

**NK/EG/CMCA/9806**

**NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE USE  
ISSUED DATE: TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015**

**Call for End to Fuel Poverty Made in Face of Huge Increase in Excess Winter Deaths and in Support of Challenge Poverty Week**

'Set out a detailed plan to ensure that no-one in Scotland has to live in a cold, damp, expensive to heat home.'

This is the call from the national charity Energy Action Scotland to the Scottish Government during Challenge Poverty Week and on the day that a four-fold increase in the number of excess winter deaths in Scotland is announced.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on the Scottish Government to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that people are not living in fuel poverty in Scotland by November 2016.

But with fuel poverty levels on the up, and the target date just one year away, many believe the target will be missed.

Campaigners like Energy Action Scotland want Scottish Ministers to open discussions now about how they can realistically meet their target.

Today, the latest figures for seasonal winter deaths - known as excess winter deaths - from the National Records for Scotland show that 4,060 people died needlessly in the last winter in Scotland often due to cold-related causes.

This fact underlines the need for increased action on fuel poverty.

Norman Kerr, Director of Energy Action Scotland said:

"The huge rise in the number of excess winter deaths in Scotland stresses the fact that much more needs to be done to end the blight of cold, damp homes that people can't afford to heat.

"There are a lot of people who have experience of living in fuel poverty. There are a number who are already delivering solutions to the problem. All want to know what the Scottish Government's strategy is.

"We urge the Scottish Government to set out now what needs to be done to move forward towards the goal of eradicating cold homes in Scotland.

"In Challenge Poverty Week, we are encouraging government at all levels to increase the priority they give to making the energy we use to heat and power our homes affordable."

**-ends-**

**For further details contact:**

Elizabeth Gore, PR Manager, Energy Action Scotland on: **0141 226 3064**

**Background notes:**

1. Challenge Poverty Week is a Scotland-wide campaign designed to show that poverty is a real problem in Scotland, affecting large and growing numbers of people, and to encourage people to work together to end it.

**AN ENERGY ACTION SCOTLAND BRIEFING ON FUEL POVERTY AND POVERTY IS ATTACHED AND ON OUR [WEBSITE](#)**

2. Energy Action Scotland is the national charity which campaigns for an end to fuel poverty and works to promote warm, dry homes for all in Scotland.

3. Fuel poverty is the inability to afford adequate warmth in the home, defined as needing to pay more than 10 per cent of income on energy costs.

4. The main causes of fuel poverty are poor energy efficiency of the home, high domestic fuel prices and low household income.

5. The official Scottish Government figures show there are 940,000 households in Scotland in fuel poverty ie 39 per cent. Source: Scottish House Conditions Survey 2013.

6. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on the Scottish Government to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that people are not living in fuel poverty in Scotland by November 2016.

7. The latest figures (2014-2015) for increased winter mortality (also known as excess winter deaths) have been published today by the National Records for Scotland, see [here](#)

8. Extract from new NRS report: The seasonal increase in mortality figure of 4,060 for winter 2014/15 was 2,460 more than the corresponding value of 1,600 for winter 2013/14. The latter had been the second lowest of any of the 64 winters for which such a figure has been calculated (the 1,420 for winter 2011/12 was the lowest value). However, the figure of 4,060 for winter 2014/15 was the largest since 1999/2000, when the seasonal increase was 5,190.