

14th December 2011

Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers (IGEM) State of the Nation Report on fuel poverty – ‘Out in the Cold’

As it launches its inaugural report on fuel poverty, the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM) is calling for changes to the Government’s Winter Fuel Payment scheme to ensure that not only the old are saved from the cold this winter.

Winter Fuel Payments are yearly, one-off payments to help older people pay for their winter heating. However, as Chief Executive of IGEM, Dr Claire Curtis-Thomas explains; *“fuel poverty is not restricted to the elderly. There are a wide variety of individuals who will struggle to heat their homes this year and be left vulnerable to temperature related illness such as hypothermia as a result.”*

In line with the message portrayed by the National Energy Action (NEA) group, IGEM advocates that Winter Fuel Payments should be extended to all vulnerable individuals not just pensioners.

“With the introduction of the new Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) scheme, now is the right time to review the definition of a ‘vulnerable’ individual and ensure that money is made available to all those who need it” said Claire.

As well as targeting a wider range of individuals with Winter Fuel Payments, IGEM’s fuel poverty report, entitled ‘Out in the Cold’ also suggests that the level of subsidy offered by the Winter Fuel Payment scheme should be linked to the climate in which an individual resides.

“By incorporating climate statistics into the Winter Fuel Payments scheme those at highest risk of temperature related illness like hyperthermia, would receive a higher level of financial support” said Claire

These changes form just two of the recommendations that IGEM believes are required to safeguard the most vulnerable members of society from harsh winters.

On Wednesday 14th December details of IGEM’s full fuel poverty report were presented in the Jubilee Room off Westminster Hall in the Palace of Westminster by IGEM Chief Executive, Dr Claire Curtis-Thomas in conjunction with Barry Sheerman MP for Huddersfield, Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group and Secretary of the Associate Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group, to an audience of key industry stakeholders members of Parliament and Government representatives including Barry Gardiner MP for Brent North, Member of the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee.

Ends

Notes to editors:

State of the Nation Report on Fuel Poverty

The Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers (IGEM) State of the Nation Report on fuel poverty – 'Out in the Cold' is launched on Wednesday 14th December 2011 in the Jubilee Room off Westminster Hall in the Palace of Westminster between 1pm and 3pm.

Speeches commence at 1.30pm and will be delivered by; IGEM Chief Executive Dr Claire Curtis-Thomas CEng CIGEM FIMechE FIET FCGI FRSA (former Member of Parliament 1997 – 2010) and Barry Sheerman MP for Huddersfield, Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group and Secretary of the Associate Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group.

Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers (IGEM)

IGEM is a learned Institution and Chartered professional body established in 1863 and licensed by the Engineering Council. The Institution provides, through its independent technical panels, definitive process standards which are used throughout the gas sector globally.

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