**Affordable School Network- Warm Homes**

**Purpose/Objective:** To inform attendees about available support for families to implement energy-saving measures in their homes.

**Executive Summary**

The meeting provided an overview of energy-saving measures and available support for families in Swindon. Key discussion points included the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme, council tax band-based support, and the Warm and Safe Wiltshire advice service. The presentation highlighted the importance of energy efficiency in reducing household bills and signposted attendees towards resources for assisting families in need.

**Discussion Points**

* **Introduction to Energy Saving Measures for Families**
	+ The presentation began with an introduction to the support available for families to implement energy saving measures in their homes.
* **Why Implement Energy Saving Measures?**
	+ It was highlighted that space heating and hot water account for over 80% of household energy use. Reducing energy consumption in these areas can significantly lower energy bills. A pie chart was used to illustrate the breakdown of energy usage in a typical household.
* **Heat Loss in Homes**
	+ The presentation showed that a significant amount of heat is lost through the loft (25%) and uninsulated walls (35%). Attendees heard that support is available for loft and cavity wall insulation, making these key measures accessible.
* **Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Scheme**
	+ The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme was introduced as a primary source of support for energy-saving measures, including loft, cavity wall, and heating improvements. Qualification is based on either low income/means-tested benefits or through a flexible eligibility route for households with incomes around £31,000 per year or those with specific health problems. Attendees heard that significant annual savings on energy bills (circa £1300-£1500) can be achieved through these measures.
* **ECO Scheme Measures and Warm and Safe Wiltshire Advice**
	+ The ECO scheme covers measures such as loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation and central heating installation (in properties without existing central heating). The Warm and Safe Wiltshire Advice Service was recommended as the primary point of contact for accessing support through the ECO scheme.
* **Council Tax Band Based Support**
	+ A scheme that provides cavity wall and loft insulation based on council tax band (A to D) and energy performance certificate (EPC) rating (D to G) was outlined. This scheme is accessible as it does not involve means testing, focusing on smaller and less energy-efficient properties. The presenter advised that the typical EPC rating for a property is D, suggesting many properties would qualify for support.
* **Support for Social Housing Tenants**
	+ Practical support measures available to social housing tenants were outlined. Attendees were advised that tenants should flag required insulation measures to their social landlord, such as Swindon Borough Council.
* **Warm and Safe Wiltshire Advice Service**
	+ The Warm and Safe Wiltshire service was described as a council-backed energy advice service for all Swindon residents. It primarily operates through an energy advice line but also conducts home visits and attends events. The service provides advice on insulation, heating, draught proofing, heating control usage, damp/condensation, fuel bills, fuel debt, and other available financial support.
* **Contact Details and Partner Referrals**
	+ Contact details for the Warm and Safe Wiltshire Advice Service were provided, including a free phone advice service and a partner referral email. Attendees were informed that the slides would be shared for easy access to this information.
* **How Schools Can Help and Questions**
	+ Attendees were asked to refer families struggling to keep warm or facing financial difficulties to the Warm and Safe Wiltshire service, either through direct referral or signposting. A secure partner referral route is available. The presenter offered to provide more information on the service and energy-saving grants for schools to distribute.