

This study was conducted in Rotherham, but the pen portraits can be used in other areas in order to identify old people who are at risk of being cold at home. To identify where people like Fred live at postcode level, social marketing programmes such as Acorn and Mosaic can be used alongside the KWILLT segmentation model.

### What are the best ways to identify and help older people living in a cold home?

Across all six pen portraits it is necessary to consider the following interventions:

- Consistent messages addressing and correcting beliefs e.g. the negative health impact of a cold home
- Provide information that promotes action for older people and families, e.g. a helpline and people checking on older neighbours
- Targeted affordable warmth information to older people at key points in their life e.g. retirement, onset of new chronic/ long term condition, bereavement
- Room thermometers provided at routine contact with health, social care and financial inclusion professionals e.g. flu jab, pensions advisors or home visit from a community matron
- Policy development including: Affordable Warmth Strategy linked to the Health and Wellbeing Boards to achieve delivery of the Cold Weather Plan, Public Health Outcomes Framework and other local strategies e.g. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Financial Inclusion.

An Affordable Warmth Strategy Group will achieve the partnership required to deliver this

- Develop pathways of care across organisations and settings (e.g. communities, hospitals, primary care, social care, voluntary sector) with data sharing in order to identify those at risk, assess and refer to responsive interventions. Pathways should include feedback mechanisms to referrers. E.g. a one-stop shop and energy champions.
- Boundary spanning roles that operate at a strategic and frontline level. Examples include affordable warmth officers and volunteer energy champions
- Social prescribing schemes for example where a GP or practice nurse would refer a patient for energy efficiency advice
- Accessible education delivered to all appropriate staff and embedded within existing training e.g. pre registration nurse training, Making Every Contact Count, Local Authority and voluntary sector inductions

### What are the best ways to identify and help people like Fred?

In order to address the problems and barriers experienced by vulnerable, socially isolated older people it is necessary to develop ways of identifying those who are at risk and how to help them.

Specific ideas of how to help people like Fred are in the table below.

Solution required	How can we reach	Where
Consistent information and messages delivered over time to dispel myths	Energy champions, local shops, post offices, British Legion, libraries, energy companies, pharmacies, hearing aid/audiology services, wardens	Health and community venues, home
Creating messages providing positive spin on advantages of affordable warmth: • Healthy aging • Independence • money	Media, local venues	Community
Affordable warmth assessment at routine health checks e.g. hearing, flu jab, medication review	Health services/professionals	GPs, practice nurses, hospital departments, community pharmacies



**Proud and wants to be self sufficient**

# FRED



SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

**Dr Angela Tod**  
Email: a.tod@shu.ac.uk • Tel: 0114 2255675

**Catherine Homer**  
Email: catherine.homer@rotherham.nhs.uk • Tel: 01709 302746

NHS Rotherham is the Rotherham Primary Care Trust © Creative Media Services NHS Rotherham  
Date of publication: 03.01.2012 Ref: HIEG3313\_1112NHSR

This presents independent research commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under its Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme (Grant Reference Number PB-PG-0408-16041). The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NHS, the NIHR or the Department of Health.



**PEN PORTRAITS**



## Stoic and hardy and thinks he doesn't need any help even though his home is cold

This pen portrait is about Fred who represents people who are vulnerable because they are *"Proud and wants to be self sufficient"*.

People like Fred have sufficient money that could be used to pay for home heating, energy efficiency and affordable warmth. They do not necessarily fit the definition of being in fuel poverty but there are other reasons that mean they live in a cold home.

Others like Fred may be over 70 years of age, have some social connections with the community, live in social housing or accommodation for older people, and have moderate health care problems.

Factors that drive their decisions and behaviour regarding keeping warm include:

- Stoicism
- Hardiness
- Thrift
- Privacy
- Mistrust.

*"I don't like Direct Debits. Like I say I'm quite a private person, I don't want anybody knowing my business, I don't want them knowing, you know, having these whatever, these bank cards and things like that, I'm just not interested."*

### ABOUT FRED

Fred is 80 years old and lives alone. His wife died a few years ago and they had no children. Fred was in the army and is extremely proud of his military service. He has good health with only a slight hearing problem and mild arthritis. The arthritis is sometimes aggravated by the cold but Fred tries not to let this affect his daily life.

Fred grew up in a large family in a small terraced house. The kitchen had a coal range and the front room had a coal fire, but no rooms upstairs had fires. When he thinks back now he thinks times were hard and considers his life now relatively comfortable. This adds to his stoicism and tendency to cope with any hardship in life without complaint.

*"There was no central heating. So you'd have a coal fire in two of the rooms, in the two main downstairs rooms and that was it. So there wouldn't be any heating in the rest of the house. I don't know that we could bear to go back to that. You get quite spoilt. I mean growing up there would have been ice on the inside of the bedroom windows quite regularly because it would be really, really cold in the bedrooms in winter".*

In comparison he thinks younger generations tend to expect more help, whereas his generation would just put a brave face on things and cope.

*"I think you are influenced to think a little bit, in our generation I think you tend to think they're a bit nannied. Talk about a nanny state, you know, but they're so coddled with everything and that it shouldn't really be much of a hardship to be cold occasionally. But I guess you've got to be a bit more practical as you get older with that. I wouldn't see it as a life-threatening issue to have been without the heating for a month because yes you're probably quite right we grew up without any so".*

Fred downsized and sold his house a few years ago to move into older peoples' bungalows. This was when his wife's health deteriorated. His bungalow is centrally heated but Fred tends to use gas fires to warm his living room, where he spends most of his time.

