

About

The Warm Well Families Research Project Information Sheet



There is a growing knowledge and evidence base related to the direct negative impacts of living in a cold home. We know for example that children in cold homes are associated with **poor infant weight gain, slower development, worse asthma and more hospital admissions**. In addition, living in a cold home can have other detrimental impacts on children and young people. **It can affect educational attainment, emotional wellbeing, resilience and can even limit dietary opportunities.**

The Warm Well Families Research project

This research follows the KWILLT project www.kwillt.org, which focused on older people who are at risk of being cold and therefore vulnerable to the detrimental impact on health this can have. For the resources relating to the KWILLT project please go to:

<http://kwillt.org/index.php/pen-portraits>
<http://kwillt.org/index.php/learning-resources>

The Warm Well Families research project was commissioned by Consumer Futures (now Citizens Advice Bureau), former NHS Rotherham and NHS Doncaster. The project aimed to explore the factors that drive the behaviour in households with children who have asthma in relation to keeping warm and accessing help and advice. 36 families and 25 health and social care professionals were interviewed as well as focus groups being held with professionals across a number of organisations, parents and children. Temperature measurements were undertaken in each living room and children's bedroom of families interviewed over a period of two weeks prior to interview.

The Resources

This information sheet has been developed to outline the findings from the research and the resources that have been developed to support professionals in using the findings to help vulnerable families. The sheet is designed to be used in conjunction **with the Pen Portraits from the Warm Well Families work**. For a link to the resources please go to:

<http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/hsc/ourexpertise/warm-well-families>

¹ The Marmot Review Team (2011) The health impacts of cold homes. London, Friends of the Earth.

