number of households to receive measures

Category description	Scheme year (01/04/04 - 31/03/05)	Scheme total (01/06/00 - 31/03/05)	EEC measures traded (01/04/04 - 31/03/05)	Scheme total EEC measures (01/04/03 - 31/03/05)
Cavity wall insulation	19,729	92,990	10,189	27,761
Loft insulation	38,548	137,650	19,568	34,365
Draught proofing	15,828	93,873		
Hot water thermal jacket	7,736	34,056	1,997	10,385
New electric heating	348	3,773		
New gas heating	4,787	25,161		
Replacement boilers	3,969	11,977		
Heating system repairs	1,382	10,305		
Other heating measures	5,056	24,736		
Total	97,383	434,521	31,754	72,511

Number of measures installed



Household SAP ratings prior to and post installation

Registered office:

Powergen Warm Front Ltd, Westwood Way, Westwood Business Park, Coventry, CV4 8LG.

Registered in England and Wales No: 4725781