



# 3 Steps to a Warmer Winter

**HELPTHEAGED** WE WILL<sup>®</sup>

**British Gas** 

Working together to improve the lives of older people

## Three simple steps

Take these three simple steps to ensure you keep warm this winter.

### Check

Are you struggling with the rising costs of living? Check that you are receiving all your rightful entitlements and read the hints and tips on cutting costs and keeping warm this winter.

### Claim

Make sure you are getting everything you are entitled to. Contact The Pension Service to make sure you're not missing out on unclaimed benefits.

### Insulate

A properly insulated home could save you about £275\* off your annual energy bill. Find out if you are eligible for free insulation by contacting your energy provider and check the list for other ways you can improve the energy efficiency of your home.

**Do you know of a friend or relative who would like one of these packs? If so, please call 0800 089 0800 or 0207 239 1866.**

\* Source: Energy Savings Trust, June 2008. Based on a 3-bed, gas-heated, semi-detached house with an average annual gas consumption of 20,500kWh. Individual savings may vary on type and age of home.

## A guide to benefits

**Check** your entitlements with a benefits adviser or an online benefits calculator at [www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk). To apply for Pension Credit and to see if you can get Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, call The Pension Service on 0800 99 1234. Don't assume you're not entitled to benefits.

**Check** you are getting a *full* benefits check. Even if you're claiming some benefits, you may be entitled to others.

**Check** out [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk) or [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) for help to guide you through the process. Claiming benefits doesn't have to be complicated.

**Check** your phone book for a local Citizens Advice Bureau or Age Concern who may be able to help you. In addition, the British Gas Help the Aged Benefits Advice Service is available in many of these local agencies and can provide free face-to-face benefits advice.

**Check** out The Pension Service home-visiting service, which will help you find out about all the benefits available and make it easier for you to understand the benefits you can claim.

**Check** out [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk), contact the Consumer Credit Counselling Service on 0800 138 1111 or the National Debtline on 0808 808 4000 for free confidential and independent advice on dealing with debt.

**Check** you are on the lowest payment option offered by your energy provider. Call your provider today to find out if you are eligible for a social tariff.

## Keeping warm this winter

**Check your home** is at the right temperature. Place the thermometer in your living room and keep the temperature at 21–24°C (70–75°F).

**Check your windows** are closed at night. Cold air on the head at night has been shown to increase blood pressure, which could lead to a stroke.

**Check you are getting** regular hot meals and hot drinks as they provide warmth and energy.

**Check you keep moving** Any activity, even vacuuming, will improve circulation.

**Check you dress appropriately** – day and night. Wrap up warmly, indoors and out, ideally with several layers of thin clothing to trap the heat.

### **Check you are keeping your fuel bills down:**

- switch the lights off when you leave the room
- turn off appliances rather than leaving them on standby
- don't overfill the kettle – boil only what you need
- replace standard light bulbs with energy-saving ones
- turn down the washing machine to 30°
- consider having a shower instead of a bath as this uses less hot water and therefore saves on heating costs.

## The Pension Service

### Here to help

The Pension Service can help you to access benefits and services. You can talk to their friendly team over the phone and someone will fill in any forms for you. Or, if you'd prefer, The Pension Service home-visiting service will help you find out about and claim all the benefits you may be entitled to. Call The Pension Service today on 0800 99 1234.

Even an extra £5 per week could mean many older people are able to do more of the things they enjoy. Things such as having a meal out, visiting family and friends or having a hobby can make a real difference to people's lives.

## Help the Aged SeniorLine

SeniorLine is the Help the Aged free national telephone helpline, available to answer your call if you have any questions or concerns about any of the services and entitlements to which you may be entitled. Call SeniorLine on 0808 800 6565.

## The Pension Service

**Make sure you're not missing out on unclaimed benefits.**

Many people aged 60 and over welcome the extra money and support available from The Pension Service. Call 0800 99 1234 today to apply for Pension Credit and at the same time you'll find out if you could get Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. Or, if you prefer, just fill in the form below and The Pension Service will contact you.

