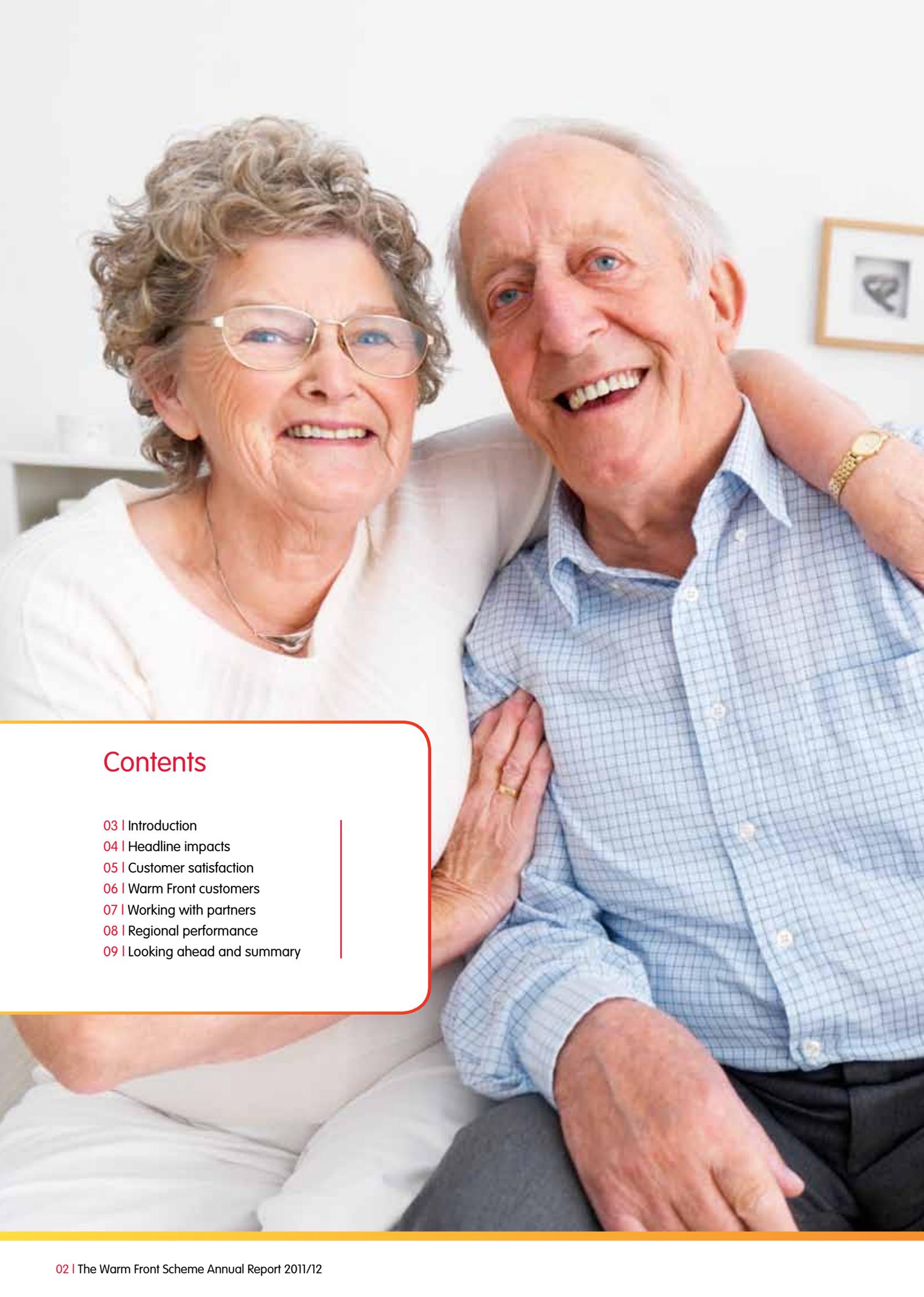




The Warm Front scheme
Annual Report
2011/12





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Introduction

This report on the penultimate year of the Warm Front scheme highlights the ongoing significance of the assistance provided to low income and vulnerable households that are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. Since the scheme's inception, over 2.3 million homes have been helped, with over 30,000 households receiving assistance in 2011/12.

This year saw the scheme operating with revised eligibility criteria designed to ensure that the limited resources of the scheme were targeted at the most vulnerable households living in the most thermally inefficient properties.

