

Safe and Warm

Fuel poverty and substandard housing are closely linked with lower standards of living and even death. In Walthamstow fuel poverty is 50 per cent worse than the national average, affecting one third of the borough's population. An estimated 552 extra premature cold-related deaths occurred in the Walthamstow constituency in the period 1999 - 2002.

Safe and Warm, part of the Home Energy Efficiency Training (HEET) project, is a NOW funded initiative that aims to raise awareness and tackle issues of poor quality, damp and cold homes occupied by vulnerable Walthamstow residents.

The Safe and Warm team work with local health visitors, social workers and others who regularly visit the homes of vulnerable people. These people help HEET to identify households where cold and damp living conditions are impacting on a person's health. They also help to identify households that are vulnerable to, or fearful of, burglary; older, housebound and disabled people are often targeted by thieves.

If any of the poor home issues are identified, HEET visits the house, upgrades the insulation and installs anti-burglary measures.

HEET received over £49,438 of NOW Funding for the Safe and Warm initiative between October 2003 and March 2006.

This funding has enabled HEET to demonstrate its capacity to deliver effective home repairs and heating projects that benefit those most at risk in the community. HEET's activity has attracted the attention of private and other public funders who are looking to support and expand its activities in the area. This includes the Safe and Warm project.

HEET also addresses the following issues across the area:

- Fuel Poverty - providing practical energy saving help to low income households
- Residential burglaries - improving the security of homes
- Unemployment - training local people in construction and insulation skills
- Greenhouse gas emissions - improving the energy efficiency of housing in the area

Number of dwellings benefiting from the project	141
Number of people benefiting from safety initiatives	174
Number of dwellings with security upgraded	109
Number of people employed in voluntary work	18



Mr. Smith, 71, from Walthamstow lives alone. Following a stay in hospital, he was due to be discharged to his home and the care of social services. However, his social worker was concerned that his poor housing would be detrimental to his health and could lead to him being re-admitted to hospital.

The main problem was the home was un-heated, very draughty and potentially prone to burglaries as security was minimal. Social services contacted HEET which, via the Safe and Warm Homes project, visited the house and planned and implemented a program of work to improve it.

HEET fitted a new central heating system, draught proofing to all doors and windows and fitted cavity wall insulation. To increase security HEET replaced the back door and upgraded security overall.

This activity enabled Mr. Smith's discharge from hospital into a comfortable home, which aided his recovery.

A National Home Energy Rating survey found that HEET's work improved the energy rating of Mr. Smith's home from 2.5 to 7.1. This means he can keep his house warm significantly more easily and affordably than previously. The estimated saving for the house is £380 per annum, according to energy efficiency modelling.

HEET's improvements also represent a cost saving to the NHS as Mr Smith is now able to live independently out of hospital. The social worker was pleased at being able to improve her client's living conditions quickly and easily and positively effect a long-term change to his health prognosis. Mr. Smith said: "everything was handled quickly and professionally and life saving changes were made to my property. Without HEET I would not be able to continue living in my home."

The Limes Community And Children's Centre

The Limes Community and Children's Centre is used by hundreds of disabled and non-disabled children and families every month all keen to make use of the facilities and play areas that did not exist prior to NOW's funding.

NOW's £353,000 capital funding totally renovated William Morris Hall where The Limes is situated. The funding also enabled the Centre's staff to lever money from other funders such as Barnardos and The Community Fund. NOW also contributed almost £14,000 in revenue funding to support The Limes in its first year.

Prior to The Limes there was nowhere safe and secure for children to go in the area. Young people - especially those with learning difficulties or disabilities - faced isolation because of the lack of places to meet.

The Limes provides such facilities and promotes inclusion by enabling disabled and non-disabled children and young people up to the age of 25 and their families to learn and play together.

The Centre hosts around:

- 200 children every week during the school holidays
- 300 family group members with around 100 children every Sunday
- 100 children per week from other organisations such as local schools and charities
- 50 families attending parent and toddler groups every week
- Birthday and other parties every Saturday

It costs a family (of any size) £5 to become a member of The Limes for a year. Member families can use all the Centre's facilities, take part in activities, rent space for parties and stay up to date with The Limes' development via its regular newsletter.



Arfaa, a Limes regular, tells us in her own words why she likes to use The Limes:

"My name is Arfaa. I'm 11 years old. I'm an All Together Group member at The Limes Community and Children's Centre. I got involved with The Limes through a competition to design a logo for The Limes and luckily I woonn!!!

