



Firm Design New Heating Control to Help in the Fight against Fuel Poverty

A Bristol based heating controls manufacturer is taking part in the Government's Warm Front initiative by offering an easy to use heating control and programmer that will enable the elderly and visually impaired to control their central heating system more effectively.

As stated in Gordon Brown's 2006 pre- Budget speech:

'With grants of £300 to £4,000 - through the Warm Front programme which I extended last year - we are providing not only insulation but free central heating for low income pensioners and extra support towards central heating in all other pensioner households.'

One of the factors featuring highly on the list of reasons behind poorly heated homes is the difficulty in using central heating controls and programmers. Reasons for this are; being unable to read the settings clearly enough, having difficulty with operating the small buttons as well as the lack of understanding of how the system operates. Of the number of deaths relating to fuel poverty each year, 93% are in people over 65. Inadequately heated homes are often to blame because the homeowner is unable to understand or correctly operate the heating controls to efficiently heat the home or will have no central heating system installed.

The fear of a high bill in January often leads to switching the heating off altogether, the consequences of which can often result in illness and a great deal of stress which could easily be alleviated by using a system designed to suit the needs of the elderly and visually impaired. The ThermoPlus has been developed by Horstmann for this reason and will be installed in all new build and existing homes occupied by the elderly and visually impaired throughout the country as part of the government's Warm Front initiative. The control will keep the room temperature above 15 degrees centigrade, the minimum temperature required for health and comfort, protecting the householder from the many health problems associated with cold homes as well as preventing the appearance of mould spores. ThermoPlus has user friendly features such as a colour coded bright LED warm/cool display, automatic winter and summer time change, frost protection and Braille markings for selecting warm/cool settings - all designed to enable the user to easily understand and alter the settings correctly.

Warm Front offers those on low incomes and the elderly the opportunity to have energy saving appliances such as ThermoPlus installed in the home, an energy saving grant of up to £4,000 is available for those who are eligible. The items available include loft insulation, central heating controls and damp proofing. The aim is to have the home assessed and provide information on what needs to be done to improve energy efficiency and avoid loss of heat within the home.

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Notes to Editors

1. Bristol based Horstmann Controls is one of the UK's leading designers and manufacturers of controls for domestic heating products. The UK office of Electricity Regulation (OFGEM) approves Horstmann for the certification of electricity meters, as does the British Electrical Approvals Board (BEAB) for Horstmann domestic Products.
2. Warm Front is the Government's main grant-funded programme for tackling fuel poverty. The scheme was launched in June 2000 and before its name changed to Warm Front, it was called the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme. See the DEFRA website for more details on the initiative www.defra.gov.uk.
3. Photographs of the ThermoPlus programmer are available from www.horstmann.co.uk/press.asp or by contacting Jane Peters (the control itself can be sent out for evaluation on request) Also available is a Warm Front fact sheet and other information relating to Horstmann projects.

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