The changes in eligibility for the scheme in order to target more effectively have seen the size of the group eligible for the scheme reduce from 4.3m to 1.5m, in line with the budget reducing from £345m to £110m. This represents a 69% budget reduction and a 65% reduction in the size of the eligible group.

For the first time in the history of the scheme the budget available was not fully spent. The greatest reason for the budget not being fully spent was undoubtedly the low rate of applications received by the scheme.

During 2010/11 the average weekly application rate was in the order of 4000 a week, but in 2011/12 this rate dropped to around 1200 per week. A particular issue was the unseasonably mild winter in 2011/12 compared with the previous year. This was borne out by our receiving around 6000 applications a week in the winter of 2010/11 but a highest weekly application rate in 2011/12 of 1500.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to everyone involved in delivering the Warm Front scheme: our installers, local and charitable organisations, social enterprises and the voluntary sector for all of their support and hard work in continuing to deliver the scheme.

The announcement of the reduction of the numbers of households in fuel poverty in 2010 was testament to the work that the Warm Front scheme has done in improving the energy efficiency in some of the most thermally inefficient properties and we look forward to continuing to make a positive impact in the final year of the scheme.



Asa Parker

Commercial Director
Carillion Energy Services

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Headline impacts

In the year 2011/12, the Warm Front scheme delivered energy efficiency improvements across a wide range of households with some of the key impacts being:

- **33,058** households received assistance
- **47,516** households received heating measures *
- **9,686** households received insulation measures *

* There are two important points to take into account when considering these figures. The first is that some households will receive both heating and insulation measures and as such feature in the figures for both measures. The other is that a number of households receiving heating and / or insulation measures will have applied in the previous scheme year but have had measures installed in 2011/12. The households assisted figure shows only those who applied within 2011/12.



Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has remained high throughout the year, despite the challenges presented by high demand and the temporary closure, with our customers giving scores of 92.9% for heating installations and 91.6% for insulation measures*.

All customers who have works completed are now sent satisfaction questionnaires, and the majority of comments received are positive. Some examples of this are provided on the next page.

Feedback from our customers is shared with all elements of the delivery chain to ensure that they focus on continuous improvements to the service they provide.

*Customer Satisfaction scores as at March 2012



**Customer satisfaction
has remained high
throughout the year**

Warm Front customers

Mrs W

In July 2011 Mrs W applied to Warm Front as she was using gas fires throughout her property as insufficient heat was being provided. Mrs W received a new combi boiler with five radiators which have made a real difference to her home.

“ “ The installers were a lovely happy lot of young people.

I would have had it put in sooner as my house has never been so lovely and warm. Thank you so much. I have been here 60 years (cold ones). ” ”

Mr G

Mr G of Portsmouth contacted Warm Front in November 2011 as his existing boiler was leaking and inoperable. Mr G was provided with a new combi boiler and in addition the installer made a variation to the original survey in order to provide the customer with easier operational controls. Mr G explains how efficient and professional the whole Warm Front journey was.

“ “ Both the gas fitter and the electrical fitter were very helpful and very efficient in their work and explained everything to me as the work proceeded. Because of my inability to move furniture, they did it for me and replaced it when finished.

The two fitters that came to me were of the highest standard. From application to installation was fast and efficient and carried out professionally. ” ”

Mrs B

Mrs B contacted Warm Front in September 2011 as her 42 year old Vulcan boiler had broken down. Mr B received a replacement condensing boiler and radiators and explains how this experience has changed her life.

“ “ The service and courtesy I received from Warm Front and Glowarm was absolutely first class. The installers worked non stop, no breaks, just kept going. They were tidy, clean and very polite with a good sense of humour. I am delighted, over the moon, very warm now and feel I have my life back. Thank you all so much.

What can I say, for me it was a perfect experience in my life. I don't feel you could improve your service. It did take me a long time to mourn the loss of my "antique Vulcan boiler" - but I'm very happy now!! Love and keep up the good work. ” ”

Working with partners

When the Warm Front scheme was re-launched in April 2011 with a different eligibility criteria and smaller Networking Team, it was key that vital messages were cascaded through the various referral networks to ensure clear and up to date information was available to stakeholders and customers. This was carried out via existing referral networks and with new stakeholders who were engaged and encouraged to work in partnership.

Whilst normal routes of engagement have continued with stakeholders such as local authorities, the Warm Front Network Team have established key contacts and stakeholders to enable access to some of the most vulnerable members of society who need that extra bit of support and assistance. Working in partnership with key stakeholders has meant Warm Front assistance has helped the extremely vulnerable who are very unlikely to respond to normal routes of engagement.

