

25 April 2008

## British Gas launches Generation Green programme for schools

British Gas has announced the launch of Generation Green - an environmental programme that empowers teachers, schools and their local communities to lead the UK in tackling climate change through the adoption of green behaviours.

The programme provides educational resources to teachers and incentivises pupils and their communities to adopt greener living by rewarding them with Green Leaves, which can be redeemed by schools for green prizes.

The company believes that, through working to help children understand the need for energy efficiency, teachers can play a key role in helping the UK meet its carbon emissions reduction targets. British Gas' view is endorsed by a study from the University of Bath's Centre for Research in Education and the Environment, which suggests that as teachers touch around a third of the population, they could have the power to reach 18 million people, young and old, during the course of just one year. As a result they could be Britain's most influential force to drive concrete action on climate change.

Generation Green will see schools across the country learning about energy efficiency through national curriculum-based lesson plans. The programme will also help teachers, pupils and the wider communities see that small, everyday steps can have a significant effect on reducing their impact on the environment. It rewards them for their actions with 'Green Leaves'<sup>1</sup>, which can be collected by schools and redeemed against a variety of useful green rewards such as botanicals kits, weather stations and solar photovoltaic kits. Schools also have the opportunity to compete for valuable renewable energy prizes such as solar panels and wind turbines.

Gearóid Lane, Managing Director, British Gas New Energy, said: "In the 1990s we saw socially conscious UK consumers collect coupons for books, sports kits and computers for schools. Our 'Green Leaves' will herald an equivalent movement with the potential to make a massive impact on schools, local communities and ultimately future generations."

Lane continued: "Our campaign celebrates the role of the classroom in improving the nation's green attitudes and behaviour en masse. While big names in cinema, politics and music raise awareness via the media, teachers can make an incomparable difference via the whiteboard."

By investigating such factors as the number of children reached by primary and secondary school teachers and scope of accessible family members, Professor William Scott, Director of the Centre for Research in Education and the Environment, devised an algorithm<sup>2</sup> that calculates the potential 'power of one' teacher in engaging the wider community. For example, the research suggests that one Key Stage Three science teacher could reach as many as 800 people beyond the classroom in one year. Similarly, one Key Stage Three geography teacher could reach up to 1,200 people in the same period.

Professor Scott, who led the study, commented: "The power of schools and teachers to encourage sustainable behaviour presents an opportunity that should not be overlooked. Yet often such endeavours tend to rely on a simplistic model whereby teachers teach and children go home and are expected to pass their learning on. This misses the point because the potential for teachers to engage people beyond the classroom is greatest when the family and the wider community are receptive to the issues and engaged in activities so that they feel

empowered to make a difference and participate."

Adopting simple steps such as turning off lights and computers when not required could result in savings of around 10 per cent<sup>3</sup> on schools' energy bills - and the payoff for the wider community could be bigger still.

Schools can sign up to Generation Green online at <http://www.generationgreen.co.uk/> where they can also download new resources and lesson plans to support the Key Stage Two and Three Geography and Science curricula.

**- ends -**

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## **Notes to Editors**

<sup>1</sup> Schools take part in the initiative by collecting 'Green Leaves' and by downloading and using resources and lesson plans developed by leading environmental charity Global Action Plan. Leaves are awarded to schools for taking steps such as appointing a lights monitor to ensure lights are off when not in use.

Consumers participate by donating the leaves they collect to a school of their choice, and they can receive Leaves simply by switching to paperless British Gas billing or completing an energy saver's report online.

<sup>2</sup> The methodology / data used to calculate the potential reach of teachers draws on 2007 DCSF figures and is as follows:

### ***For all primary teachers***

$Fp$  = No. of family members reached by primary school teachers

$C$  = Average No. of children taught by teachers = 21.8

$T$  = No. of *full time equivalent* teachers in English maintained primary schools = 197,100

$k$  = No. of accessible family members that each child has = 2

***Thus:***

$Fp = k \times C \times T = 2 \times 21.8 \times 197,100 = \mathbf{8,593,560}$

### ***For all secondary teachers***

$Fs$  = No. of family members reached by secondary school teachers

$C$  = Average No. of children taught by teachers = 16.5

T = No. of *full time equivalent* teachers in English maintained secondary schools = 216,800

k = No. of accessible family members that each child has = 2

**Thus:**

$$F_s = k \times C \times T = 2 \times 16.5 \times 216,800 = \mathbf{7,154,440}$$

### **For all teachers**

Taken together, this means that the total number of teachers reached ( $F_t$ ) is ( $F_p + F_s$ ) = (8,593,560 + 7,154,440) = **15,747,960**

Converting these to UK figures,  $F_t (UK) = F_t \times 1.19 = \mathbf{18,740,072}$  which might be rounded down to **18 million**

<sup>3</sup> According to the Carbon Trust, by adopting good housekeeping practices, such as switching off lights when not required, closing windows and regular checking of heating control settings, school energy costs can be cut by at least 10%. Potential savings range from a few hundred pounds a year in a small primary school to several thousand pounds in a large comprehensive school.

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