



## DEBATE PACK

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# Debate Pack: Fuel Poverty

David Hough  
Ed White

## Summary

This Debate pack has been compiled ahead of the debate on *Fuel Poverty* to be held on Tuesday 24 November 2015 at 16:30 in Westminster Hall. The Member in charge of the debate is Drew Hendry MP.

Before that a digital debate is taking place on the website [Money Saving Expert](#) ahead of the Westminster Hall debate on fuel poverty. The digital debate will take place from 2 pm to 3 pm on Monday 23 November 2015.

*Drew Hendry MP said:*

*Fuel poverty continues to grow in all of the nations of the UK and is set to reach record levels as further UK Government welfare cuts come into effect. Indeed it is estimated that already 2.3 million UK households can't afford to keep their home adequately heated. It is unacceptable that families sitting are freezing in their own homes while unfair charges are pressed upon them.*

*I am therefore pleased to have secured Tuesday's Westminster Hall debate on this extremely important issue. I am keen to hear the views of MoneySavingExpert members ahead of this debate.*

Debate packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for MPs on request to the Library.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most, but not all, non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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# 1. Summary

## Box 1: Digital debate

A digital debate is taking place on the website [Money Saving Expert](#) ahead of the Westminster Hall debate on fuel poverty. The digital debate will take place from 2 pm to 3 pm on Monday 23 November 2015.

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## Fuel poverty definitions

Fuel poverty in **England** is measured by the Low Income High Costs definition, which considers a household to be in fuel poverty if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line

**Previously the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy** published in November 2001 had recommended that the numbers of households suffering fuel poverty in England should be displayed using two main definitions. These are as follows:

- A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income ( *including* Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use;
- A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income ( *excluding* Housing Benefit and Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use.

The **Scottish and Welsh** definition of fuel poverty is set out in the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement (2002), it follows the 2001 definition above:

*'A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use'*

Extreme fuel poverty indicates that a household would have to spend more than 20% of its income to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

The Scottish Government commissioned, on behalf of the Fuel Poverty Forum (FPF), a review of the evidence in relation to the assumptions underpinning the definition of fuel poverty in Scotland and this [research is now completed](#). However, the Forum considers that the outcome of the research, while exceptionally useful, does not support informed reason to change any of the underpinning values of the definition at this time. It is now the Fuel Poverty Forum's intention to engage in discussions with stakeholders before making any final decision on recommended changes.

### **Current UK Government fuel poverty initiatives**

The Government has not so far made any major announcements on fuel poverty. However, in responding to this question from the opposition spokesperson, the Minister has indicated that further announcements will be made in autumn 2015.

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [...] The issue that we have discussed, perhaps more than any other, is the desperate need for the UK to have a stable energy efficiency policy and for there to be some serious political will to tackle fuel poverty. This Government have already scrapped the green deal and zero-carbon homes. There is no taxpayer-funded fuel poverty programme and the Government's manifesto commitment proposes a huge drop in the already inadequate levels of insulation measures delivered in the last Parliament. That lack of ambition is disastrous for the environment and for consumer bills. What do this Government intend to do to end fuel poverty?

**Amber Rudd:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question. I, too, have enjoyed our exchanges. He spoke as if it were our last one; I certainly hope that that is not the case. Fuel poverty is an essential part of what this Government are trying to address. As he knows, we set out new regulations under the previous Government for the private-rented sector to ensure that we reach new standards in houses by 2030, 2025 and 2020. We have more ambitious targets. We have committed to making a minimum of 1 million houses more secure against fuel poverty, and I will bring forward more proposals in the autumn.<sup>1</sup>

A range of measures are currently available to help alleviate fuel poverty. Targeted support includes direct financial assistance for paying bills (eg the [Warm Home Discount](#) and [Winter Fuel Payment](#)) and energy saving measures (eg [ECO](#)) to help reduce costs. They are covered in the Library Note, [Help with energy bills](#). The Government has withdrawn funding from the Green Deal Scheme which was the main,

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<sup>1</sup> HC Deb, 17 September 2015, c1184

though much criticised, policy for promoting energy efficiency in the home.

### **Fuel Poverty: policy history**

The statutory requirement to address fuel poverty was at the centre of the [Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act \(WHECA\)](#) which was passed with cross party support in 2000.

Following an announcement in the October 2010 spending review<sup>2</sup>, Professor John Hills of the LSE conducted an independent review of fuel poverty for England and Wales, for DECC. Hill's interim report<sup>3</sup> addressed the problem of measuring fuel poverty, and his final report [Getting the measure of fuel poverty: Final report of the fuel poverty review](#)<sup>4</sup> was published in March 2012. In September 2012 the Government ran a [consultation on proposed changes to the fuel poverty measurement framework](#) to which they responded on 9 July 2013.

