**Residents encouraged to check whether they can access free insulation and energy efficiency grants**

Chichester District Council is urging homeowners and landlords across the Chichester District to check whether they could be eligible for free insultation and renewable heating systems.

A range of grants, including new and enhanced schemes, are available to help people reduce their bills by improving the energy efficiency of their homes and cutting their carbon footprint at the same time.

From free insultation, solar panels and heat pumps for those on a low income, to funding to help replace an old gas boiler with more efficient heating systems, there is a variety of support available.

**“**The average household could be losing hundreds of pounds each year because their property isn’t energy efficient, and so we’re encouraging people to see whether they could be eligible for free home energy grants to help make their homes warmer and their energy bills cheaper,” explains Councillor Jonathan Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environmental Strategy at Chichester District Council.

“There are a whole range of schemes designed to reduce the amount of energy wasted as a result of having inefficient heating or insulation. The ‘Great British Insulation Scheme’ was introduced by the Government last month and offers grants to fund insulation for homes in council tax bands A-D. Through this grant scheme, low-income households could be eligible for free insulation, and households not on a low income will get insultation at a reduced cost. You can find out more at: [**www.gov.uk/apply-great-british-insulation-scheme**](http://www.gov.uk/apply-great-british-insulation-scheme)

“The Government has also just announced an increase to the amount that homeowners can claim through its Boiler Upgrade Scheme. This scheme enables people to apply for a grant of up to £7,500 to cover part of the cost of replacing an oil, gas or electric heating system with a more efficient air source or ground source heat pump. The scheme also offers £5,000 off a biomass boiler. These grants are designed to help homeowners that are not eligible for low-income grants and aim to make it cheaper to install a heat pump than to install the average gas boiler. You can find out more at: [**www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme**](http://www.gov.uk/apply-boiler-upgrade-scheme). To qualify, your property must have a valid Energy Performance Certificate with no outstanding recommendations for loft or cavity wall insultation — an installer will advise on this when you apply for the scheme. If your property does need insulation, then it’s worth looking into whether you could access this free or at low cost through the Great Insulation Scheme first.

“Another source of support is Warmer Homes ([**www.warmerhomes.org.uk**](http://www.warmerhomes.org.uk/)), which can provide a range of fully-funded energy efficiency improvements for your home through the government’s Home Upgrade Grant (HUG). The grants are for properties that do not use mains gas for heating, and for those on low household income or for those in receipt of means tested benefits. The property should have an Energy Performance Rating (EPC) of E, F or G. To find an energy certificate for a property, visit: [**www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate**](http://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate)

“The Chichester Warm Homes Initiative is a scheme that we have introduced as a council to help keep people warm. It provides financial assistance for residents on a low income living in a property with poor energy efficiency and for landlords with an eligible tenant. It could contribute towards the installation of an efficient heating system, as well as loft and wall insulation. The maximum assistance is £10,000 for homeowners living in on-gas areas, and up to £25,000 for those in off-gas areas. For more details and to apply, please visit: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/applywarmhomesinitiative**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/applywarmhomesinitiative)

“The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme offers grants to low-income households and those in vulnerable situations. The scheme can help you insulate your home, or possibly even help with replacing an old, inefficient boiler or other heating system. If your household income is less than £31,000 a year, or you live in a cold home and have: a cardiovascular, respiratory, or mental health condition; a disability; are aged 65 or older; or live in a household with children from new-born to school age, please contact the Citizens Advice West Sussex Energy Team on 0800 145 6879. They will confirm if you are eligible and, if so, they can provide you with a list of installers that are approved to provide insulation and/or replacement heating systems under this scheme.

“Alternatively, you can contact your energy provider directly and ask for their help. You can find a link to contact details for energy providers on our website: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/homeenergyefficiency**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/homeenergyefficiency)**.**

“The council is working with partners to promote some of the grants mentioned, so you may receive a letter through the post from them with information. Look out for the council’s logo and if you have any concerns and want to check that a letter is genuine then please give us a call. Please note that council employees will never ring you directly to sell or offer you a grant.”

Further advice on energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, tips to help save money on household bills, and details on the range of different grants available for homeowners and landlords, can be found on the council’s website at: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/homeenergyefficiency**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/homeenergyefficiency). On this page, there is also a downloadable leaflet that summarises all of the different schemes.

The West Sussex Energy Team at Citizens Advice are available to help anyone who is struggling with their energy bills. They can be contacted Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm, on 0800 145 6879, and can advise on the support available depending on an individual’s circumstances, including grants and ways to make homes warmer.

For district residents who are concerned about the cost of living, Chichester District Council’s Supporting You team are on hand to help. They can be contacted on 01243 534860 or by visiting: [**www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyouteam**](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyouteam)