

## Case Study: Warm Homes Fenland

### Introduction:

The charity PECT aims to help preserve, protect, and enhance the environment. We want to improve the quality of life of communities by raising awareness of environmental issues and nurturing behaviour change in future generations.

There is substantial evidence of the detrimental impact of fuel poverty on the physical and mental health of residents. Health impacts caused by cold homes include cardiovascular and respiratory problems, diminished resistance to infection, and increased levels of anxiety and social isolation.

Our Warm Homes project helps improve the lives of vulnerable households who are suffering from or at risk of fuel poverty. We support residents who are struggling to pay their energy bills or cannot keep their home at a sufficient temperature. We aim to reduce the numbers of people living with preventable ill health, and to help reduce energy usage and cut carbon.

PECT has carried out 1,000s of free household visits through its project 'Warm Homes'. The package of support has included: an 'Energy Pack' with information and goods relating to energy-saving, reviews on energy usage and tariff, advice on keeping homes warm and energy costs down, signposting to other support available such as the Warm Home Discount and Priority Services Register, and supporting residents with grant applications.

Our Warm Homes Project Officer explains why this project is so important: "It is essential to address the Fuel Poverty crisis. Huge numbers of homeowners are unable to adequately heat their homes, and this has significant health implications and places enormous pressure on the NHS. Our project ultimately seeks to tackle this growing issue by providing householders with a free helping hand to make their homes more energy efficient and to help save money on their energy bills."

### The challenge:

At the beginning of October 2019, Age UK contacted PECT to refer Fenland resident, Jane. Age UK was concerned for Jane's health and wellbeing due to not having an efficient heating system and no hot water. Jane lives alone and is registered disabled, so the risks from a cold home would impact her very seriously.

PECT carried out a visit with Jane and noticed that the home was cold, and Jane was restricted with her movement and seemed low. Jane had an electric heater in her living room, and no other heating in the rest of the house. Her water tank has also been broken for over a decade because she could not afford to have it fixed herself.

The main discussion during the home visit focused on discovering if Jane would be eligible for any funding for first time central heating.

### The results:

As a result of the home visit, we were able to refer Jane to a funding scheme for homeowners on benefits who need help with heating their home. This scheme allowed Jane to receive a full central heating system in her home in February 2020, covered fully by the grant. This meant Jane now has heating throughout her home and hot water.

After the installation of this, PECT did a follow-up visit and installed radiator reflector panels to increase the efficiency of the radiators. Jane was also advised on how to efficiently use her heating system and has also received general advice on how to keep her energy bills low whilst keeping her house warm.

During the follow-up visit it was clear that Jane was much happier and more comfortable in her home. The installation of the heating system had made a difference to Jane's mental wellbeing as well as her physical health.

### Key achievements:

-  Received a fully funded central heating and hot water system in home
-  Jane is much more comfortable in her home, increasing her mental health and general health
-  Jane received advice on keeping energy bills low and knows how to efficiently use her heating system

### Feedback:

"I didn't know about this service until Age UK, and I wish I had known about this before instead of living in the cold. Because of my health conditions, being cold is bad for my health, and this had made a big difference. And it was nice to have a bath after 12 years!" – Jane

**For more information:** Call PECT on 01733 568408, email [warmhomes@pect.org.uk](mailto:warmhomes@pect.org.uk) or visit the website at [www.pect.org.uk](http://www.pect.org.uk).