A new definition of fuel poverty has been adopted which finds a household to be fuel poor if their income is below the poverty line (taking into account their energy costs); and their energy costs are higher than is typical for their household type. It also uses a fuel poverty gap (i.e. the difference between a household's bill and what it would need for them to no longer be fuel poor).

A [framework for future action on fuel poverty was](#) published in July 2013 which sets out the way the Coalition Government intended to measure fuel poverty going forward and the action it intends to take to help people who are fuel poor.

In July 2014 the Coalition Government consulted on proposals for a new fuel poverty strategy following on from the 2013 paper. The consultation is based around 4 key principles:

- A new fuel poverty objective - the new target - and an ambition to improve the energy efficiency standards of fuel poor homes.
- A roadmap to meet the target based around the following themes:
  - Warmer homes: cutting bills and increasing comfort in the coldest low-income homes, making a real and lasting difference through energy efficiency and heating improvements.
  - Supporting people: helping people directly with their energy bills and helping to increase incomes
  - Fairer markets: ensuring that everyone can take action and benefit from a more open energy market
  - Improving delivery: making the most of the support available, getting it to the right people, and working together to support fuel poor households – recognising that

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<sup>2</sup> HM Treasury Spending Review 2010 [press notices](#) October 2010

<sup>3</sup> [Fuel Poverty: The problem and its measurement](#) October 2011

<sup>4</sup> John Hills, CASE Report 72, March 2012

fuel poverty is not a problem that central government can tackle alone

- An approach to assessing progress towards the target and how we will review the strategy over time. This will enable us to take account of the latest understanding of fuel poverty, developments in technology, and changes in the wider policy landscape.

At the same time as the consultation the Coalition Government also published [a review of research evidence into fuel poverty](#). This noted key findings of:

- householders' awareness and understanding of energy efficiency in the home can be driven by a complex array of factors, but that comfort and cost were key issues.
- Households employed a wide range of efficiency (how to make the most efficient use of the heat) and sufficiency (what is the minimum that is required for a 'manageable' level of warmth) strategies to heat their homes within their budgets, and there is evidence to suggest a generational divide in preferences (and needs) for different types and forms of home heating. For example, older people who grew up with solid fuel heating or proximal heaters are more likely to utilise these forms of heating than younger generations.
- There appears to be capacity for at risk or vulnerable households, particularly older people, to improve on the use of their current systems, including better informed use of heating systems, timers and thermostat controls, cladding hot water tanks, insulation of windows and the use of draft excluders. Various factors could trigger such behaviour change, such as advice and clear information from a trusted source and financial incentives. However, barriers to change do exist. The process of switching energy supplier, for example, is seen as too complex and uncertain for many to feel that they can, or have the ability to, change. Evidence suggests some poorer households have anxiety about change, for fear of incurring financial costs and upsetting carefully designed coping strategies. Financial savings from switching suppliers or installing energy efficient measures had to be sufficiently large for some individuals to consider it worth the effort.

A [response](#) to the consultation was published on 3 March 2015 alongside a [Cutting the cost of keeping warm: a fuel poverty strategy for England](#). The New Strategy builds on the policy described in the consultation. A summary and policy history are included in the first two sections of the document and make useful reading. The launch of the strategy was accompanied by this [Ministerial Statement](#).

Ofgem has undertaken work and developed a [Consumer Vulnerability Strategy](#), published in July 2013 that aims to address problems vulnerable groups face including poverty premium issues.

## 2. Press Articles

Independent

### **Cold winter in store for many who can't pay energy bills**

November 18, 2015

Simon Read

<http://www.independent.co.uk/money/cold-winter-in-store-for-many-who-can-t-pay-energy-bills-a6738391.html>

The Guardian

### **The UK's fuel poverty crisis can, and must, be fixed**

October 27, 2015

Phil Levermore

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/oct/27/fuel-poverty-crisis-fixed-insulation-energy-efficiency>

Independent

### **If you're in fuel poverty, British Gas might come to the rescue.**

**Trust me, it's true**

September 19, 2015

Simon Read

<http://www.independent.co.uk/money/spend-save/if-youre-in-fuel-poverty-british-gas-might-come-to-the-rescue-trust-me-its-true-10508803.html>

