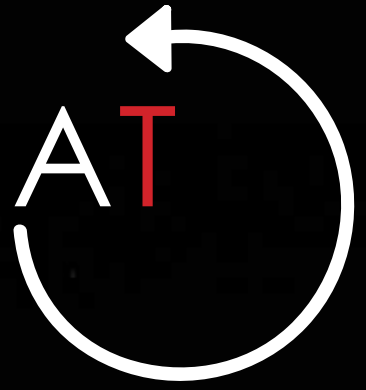


G.HEAT

glasgow
home energy
advice team



wisegroup

The First 5 Years

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Welcome from the Wise Group Chief Executive Laurie Russell

The Wise Group prides itself on being a social enterprise that makes a positive difference to people, communities and society.

We are a business that provides solutions to social problems. Glasgow remains the most deprived city and local authority areas within Scotland. With austerity continuing to bite and living standards declining one of the biggest challenges facing its residents is fuel poverty. In April 2010 we were delighted to partner with Glasgow City Council in delivering the city's in home fuel advisory service.

This five year report demonstrates the impact the Glasgow Home Energy Advice Team (G.HEAT) has made since its inception. The team is now embedded in the fabric of the communities, and their expertise has become an essential component for local support services, social housing providers, community groups and partners city wide.

Over this last five years G.HEAT has made over 14,000 home visits, and returned nearly £3.5 million in savings to householders. We have reduced the city's carbon footprint by over 45,000 lifetime tonnes. Over the course of the project we saved every resident who had a home visit around £245.

The project's success and the impact we make cannot be measured by numbers alone. When you listen to the stories from customers and partners it illustrates the essence of why we do what we do.

This pioneering approach to combating fuel poverty has led to a number of other local authorities in Scotland partnering with the Wise Group to develop similar projects for their residents. As Chief Executive I am proud that we are at the forefront of delivering a vital service to the communities that we serve.

Finally I want to acknowledge the continued financial support from both Glasgow City Council and Scottish Power for the project. We look forward to serving the city of Glasgow in the coming year, and continuing to make such a positive contribution to its people.



Laurie Russell

Laurie Russell
Chief Executive

**Message from Patrick Flynn,
Glasgow City Council**

“G.HEAT aims to help people who may be having difficulty keeping their home warm at a price they can afford. As temperatures continue to fall and fuel prices soar, we want as many people as possible to take advantage of the in home G.HEAT service.”

G.HEAT CUSTOMER

“The assistance provided by G.HEAT was beyond all of my expectations and their help has changed my life. I will be recommending them to everyone I meet.”





“Our objective is to help householders reduce their fuel bills and make more effective use of the money they spend on fuel.”

G.HEAT WHO ARE WE AND WHAT WE DO

As part of Glasgow's Housing Strategy a specific outcome has been identified in relation to Affordable Warmth. It states “Across all tenures we have increased the energy efficiency of the city's housing and taken steps to mitigate the impact of increasing energy costs on the level of fuel poverty in the city”.

Glasgow Home Energy Advice Team (G.HEAT) G.HEAT was established in 2010 to provide independent advice on energy related issues to householders on a face to face basis, in their homes, and support Glasgow City Council's strategic aim of eliminating fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty exists where a householder has to pay more than 10% of their disposable income on energy for the home. Energy prices have increased dramatically over the past five years and it is estimated that over 100,000 households in Glasgow currently have to pay more than 10% of their net income to keep their homes warm. Around 35,000 households pay more than 20%.

The provision of independent advice on energy related issues to householders is one way in which fuel poverty can be mitigated or reduced. Our aim is to deliver this service to householders in the city regardless of whether they are tenants or owner occupiers. The service has a particular emphasis on assisting those who may be in fuel poverty and are having difficulty in keeping their home warm at an affordable cost.

G.HEAT. WOW THEY ARE HOT!

I first heard the name G.HEAT at an information seminar about a service aimed at addressing fuel poverty in Glasgow.

I have never looked back. This truly is one hot organisation.

I am the Tenancy Sustainment Officer at Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association and here is my story about working with G.HEAT.

