

How WDH is going greener

Along with making our new and existing properties more energy efficient, Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) are looking at how our own offices and procedures impact on the environment, as part of our efforts to become greener.

We are working out how our day-to-day activities, like powering PCs, heating office buildings and driving vans around the district, affect the environment. This information, often called the “carbon footprint”, will then be used to set yearly targets for improving our environmental performance.

A “carbon footprint” means the total amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are emitted over the full life cycle of a product, service or building (in this case, our whole organisation).

What are we doing to go green?

All of WDH’s 1,320 employees have completed a survey detailing how they travel to work and how far they travel, along with any mileage they clock up while working.

The amount of energy being used at every WDH office, Service Access Point (SAP) and depot is also being calculated.

Together, these figures will provide the starting point for WDH’s efforts to cut its carbon emissions.

Since the start of 2007 WDH has operated a “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” campaign, ensuring that waste is reduced in the first instance, reused if possible or recycled. As part of this campaign, we have been encouraging a number of energy-saving practices in our offices, including:

- recycling paper, cardboard, plastic and cans
- using energy efficient lighting
- asking employees to bring their own drinking glasses instead of using plastic cups
- turning waste paper into notebooks for use at work

Many of these initiatives are being piloted at our head office in Castleford before being rolled out across the district to all teams. Since the beginning of the campaign, collections for paper and cardboard recycling have doubled.

WDH’s Technical Services Team and other employees who need to drive as part of their job are also being advised on greener driving techniques, including how to use fuel more efficiently to cut carbon emissions.

Tenants go greener

But WDH's energy efficient efforts don't stop there - we're making sure our 31,500 properties across the district are going green too.

Double glazing, high quality insulation and energy efficient boilers are being installed in properties as part of the Improvement Programme, and our new build properties at Chiltern Avenue, Whitwood, are on course to achieve the EcoHomes rating of 'very good'.

This is thanks to high quality insulation, energy efficient boilers and the use of timber for renewable sources, and WDH is aiming for the same 'very good' rating in all of its developments of new homes over the coming years.

Tenants have also gone the extra mile by visiting our Energy Efficiency Road Show to get helpful hints and tips on how to do their bit for the environment and save money on their energy bills at the same time.

Tenants who visited the Road Show collected energy efficient lightbulbs, power downs which automatically turn your appliances off when you press the standby button, and flush savers that can save up to a litre of water every time you flush your toilet.

You can find more useful energy saving tips and information by visiting WDH's Energy Efficiency web pages at www.wdh.co.uk/community/energysaving, by contacting the Energy Hotline on 01977 724431, or by writing to WDH Energy Efficiency Team, Merefield House, Whistler Drive, Castleford, WF10 5HX.

ENDS 629 words

Energy saving handy hints

Here are a few handy hints to help you save energy in your home and cut your bills in the process:

Dry your clothes outside whenever possible. Drying clothes on radiators lowers the room temperature and makes your boiler work harder, costing you more to heat your home.

Turning your central heating thermostat down by 1°C could save you up to 10% on your energy bills.

Shop around for your gas and electricity supplier - there may be cheaper deals out there.

Use rolled up blankets or sausage shaped cushions under doors and on windowsills to keep out draughts.

If you have cheaper off peak electricity, run your washing machine during these times.