



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Clyd
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

Fuel Poverty

- over 10% of household income on fuel costs to maintain adequate warmth for health and comfort
- 20% - severe fuel poverty

Factors affecting fuel poverty:

- cost of fuel
- level of household income
- physical quality and characteristics of the dwelling
- degree of vulnerability of the occupants of a dwelling

Who is affected?

- Fuel poverty can affect anyone! But most prevalent among:
- vulnerable households including pensioners
- people with children under the age of 16
- those on benefits, people with disabilities, and people suffering long term illness
- Rural areas particularly affected

Figures for Wales

- 2008 - 26% of households in fuel poverty
- 2012 - 30% of households in fuel poverty /386,000 homes
- investment in energy efficiency measures has helped to keep 3% of Welsh homes out of fuel poverty (*Wales Fuel Poverty Projection Tool*)

Collective Switching



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Dec 2012 - DECC "Cheaper Energy Together Fund"
- Concerned that consumers are not getting the best deal from the competitive market
- Switching levels have been falling
- NEA Cymru held 2 events in Wales : 18th March in South Wales, 26th April North Wales
- Events funded by the Welsh Government
- Aim: To share examples of collective switching initiatives and how they might contribute to the alleviation of fuel poverty through lower energy bills

Community Energy Direct



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- **Type of Scheme** - community/local authority led scheme
- 5 local authorities in West Yorkshire, 1 Housing Association
- Project funded by DECC
- Community Energy Direct is a non profit co-operative

Why?

- Rising problem of fuel poverty
- Low numbers of people who switch
- Higher income background – more likely to switch
- “leakiest” housing stock in Europe
- Expectation that energy prices will keep on rising
- Competition – navigating tariff structures and bills
- BME communities – low levels of switching

Energy Smart Clubs



*Ymgrychu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Local Energy Smart Clubs - emerging modern forms of co-operative
- increase self-confidence and empowerment
- Aim: The Smart Club is intended to be the place for people to talk about/share knowledge about how to reduce energy costs
- The “hook” - cost-saving
- “sell’ the economic benefit NOT the green agenda
- Energy Smart Clubs encourage people to be more energy efficient
- Grassroots engagement model - owned and controlled by people in local communities
- **Self Help**

Principles/Values



*Ymgychu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Openness
- Transparency
- Function is much more than Collective Switching
- Embed the Energy Smart Clubs as sustainable community hubs – Collective Switch is just the first step
- Longer term - reducing energy demand via behaviour change

Partnerships



*Ymgynghu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Key to the scheme
- Trusted organisations and individuals - Tenants and residents associations, community groups, LA housing support officers, health, social care and energy teams, Citizens Advice Bureau; charities, faith groups
- Attending community stakeholder meetings - Financial Inclusion meetings, Fuel Poverty forums, Community Network meetings, Funding fairs, Community conferences and open days
- Recruitment & training of community champions - key interface between their community and the energy issues it faces
- training: residential weekend (energy training, capacity building, input into constitutions of the ESCs)
- Steering group meetings with key stakeholders – to report on progress in each area

Process



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Sign up events at community venues
- Traditional' publicity via local press, radio etc.
- Launch of website and social media
- Training of frontline staff
- 'drop-in sessions'
- bus advert campaign

Barriers encountered



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylw
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- General apathy towards switching and energy companies – “they’re all as bad as each other”
- Political motivations & drawn out decision-making
- Green v Fuel poverty
- Restricted timescales - takes time to build trust and develop relationships
- Working with local authorities: time to filter information and share between departments etc
- Time to recruit champions
- Lack of understanding of specific/local cultural issues

Useful Learning



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Lack of digital inclusion - increase capacity to sign people up by telephone
- Empathy for the anxiety and mistrust people experience when dealing with energy companies
- Consistency with contacts - Becoming a 'known face' who people recognise and trust
- Reliable and respectful 'customer service' - ring people back
- Adding value with knowledge and advice - Signposting to services especially debt advice
- Expectations - Over 6000 signed up - original target of 16,000
- The local engagement model is slow