The first two referrals I made were for vulnerable tenants who were setting up their first ever tenancies. This is when I met the lovely, but very formidable William! G.HEAT's manner with tenants is very gentle and they are very patient with tenants who are confused. However when it comes to dealing with the energy companies, they are totally focused on getting the best for the tenant.

A phone call is all it takes to make a referral. You simply need to have the tenant's name, address, contact number and a wee bit of background for the referral.

Donna, who takes the referrals thinks I have fallen out with her if I haven't called her for a few weeks. She is very friendly, efficient and nothing is too much

for her. As for Graeme the manager, the statistics with outcomes is always sent to me on request. I can't mention everyone but I have nothing but praise for this organisation.


Many tenants of Whiteinch & Scotstoun have benefitted from G.HEAT, from compensation for bad service, to reduced tariffs and help to establish reasonable and affordable payment arrangements.

Caroline OToole

Tenancy Sustainment Officer
Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association



G.HEAT IN FIGURES

| | G.HEAT Gains | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|  | Arrears reductions | £45,491 | £88,731 | £93,738 | £105,230 | £74,233 |
|  | Rebates | £16,598 | £14,459 | £15,904 | £21,204 | £16,445 |
|  | Social Tariff / Warm Home Discount (Clients referred by G.HEAT) | £42,800 | £35,640 | £39,130 | £51,140 | £126,236 |
|  | Payment Reductions (G.HEAT negotiations with Utility Firms) | £66,600 | £84,045 | £109,000 | £94,306 | £62,870 |
|  | Fuel Switching (G.HEAT referrals for replacement Boilers £1,800 average per boiler) | £50,400 | £451,800 | £147,600 | £174,260 | £54,467 |
|  | Referrals for Loft Insulations measures (£120 average yearly savings) | £8,640 | £137,880 | £9,600 | £12,700 | £180 |



G.HEAT IN FIGURES

| G.HEAT Gains | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|  Referrals for Cavity Wall Insulation (£110 average yearly savings) | £4,510 | £51,810 | £10,010 | £9,080 | £360 |
|  Affordable Warmth Dividend referrals (£100 from Glasgow City Council via G.HEAT referral) | - | £12,300 | £18,800 | £23,400 | £600 |
|  Assumed savings for advice (approx £110 per annum for face-to-face advice in home) | £152,130 | £183,920 | £248,600 | £283,030 | £208,560 |
| TOTALS | £387,169 | £1,060,585 | £692,382 | £774,350 | £543,953 |

