

STATEMENT FROM:



BILLY ARMSTRONG MLA

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Armstrong welcomes Local Boiler Scrapage Initiative

The Ulster Unionist Party's Social Development spokesman Billy Armstrong MLA has welcomed the news that the Energy Savings Trust and Phoenix Natural Gas are to implement a boiler scrapage initiative for new customers in the Belfast area. The Mid-Ulster MLA went onto express his continued concern at the lack of a Scrapage Scheme for the whole of Northern Ireland.

Mr Armstrong said;

“I welcome this initiative from the Energy Saving Trust and Phoenix Natural Gas as a step in the right direction in the fight against fuel poverty.

This initiative by the Energy Saving Trust, in conjunction with Phoenix Natural Gas is set to run from the 1st April until 30th June 2010 in the form of a Boiler Scrapage grant being made available to householders who wish to connect to natural gas for the first time in the greater Belfast area.

The fact remains however that a comprehensive scheme should be introduced in Northern Ireland by the Department for Social Development, and I will continue to lobby the DSD Minister, Margaret Ritchie MLA, in a bid to persuade her to provide the people of Northern Ireland with the same opportunities available to their fellow UK citizens in England, Scotland and Wales.

Indeed it could be argued that such a scheme is needed most in Northern Ireland due to the level of fuel poverty here and our reliance on oil for our domestic heating.

If introduced this scheme would also provide much needed added income and trade to the many boiler installation and maintenance businesses in Northern Ireland in addition to improving energy efficiency, tackling fuel poverty and benefitting the environment.

The scheme launched this week by the Energy Saving Trust and Phoenix Natural Gas will effectively match what is on offer for households on the mainland by allowing up to £400 cash back for any consumers wishing to upgrade from an old inefficient domestic boiler to a high efficiency A-rated natural gas boiler.

More details can be found by visiting the Phoenix Natural Gas website at <http://www.phoenix-natural-gas.com> or by contacting their general enquiries number on 08454 55 55 55.”

ENDS