Ichoosr



*Ymgrychu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Behind collective switching schemes in Holland & Belgium and more recently in the UK
- A way of collectively purchasing products or services under your own label
- They organise and facilitate every step of the process
- Provide a full service package - IT platform, project management, supplier management, communication support, customer helpdesk
- Ichoosr organise the auction and process results
- Can apply the principles to gas, electricity, insurance, mobile phone services – other products and services
- It's a numbers game – need to combine Local Authorities

Cornwall Together



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Scheme : Cornwall Together
- DECC funding
- Aim: bringing people from all walks of life together to negotiate a better deal for everyone
- Ran 2 rounds
- Why? – cost of energy & support people to work together
- Network of partners - NHS, Cornwall Council & over 20 other public, private and third sector partners to alleviate fuel poverty and improve public health
- Fuel Poverty Fund - 10% of switching fee into a dedicated fuel poverty fund for Cornwall

Cornwall Together – Process



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylid
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- started by bulk buying electricity, gas and heating oil using a standard model involving 3 steps:-
- 1) register interest
- 2) conduct a reverse auction
- 3) switch

Results of 1st Round

- 10,000 registered members
- average savings of £133 for those who switched (£700 in some cases)
- Over £150,000 went back into the pockets of Cornish households
- 1,152 people actually switched (12.5% switch rate – and 5% of Cornwall)

2nd Round



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- improved the model - upfront auction
- Inclusivity - Different payment types (PPM, DD, pay on receipt of bill)
- Shorter registration/switch period – 4 weeks
- Final price - They could switch gas and electricity suppliers immediately or they could wait and switch later
- Final price depended on the final number of people who switched
- Used uswitch for the intermediary
- Marketing - announcement in the leaflet that accompanied the council tax bill, leaflet drop to all Cornish households, advertising in the press, radio & outdoor, community drop-in sessions & town-centre road-shows
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter and local networks to promote the campaign

Round 2 Results



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Cornish households saved £131,536
- average saving of £112, with some saving as much as £715

In total across both rounds:

- 16,500 have registered their interest (nearly 10% of Cornish households)
- 2,326 households have changed their supplier (over 1% of Cornish households)
- £285,000 has been saved across both rounds

Issues



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Switching is not easy - Get the expectations down a bit
- Can you engage the disengaged?
- Switching period - 3 months was too long, tighter deadline needed
- Timing - October to March (don't do in August/July)
- No idea of savings – change the model
- Some people switched to green energy providers
- Can be applied to other markets – eg diesel, food
- **Collaboration** – worked with the NHS eg Winter Wellbeing Partnership



Birmingham and Solihull Together.com



Birmingham and Solihull Together



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Funded by DECC bid
- Procurement by Birmingham City Council

Why?

- High levels of fuel poverty and vulnerable households in Birmingham and Solihull
- 3 million population - £50bn value economy - £5.1bn energy bill
- 90% of payment on energy leaving the area

Values



*Ymgrychu Dros Gartrefi Cylid
Cymru i Gynhyrchu Wym Homes*

- **Inspiring** - people to buy together & support each other to save money
- **Innovating** - with local & national partners to test, learn & share experiences
- **Engaging** - people through a variety of methods
- **Accessible** - online & offline, local & freephone numbers, post
- **Inclusive** - all payment types including pre-payment
- **Open** - best of market comparison alongside the Birmingham & Solihull Together tariff

Consumer Benefits Message

- **Free** – there is no charge for members to join
- **Open** – compares the whole market
- **No obligation** to accept any offer
- **Energy Efficiency** - through Birmingham Energy Savers & Solihull Winter Warmth
- **Sustainable** - Green tariff for members who wish to go green

Process



*Ymgychu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Informed by stakeholder meetings during 2011
- Consultees included: housing associations, community groups, local credit unions, health advisors & the NHS, energy advisors, social enterprises
- Winter Warmth Campaign management meetings
- An energy project group
- Reviewed experience of collective purchasing from elsewhere in the UK (eg. Cornwall)
- Held discussions with switching providers (eg. uSwitch)
- identified approaches for promoting participation amongst vulnerable households

