



Ministers Ryan & Hanafin aiding warmer homes this winter

Minister Ryan announces €15 million in insulation for most vulnerable under Warmer Homes Scheme

State Utility companies contributing over €5 million to scheme - 12,500 homes to be upgraded

Energy Minister Eamon Ryan announced today (13th November 2008) that that the Government will spend €15 million this year and next on insulation to make houses warmer for those on low incomes.

This will allow these householders to save up to 50% in their energy use.

According to the ESRI, approximately 40,000 homes in Ireland are not heated to a safe and comfortable standard. This is primarily due to low income and poor or energy inefficient housing standards. Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin recently announced an 11% increase in the value of the fuel allowance, bringing it to €20 per week from next January. The duration of the fuel season is also being extended by another two weeks from April 2009, bringing it to 32 weeks in total. This is a valuable contribution to those on low income towards heating their homes. While these measures will help those in greatest need over the coming months, the structural issues underlying energy inefficient housing urgently need to be addressed.

For this reason, Minister Ryan doubled the amount the state gives to the Warmer Homes scheme for 2008 to €5 million. He also secured an additional €5 million in the Budget 09 for this scheme. ESB and Bord Gáis are matching this funding with



a joint contribution of over €5 million to bring the total for 08 and 09 to €15 million overall.

Announcing the scheme today, Minister Ryan said, "We know that this winter there will be people who struggle to heat their homes. The Government provides funding to allow people to buy fuel and supplement their electricity expenditure. This Scheme is about improving the quality of the homes - in order that heat does not escape through the roof or chimney. This new money will make the homes of those on low income more comfortable and enable them to spend much less on fuel and electricity. In fact, with the full suite of measures householder can save up to 50% of the energy they use and the same amount on their bills. I am pleased to be able to provide this funding to those in greatest need in the cold months ahead and am confident it will improve the lives of our elderly in particular who are the most vulnerable.

"While ESB and Bord Gáis have been working for many years with organisations such as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service to help customers manage their energy usage and spend, today's announcement marks an important step in these companies' recognition of energy efficiency as the effective medium-term solution. I commend the companies involved for their contribution to this valuable scheme, which will improve the homes and lives of over 12,000 people".

Minister Hanafin stated, "In the next year the Government will be spending over €350million on helping households meet their energy costs. Families are helped through the weekly fuel allowance which is particularly targeted at those who depend on long term social welfare or Health Service Executive payments. In addition to this, hundreds of thousands of people, particularly our elderly, receive free units of electricity or gas through the household benefits package. This method of direct payment ensures that the customer is protected from inflationary increases by paying a set number of units of usage."



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Padraig McManus of ESB said, "We are delighted to contribute to this excellent scheme. ESB is providing €4 million to help roll out home energy efficiency improvement to low income families. We will work closely with Sustainable Energy Ireland to ensure maximum benefits are achieved for the money spent. ESB has very good relationships with voluntary/non-governmental agencies that are active in the area of fuel poverty who can identify candidate households at risk."

John Mullins, Chief Executive of Bord Gáis, said: "When Bord Gáis commissioned the CIPA study on energy affordability, it was with the aim of identifying solutions that could be supported by policy makers and industry participants. We recognise that more efficient use of energy will be the single most important measure in addressing energy affordability now and in the future. Bord Gáis is committed to assisting its customers to achieve energy savings, both through providing practical advice and now by investing €1.2 million in the Warmer Homes scheme, which will enable the most vulnerable customers to lower their fuel bills. Bord Gáis is also in discussions with the CER on the wider availability of pre-payment meters for its customers following the successful launch of our new technology on October 28th last. Pre-payment meters will assist the budgeting process and customers will not be required to pay security deposits following their installation in the home."

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