

Despite tough economic times and the arrival of Arctic weather conditions, millions of people are missing out on free help with their energy bills because they don't think the assistance on offer is meant for 'people like me', new research commissioned by the Home Heat Helpline (0800 33 66 99) has revealed.

According to the research there are 5.2 million households across the country that could claim free insulation grants from their energy companies. But despite the fact that people could typically save £260 a year on their energy bills, only 12% have actually claimed free help.

With so many people missing out, research was undertaken to find out why more people aren't claiming and what could be done to get them to do so. One of the biggest barriers is that while 70% of people believe you should claim help if you really need it, they don't think the help available is intended for them.

The Home Heat Helpline is hoping that the £260 saving from household energy bills (simply by taking advantage of the free insulation available) could prove a strong incentive this winter. And as a result of these findings, are urging the public to see the aid available as an entitlement, rather than help which they need.

In Cornwall, the Cornwall Rural Community Council (CRCC) are helping to get the message out by running an energy campaign, Calor FREE, funded by Calor Gas Limited. The initiative's aim is to give independent advice and information regarding energy efficient technologies, carbon reduction measures, grant schemes which are available to improve insulation and heating systems and balanced information on fuel options. There is an opportunity to collect a FREE information booklet, useful contacts sheet, TV and computer power-down and shower saver devices.

The project is initially focussing on villages with high index fuel poverty in off-grid rural communities in the West of Cornwall. The CRCC are attending events across West Cornwall, such as farmers markets, day centres and one stop shops. If you run or attend any gatherings where you think it may be useful to have an information and advice stand or a representative to come and talk about the project, please get in touch.

For more information contact marita.ward@cornwallrcc.org.uk
01872 273952 or www.cornwallrcc.org.uk/calor_free.html