

Fuel Poverty – when will it end?

9th West Midlands HECA Forum Conference

Speaker profiles

Mike Atherton, Head of Housing & Consumer Services, Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Mike joined the former Wrekin District Council in 1991 as Head of Customer & Client Services. He has had a number of roles prior to and after local government re-organisation culminating in his appointment as Head of Housing & Consumer Services when the Council transferred its stock in March 1999. Mike is a member of the Shropshire Housing Officer's Group, the Rural Housing Network, the Regional Housing Partnership and he sits on the Regional Housing Board.

Jackie Park, Housing Specialist, Government Office for the NE

Jackie Park has for the past year been on a secondment with Government Office for the NE, from her post as Head of Housing at Blyth Valley BC, an authority which has attracted resources to meet the decent homes target by setting up an ALMO that has been awarded two stars. At the Government Office she leads in relation to the implementation of decent homes, option appraisals and is actively involved the development of the North-East Regional Housing Board.

Jackie has worked in local government housing for 23 years, she a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing and was awarded honorary membership of the Energy Institute following a HECA Officer of the Year Award. She led a successful application at Blyth Valley for Beacon Council status and in 2002 attended a reception at 10 Downing Street hosted by the Prime Minister and Mrs Blair in honour of contribution to local government.

Peter Molyneux, Independent Health and Regeneration Consultant

Peter Molyneux is an independent Health and Regeneration Consultant. He has undertaken numerous projects at the interface between health, housing and regeneration and is expert in multi-agency working and partnership development.

He has a particular interest in the ways improvements in the living environment can work to improve peoples' health. Recent projects include i) a Review of Services for Older People for Southern Housing Group, ii) the project management of a successful bid to the New Opportunities Fund for a Healthy Living Network in the East End of Plymouth, iii) an evaluation of Housing Corporation funded projects promoting health and well-being through housing interventions and iv) an evaluation of an NRF funded accident prevention project for Old Ford Housing Association and Tower Hamlets PCT.

Peter is Vice-Chair of the Housing Associations Charitable Trust where he chairs the Older Persons' Programme. He has served on a number of advisory bodies including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 'Lifetime Homes' Group, the London 'Leading for Health Programme', the Health Sub-Committee of the Energy Savings Trust and the Policy Committee of the UK Public Health Association. He is a Non-Executive Director of Southwark Primary Care Trust where he chairs the Audit Committee.

Alastair Brookes, Senior Project Officer, EST's Practical help for Local Authorities

Alastair works on the Energy Saving Trust's Practical help initiative for local authorities, advising local authorities on sustainable energy and sustainable transport issues. He is involved with the development and management of the Practical help website and has also written a number of briefings and case studies for local authorities on various sustainable energy issues. Alastair also manages the day-to-day operation of the Energy Saving Trust's Energy Services Support Programme.

Tracy Dexter, LASP Coordinator, Warwickshire EEAC

Tracy was born in America but moved to the UK to study Construction Management and graduated from Derby University with BSc (Hons). She previously worked as a HECA officer for Stratford on Avon District Council before joining Warwickshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre in 2001 as Local Authority Support Programme (LASP) co-ordinator.

Tracy is currently involved in dealing with local authorities and housing associations at a strategic level as well as devising and planning specific services. She also represents WEEAC and local authorities in a number of regional and national forums. She has particular expertise in domestic building construction and energy efficiency with a strong interest in renewable technologies.

Steve Gillon, Director of Operations, NEA

Steve is presently Director of Operations with NEA, responsible for NEA's energy efficiency service delivery, including the regional fuel poverty forums, NEAs work with local authorities, other housing providers and the health service, and the development and management of its portfolio of demonstration projects. The forums are the major regular networking event which focuses on tackling fuel poverty. NEAs work with housing providers and the health service concentrates on establishing best practice to deliver the Governments Fuel Poverty Strategy. The projects pilot new approaches to the installation of energy efficiency measures, the provision of energy advice and energy awareness training to tackle fuel poverty amongst vulnerably groups. Over twenty-five demonstration projects are currently being delivered in England. The projects feature a partnership approach involving central and local government, the fuel utilities and the private sector working together to demonstrate the potential for energy efficiency initiatives to tackle fuel poverty; benefiting both the local communities in which they are based and NEA's campaigning work through their contribution to the organisation's policy development.

Steve has worked with NEA since December 1985, originally as a Development Officer, following his involvement in setting up a Community Insulation Project in Dundee. He has degrees in Geography and Urban Planning and, prior to involvement in energy efficiency, held several posts in the community development and advice fields in both England and Scotland.

As a member of NEA's senior management team he is responsible for the delivery of the projects successfully, on time and within budget, and ensuring that the lessons of the project are incorporated into NEA's policy development. With the remainder of the management team he is responsible to the Chief Executive for the delivery of NEA's work programme.

Graham Wood, General Manager, ART Homes Ltd. Birmingham

Graham worked in the Building Society Industry for 26 years before joining Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council in the Private Sector of the Urban Improvement Service. His work concentrated on researching equity release and other loan products to assist homeowners in the repair maintenance and improvement of their homes.

He joined ART Homes as General Manager in April 2001. The priorities were to move the company forward from project research into 'lender' status (- that milestone was achieved in December 2001) and to develop working relationships with like-minded organisations who are equally willing, able and committed to making a difference to the living conditions of 'vulnerable' homeowners. The first partnership with Birmingham City Council, Anchor Staying Put ART Homes Ltd and The Home Improvement Trust was marketed as 'HouseProud' across the city of Birmingham and it won the National Home Improvement Council's Award for Local Authorities and RSL's - Innovation and Good Practice in November 2001. Partnerships have and are being established with additional local authorities and a Housing Action Trust in and around the West Midlands area.

On a personal front, Graham serves on the Management Board of Ashram Housing Association, a specialist BME organisation, catering predominantly for the needs of vulnerable Asian people. He also made several presentations at seminars for DTLR/CIEH; the National Assembly for Wales/CIEH; CURS (University of Birmingham) and Housing Quality Network on the Government's Housing Regulatory Reform Order 2002. Other important speaking engagements were the 2002 and 2003 Annual Conferences of Community Developed Financial Institutions (CDFIs) in Birmingham and Glasgow.

The Certificate in Mortgage Advice & Practice is to be the Regulatory Requirement for persons dealing in loan advice from 2004 (under Financial Standards Authority) and Graham already has that qualification – he will be looking to add the 'Lifetime' Mortgages module as and when it is available.