

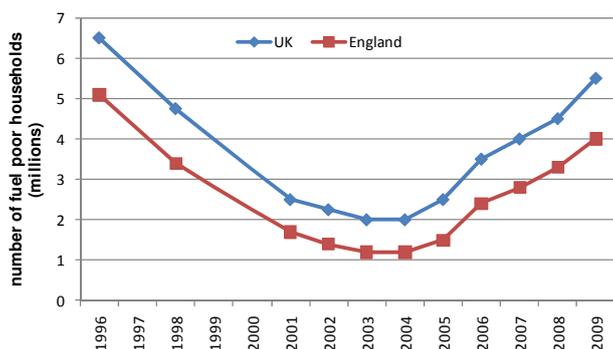
# Groups of vulnerable older people who find it hard to keep warm.

Findings from KWILLT

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Living in a cold home can be bad for your health especially for those who are in later life. Health problems associated with cold homes include heart disease, respiratory problems and mental health issues. Fuel poverty<sup>1</sup> is an increasing problem for older people in the UK. Being fuel poor has implications for health and wellbeing and leads to repeated stays in hospital for those suffering from cardio vascular, respiratory and other conditions. Being fuel poor and living in cold homes can also lead to excess winter deaths. Rotherham in South Yorkshire is an area with high levels of fuel poverty.

Fuel Poverty Statistics 2011 Department of Energy and Climate Change



The total number of householders living in fuel poverty in Rotherham has increased from 11.9% in 2006 to 17.4% in 2010 (n=34660). (NEA 2011)

## BACKGROUND - THE KWILLT PROJECT

Keeping Warm In Later Life Project (KWILLT) was commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under its Research for Patient Benefit Programme. The research was conducted in Rotherham.

KWILLT aimed to;

- Examine the knowledge, beliefs and values of older people regarding keeping warm at home
- Identify the barriers older people experience that prevent them accessing help in keeping warm.

## GROUPS WHO EXPERIENCE COLD AND WHO ARE 'AT RISK'

We have identified six groups of vulnerable older people who are at risk of being cold for different reasons. Each group represents a 'segment' of older people in society and contains people who share a combination of factors which influence them in keeping warm. For each group we have developed a pen portrait. The six pen portraits are not real people but are case studies which summarise and illustrate the experience and situations of older people at risk of being cold. Across the board we have found that all these groups are poorly informed about some aspect of keeping warm.

## THE KWILLT SEGMENTATION MODEL

Segmentation group	Pen Portrait Name	Description
Isolated and not wanting to cause a bother	Pat	Low income household and fuel poor, over 55, socially isolated and frightened, lacks information and understanding about keeping warm, private rented housing, long term mental health problems (depressions/anxiety)
Getting by cautiously	Ben and Joan	Low income household and fuel poor, over 65, some social connections but not well informed about keeping warm, privately owned house, one partner has chronic health problems
Dependent and poorly informed	Meena	Low income household and fuel poor, over 55, limited social connections, poorly informed about keeping warm, privately owned housing, poor health and mobility and very dependent on close family.
Just about managing	Enid	Can pay for home heating but values thrift, over 70, some social connections but is private and trusts few people so is poorly informed about keeping warm, social housing, physical health problems and sensory impairment
Lonely and out of touch	Pearle	Financially secure but lives in a cold home, over 70, widowed, and socially isolated, poorly informed about keeping warm, privately owned house, physically well but bereaved
Proud and wants to be self-sufficient	Fred	Low income but not fuel poor, over 70, regular but superficial social connections, poorly informed but values stoicism and hardiness and thinks he doesn't need any help, social housing, good health, minor ailments.

<sup>1</sup> A household is said to be in fuel poverty if it spends more than 10% of its income to achieve temperatures needed to maintain health and comfort. For older people this is between 18 and 24 degrees centigrade

The segments are informed by a number of factors.

These are:

- **Situation or context factors** personal and environmental characteristics
- **Attitudinal factors** including values and beliefs that interact with contextual factors in order to influence older people's keeping warm behaviour
- **Barriers** that prevent older people keeping warm and make them vulnerable to the negative impacts of fuel poverty and a cold home.

Situation or context factors	Attitudinal factors	Barriers
Income	<b>Making ends meet</b>	<b>Awareness</b>
Age	• Thrift	• Knowledge
Social connections	• Competing priorities	• Information
Housing type and tenure	• Pride	• Experience
Health	• Struggling	<b>Technology</b>
	<b>I can manage</b>	• Heating
	• Thrift	• Information
	• Hardiness	• Banking
	• Stoicism	<b>Disjointed systems</b>
	<b>Its my business</b>	• Fragmentation or services
	• Mistrust	• Local differences
	• Pride	• Lack of referral systems
	• Independence	
	• Privacy	<b>Visibility</b>
	<b>I'm frightened</b>	• Fuel
	• Independence	• Money
	• Privacy	• Information
	• Personal safety/vulnerability	• Older people
	<b>I'll stay as I am</b>	
	• Struggle with change	
	• Like routine	
	• Fear	
	• Trust	

## PURPOSE OF THE PEN PORTRAITS

The pen portraits illustrate these segments and provide information to help plan and provide services for older people.

They describe and help to understand the lives of older people at risk. The pen portraits help to:

- Find people who are at risk
- Recognise people at risk
- Understand the complex reasons why older people are cold and the contextual attitude and behaviour that contribute to this
- Support the design and delivery of acceptable and accessible services
- Identify strategies to overcome barriers
- Promote strategies to support self management to keep warm.

The pen portraits can be used by relevant organisations and staff to help them consider and plan their response to the Department of Health cold weather plan (Department of Health 2011)

The six pen portraits show how the factors and barriers identified may influence those in each of the groups in the segmentation model. The six are listed below:

Segment	Pen Portrait
Isolated and not wanting to cause bother	Pat
Getting by cautiously	Ben and Joan
Dependent and poorly informed	Meena
Just about managing	Enid
Lonely and out of touch	Pearle
Proud and wants to be self sufficient	Fred



SHARPENS YOUR THINKING



To explore all six pen portraits and access other information about the KWILLT project please access the project website at: [www.kwillt.org](http://www.kwillt.org) or contact:

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