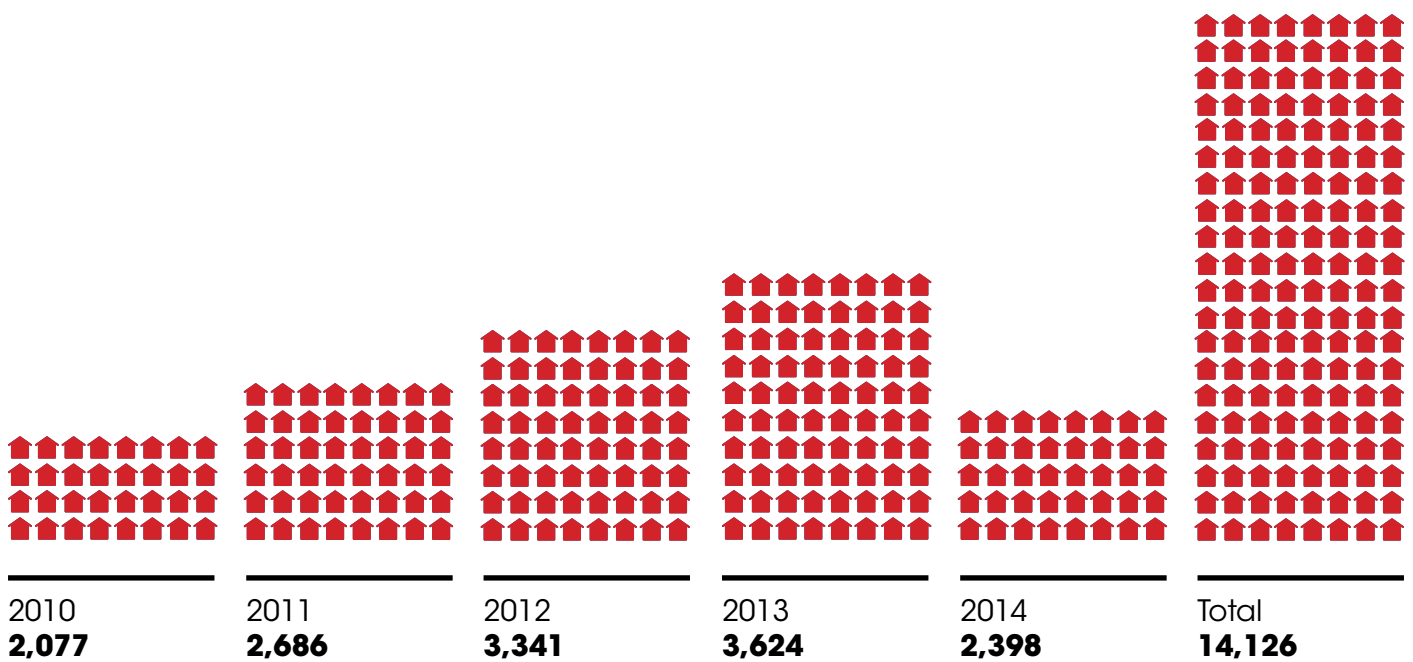
When comparing the figures year on year it is important to recognise there are a number of factors that affect the levels of savings achieved. These include the number of advisors within the team for that given year, and also involvement in specific community projects, which due to their nature skew the figures. An example of this would be in year 2011/12, where the fuel switching figures are considerably higher than other years.

G.HEAT VALUE FOR MONEY

| Description | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Total Expenditure | £202,618 | £238,511 | £302,840 | £320,480 | £292,425 | £1,356,874 |
| Return on investment | £387,169 | £1,060,585 | £692,382 | £774,350 | £543,953 | £3,458,439 |



HOME VISITS



CASE STUDY

Frances is delighted with G.HEATs intervention with her electricity supplier.

Frances was referred to G.HEAT by the MacMillan Cancer support service as she had been experiencing a problem with her electricity supply since 2006. Despite numerous attempts over the years, Frances was unable to establish which utility company was supplying her electricity.

As Frances' illness deteriorated she became more concerned about her ability to afford her home energy costs.

Worried about a potential future debt, Frances always made payments via a Scottish Gas pre-payment card.

Marion Tominey, a Home Energy Advisor for G.HEAT, visited Frances and began to pursue the electricity supply via the national grid and Scottish Gas. After a thorough investigation Marion discovered that the electricity meter had been de-energised in 2006 after refurbishment works by the housing association.

This meant that the electricity being used by Frances was not being logged by the national grid. Marion arranged for the meter to be energised and an account set-up correctly. She was successful in obtaining a full refund of £2,991, the full amount of money that Frances had used to top-up the pre-payment card since 2006.



Finally Marion successfully applied to Scottish Gas for Frances to receive the Warm Home Discount credit of £130 to help her with winter energy costs.

Speaking of her joy at this successful outcome, Frances commented, "After years of getting nowhere with this problem, the intervention from Marion at G.HEAT managed to get the issue resolved, and getting a refund of £2,991 just weeks before Christmas was beyond my wildest expectations. Due to my illness I had been unable to save as much money as I would have liked, and this outcome has made a massive difference to my life. The service I received from Marion has been exceptional and I recommend the G.HEAT service to everyone I meet."

CASE STUDY

An Energy Trust application clears Miss Prestons debts and stops her being disconnected.

Miss Preston was referred to G.HEAT by Home Scotland Housing Association regarding an outstanding balance of £8,057.61 on her gas account.

Miss Preston moved into her home approximately eight years ago and shared the house with her 23 year old son who suffers from cerebral palsy.

All the internal doors had been widened for wheelchair access. The G.HEAT advisor discovered that when the doors were widened the thermostat had been disconnected and had never been re-connected. This played a major part in her high gas bills.

