

## Healthy Homes scheme

South East Wales Energy Agency operates the Healthy Homes scheme which provides energy efficiency advice and sources grants for insulation for householders who are struggling to keep their house warm in Newport, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend.

Free briefing sessions are also available for frontline council, health, community or voluntary workers in these local authorities. The briefing covers the effects of fuel poverty, what can be done to reduce fuel bills and grants available for clients.

*“The training was beneficial and will prove beneficial to my community”*  
Key workers training feedback

Mr S of Rogerston, Newport, called Healthy Homes after seeing the free phone number in the local newspaper. After receiving a free, no obligation survey the workmen told Mr S he would benefit from loft insulation and low energy saving lightbulbs, which could save him up to £150 a year (Energy Saving Trust). Mr S was able to have the insulation installed free of charge because he receives disabled living allowance.

*“The whole process [of installing insulation] only took a few weeks and the standard of work was very good. I would recommend other to take advantage of the services offered”*  
Mr S, Newport

Mr J from Abergavenny received cavity wall insulation under the Healthy Homes scheme. Because he is on Pension Credit and Housing Benefit he was eligible for the work to be carried out free of charge. He was very satisfied with the assistance he received and he could save up to £120 a year on his heating bills.

*“The scheme was excellent for saving excellent for warming the home and saving money. The staff were very polite, concentrated on the job in hand and cleaned up after themselves. A highly recommended scheme”*  
Mr J, Abergavenny

## Newport County Council solid wall homes insulation

Residents of 68 council houses in the St Julians area of Newport will enjoy a warmer winter this year, thanks to a £500,000 project funded by Newport City Council.

The insulation of solid wall houses can be a tricky prospect. Solid walls not only allow heat to drain away from the home more easily than more modern cavity walls but

because they lack a cavity they can not be insulated using common cavity-filling techniques. This means that many older homes most in need of energy efficiency improvements are often the hardest to treat.

The solution is to apply an extra layer of insulating treatment to the wall, either internally or externally. In St Julians, the contractors are using phenolic insulation board, glass fibre mesh and a scrim coat on the external walls of the properties. The project, due for completion in mid-October, could save residents up to £350 a year on their energy bills.

### **Monmouthshire Council Air Source Heat Pumps**

Residents of Great Oak in Monmouthshire are benefiting from warmer homes at less cost with the installation of air-source heat pumps by Monmouthshire County Council.

Five council-owned bungalows were fitted with heat pumps in the spring 2006 and the units coped well with early cold spells. The fuel-efficient system will help the elderly residents with maintaining healthy and comfortable temperatures in their homes. The tenants had campaigned for many years that the existing slim line storage radiators were expensive to run and produced inadequate heat. Consequently, Monmouthshire County Council have responded to the opportunity to fit a more economical and environmentally-friendly system.

Air-source heat pumps are a particularly fuel-efficient method of home heating. In these air-to-water heat pumps, an outdoor electrical compressor unit (pictured) is used to extract heat from the outside air and transfer it to the conventional wet central heating system via heated coils. The amount of electricity required is relatively low; the heat energy provided to the home is typically three times that of the electrical energy used to drive the heat pump.

Heat pumps give off a relatively low level of heat which is appropriate for maintaining temperatures over long periods; this is particularly useful for elderly residents who may spend a lot of time in the home. Constant heat emission at a lower temperature also gives slightly cooler radiators, at 50 °C, which reduces risk of burns. During cold spells and at night, off-peak electricity is used to boost water heating. The big test for the systems will come this winter, when it is hoped that the systems will continue to perform well in keeping the cold in check, cutting carbon emissions and providing more comfortable homes.