Birmingham and Solihull Together



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

Partner Activities

- Training
- PR Campaign
- Drop in Centres
- Face to face advice/home/advice centres
- Community events knit and chat
- Social media
- Community organisations/financial inclusion organisations

Publicity



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylt
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- Linking to topical events – red nose day “red letter switch day”
- Advertise on buses, billboards, video

Results

- Best Saving of £1078.78, average saving of £160.19
- **Birmingham** – 46% of households expressing an interest live in the 10% of most deprived areas in England and 32% in the 5% of most deprived areas
- **Solihull** – 21% of households expressing an interest live in the 10% of most deprived areas in England
- **Overall** - 51% of expressions of interest came from areas that are below national average in terms of deprivation



Facebook Share 0 | Twitter Tweet 2 | Email Share 2

Birmingham and Solihull Together is coming...

Get together.

Save money.

Pass it on...

Birmingham and Solihull are getting together to get a better deal on energy. Leave your details here if you want to find out how much you might be able to save on your gas and electricity by buying energy together. The more join up, the more you'll save, so tell your friends and pass it on...

Starts Feb 18th!

Save on energy, together

Leave us your email address and postcode and we'll let you know when we're ready to go.

Mac OS X dock with various application icons including Safari, Mail, iPhoto, iMovie, iTunes, and others.

Linking to Topical Events



Birmingham and Solihull Together.com

**Get together.
Save money.
Pass it on.**

Save on energy, together.

Birmingham and Solihull Together is a Council campaign to encourage residents to see if they can save money by switching their energy company. The website shows both the winning deals with extra cashback off bills and the best deals on the whole market.

TODAY  **March 17**

The cashback deals finish at midnight tonight.

0800 6888662

0121 222 8051

www.birminghamandsolihulltogether.com



Birmingham and Solihull Together.com



“Make red nose day a red letter switch day too.”

Together we can get a better deal on energy and you can make a bigger donation to Comic Relief.

Birmingham and Solihull Together energy switching campaign works by using the collective bargaining power of everyone who signs up to negotiate a better price from the energy suppliers.

