



VULNERABLE SWINDON RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO PREPARE FOR WINTER WEATHER

While most of us are holding on to the last days of summer, a local warmth scheme is encouraging residents in Swindon with cold or damp related illnesses to think ahead and ensure their homes are prepared for the winter before the cold weather returns.

npower Health Through Warmth, which is managed locally by Ridgeway Care & Repair in partnership with Swindon Borough Council and NHS Swindon, aims to help people whose health is made worse by cold and damp living conditions as a result of inadequate heating and insulation in their homes.

Acting Joint Director of Public Health, Cherry Jones said: 'Cold homes have a significant impact on people's health. One of the best ways of keeping well during winter is to stay warm as the cold weather can be associated with serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

'The chances of these problems are higher if people are vulnerable to cold-related illnesses because they are over 60, on a low income and can't afford

heating, have a long-term health condition such as heart, lung or kidney disease, or are disabled. Therefore it is really important that we help those who are more vulnerable to stay warm this winter.'

Illnesses that can be adversely affected by cold, damp living conditions include respiratory and cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, arthritis, terminal illness, mental health issues and mobility difficulties. npower's Health Through Warmth scheme may be able to assist with the installation of cavity wall and loft insulation, boiler repair or replacement, heating systems and appliances, as well as provide relevant advice and information.

Health Through Warmth launched in Swindon in 2008, and to date nearly 700 local vulnerable residents have been referred to the scheme for help with heating and insulation measures. £625,000 has been levered to secure funding for the measures required, which includes nearly £29,000 from charitable organisations. In addition nearly £85,000 has been accessed from the unique RWE npower Health Through Warmth Crisis Fund.

Elaine Midwinter, npower Health Through Warmth scheme manager, comments: "Now is a good time for residents to check that their heating is in good working order.

"Residents can ensure they are prepared when the temperature drops, giving them peace of mind that they can stay warm and comfortable in their homes during the cold winter months."

The npower Health Through Warmth scheme was set up in 2000 in partnership with the NHS and National Energy Action (NEA), the national fuel poverty charity, and operates in 15 areas of England and Wales to help people whose health is adversely affected by cold, damp living conditions.

For more information on the npower Health Through Warmth scheme in Swindon please contact the local Health Through Warmth co-ordinator on 01793 940094 or visit www.healththroughwarmth.com.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

*The npower Health Through Warmth (HTW) scheme operates in the following areas:

- Birmingham
- Dudley
- East Riding
- Leeds
- Leicester
- Merseyside
- Newark & Sherwood
- Newcastle/North Tyneside
- Staffordshire
- Swindon
- Telford & Wrekin
- Vale of Glamorgan
- Walsall
- Wolverhampton
- Wrexham & Flintshire

In 2011 the Health Through Warmth scheme has been re-accredited with a Big Tick award by Business in the Community in the Building Stronger Communities category of their Annual Awards for Excellence, This award recognises the company's continued commitment to responsible business practice and the positive impact that the Health Through Warmth scheme continues to have on

the lives of vulnerable people with cold and damp related illnesses who require assistance with installation and funding for heating and insulation measures.

The npower Health Through Warmth scheme operates in 15 areas of England and Wales, listed above, and works in partnership with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local authorities within the areas. Vulnerable residents in Health Through Warmth areas can be assessed for help through the scheme, regardless of whether or not they are an npower customer, provided they have a cold or damp related illness and they are referred by a community worker who has attended a Health Through Warmth awareness session. For further details about the areas the scheme operates in or more information about Health Through Warmth please visit www.healththroughwarmth.com or email healththroughwarmth@npower.com. Join the energy industry discussion on npower's interactive debating website the brighter energy debate where you can post your questions, views and comments.