The Telegraph

### **SNP 'U-turn' over middle-class winter fuel allowance cut**

October 13, 2015

Simon Johnson

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/SNP/11929774/SNP-U-turn-over-middle-class-winter-fuel-allowance-cut.html>

The Guardian

### **Millions of Britons are overpaying for energy, says competition report**

July 7, 2015

Terry Macalister

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/jul/07/britons-overpaying-energy-cma-competition-report>

Independent

### **Social tenants locked into energy tariff for 40 years**

May 5, 2015

Simon Read

<http://www.independent.co.uk/money/social-tenants-locked-into-energy-tariff-for-40-years-10226236.html>

Independent

**"Still people die because they can't afford the heating bills"**

May 1, 2015

Simon Read

<http://www.independent.co.uk/money/spend-save/simon-read-still-people-die-because-they-cant-afford-the-heating-bills-10219843.html>

The Guardian

**Fuel banks pilot scheme aims to address austerity-era dilemma of 'heat or eat'**

April 24, 2015

Patrick Butler

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/apr/24/fuel-banks-scheme-heat-or-eat-voucher-prepayment-meters-food-banks>

The Guardian

**Cold homes 'causing more respiratory illness in England than Sweden'**

March 19, 2015

Denis Campbell

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/mar/19/cold-homes-causing-more-respiratory-illness-in-england-than-sweden>

The Telegraph

**GPs to 'prescribe a boiler' to patients living in cold homes**

May 19, 2015

Emily Gosden

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/energy/10842297/GPs-to-prescribe-a-boiler-to-patients-living-in-cold-homes.html>

The Guardian

**Landlords to be banned from letting draughtiest homes**

February 5, 2015

Adam Vaughan

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/feb/05/landlords-draughty-homes-ban>

The Independent

**More than one million British families now live in fuel poverty**

December 23, 2014

Nigel Morris

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/more-than-one-million-british-families-now-live-in-fuel-poverty-9941033.html>

## 3. Press releases

### **Department of Energy and Climate Change**

#### **Residents across England win share of £25 million to warm their homes**

03 Sep 2015

More than 7,000 households across England will benefit from £25 million worth of government funding to tackle fuel poverty and keep bills low.

The £25 million Central Heating Fund competition opened in March to local authorities across England asking for plans to support local people living in homes that are not connected to the gas grid. Twenty projects across England have been awarded funding; these new and existing projects will deliver services to those who need it the most.

The result is that hardworking bill payers living in fuel poor households will have central heating installed for the first time. Once installed, central heating can help households save up to £1,000 a year as well as keeping their homes warm more effectively.

*Energy Minister Lord Bourne said:*

“We are determined to help hardworking families keep their homes warmer for less and we recognise that households not connected to the gas grid can pay over the odds for their heating.

“So we are taking action by backing these innovative projects that will help the people who need it most by focusing on central heating for the first time – cutting bills and keeping homes warmer. Projects like this show how much the government and local councils can achieve working together to secure a better future for local communities.”

The Department for Energy and Climate Change received more than 80 proposals from more than 100 local authorities. The proposals were assessed on how they met the funding criteria which included value for money and how the plans would offer ongoing support to cut bills.

From autumn local councils will begin to install central heating systems in local fuel poor households. The government will continue to work closely with local authorities to implement their winning proposals, to make sure that the results inform future work to help hardworking bill payers living in fuel poverty

### **Department of Energy and Climate Change**

#### **Fuel poverty report shows improvement**

30 May 2015

The 2013 annual fuel poverty report for England was released recently.

The report analyses data from English Housing Survey to measure the impact of fuel poverty in England. A combination of rising incomes and energy efficiency improvements in low income households has seen a decrease in the fuel poverty gap from £909 million in 2012 to £877



million in 2012, with an overall reduction of £32 million. There has also been an improvement in fuel poverty levels in England from 2.36 million in 2012 to 2.35 million in 2013.

These improvements are encouraging because they show that we are moving in the right direction and that by helping low income households improve their energy efficiency we can make a real difference in helping to keep their bills down.

## **Department of Energy and Climate Change**

### **A strategy to end cold homes for good**

04 Mar 2015

Yesterday's new Fuel poverty strategy sets out a revolutionary approach to identifying and targeting England's energy inefficient homes.

Future governments will now, for the first time, be required by law to tackle fuel poverty by making the coldest, leakiest homes in England more energy efficient.

This new Fuel poverty strategy – the first for over a decade – outlines challenges and actions for the next 15 years to ensure future Governments take the right steps to tackle fuel poverty and get help to those who need it most.

