

# Kill chills and cut bills

SPRING may be upon us, but the harsh winter has left a legacy of frosty nights and hefty energy bills.

Perhaps there is no better time to start thinking about saving energy – and hard-earned cash.

The government and Tameside Council have teamed up to create Kill The Chill, a campaign to help people save thousands of pounds towards the cost of heating improvements.

James Mallion, affordable warmth officer for the council said: "The cold weather has created much more of a problem for people, and they really want to find out about these things."

The campaign has been handing out advice about heating and bill related issues, including benefit entitlements and the Warm Front grant for heating improvements.

Kill The Chill is all part of efforts by the Energy Saving Trust, a national body that aims to help people make their homes greener while cutting bills.

The savings made can be huge. The Warm Front scheme offers between £3,000 and £6,500 if your



home needs oil central heating. The grant covers a massive range of heating and energy saving help, including loft insulation, draught proofing, cavity wall insulation, hot water tank insulation, gas, electric or oil central heating, timer controls and open fire conversion.

In addition, the boiler scrappage scheme offers householders £400 off the price of a new energy-efficient boiler in exchange for their old model.

These improvement payouts are in addition to schemes to ease the burden of bills. It all adds up to a huge helping hand for older and disadvantaged people who are struggling with fuel poverty.

"Any part of the heating

system can be improved – you could have £3,500 towards replacing your radiators," James explains. "It's very good. The only thing is that you have to meet the age and income eligibility criteria. There are a range of different eligibility factors that may qualify you for the grant – all you have to do is call the Energy Saving Trust to find out."

There are now plans to introduce the initiative across Greater Manchester. A number of events and roadshows have taken place to give people the advice they need to save cash – as well as free energy monitors to measure exactly how much they are using.

And, James adds, there are often many ways of saving cash even if you don't claim benefits. Utility companies often have hidden 'social tariffs' that can get you a better deal. All you have to do is ask.

"The problem with these energy and gas companies is that they don't advertise these tariffs – they don't need to," he says.

But the government is lobbying them to advertise more."



ROADSHOW: James Mallion of Tameside Council with Margaret Taylor

■ For more information about whether you qualify for any of the energy efficiency grants or fuel payment schemes on offer, call 0800 512 012. For more information about the Warm Front scheme, call 0800 316 2805 or go to [www.warmfront.co.uk](http://www.warmfront.co.uk) For local information, go to [www.tameside.gov.uk/killthechill](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/killthechill). The site provides links and information to Tameside Welfare Rights and the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

## Your event to get top billing

COMMUNITY groups and the public will soon be able to advertise their events on notice boards across the borough.

The idea, which was successfully trialled in Hyde, is now being extended and between 40 and 50 boards will be produced, each coloured according to the town in which it is sited. Dukinfield company JDW Engineering manufactured the boards.

## Teen voters grill politicians

FIRST time voters gave politicians a grilling during a visit to Ashton Sixth Form College.

Labour MP David Heyes was joined by Tory CLr Derek Baines, Ruth Bergan – the Green party's parliamentary candidate for Stalybridge and Hyde – and Liberal Democrat Stephen Broadhurst who is challenging in Denton.

Tom Hatton, student union president at the Darnton Road college, said: "It's the first time the college has done this but I was delighted with how it went."

## Tree treat

'GREEN lungs' have been earmarked for an area of Gee Cross. Trees are to be planted on land on Stockport Road, near the Smith Knight Fay car showroom.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Private treatment offers real solutions for those struggling with their weight

The National Obesity Surgery Centre is holding a lifeline for those people who can't access weight control treatment on the NHS

**O**BESITY and the lack of NHS funding to tackle the problem rarely seems to be out of the news.

And for those who need bariatric surgery, that is the fitting of a gastric band to cut the size of the stomach, most Primary Care Trusts require the patient to have a BMI of at least 50.

But what about those people who still want to lose weight but whose BMI is below 50? What about those who might want to lose a few pounds but only have a BMI of 27? Thousands of people need more help than can be provided with drug therapy or dietary advice alone.

But there are alternative solutions which combine the best of today's medical technologies with proven principles for healthy lifestyle change.

One solution is the Orbera Gastric Balloon Programme. Only available privately, thousands of people will testify that the treatment is

money well spent, helping them lose weight and keep it off for good.

## What is Orbera and how does it work?

"Orbera is an incredible weight loss tool," said Dr John Mason, consultant gastroenterologist. "During a non-surgical procedure that takes less than 15 minutes, the Orbera balloon is passed into the patient's stomach. Once in place, it fills up to around 70 per cent of the stomach's capacity. This means patients don't feel hungry as often and can't over eat."

"Although the balloon is removed after six months, patients are still only half way through their behavioural modification programme. "Weight loss with Orbera is impressive, with people losing between two and six stones in six months. And although we can't make guarantees, after completing the one-year programme most people



**TREATMENT** A balloon used in the procedure

have control over their eating habits and can easily maintain their new weight."

## Popular

Another popular treatment for people considering surgical intervention is the gastric band. It is available on the NHS but not everyone makes it onto the waiting list and those who do might have to wait a few years for surgery. The gastric band is a simple and fully reversible procedure. Performed under general anaesthetic, an adjustable

silicone band is fitted around the upper part of the stomach by key-hole surgery. A small stomach pouch is created that limits the amount of food that can be consumed and increases the time it takes for the stomach to empty. The subsequent reduction in food results in weight loss.

Are you looking for a real solution to your weight problems and can fund private treatment? Contact The National Obesity Surgery Centre on 0161 976 3772 or go to [www.obesitysurgerycentre.com](http://www.obesitysurgerycentre.com)



**GET HEALTHY** Do you need help to lose weight?