

# North Western Fuel Poverty Project 2004

Energy Action and the Health Promotion Unit of the North Western Health Board (NWHB) have joined forces to set up a working group in the Choice area to tackle fuel poverty. The Choice areas include Letterkenny, Gweedore and Carndonagh in Donegal and selected areas in Sligo (the Lough Arrow cluster in south east Sligo and Sligo town east of the Garavogue river) and Leitrim (Drumkeerin).

A working group was established in February 2004 which also included representatives from Donegal County council, St. Vincent de Paul, the Department of Social & Family Affairs, ESB and two Donegal based approved insulation installer companies operating within the Low Income Housing programme, Meitheal Forbartha Na Gaeltachta, Letterkenny and Action Inishowen, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal.

The main aims of the project are as follows:

- To establish a working group to tackle fuel poverty in the Choice area with a key input from health professionals and a range of local community focussed organisations
- To quantify the extent of fuel poverty in households in the Choice project area (Choice addresses older local people in defined areas in Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim)
- To deliver energy awareness training to community-based health professionals working for the North Western Health Board and other relevant professionals in the Choice area
- To identify a range of measures needed to address the causes of fuel poverty in the households affected and arrange for implementation of these measures.

There are a number of initial tasks to be undertaken.

These are:

- To prepare an energy plan of households in the Choice area to identify the extent of fuel poverty and the range of measures needed to address energy and heating-related issues.
- To conduct energy audits and studies of local housing stock and cross-reference that output to a socio-economic profile of the area
- To categorise the energy efficiency measures needed into a), those that can be covered by existing programmes at no cost to the households and b), those measures for which funding is required
- To set a strategy to enable those measures for which funding is not presently available to be addressed in the medium to long term
- To determine the payback for the measures recommended in terms of cost, IHER improvements, CO2 reductions, reduced space & water heating costs, improved comfort levels
- To deliver energy awareness training to 100 health professionals. The purpose of the training is to educate health professionals on fuel poverty and its links with poor health and to inform them on how to refer client to energy efficiency programmes.
- To prepare a list of households qualifying for energy efficiency measures under existing programmes such as the Low Income Housing Programme.