Helping professionals to understand behaviour and target interventions

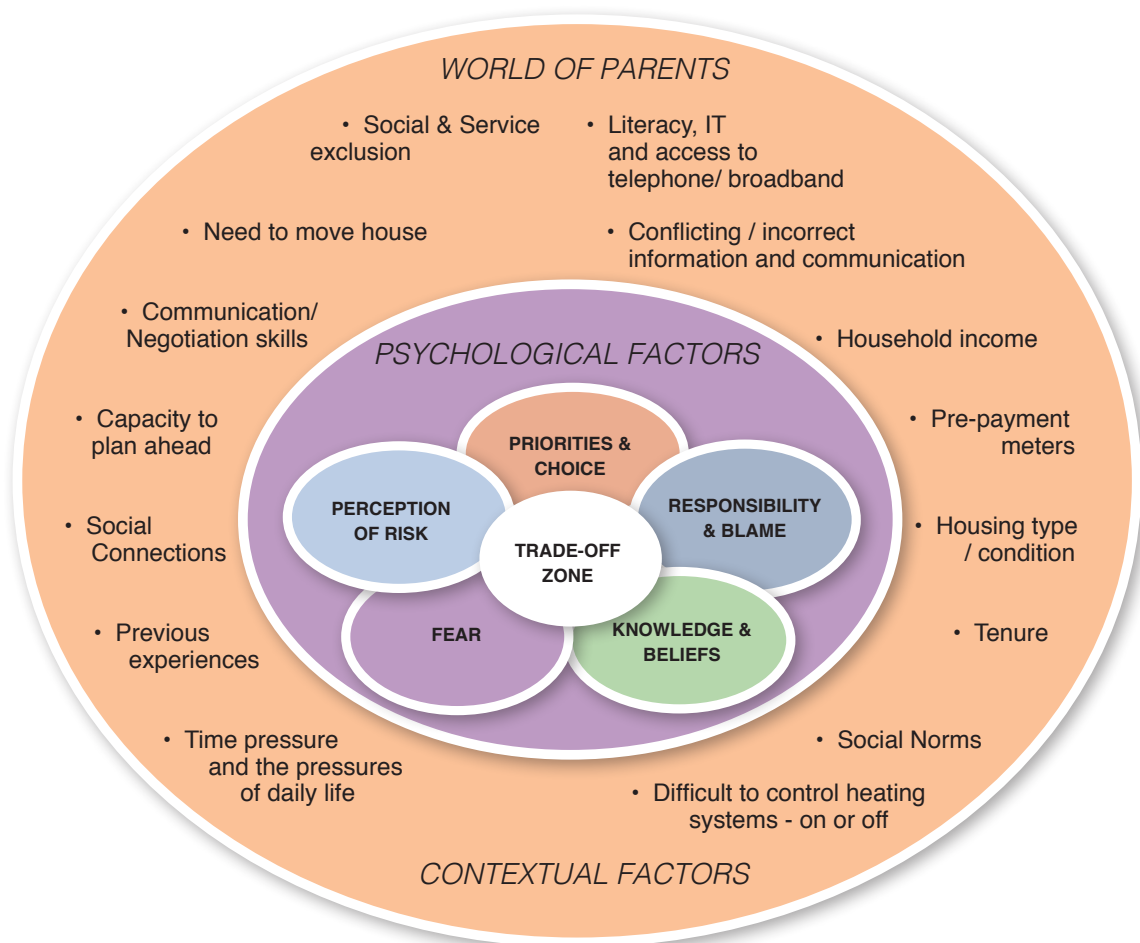
The Trade-off Zone

The findings illustrate that the families involved in the research were constantly juggling priorities and resources to manage family life. They had to make choices on how to spend the household budgets including how to pay for fuel and when the heating was used.

The research demonstrates that a number of factors affected behaviour in relation to making choices and taking action. These factors were sometimes contextual for example household income, tenure of housing or connections to services. Other behaviours were driven by psychological factors such as fear, perception of risk, or blame.

These contextual and psychological factors combine to drive choices and behaviour in what we have called the '**Trade-off Zone**'.

The Trade-off Zone illustrates how different factors can impact on behaviour. To help professionals understand how different types of people may react when faced with these 'Trade-offs' and therefore target any interventions more affectively, a basic segmentation model has been developed from the findings of the research. From the findings we have identified four possible groups.



An example of a 'trade-off'

A high percentage of the families interviewed paid for their electric and gas through pre-payment meters. The parents knew that this was a very expensive way to pay for their fuel. However a fear of debt and large bills and of not managing was expressed by many of the respondents. In this instance, the 'trade-off' was higher fuel prices versus fear of debt and the ability to control large bills coming in. The trade-off was made and the fear of debt drove their behaviour.

A basic segmentation model

The Segment	Emotional and psychological factors	Contextual factors	What this means to behaviour
Seeing the issue and overcoming barriers	Pride, family values. Social norms of making ends meet and saving a little	Housing and tenure Family and social support Ability to access services and technology	Able to take action and address problems/overcome barriers
Constantly juggling	Anxiety and reluctance to contact landlord Fear of losing home	House needs repairs Shift work and need for child care	Try to juggle life and manage everything themselves
Just living day to day	Social norms – behaviour influenced by these around them as they see things such as coping day-to-day as the 'norm'.	Household income	Exclusion from services Does not access help
On the edge of crisis	Fear, shame, blame and responsibility	Household income Housing conditions and tenure Service exclusion	Self disconnection No quality time as a family Becoming withdrawn and depressed

The pen portraits

In order to bring the research to life and help professionals develop a deeper understanding of these four segments and the Trade-offs they might make a set of pen portraits have been developed. These are not real stories or people however, they are built using the research findings and real life observations. These are portraits of possible family scenarios using a descriptive narrative but can be used to inform the development of targeted and effective interventions.

They help professionals by:

- *Building understanding of contextual and psychological factors that drive choices.*
- *Building knowledge of the harm caused to health and wellbeing by living in a cold, damp home.*
- *Suggesting the best messages and channels of communication to reach the different types of people in different types of situations.*
- *Helping professionals not to make assumptions.*

The Segment	The Pen Portrait that illustrates this segment	Contextual factors
Seeing the issue and overcoming barriers	Paula and Steve	Home owners – both work and have 2 children
Constantly juggling	Michelle and Ryan	Both work, have 3 children and rent privately
Just living day to day	Claire	Single mum with 1 child in social housing
On the edge of crisis	Adam and Steph	Home owners with 2 small children – both unemployed and really struggling financially

How might we reach the family and what might help?

The Segment	Seeing the issue and overcoming barriers Paula and Steve	Constantly juggling Michelle and Ryan	Just living day to day Claire	On the edge of crisis Adam and Steph
Segment and pen portrait				
Professional support through key worker contacts such as practice nurse/nursery workers etc		✓	✓	✓
Peer support through local advocates/volunteers in familiar or social situations	✓		✓	✓
Digital channels: Websites such as mumsnet, NHS choices, Local Authority Social media such as Facebook and twitter	✓	✓		
Local printed media – case studies, special editorials and sign-posting to referral schemes. Must have real people as hook.	✓	✓		
Local broadcast media – local radio features with case studies, warm home week or links to local referral schemes	✓		✓	✓
Support materials such as handouts, leaflets and card sized bites of info	✓	✓		
Work based channels through unions, newsletters, sponsorship or HR	✓	✓	✓	
Training and awareness for staff/peer advocates, volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support materials for staff/peer advocates, volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓

Pen Portraits - About