



## First Quarter Impact Report

The **Connect for Help** service started operating in July 2020 and over the last three months it has provided over **600 clients** across England and Wales with free energy and money advice, along with referrals for other support to reduce their bills and stay warm and well. The ultimate lifetime financial benefit for these low income and vulnerable households will be over **£250,000**.

Connect for Help is a partnership between **Income Max CIC**, the social enterprise that supports families in England and Wales to take control of their finances, and energy efficiency specialists **AgilityEco**. The funding for the service comes from **National Grid's** £150 million **Warm Homes Fund** which is administered on their behalf by **Affordable Warmth Solutions** and which supports projects tackling fuel poverty across Great Britain.

Connect for Help is available to homeowners, social tenants and people living in privately rented properties. Anyone can receive a free initial review of their situation and the support available to them both locally and nationally. Additional in-depth help is available for those on low incomes, or with health conditions or other vulnerabilities.

A particular specialism of the service is helping households understand what grants are available for heating and insulation measures. Connect for Help is supporting them to access fully-funded central heating and new gas connections through other Warm Homes Fund projects. It's also advising households on the opportunities available through the government's new **Green Homes Grant**.

Jeremy Nesbitt, Managing Director of Affordable Warmth Solutions, said: *"We are grateful to National Grid for their continued financial support through the Warm Homes Fund. We are delighted with the progress made so far to support households with the financial challenges they are facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly we expect that many more households will need assistance over the coming months but Connect for Help will be there to provide it."*

IncomeMax



AgilityEco

So far we've had some great feedback from our clients. Here are a couple of examples:

**Mr G from Nottinghamshire** lives alone in a home that he inherited; unfortunately he also inherited a large energy debt. After calling us, the friendly team at **IncomeMax CIC** gave him an in-depth financial review and helped him apply for his water company's Social Tariff and the Warm Home Discount (WHD) via his electricity supplier. Mr G told us he felt very reassured by the information we gave him.

**Mrs L from Yorkshire** and her husband were severely impacted by Covid-19 and have had to sign onto Universal Credit for the first time ever. As a result she was worried about making her diminished income stretch. An experienced **AgilityEco** advisor spent time with her on an in-depth call and provided lots of useful advice, including helping her switch to a cheaper energy supplier and advising her about the Green Homes Grant.



One of the new referral partners for the service is Home Group – with 55,000 properties across England and Scotland, it's one of the UK's largest providers of social and affordable homes. Mark Henderson, Home Group's Chief Executive, said: "We're delighted to be working with Income Max CIC and AgilityEco as we are now able to offer the Connect for Help service to our customers.

"We are spearheading a campaign, together with more than 30 housing associations, aimed at ensuring the government and energy providers do all they can to support those caught in fuel poverty, especially given the impact Covid-19 is likely to have this winter.

"Tackling fuel poverty is a major priority for us, so along with pushing government and energy providers, it's reassuring to know that the energy advice, support with benefits and debt and the referral to local services that Connect for Help offers will make a significant difference to that end."

It's easy to access Connect for Help directly or to refer someone else. Just visit [www.connectforhelp.org.uk](http://www.connectforhelp.org.uk) or call our expert team on **0800 029 4548**



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