



SHARE

Social Housing Action to
Reduce Energy Consumption



Case Study 13



Involving social workers in energy advice

The aim of the « energy ambassador » plan of action is to help the Haute-Savoie families in difficulties to manage their energy bills. This programme is financed by the Conseil Général of Haute-Savoie and is closely related to the SHARE programme objectives.

Activities are addressed both to vulnerable households and to the professionals in contact with them. To assist the latter category, the following services are provided:

- Training on energy and housing for qualifies social workers and those in training
- A telephone service to answer any question concerning energy or water, for professionals and volunteers in contact with people in difficulties.

- Development and distribution of a written guide (the 'ant's guide') to help social care professionals and volunteers in supporting people in difficulties to manage their energy consumption and bills.

This guide helps social workers to identify energy-related problems and take appropriate action

SHARE is an Intelligent Energy Europe Project working in Eight European areas to develop energy efficiency and low carbon technologies in social housing. For more information about the SHARE project and for other case studies see the project website:

www.socialhousingaction.com



Guénaëlle CARTON, energy ambassador, explains the importance of this collaboration with social workers: "In order to work with families on their energy consumption and on the management of their energy costs, it is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to the household budget.

Social workers are the first to be in contact with families and they can detect difficulties linked with energy. Without this collaboration, we would just have access to people who cannot pay; which is quite restrictive. Some families stop heating in order to be able to pay the bill. Others are cutting down on other expenditure, such as for food, to keep on paying their bills. And it is really important to help them".



Management of unpaid energy bills by social workers

Requests for financial help for unpaid energy bills are made by social workers, at the request of the households. In most cases, they are addressed to the Conseil General, manager of the Local Energy Fund.

Financial help requests under 300€ are treated one by one.

Financial help requests for more than 300€ and complicated cases go through a commission once a month.

The commission rules on whether the assistance will be given and the amount. The ambassador and the energy suppliers participate in the commissions.

When the commission spots a high energy consumption or when social workers report energy-linked problems, an energy ambassador visit is offered to the family.

Social workers can also directly call the ambassador for their questions concerning water or energy, or they can refer the family to the ambassador for advice.

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