



# Keeping warm in later life: tackling money, mindsets and machinery

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# Keeping Warm in Later Life (KWILLT)

- A study to examine the knowledge, beliefs and values of older people with a focus on keeping warm at home and barriers to accessing help to keep warm.
- With the findings we will develop solutions and strategies to overcome these barriers in an attempt to prevent seasonal excess deaths.

# The Research Team

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- **Judy O'Brien**
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# Methodology

- Stage 1:
  - 50 older people (aged 55-95), face to face in depth interviews, temperature/humidity measurements.
  - 25 health and social care staff, face to face in depth interviews.
- Stage 2:
  - Six focus groups with older people and frontline/strategic staff
- Stage 3:
  - Consultation event

# Key findings

- Awareness
- Factors influencing behaviour:
  - Money
  - Mindset
- Barriers:
  - Machinery
- Solutions

# Awareness and knowledge

- Staff and older people
- Link between warmth and health
- Temperature of rooms
- Fuel payment
- Energy suppliers and tariffs
- Mistrust

# Awareness - Staff

- *I don't think people actually associate heat, warmth with health at all. I mean I have to say, as a health visitor and a nurse, for goodness knows how many years, it's only when affordable warmth became sort of being promoted that I really linked the two. So, you know, even as a health professional I haven't really given it a great deal of thought. (S1)*
- *They probably see heating as a luxury as well because when they were younger they didn't have heated houses did they, they had a coal fire and that would heat just one room (S5)*
- *They get to the stage where they will switch it off, they'll wrap up but they don't understand the importance of the house being warm because they've lived in conditions like that for many years when they were younger, damp cold houses, and they don't realise the effect it can have on their health. (S8)*

# Awareness - older people

*"Not too warm, that's unhealthy isn't it". (OP34)?*

*"I don't put the gas on, because they've never been serviced or cleaned for years". (OP8)*

*"I don't know what it works out but I have it on 18 on the thermostat, whatever that is". (OP1)*

*"I've never been spoilt, and I'm not bothered about being right warm". (OP22)*

*"Just keeping a comfortable temperature really to - I don't know how to say it any more than that really" (OP5)*

*"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". (OP31)*

*"When you get older, you feel the cold more and when you're not well, you feel the cold more". (OP16)*

# Factors influencing behaviour

- Age
- Money
- Mindset
- Trust
- Fear

# "Mindset"

- Priorities and values
- Privacy and independence
- Stoicism and hardiness
- Acceptance
- Focus on family not themselves
- Don't like change
- Trust

# Mindset - staff

- *It's because they've lived such a frugal life through the wars and beyond. They've had to be so tight with their money and so frugal that to spend an excessive, what they consider an excessive amount of money now is quite vulgar to them and it's just not in their mindset. Their mindset is to spend as little as possible and get by with as little as possible, and that's what they've been doing all their life. So now that they've got the money it doesn't register that they can afford it; they just don't think they're supposed to do it. They don't think they're supposed to spend. So to be living in a warm cosy house with the heating on, it'd be frightening to them in some respects because they'd be thinking they'd be spending money they shouldn't be spending. (S12)*

# Mindset

- *My dad's nearly 70, just an example, he won't have his heating on, will not, and it's freezing in his house; he'll put more jumpers on. He believes that that's unhealthy, having heat on; he'll have jumpers on. (S24)*
- *I think older people see it as a luxury. I don't think they see it has any bearing on their health. I think they think they can get by without it a lot of the time, or just very little. (S12)*
- *They seem to want to save it for family don't they? (S14)*

# Mindset - older people

- *"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. So, I don't know, I think you are influenced to think a little bit, in our generation I think you tend to think they're a bit nannied..... 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. No, I wouldn't say it's, I wouldn't see it as a life-threatening issue to have been without the heating for a month because we grew up without any so". (OP5)*

# Mindset - older people

*"No, I grew up in what was called and two up and two down, which was a terraced house. We had an outside loo, we had a cold water tap and a fire which did the cooking and heated a kettle.....There was a coal fire. You had a brick heated in the oven or an oven plate out of the oven, a metal plate wrapped in a blanket into the bed at night. Loads of bedding, and you wore more clothes. You wore more clothes, you had more exercise, we walked more, we didn't have cars, we didn't have central heating.*

