



Tackling Fuel Poverty in Scotland - Key Action Points for Local Government

Local authorities have a significant role to play in tackling fuel poverty. Currently they lead in managing the HEEPS: Area Based Schemes which deliver energy efficiency measures in areas at risk of having higher levels of fuel poverty and low income. Local authorities are required in their Local Housing Strategies to report on the progress of actions towards eradicating fuel poverty. Local authorities with housing stock must meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by 2020 which complements duties under the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Some have developed fuel poverty strategies which involve alternative schemes for providing heating and power to homes or provide face-to-face energy advice services.

The Scottish Government is preparing to produce a new fuel poverty strategy and to reset the target to eradicate fuel poverty in Scotland. It is Energy Action Scotland's view that, just as under the previous statutory duty which expired in 2016, local authorities must have a key role in the new strategy and make significant contributions that are integral to the aim of fuel poverty eradication.

Energy Action Scotland calls for the following actions, which includes aspects of the recommendations made by the [Scottish Fuel Poverty Strategic Working Group](#) and the [Scottish Rural Fuel Poverty Task Force](#).

Action Point 1

Commit significant investment in increasing the energy efficiency of the housing stock

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is one of the most sustainable routes out of fuel poverty and helps to protect households against fluctuations in energy price and income. Local authorities must continue to make this investment and to tackle their worst performing homes first. They should also have a co-ordinating role in promoting actions locally, attracting funding and in ensuring that national investment incentives are communicated effectively to home owners and private landlords. In using public procurement, Energy Action Scotland recommends that local authorities insist that all bids for public work provide an impact statement in relation to the local economy in respect of the supply of goods and labour, and that this element is part of the evaluation process.

Energy Action Scotland believes that there should be regulation of energy efficiency in the private rented sector, similar to EESH, and that local authorities should be supported to enhance existing Landlords Registration Schemes to ensure that regulations are enforced.

Action Point 2

Commit to providing advice services for individuals and communities

Through Health and Social Care integration, there is a clear recognition of the need for proactive measures to identify vulnerable households and their needs in order to facilitate better planning. Holistic 'one-stop-shop' services are known to be effective in delivering information and advice to the public on a range of topics that can reduce the impact of fuel poverty. This includes energy-saving advice, managing bills, dealing with debt, choice of payment methods and benefits/tax credit checks. The option of face-to-face services in addition to phone or internet-based services and the ability to access advocacy support are considered essential to assist those who are vulnerable. Energy Action Scotland recommends that all local authorities adopt this model.

Action Point 3

Maximise opportunities to develop energy choices and protect vulnerable consumers

Local authorities have an opportunity through national policies such as the potential Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) to support a changing energy landscape that is appropriate to local needs. Where private enterprise invests locally in the provision of heat and power by renewable or conventional means, the local authority should ensure that the community benefits from this investment and that consumers supplied by the service are protected in this unregulated market.

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