

## **Introduction and background**

- 1) The Advice Network & Training Partnership (ANTP) is the network of independent community advice services across Bradford District. ANTP advisers give free, confidential, independent, impartial and quality assured advice direct to the public from over 100 locations in the district. To find out where to get advice, please go to: [www.divabradford.org.uk/advice-services](http://www.divabradford.org.uk/advice-services)
- 2) This autumn and winter, the ANTP has decided to focus on how we can help people struggling to pay their fuel bills. Gas and electricity prices have risen significantly this year while most peoples' incomes have not. Sadly that means we expect more enquiries for help with fuel debts over the coming months.
- 3) So we want to make sure that everyone knows about the resources available to support you and your clients. We also want to monitor whether the major energy suppliers deal with vulnerable people in line with '5 key principles'.

## **ANTP Social Policy Campaign: '5 key principles' for pre-payment meters**

- 4) We have been working with the national consumer watchdog, Consumer Focus ([www.consumerfocus.org.uk](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk)) on the issue of pre-payment meters (PPMs). Consumer Focus has negotiated '5 key principles' with the 'big 6' energy suppliers that offer better protection to vulnerable people.
- 5) To help you understand what the '5 key principles' cover, and how to use them when negotiating with energy suppliers on behalf of vulnerable clients, we have produced a briefing paper. We have also produced a form to monitor whether the energy suppliers are putting the '5 key principles' into practice. Both documents are available on request and our social policy worker, Aysha Chetwood, can visit you to talk more about this important campaign.

## **Local energy advice projects: face-to-face support for the public**

- 6) We have two energy advice projects in Bradford District:
  - Energy Wise at Canterbury Advice Centre, which is open to people from all over Bradford. To make a referral, please ring: 01274 577571. For more details, please contact Sarah Lala on: [sarah.lala@family-action.org.uk](mailto:sarah.lala@family-action.org.uk)
  - The new Energy Advice Project at Bradford & Airedale CAB, which operates in Bradford, Shipley and Keighley. We have attached a form for you to refer clients to the project. For more info and copies of public leaflets, please contact Alex Bohdanowicz on: (ex-directory) 01274 758030 or: [alexb@bradfordcab.com](mailto:alexb@bradfordcab.com)

### **National telephone advice services: open to the public**

- 7) Clients can get advice about fuel debts and other energy supply problems by ringing Consumer Direct on: 08454 04 05 06 or 01604 640 371.
- 8) In addition, there are several free national telephone debt advice services, such as National Debtline. For more info, please see the ANTP website: [www.antp.org.uk/telhelpweb.htm](http://www.antp.org.uk/telhelpweb.htm)

### **Consumer Focus 'Extra Help Unit': support for advisers**

- 9) This is a second tier, specialist support service for advisers. It is not directly open to the public. It provides three types of support:
  - 'Ask the Advisor' is a telephone consultancy line for advisors only: 0844 980 0041 Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
  - The Extra Help Unit can also take on some cases where the client or adviser has been unable to reach a satisfactory resolution with the energy company. They have statutory powers that cannot be ignored!
  - The Consumer Focus website has a section designed for advisers. The advanced version of 'Your energy questions' is at: [www.consumerfocus.org.uk/get-advice/adviceagencies](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/get-advice/adviceagencies). Please log in using: Username: 'Adviceprovider' and password: 'Info4you'

### **More information about the ANTP**

- 10) If you would like to know more about the Advice Network & Training Partnership, please see our website: [www.antp.org.uk](http://www.antp.org.uk) or contact our office:
  - Nick Hodgkinson, Programme Manager: (ex-directory) 01274 597743 or [nickh@antp.org.uk](mailto:nickh@antp.org.uk)
  - *Please note:* this office supports advice centres but cannot give advice and is not open to the public. We do not employ advisers at our office and we do not have the capacity to arrange referrals to advice centres.
  - To find ANTP advice centres and outreach sessions, please either contact the energy advice projects listed above or go to: [www.divabradford.org.uk/advice-services](http://www.divabradford.org.uk/advice-services)