Switch together by  **March 17**

0800 9175772

0121 222 8051

www.birminghamandsolihulltogether.com



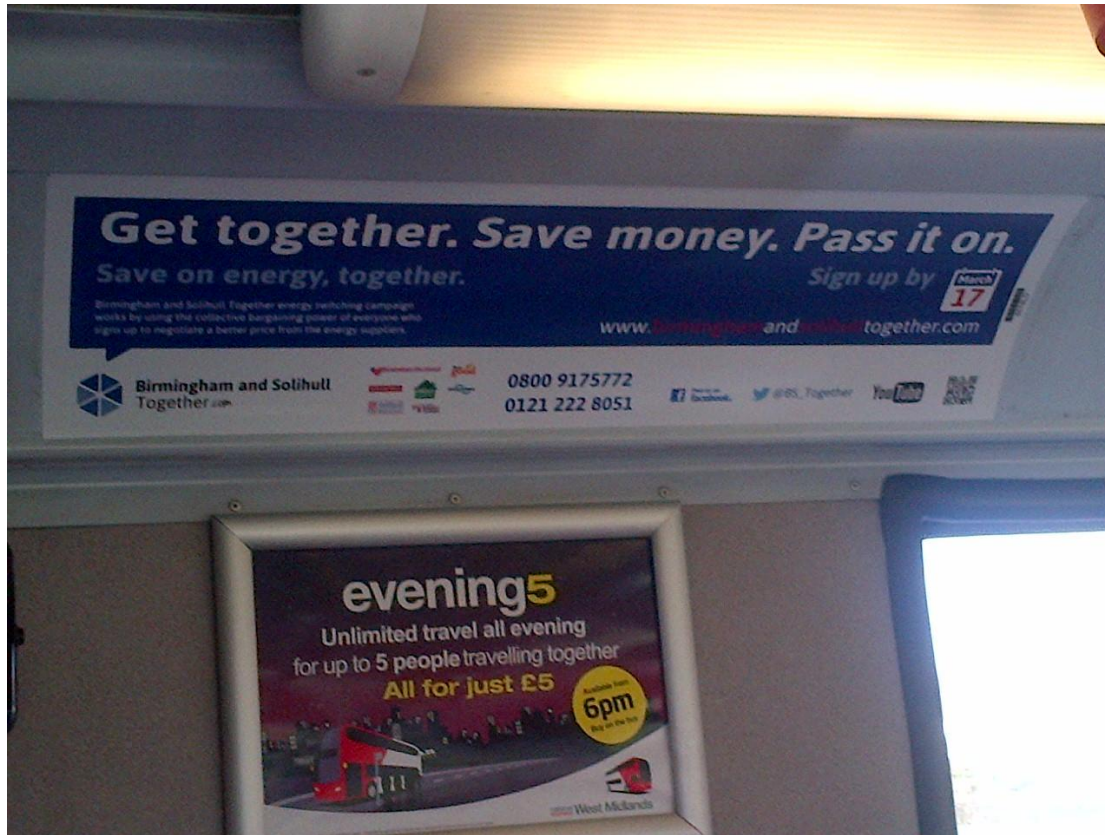
Birmingham and Solihull Together.com



Bus Adverts



Birmingham and Solihull
Together.com





Birmingham and Solihull
Together.com





THE COLEBRIDGE NEWS

ENERGY SAVINGS SPECIAL

MARCH 2013

Hurry hurry - your chance to save money on fuel bills ends on March 17th



Coun Ian Courts, Solihull Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, says: "Act now before it's too late!"

The opportunity for all local residents to join Birmingham and Solihull Together comes to an end this coming weekend, on Sunday March 17th.

The money saving scheme, backed by both Solihull and Birmingham Councils, gives residents the chance to cut the cost of their gas and electricity through the power of bulk purchase.

Get your latest bills and go to :

birminghamandsolihulltogether.com

today and find out how much you could save.

Alternatively, call either 0800 9175772 or 0121 222 8051 and find out more.

PRIZE DRAW!! - Win an iPad Mini

Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter or complete our survey and you could win one of three great prizes - including a mini iPad! Deadline is March 17th - so hurry! Here's how:

1. For a chance to win the iPad mini: Go to www.birminghamandsolihulltogether.com by 17 March. Look for the competition blog article and the link to the switching survey competition. If you complete the survey you'll be entered into our prize draw - you don't need to have switched.
2. To stand a chance of winning £150: Follow us on Twitter @B5_Together or search "Birmingham and Solihull Together" and like us on Facebook. We've chosen this sum as that's the average saved by switchers in a similar scheme in Cornwall.
3. To try your hand at winning a free thermal image survey of your home: Just tweet us!

You'll need this code to hand: CW

Winners will be chosen by picking the entries out of a hat! (Terms and conditions apply)



Birmingham and Solihull Together



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylch
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- **Ambition**
- to interest 5% of the 98,000 vulnerable households in Birmingham and Solihull in the immediate benefits of tariff and energy switching while offering a holistic support package on budgeting, energy use and energy efficiency measures installation

- **The Results:**
- 70% of members could make savings, but...
- Only 4,000 opened their offers
- 25% switched
- 31% had never switched before

Lessons



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Cylud
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

- It's difficult to gain members/switches
- Writing/reading skills
- Used LA's to get information out with council tax bills

Key issue – trust, trust, trust

- Understanding the customer journey
- People didn't recognise the brand
- Trust/Mistrust, Hassle, Inertia
- 9% of people who switched were double billed
- 9-25% encounter problems during switch - 25% on PPM find a problem
- Assets – existing infrastructure community – local authority – voluntary and third sector
- Trusted Council brand and access to people eg via Council Tax bills
- Energy only a part of financial inclusion issues
- Multi channel approach is important
- Managing timeframes



*Ymgyrchu Dros Gartrefi Clyd
Campaigning for Warm Homes*

Contact Details

carolemorgan-jones@nea.org.uk