A few examples of our partnership work are detailed below but there are many more examples of how working together with the 'baton on trust' methodology has proven to be an integral part in assisting vulnerable households.

Rural areas project

Fuel poverty can be prevalent in over 20% of households in rural areas, where the properties are often off-gas networks and hard-to-treat. With ever increasing energy prices, fuel poverty is on the increase, so the importance for energy efficiency is ever more necessary. The Warm Front scheme has been able to offer assistance to households off-the-gas network by providing insulation and electric or oil central heating since June 2005. The new Warm Front scheme launched in April 2011 now also offers new Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) boilers.

Through partnership working, a rural project was set up in the South of England to enable Warm Front take up at the community level by engaging with vulnerable and hard-to-reach members of the rural community that would not normally access the assistance available to them. This has been rolled out by raising awareness to the local trusted members of the community, such as Parish Councils and Energy Champions, and for them to offer the support required to apply for the Scheme.

In addition to the community organisations raising the profile of the Warm Front scheme, some marketing materials such as leaflets and flyers have been distributed to hubs of the rural community such as GP surgeries and libraries, and a number of community coffee mornings and workshops have also been held.

Foundations and Home Improvement Agencies project

Foundations are the national body for home improvement agencies (HIAs). Each year HIA's help around 240,000 elderly, disabled and vulnerable people make essential adaptations to their homes so they can continue living as independently as possible. The majority of these people will have been visited by a HIA caseworker to assess what help is needed. This provides an ideal opportunity to

identify potential new Warm Front customers. The HIAs are vital to the role of encouraging the householder to apply for the scheme by highlighting the benefits and providing reassurance. This approach also ensures the scheme is reaching the most vulnerable members of our communities and those that would not normally respond to traditional marketing methods.

The project is based around awareness raising, training, advice and a promotional campaign to the network of HIA's via Foundations. The project has had a dedicated person who received Warm Front training at the start of the project with a view for the training to be passed onto all individual HIA branches.

Foundations are the linchpin between the Home Improvement Agencies and Carillion Energy Services. The project is ensuring that we are reaching the most vulnerable members of our communities by working with a network of agencies that have field based staff who continuously go into the homes of those most at risk of cold related illnesses.

To date the project has assisted hundreds of vulnerable households' access the scheme ensuring that they will be living in a warm and comfortable home.