- I'd like someone to call me.
- I have difficulty getting out and about and would prefer someone to visit me at my home.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/other: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

National Insurance number : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send this coupon back to  
The Pension Service at:  
FREEPOST RRKJ-AEXK-JRLB  
The Pension Service, PO Box 16  
Gateshead NE92 1BA**



# Insulate

## Keeping your home warm

**Insulation** Heat rises, so a lot of heat can be lost through your roof. You can cut this down by insulating your loft. Cavity wall insulation can also make you feel warmer, keep the heat in and help reduce your energy bills. Check with your energy provider to see if you are entitled to free insulation.

**Thermostat control** Make sure you know how to set the heating controls. If you can't heat your bedroom overnight during the winter months, set the timer so that the heat comes on an hour before you get up and goes off when you go to bed.

**Central heating** Make sure your heating system is in good working order by getting it checked at least once a year. Ask your gas or electricity supplier about this as they may offer free checks for people aged over 60.

**Windows** Double glazing cuts heat loss, but can be expensive. However, you can attach plastic film or sheeting to the window frame, which will help.

Curtains will also insulate your windows, as they trap a layer of air between the glass and the curtain which gives added insulation. If you have radiators under your windows, don't let the curtains hang in front of them. Tuck them behind the radiators so that the heat flows into the room.

**Draughtproofing** Draughtproofing the front door with a well-fitting curtain will cut down on draughts, but avoid using loose draught-excluders as it is very easy to trip over them.

Draughtproofing strips can also be fixed between the part of the window that moves and the frame, and to the bottom of doors, especially the front and back doors where most heat is lost.

**Water tanks** A special jacket that fits around the tank will slow down the amount of heat loss and keep your hot water at the right temperature for longer. Your cold water tank should also be insulated to stop it from freezing over in the winter months.

## Take advantage of free home insulation from British Gas

### Why is Help the Aged promoting this British Gas offer?

Thousands of older people struggle to stay warm each winter because they cannot afford to heat their homes. When British Gas told us it wanted to do something to alleviate this problem, we had to pass on the good news to you.

### Do I qualify for free insulation?

The answer is 'yes' if you are a British Gas customer and over 70 years old or claiming one of the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Attendance Allowance
- War Disablement Allowance (includes Mobility Supplement or Constant Attendance Allowance)
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Disablement Pension (includes Constant Attendance Allowance)
- Child Tax Credit (maximum household income £15,592)
- Working Tax Credit (maximum household income £15,592)

# Insulate

## How can insulation benefit me?

Insulating your home can:

- save you about £275\* a year on your heating bills
- keep the heat in longer
- make you feel warmer
- add value to your property
- help reduce the impact on the environment by using less energy

Remember, if your home is not properly insulated, you may lose heat through the roof and the walls.

## Can I still get free insulation if I don't own my own home?

Yes, providing you get written permission from the council, organisation or individual that does. If you are a landlord and one of your residents qualifies, they can claim this free offer.

## How do I claim my free insulation?

If you own your home you can claim your free insulation now by phone. If you don't, first ask your landlord or council for a letter giving you permission to have free insulation fitted and remember to tell them it is a free offer.

## To make your claim call

**0845 605 2535\*\*** and quote ref HTA

Please mention that you heard about this offer through Help the Aged.

\* Source: Energy Savings Trust, June 2008. Based on a 3-bed, gas-heated, semi-detached house with an average annual gas consumption of 20,500kWh. Individual savings may vary on type and age of home.

\*\* British Gas install in mainland Great Britain only. Not valid in certain areas of North and West Scotland. Subject to availability. Not all properties are suitable for cavity wall insulation and/ or loft insulation. Subject to survey. Successful applicants will only be eligible for measures recommended by the appointed surveyor. Lines are open Mon-Fri 8am-8pm and Sat 8am-6pm. Your calls may be recorded and/or monitored for quality assurance and compliance purposes. BT customers are charged a minimum of 4p per minute for this call (or 1p per minute during evenings and weekends). A call set-up of 3p applies to calls from residential lines. Non BT customers should check the cost of their call with their provider.

