

Keeping Warm this winter



February 2009

Controlling your heating system

- If you have a single thermostat the dial will normally be located in your hallway. The temperature in this room will control heating to the rest of your home.
- Try to keep a temperature of 21 degrees Celsius in the main rooms you use during the day, particularly if you are an older person, have young children or suffer ill health.
- Bedrooms should be heated to 18 degrees Celsius to avoid mould growth and condensation.
- If you cannot afford to keep your heating on all the time set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed. In very cold weather set the heating to come on earlier.

Practical steps

- Shut outside doors and close curtains at night.
- Wrap up warmly inside and out, ideally with several layers of thin clothing to trap the heat.
- Food is a vital source of warmth so try to have regular hot meals and drinks through the day. If you are boiling the kettle do not overfill it.
- Moving around is good for your health and generates extra body heat so any exercise or activity will help keep you warm. If possible move around at least once an hour.
- Use an electric blanket or hot water bottle (but not both together as you could electrocute yourself) to warm the bed before you get in but do not leave electric blankets on over night.

Keeping well

- Get a flu jab. This is available free from your doctor if you are 65 or over, or if you have a serious respiratory condition, heart, kidney or liver disease, diabetes or lowered immunity, or if you have had a stroke.
- Stop smoking - this will boost your health for winter, improve your body's circulation and reduce your chances of a heart attack.

Financial help and advice

- For advice on saving energy (and money) call the Islington Energy Advice Centre on 0800 953 1221 or visit them at the Green Living Centre 222, Upper Street, Islington, N1 1XR (9.00-17.00pm Monday – Friday). See **Islington's Energy Advice Centre Fact Sheet**

- Call Warm Front on 0800 072 9006 and check you are getting all available benefits or email Islington's welfare rights team at claimit@islington.gov.uk
- If you are over 60 you can arrange a visit to check your benefits call 020 7527 3697.
- If you are a pensioner, disabled or chronically sick call your fuel supplier and join the priority services register. Customers on the register are entitled to additional services free of charge, such as a free quarterly meter reading.
- If you get estimated bills read your electricity and gas meter and tell your supplier so that your bills are more accurate.
- If you spend more than 10% of your income on heating your home contact your energy provider and ask about their social tariff as you may get a discount.
- You can find information about social tariffs on the National Housing Federation's website. www.housing.org.uk/default.aspx?tabid=1015
- Find out whether you can save money by switching to another company. www.switchwithwhich.co.uk is an impartial service recommended by the Energy Savings Trust. You can call them on 01992 678 282 (Monday-Friday 8.30am-6pm)

New Tenants

- When you first move in a gas engineer visits to start your central heating system. You will be shown how to operate your system.
- Do not use calor gas or paraffin heaters. This is against your tenancy conditions and can cause damp and condensation.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning and protect yourself against it. Do not block up ventilation, get appliances checked regularly and get a carbon monoxide detector. Visit <http://www.carbonmonoxidekills.org.uk/>
- All London residents can get a free fire safety check from the London Fire Brigade to register visit: www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp
- Make sure that your gas central heating is checked annually by HFI - our contractor will contact you when it is due.
- If you are a new tenant, have chosen to stay with **Scottish and Southern Energy** and you are spending more than 10% of your income on your fuel bills, you could get discounts and benefits on their **energypus care** scheme. Call their Careline on **0800 622 838**.

Don't forget elderly relatives or neighbours. Check that they are safe and well, especially in the winter months.