*A lot, I think people were much more self sufficient then, you had to be to survive. Well I wear fewer clothes, but if it gets cold I put more clothes on or wrap a fleece round me rather than turn the heating up. That is always my last resort, to turn the heating up.*

*I was trained to be frugal, it was part of my upbringing. You didn't have a lot so you were careful with what you did have. And with the costs rising now, I'm certainly not extravagant with the heating, I'm very wary.*

*I worry about my independence not my fuel bills. I don't want to be dependent". (OP34)*

# Barriers

- Technology: machinery
- Disjointed systems
- Visibility: money, mindset and machinery

# Technology

- Heating:
  - Boilers, programmers, thermostats, controls, radiators, gas fires
- Banks and payment:
  - Direct debits, cards, bills, internet banking and payment, estimated bills.
- Accessing help:
  - communication technology, Internet, forms, phones

# Technology

- *I don't think they know how to set the timers and things. A lady I went to, hers was on the stairs and she didn't have a clue. She just put the boiler on every day and that was it. And her house was quite cold because she only had it on for certain times of the day but she did have an electric heater which she plugged in which was at the side of her to keep her warm. She wasn't really bothered about the rest of the house. They keep themselves warm, they sit with blankets on. But I don't think they know how to work these new systems. I don't actually, I leave it to my husband. (S6)*

# Technology - Heating

- **Heating:**

- *They do struggle, we do get asked to help....When the clocks change I have to go to my mothers to change the boiler. (S16)*
- *Well, I don't know how to work that one in there. That's why I just said to him, when he set it for me, I said look I want to work it manually. I want it going off and coming on when I want to do it. So I just work from the thermostat in the hall and just come down in the morning, switch it on, and when I go up at night I switch it off. You know, so I don't know the first thing about working that boiler but I'm not bothered in a way. (OP1)*
  - Can't see the numbers or move the dials because of their hands
  - Can't access the boilers / programmers because of location or frailty
  - They don't know what they should do to turn the heating on or alter it.

# Technology - Banks and Payment

- *Staff*
- *They'll not do direct debits a lot of them, they don't know how to do it... even writing a cheque basically, almost impossible for a lot of older people because they don't know, they've never done it; they've always dealt in cash. (S12)*
- *They won't use direct debits – they want it to come as a bill. (S15)*
- *I would say the majority of the pensioners that I see do use the Post Office. Apart from the ones that have been brought up to date by family members and have got direct debits set up for them. (S12)*

# Technology - Banks and Payment

- **Older people**
- *We 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. (OP9)*
- *She thinks that she doesn't trust them; they might charge more with direct debit. (OP6)*
- *And I don't believe in using cards because you have to remember so many numbers, and ..... They pay with cards and things, and they're happy with it, but I'm not, so I don't do it. I never have done and I'd much rather, well besides which when you pay by direct debit you've got no receipt. You've no receipt so, and I know they keep saying all these things, and what gets my goat now is that you can go online. I haven't got a computer, I don't want a computer, I can't get online, so therefore I am barred from 90% of things because I'm not computer literate. (OP8)*

# Visibility

- Fuel and fuel consumption
- Money and payment
- Technology
- Schemes and interventions
- Health impact of the cold
- Older people in our society

# A few challenges....

- Mindset and Green Deal
- Technology and "smart meters"
- Visibility and vulnerability

# Solutions

- Social marketing:
  - getting the messages across to older people, families and staff
  - improving accessibility of help
- Training:
  - inter-professional training
  - associated resources and tools (assessment and referral)
- Technology:
  - accessible and acceptable
- Integrating assessment and referral into everyday work
  - Hotspots
  - Flu jabs
- Partnership working:
  - housing, health, environment, energy efficiency, financial inclusion, welfare
- Tiered interventions to tackle mindset and offer choice



- Remember the consultation. Let us know if you'd like to attend!!!
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