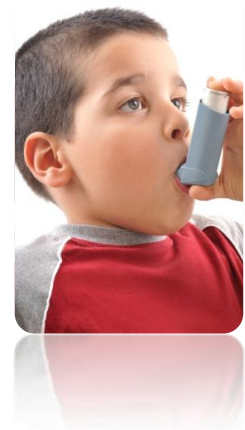


Bryson Energy – New Health Routes Supporting Young Families at Risk of Fuel Poverty

Bryson Energy is aiming to provide better access to energy efficiency and income maximisation schemes for families with children. The project *New Health Routes Supporting Young Families at Risk of Fuel Poverty* seeks to work with health professionals and children's organisations to identify families with young children vulnerable to fuel poverty and provide support.

Fuel poverty is widely acknowledged to be a special type of poverty with proven impacts on children's health and wellbeing. The 2012 Marmot Review highlighted that children in cold homes are more than twice as likely to suffer from respiratory problems as children living in warm homes. Fuel poverty has also been associated with poor weight gain in infants, higher hospital admission rates, and more time off school. The effects of living in cold damp homes are especially pertinent in children's first two years of life, when their inability to exercise independently means they are almost as much at risk from exposure to cold and damp as people who are living with chronic mobility problems.



Whilst income poverty contributes to children's risk of experiencing fuel poverty growing up, two other factors are also very important - the quality of housing and the cost of adequately heating the home.

Home energy improvement schemes are available in Northern Ireland at no cost. The schemes offer a new central heating system, loft and cavity wall insulation and a benefit maximisation check to families on qualifying

benefits or low incomes. Families must also own their own home or rent from a private landlord to be eligible. These measures will make homes warmer, help safeguard children's health and reduce household fuel bills.

In recent years more focus has been placed on supporting the elderly and disabled who are vulnerable to fuel poverty. The New Health Routes project seeks to address this by developing activity with health professionals and organisations focused on children needs. This activity will aim to increase referrals to energy efficiency schemes from families with vulnerable children.

For more information on the project or to get involved contact Rory McManus, New Health Routes Manager, Bryson Energy on:

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The New Health Routes project is delivered in partnership with the University of Ulster and funded by the OAK Foundation.

Bryson Energy is a member of the Bryson Charitable Group, Northern Ireland's leading social enterprise. We are also the EU Regional Energy Agency for Northern Ireland. Our long term aim is to assist in the eradication of fuel poverty by energy proofing homes across Northern Ireland.