G.HEAT contacted Consumer Focus for advice on how to proceed, as it was very unusual to come across a customer with an outstanding balance of £8,057.61 for gas and originally thought there must have been billing problems.

It became apparent that Miss Preston had been under paying for her gas via fuel direct and her gas supplier had sent the DWP a new quote for £3.55 per week to pay off the outstanding balance.

Miss Preston's gas supplier was threatening to disconnect her. G.HEAT arranged for a gas pre-payment meter to be installed so she could manage her usage better.

G.HEAT contacted Home Scotland on behalf of Miss Preston to gain information to complete an Scottish Gas Energy trust application. Energy Trusts are charities set up by energy companies to help individuals and families who are struggling to pay their gas and/or electricity costs.

G.HEAT asked the benefits office to send Miss Preston a breakdown of her benefits to assist the application process.

After considering the trust application Miss Preston was awarded a grant of £8,057.61 which cleared her gas arrears in full.



G.HEAT ADDING REAL VALUE

With a limited capacity for delivery and a high demand for its services, G.HEAT have also been commissioned to support a number of projects out with its normal reactive scope. The benefits of which are G.HEAT are able to offer dedicated support to specific projects, helping them achieve their desired outcomes with a minimum of fuss.

G.HEAT have developed partnerships with a number of organisations city wide. These include the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC), Cube Housing Association and Queens Cross Housing Association.

G.HEAT have also supported the Navigate South venture, a consortium of four housing associations; Southside, New Gorbals, Thistle and Cathcart and District. The project was established to deliver a wider holistic programme of support to their tenants, covering money, debt and energy advice.

Through partnering with G.HEAT the Queens Cross project alone yielded £35,000 pounds in additional outcomes through the first phase of the project alone.

Our expertise has added real value to these projects which might never have been realised without G.HEAT direct support.

Don't take our word for it!!!

"The G.Heat fuel advice service offers Cube Housing Association a flexible and very valued service for our customers. This supports our housing officers by referring customers to experts in fuel advice. Excellent success stories are common with real savings for customers on particularly tight expenditures. The flexibility offered is fantastic as we can really tailor and change the service to suit our customer demands and relate this to the changing workload requirements."

**Scott Devlin,
Cube Housing Association**



PARTNERSHIP WORKING - WEST OF SCOTLAND REGIONAL EQUALITY COUNCIL AND G.HEAT

G.HEAT was commissioned by the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council (WSREC) to help deliver their Cook, Grow and Sew project. The project was established to encourage and support the reduction of carbon emissions by minority ethnic groups in Glasgow and funded by the Climate Challenge Fund. The Fund supports community led projects that reduce carbon and create a legacy of low carbon behaviour assets. The Fund's ethos is a natural cultural fit with the Wise Group vision of realising people's potential, creating a fairer society and contributing to sustainable economic growth. The project ran for a year and G.HEAT supported over 150 households from minority ethnic groups through home visits to advise on ways to reduce energy consumption which both lowered the carbon footprint and saved money. In practice this involved behavioural advice, and changes to energy tariffs and linked individuals to other energy reduction services.

Ghzala Khan, the WSREC project manager was enthusiastic about the partnership's success and said that "The G.HEAT staff's knowledge and experience in providing energy advice has been vital to the outcomes of the project. The team at G.HEAT has always been helpful, intuitive and ready to make changes to deal with any challenging situations. Throughout the year, the team has been open to discussions, made changes to meet our business needs and developed ideas to ensure success."

One of the key aims of a Climate Challenge Fund project is to ensure a lasting community legacy. In the last six months of the project a member of staff from G.HEAT spent two days a week working in the WSREC office to support the staff and volunteers and be closely involved with the local community.

Ghzala Khan said "Having an advisor working locally developed trust and commitment from the communities and the home visit requests increased rapidly to help reach our target. The offer to develop our staff's understanding of energy consumption and training was made available when needed."

The Wise Group is an inspiring social enterprise that makes a positive difference to people, communities and wider society. By creating partnerships and using our shared experience, we can work together to add value, achieve joint goals and develop creative solutions to social problems.