### FRED'S HOME

Fred lives in a semi-detached bungalow on a small quadrangle of council owned properties. The area has a friendly demeanour and is kept neat and tidy. Fred has a small immaculate garden outside his door that he maintains himself. The neatness of the property reflects his pride in his appearance and independence in looking after himself.

Inside, the furniture and decor of the bungalow are a bit dated but well maintained, with pictures from travels and old forces plaques on the walls. The bungalow has two bedrooms, a bathroom and a small kitchen. The boiler is in the pantry in the hallway with a thermostat. The controller is on the wall in the living room. There is an electric fire in the living room and thick curtains against the large double glazed window. The internal doors are all kept closed and the living and bedrooms all have thick carpets in them.

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF FRED

Fred lives his life by routine, he gets up at 6.30am every day and has had breakfast and washed up by 7.30am. He chats to his neighbours and will help them where he can. He is a proud and private man and would not accept help from others.

Fred walks to the shops on most days. He uses the post office to pay his bills, including heating. He does this by cash on the day he collects his pension. He likes the Post Office as he can get his bills stamped and also a receipt for his money. Fred prefers to deal with visible, tangible cash rather than direct debits or other means of payment which are invisible. He finds it difficult to trust these as he has been used to cash all his life. He also likes to pass the time of day with the people he meets in the post office every week on pension day.

*"I like to pay it as it comes. If it came this afternoon I'd go down to the Post Office the same day as I got it and I'd pay it - that's the way I like to pay my bills."*

*"They keep asking for Direct Debit but I'm old fashioned; I like to see my money coming in, you know what I mean."*

He goes to the Royal British Legion club on Friday and Sunday lunch times for a drink with his old pals. He has a thrifty nature and doesn't like to spend a lot on fuel or himself. Fred mistrusts energy companies because of what he has heard on the news about fuel prices. He has a strong view that *"you don't get owt for nowt"*. He prefers to stick with British Gas as his energy supplier because he sees it as a British company and he has used them for years. It's a name he recognises from before privatization / deregulation of utilities.

*"I think the Government is very weak in not saying look this is what you've got to do to bring the prices down, do you know what I mean, and I think we've very weak on that. And I'll be perfectly honest with you, the water, the gas and the electricity should be owned by the state so that we control it; the worst thing that ever happened when it was taken away."*

When Fred is at home he keeps himself busy around the house watching TV and reading the local free press. Fred also doesn't really like the idea of central heating because he thinks it's not that good for you. Fred does use the central heating to heat the rest of the house but keeps it on low so it's just meeting 16°C in the other rooms.

*"I've seen a hell of a lot of people suffering with bone aching, joint aching. Whether it's something to do with dry heating, central heating is a dry, it dries. Even now, you can see my tongue, you know. There's no moisture left in the air. Well, that's what, I think that's what caused all the bone aching and all joints aching, a headache, most of it."*

Fred is quite hardy when it comes to temperature and thinks that while ever his health is fine he will carry on using his heating minimally. He tries to keep his living room to a constant temperature as he has heard this is best for your health but he tends to use the electric fire to make sure his living room is warm enough.

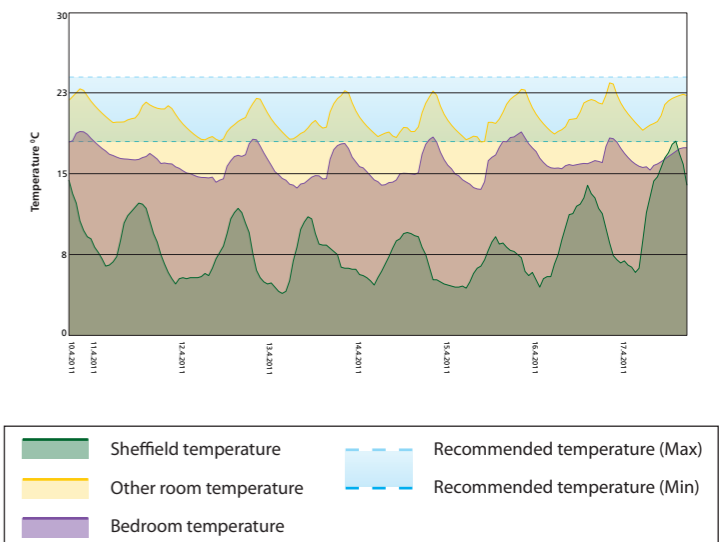
Although he uses his central heating it's not the same as having a visible source of heat like in the solid fuel houses he lived in most of his life. He can't judge how much fuel he is using like he could in the days before central heating. He prefers his electric fire.

*"You can see the coal can't you? .... and you can see it dwindling down so you know where you are with it. My grandma used to have this fire in the kitchen and she actually cooked in the bit in the other side. And so she had the fire on all day, because that was how they heated the water and the cooking and the whole lot. But she could see the coal, it was, you know, delivered every week and she knew what she was using. And I think its invisible isn't it now?"*

(Staff participant in KWILLT)

Fred watches the 10 o'clock news and goes to bed. He doesn't heat his bedroom. He believes that it is better to have a chilly bedroom and it's not good for you if the room you sleep in is too warm.

*"not too warm, that's unhealthy isn't it? That's unhealthy, it's always moderation, moderation in all"*



The graph below demonstrates the variation in temperatures Fred would have in his bedroom and living room during a typical week.