I was called to pick up my prize. I then met Melissa and got involved in further activities. We did lots of things like pick equipment for the Limes, made posters and painted some of the adventure playground and we also interviewed staff.

I love The Limes and I pop down any time I can. My bigger brother who has special needs as well as my sister and younger brother also come to The Limes.

Is that all you need to convince you to come to The Limes??!"

Number of jobs created	13
Number of construction jobs created	1,652
Number of pupils benefiting or showing improved attainment	1,190
Number of young people benefiting	1,397
Number of new child care places provided	150

Refugee Advice NOW

Refugees arriving in the UK face difficult, often harrowing, circumstances as they struggle to find their feet and a new direction to their lives.

The NOW funded Refugee Advice NOW project helps refugees and their families to claim their entitlements and work their way through the asylum and immigration process.

Successful community integration encompasses both the meeting of basic needs as well as developing every individual's potential through opportunities for further education, training and employment.

Refugee Advice NOW helps refugees reach their full potential by helping them address the difficulties they face and guiding them through the support system and the transition to mainstream entitlements and citizenship.

Started in 1999 Refugee Advice NOW has received £257,856 of NOW funding. The project works in conjunction with other local community organisations, running advice sessions from its offices and offering support and training to volunteers so they are better able to serve their community. Refugee Advice NOW partners include, Community Health Project, Face2Face, the Refugee Support Psychologist and EduAction.

Since 1993, WFSWA has been working with Somali refugee and asylum seeker families, as well as people from other African and Arabic countries

Number of locals accessing new cultural facilities	1,107
Number of community groups supported	22
Number of people employed in voluntary work	30

Waltham Forest Somali Women Association (WFSWA)

Maryan Adan, chair WFSWA, explains in her own words about the work of WFSWA which is supported by Refugee Advice NOW:

"Since 1993, WFSWA has been working with Somali refugee and asylum seeker families, as well as people from other African and Arabic countries.

We try to support our community in many different ways and through activities such as:



- Educational support classes for children
- English for Speakers of another Language classes and practical skills (e.g. sewing) for adults
- Health promotion workshops and seminars
- Cultural classes and activities
- Family mediation
- Advice and advocacy
- Outreach work and home visits

We work with families and try to focus on those most in need and vulnerable: children, the elderly, youth, single parents and those with health problems and disabilities.

Most of our clients are from the local area, but we often have contact with Somali people from all over London

and beyond, who need help or advice. The project is run by women, who all work on a voluntary basis, dedicating their time and efforts to their community.

It has been very, very helpful for us to have worked with Refugee Advice NOW for the past few years. Thanks to the advice sessions, many of our service users have had invaluable support with housing and have seen improvements in their incomes. As well as that, our staff have felt the benefits of working with the project, through in- work training, where they have gained new skills and experience from the advice worker, which they can use in their own work and pass on to others."

Community Health And Wellbeing

Coronary heart disease is the biggest killer in the country. Over 110,000 people in England lose their life to the disease every year. More than 1.4 million people suffer from angina and every year 275,000 people suffer a heart attack.



Healthy Living is a front line scheme to reduce heart disease, a national initiative helping at risk groups through preventative and recuperative exercise. Healthy Living is run regionally by health authorities and primary care trusts in hospitals and leisure centres.

Healthy Living in the NOW area has been made possible by £498,584 of NOW funding. The scheme started in 2000 and has helped over 2,500 people with heart and other health problems become healthier, fitter and stronger - with some dramatically improving their whole lifestyle.

Healthy Living is run at Kelmscott Leisure Centre, Markhouse Road, Walthamstow. It is managed by Greenwich Leisure Ltd with support from Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust and Whipps Cross Hospital. Doctors and primary care practitioners refer patients to take part in the programme.

Each person taking part in Healthy Living is given a 13-week tailored fitness programme. On completion, they are assessed and further programmes designed to help them build on their progress and increase their fitness.

Healthy Living facilities include a dedicated sports hall for classes and a range of cardio and muscle building machines.

NOW capital funding of £219,000 paid for the renovation of the sports hall, building of new consultation rooms and the purchase of new sports and fitness equipment.

NOW revenue funding of £280,000 assists with the running and staffing costs of the Healthy Living programme.

Number of jobs created	12
Number of jobs safeguarded	24
Improved business/commercial floorspace	1,755 sq m
Number of people using improved health facilities	4,460



Jeff Todd, 55, Bronze Medal winning athlete at the 2004 British Indoor Rowing Grand Prix has an unlikely past. In 2001 he weighed 24 stone, smoked 60 cigarettes a day had type two diabetes - and suffered a double heart attack.