HOUSING ASSOCIATION CASE STUDY

Denmilne Gardens, Sheltered Accommodation, Easterhouse

G.HEAT was approached by West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA) to assist its tenants at the Denmilne Gardens sheltered housing complex in Easterhouse. Many of the residents had contacted the association to ask for help and advice on how to reduce their electricity consumption and costs. All 25 properties in the complex were heated by electric storage heating and the tenants were concerned about rising energy costs.

Irene Simpson, the welfare rights assistant arranged for G.HEAT to assist and to work with the tenants. James Forrest and Ronnie Neil, G.HEAT advisors, spent two days on site and visited twenty tenants in their homes.

All the tenants were given energy advice to help increase the energy efficiency of their homes. The G.HEAT advisors helped 14 tenants move onto cheaper tariffs and 14 had their hot water clocks changed, which helped to reduce their costs further. In total, the G.HEAT advisors helped the tenants save around 15% on their annual electricity costs.

The programme was a great success. It demonstrated West of Scotland Housing Association's pro-active approach to tenancy sustainment and how G.HEAT can assist housing associations to achieve their goals.



Speaking after the programme was completed, Colin Turnbull, Director of Housing Services at West of Scotland Housing Association commented,

"I am delighted that the tenants have benefited hugely from the partnership with G.HEAT. Their advisors have managed to reduce tenants' consumption costs by more than 15%. This has greatly improved their quality of life and comfort in their homes."



G.HEAT CUSTOMER COMMENTS

We have visited more than 14,000 homes over the five years we have been in operation and our customers are delighted with the service we offer them. We receive thank you cards and letters on a daily basis. Here are just a few quotes from those.

To Marion, "Can't thank you enough for all your help. I couldn't have done it without you."

Mrs Connor, Glasgow

"I refer to your letter of 2nd January, for which I thank you and would like to place on record my appreciation of the most excellent way in which the matter was handled by your good self. To reach such a rewarding outcome was extremely gratifying, and of course, greatly appreciated during these difficult times."

Mr Brodie, Glasgow

"I just wanted to thank you so much for sorting out my gas debt. Scottish Hydro has now credited my account. You have been so helpful throughout this process and offer a fantastic service. I honestly can't thank you enough, such a huge stress removed during a difficult time for me."

Mrs McAteer, Glasgow

"Thought I'd just write about how helpful your employee Jim Forrest was when he visited us this week. My off-peak heating was very difficult to control and Jim made it really easy to understand."

Mrs Aitken, Glasgow



G.HEAT STAFF



GRAEME MULLIN

Graeme is the Operations Manager. He is responsible for a portfolio of Home Energy Advice projects across the Strathclyde and Central region.



MARION TOMINEY

Marion has developed strong links in the city centre and East End of Glasgow, working very closely with Scotcash, and Glasgow East Women's Aid.



RONNIE MUNRO

Much of Ronnie's work involves engaging with minority & ethnic communities, working closely with the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council.



WILLIAM CAMPBELL

William is an original member of G.HEAT, he is qualified to City and Guild Level in Energy Efficiency. William is also a qualified Domestic Energy Assessor.



JAMES FORREST

James' knowledge and expertise in the Energy Advice sector helped shape the G.HEAT project's outputs.



RONNIE NEIL

Ronnie has developed strong links with Housing Associations and delivers surgeries and training sessions on top of his role as a Home Energy Advisor.



JOHN MCCONNEL

John has extensive experience of the Citizens Advice Bureau network, and has worked as a volunteer with his local CAB since 2005.



DONNA STOTT

Donna is the project co-ordinator. She is responsible for advisor diary management, booking appointments and liaising with partner agencies.



The Wise Group
72 Charlotte Street
Glasgow G1 5DW

0800 092 9002

g-heat@thewisegroup.co.uk

For more information please contact:

Graeme Mullin

Operations Manager
Sustainability Services

t: 0141 552 0799

m: 0787 245 7004

e: graeme_mullin@thewisegroup.co.uk

www.thewisegroup.co.uk

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