## Share your winter stories

To encourage all pensioners to take advantage of the free 3 Steps to a Warmer Winter pack, we need your help. Help the Aged needs older people willing to share their concerns with the media about staying warm and well in winter.



During last year's campaign, pensioner Christine Hewitt shared her story with a national TV programme and her local newspaper. Christine told us how she often goes to the library to keep warm during the winter. Stories like Christine's helped raise awareness of the help available in the winter and encouraged over 75,000 people to order a pack and 4,000 pensioners to undertake a benefits check.

*'It's good to be able to speak up on issues that are important to pensioners so that we can be heard loud and clear. I'm glad to be one more voice helping this along.'*

Christine Hewitt

Please tick this box and fill in your name, address and telephone number overleaf if you are happy to be contacted by the Charity to discuss sharing your story.

Someone from Help the Aged will then contact you. All conversations will be confidential and if needed, full support is available for those who decide to tell their story to the media.

# Free advice

Help the Aged writes and distributes free, impartial advice leaflets about finance, housing and home safety, care and health issues to older people around the UK. These easy-to-understand leaflets are available from libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux, local voluntary organisations, hospital departments, day centres, Help the Aged shops, by post from the Charity, or in PDF form at [www.helptheaged.org.uk/AdviceInfo](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/AdviceInfo). If you would like any of these leaflets, please tick the appropriate boxes below.

## Financial leaflets

- Can You Claim It?
- Check Your Tax
- Claiming Disability Benefits
- Making a Will
- Questions on Pensions
- Thinking About Money

## Housing and home safety leaflets

- Care Homes
- Computers and the Internet
- Fire
- Help in Your Home
- Housing Matters
- Keep Out the Cold
- Your Safety
- Your Security

## Health leaflets

- Bereavement
- Better Hearing
- Better Sight
- Bladder and Bowel Weakness
- Elder Abuse
- Fitter Feet
- Healthy Bones
- Healthy Eating
- Keeping Mobile
- Managing Your Medicines
- Shingles
- Staying Steady

## Please send the leaflets to the address below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

When you have completed this form, please send it to: Information Resources Team, Help the Aged, 207–221 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UZ.

# Useful telephone numbers

## **The Pension Service 0800 99 1234**

Call free to apply for Pension Credit and see if you could get Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit too. Open Monday–Friday, 8am–8pm; and 9am–1pm on Saturdays. If you have speech or hearing difficulties please call textphone 0800 169 0133.

## **SeniorLine 0808 800 6565**

The Help the Aged free information welfare rights service for older people, their relatives, carers and friends.

## **Winter Fuel Payments Helpline 0845 915 1515**

For more information on winter fuel payments.  
(local rate call)

## **British Gas ‘here to HELP’ 0845 605 2535\*\***

Find out if you are eligible for FREE insulation for your home.

## **Energy Efficiency Advice Centre 0800 512 012**

Free advice and information on keeping your home warm and the grants available in your area.

**Grants 0800 952 0600** (Warm Front in England)  
**0800 316 2815** (HEES & HEES Plus in Wales)

Call to find out if you are eligible for a grant of up to £2,500 towards insulating and heating improvements in your home.

## **Energy Saving Trust 0800 512 012**

Free advice on saving energy in your home.  
[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

## **NHS Direct 0845 46 47**

24-hour health advice and information service.  
(local rate call)

\*\* Lines are open Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm; and Sat 8am–6pm. Your calls may be recorded and/or monitored for quality assurance and compliance purposes. BT customers are charged a minimum of 4p per minute for this call (or 1p per minute during evenings and weekends). A call set-up of 3p applies to calls from residential lines. Non BT customers should check the cost of their call with their provider.

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