Jeff's path to becoming a world-class athlete started in the Cardiac Rehab classes on the Healthy Living programme at Kelmscott Leisure Centre. He came to Kelmscott following a three week stay in Whipps Cross Hospital during which he had an angioplasty to keep open the arteries in his heart. During this period his weight increased to 27 stone, but he managed to stop smoking.

"When I started on Healthy Living I was so unfit that I couldn't walk from the car park to the Leisure Centre without stopping and resting. I had to get to classes an hour early to allow enough time for me to walk from the car," says Jeff.

Jeff started by doing a simple work out based around 10 minutes of closely monitored exercise including warming up and down. He came to class every day and as he gradually got fitter the workouts lengthened and began to involve gym machines, such as the rowing machine.

"I was so overweight the rowing machine was recommended. It's low impact and takes the stress off joints and back. I really enjoyed using the machine, especially as you can see yourself getting better and quicker all the time."

Jeff developed a passion for indoor rowing and his progress to medals and exceptional fitness began. In 2003 - just two years after first coming to Healthy Living - he was ranked 32nd at the British Indoor Rowing Championships. In 2004 he won the Bronze Medal in the British Indoor Rowing Grand Prix and is only 15 seconds off the British record time for his age group.

Jeff has lost over 10 stone and become an ambassador for the Healthy Living programme. He has appeared on television to endorse rowing machine products.

Jeff remains active at Kelmscott Leisure Centre attending and helping oversee Healthy Living classes.

"Healthy Living totally transformed my life. The team at Kelmscott helped me during the most difficult times. It's simply amazing what you can do if you put your mind to it and stick with the programme."

Street Cred

Quaker Social Action's NOW funded Street Cred scheme is helping women in Walthamstow learn about business and set up their own companies.

Quaker Social Action (QSA) started Street Cred in 1999 and the scheme is active in Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Hackney. NOW funding of £87,800 enabled Street Cred to start in the NOW Area in January 2002. The NOW funding enabled QSA to lever £88,000 in match funding and continue its work in the area.

Street Cred enables women to access loans, mutual support and know-how to set up their own businesses, via lending circles.

Based on the micro credit model of the Grameen Bank, Bangladesh, lending circles provide peer support and encouragement, develop cross-community ties and stimulate local enterprise.

The women involved work hard to build local contacts, provide mutual help and assistance as well as playing important roles in the local economy.

Street Cred groups meet initially every two weeks, each member's business idea is discussed and, individually, each woman works through their plan with a Street Cred Development Worker. Ideas have to be discussed within the group for three

months. This enables those proposing the business idea to really benefit from other local business women's advice whilst also having the time to fully plan and explore their business idea.

The group itself then approves each loan and re-payment has to start on the first two loans before the next two can be taken out. Loans start at £500 and go up to £1,500, but not everyone decides to take out a loan; for some the support and training is enough to get their business started.

Street Cred continues in the NOW area and is actively seeking local women to form new lending circles and get involved in other QSA led social initiative programmes such as HomeStore, which collects furniture for re-use and recycling.

QSA was founded by Quakers in 1867 to work within the East End of London community promoting social justice and breaking down the barriers of exclusion. QSA, and the projects it runs, aims to identify gaps in existing provision for social inclusion and - by creating practical projects with clear concrete benefits - bridge those gaps.





Karen Winchester's love of Caribbean food and cooking turned into a full time job when, in 2003, she opened her café - Diveen's Cuisine on Hoe Street, Walthamstow.

With no experience in running a restaurant or a business, traditional lenders turned down Karen and her bid to open her own café. But she saw an advert for QSA's Street Cred and decided to attend a meeting.

Karen regularly attended the Street Cred gatherings and learnt business fundamentals and met other entrepreneurial women from the area.

"Street Cred teaches all the practical things like how to deal with the Inland Revenue and do your marketing but they also give you confidence and help you believe you can do what you want to do. Street Cred is great because you're all women in the same boat together and you learn from each other."

"I used to think 'who am I to tell someone what to do', I've grown a lot more confidence now, I leave clear instructions before I go and expect things to be done when I get back!"

The most satisfying aspect is the reaction she gets from her customers:

"When people come and say the food is really nice, or that they've been recommended to come to Diveen's, or they call up their friends on their mobiles and say, 'I'm at Diveen's', I get such a thrill and think, they're at my place, that's my place they're talking about."

Number of new business start-ups	27
Number of businesses advised	42
Number of voluntary organisations supported	30
Number of community groups supported	23