

A warm first Christmas for baby Thomas...

19th December 2008

BABY Thomas Smith's first Christmas will be a cosy one, after he helped his family to qualify for FREE home insulation from the North Staffs Warm Zone (NSWZ).

The Smiths are the first household in Stoke-on-Trent to benefit from free energy saving measures being offered to families with children under the age of 16 whose homes are not energy efficient.

Their loft was insulated free of charge by NSWZ in November after they completed a simple questionnaire to determine the energy efficiency of their pre-war semi in Chell.

And although it is too early yet to tell how much it will save them on their annual heating bills, the house is now noticeably warmer, even when the temperature outside drops.

Thomas's mum, Donna, said: "The Warm Zone assessors were working in our area, and knocked on the door to offer us energy-saving lightbulbs."

"We asked about making the house more energy-efficient, and all we had to do was to fill out a simple assessment form."

"To be honest, we would have been quite happy to pay for cut-price insulation from them, but we were delighted when we found out we qualified for the FREE measures!"

"We've noticed how much warmer the house is now, especially since the cold weather we've had lately. I'd recommend anyone to contact the Warm Zone. It's been really beneficial for us..."

The NSWZ questionnaire will determine the energy efficiency rating of a household. And - subject to the survey - family homes with a low energy efficiency rating (as deemed by NSWZ) can have FREE loft and/or cavity wall insulation installed.

"Families, particularly those with young children, know just how difficult it is to budget for household expenses, and hundreds will find this winter's heating bills especially crippling, in light of the recent rises in energy costs," said Sophie Thorley, Director of NSWZ.

"By contacting us and completing an assessment, a family can potentially save hundreds of pounds on the cost of heating, and use that money for other necessities."

It's estimated that around 35% of household heat is lost through the walls of a property, and 25% through the roof. Cavity wall insulation can save up to £160 annually on heating bills, and loft insulation up to £220.

Families with children under 16 can contact the Warm Zone on 01782 238443 and ask for an assessment form to be sent to their home or arrange for an assessor to visit their property.

NSWZ also offers a benefits advice service, aimed at securing payouts for people who don't realise they could be eligible, or who have previously failed to make a successful claim. Anyone wishing to access the service can call 01782 238443 and ask to speak to a Benefits Service advisor.