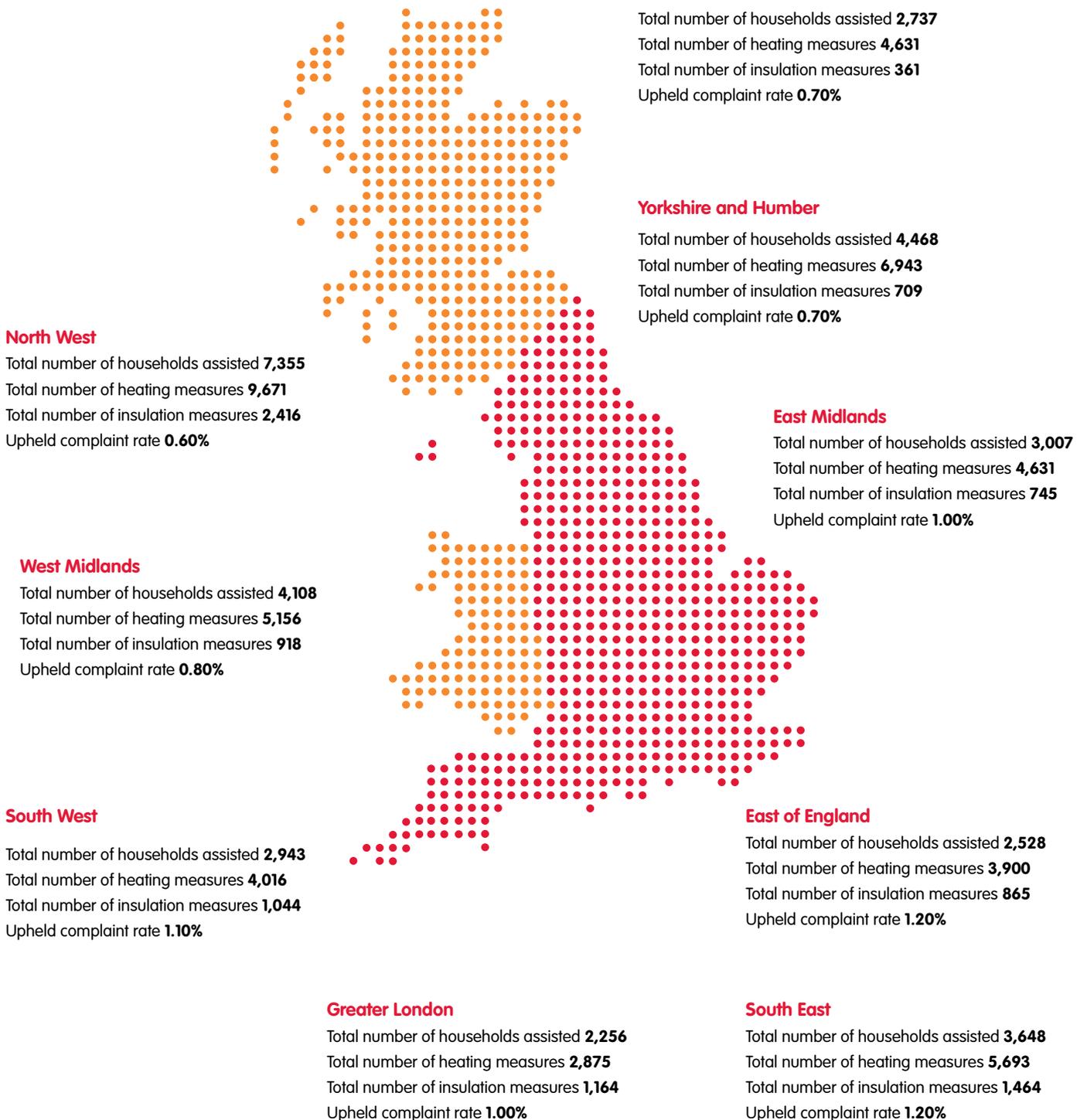
Local Authority Targeted Campaigns project

County Durham was the first local authority to take part in a targeted Warm Front campaign to its residents, using the new Warm Front eligibility criteria. Working with the Energy Team and the Benefits Team, the authority managed to secure data that matched a component on the new Warm Front eligibility criteria. Using this data, a mailing campaign across the newly founded unitary authority was carried out. Backed by a press release and local publicity the mailing proved to reach to some of the most vulnerable residents of County Durham.

The teams at County Durham were key in helping the Network Team to understand and explore what data local authorities held that would enable targeted campaigns in other local authority areas using the new eligibility criteria.

A number of other local authorities have also now taken part in these targeted campaigns including Leeds, Blaby, Cheshire West and Chester, Oldham, Harrogate, North Somerset.

Regional performance



Looking ahead...

The closure of the Warm Front scheme in 2013 provides the opportunity to reflect on the vital work that the scheme has carried out.

The ninth annual report of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group noted that prior to the 2011 changes in eligibility criteria, it was estimated that 25-40% of recipients of Warm Front were fuel poor under the current definition, with the figure increasing to 77% under the new eligibility criteria. If the effectiveness of the scheme was reassessed to take account of Professor Hills report, then those figures are likely to be significantly higher.

The final report of the Hills Fuel Poverty Review, notes in its foreword, the core problem of fuel poverty is being faced with getting by on a low income while being locked in to unreasonable energy costs, including where people, because they are on low incomes, end up paying the highest prices.

To this end, the work of the Warm Front scheme, in having assisted more than 2.3 million households in tackling the root cause of fuel poverty, the poor energy efficiency of homes, deserves to be celebrated.

We look forward to working throughout the year with our dedicated installer base, stakeholders and partners to deliver support and assistance to those customers to whom the scheme offers a route out of fuel poverty.

Summary

2,324,368 households have been assisted since the start of the scheme

33,058 households assisted in 2011/12

Breakdown of measures

Measure type	Scheme Yr	Full Scheme
Cavity wall insulation	1,281	491,242
Draughtproofing	1,619	577,913
Electric central heating	2,432	75,586
Factory insulated dual immersion Hot water tank (FIDIHWT)	136	8,767
Gas wall heaters	55	24,752
New gas central heating	5,207	190,694
Hot water tank jackets	90	157,957
Loft insulation	1,310	722,295
Boiler replacements	24,406	479,234
Heating repairs	6,790	121,476
Oil central heating	592	4,383



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