A new legally binding target – in force since December 2014 – is at the heart of the new strategy. It requires a minimum standard of energy efficiency (Band C) for as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable by 2030.

Early measures to tackle the problem of fuel poverty and hit the new target include:

- New regulations so from April 2018 private landlords cannot rent out energy inefficient properties (homes with Energy Performance ratings below 'E')
- Tackling the problem of fuel poverty in off gas grid properties with a new £25 million fund to help people install central heating systems for the first time
- Extending the successful ECO scheme to 2017, so that a further 500,000 properties will be made cheaper and easier to heat, building on the one million homes that ECO and the Green Deal have helped in the last 2 years

The strategy prepares the ground for future new measures with a series of pilots focused on priority areas, ranging from health aspects of fuel poverty through to specific housing types like off gas grid properties and park homes.

A £3 million pot for such pilots will see £1 million released immediately to scale up local 'warmth-on-prescription' projects to help primary healthcare professionals such as GPs play a much larger part in tackling fuel poverty. In the coming months up to £2 million more will be released to support innovation pilots, not just in health but also for off gas grid, park homes and community energy approaches.

*Unveiling the strategy, Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Davey said yesterday:*

Today marks a crucial step towards a future free from cold homes and bloated energy bills in England. We now have a legally binding commitment to plug our draughtiest houses – adding to the 1 million homes we've made warmer and cheaper to heat.

From tackling fuel poverty in the private rented sector to facing up properly to the challenges of rural off gas grid fuel poverty, this strategy marks a significant change from the old approach.

Yet even as we implement new regulations and new spending priorities to make homes warmer, we are planning for the next phase of cutting fuel poverty, with a series of key pilots, especially into the link between improving health and cutting fuel poverty.

Households in fuel poverty in the least energy efficient homes (Bands F and G) typically face energy costs that are £1,000 more than those in higher quality homes. To help focus support where it is needed most, the strategy introduces interim milestones to get as many as fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable up to a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band E by 2020 and Band D by 2025.

*Minister for Energy and Climate Change Amber Rudd:*

We want the fall in levels of fuel poverty seen under this Government to continue - so that cold homes are gone for good.

That's the future we're presenting, alongside our ambitious targets, so even more households can join the 1 million homes already reaping the benefits of lower energy bills and warmer homes this winter.

Last month, the government laid draft regulations to introduce minimum energy efficiency standards that will see up to 1 million people renting from private landlords benefit from warmer and cheaper to heat homes. Many of the poorest tenants will benefit and, with government support, landlords can improve their properties at no upfront cost – and landlords will only have to make improvements that are cost-effective. This will be backed by a new law to give tenants the right from April 2016 to request consent for improvements that the landlord cannot unreasonably refuse.

Nearly 2 million heating and energy efficiency measures have already been installed across the country. With ECO being extended to 2017 an extra half a million people will be able to keep warm for less, including many low-income, vulnerable households. This is on top of half a billion pounds of investment in energy efficiency schemes over three years, including the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund.

*Dr Tim Ballard, Vice-Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners, said:*

The Royal College of GPs welcomes this new fuel poverty strategy. It marks an important turning point in acting on what we have known for

some time: that cold homes contribute to the most vulnerable people being unhealthy and can even be lethal for them.

The new strategy provides a long-term framework in which the health sector has a vital role to play, in partnership with Government. The new funding for health-related pilot projects is especially needed and will help build the case for more investment to cut the cost of warmth and help reduce the burden of cold homes on the health service.

*Note to editors*

- The new [Fuel poverty strategy](#)
- More information on the [Private Rental Sector Regulations](#)
- Fuel poverty is calculated by modelling the fuel bills of households in England to ensure they maintain an adequate standard of warmth, based on the characteristics of the householders, the dwelling characteristics and energy prices.
- Under the Low Income High Cost (LIHC) definition a household is considered to be fuel poor where:

### **Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion**

#### **Independent review projects fuel poverty to worsen and calls for reinvigorated strategy**

15 March 2012

Professor John Hills today publishes the final report of his independent review of fuel poverty. The review confirms that fuel poverty is a serious national problem and shows that it is set to rise rapidly. It affects people with low incomes and energy costs above typical levels. It proposes a new way of measuring the problem, focused both on the number of people affected and the severity of the problem they face. Using the proposed measure:

- Nearly 8 million people in England, within 2.7 million households, both had low incomes and faced high energy costs in 2009 (the most recent year with available data). These households faced costs to keep warm that added up to £1.1 billion more than middle or higher income people with typical costs.
- The review's central projection is that this "fuel poverty gap" – already three-quarters higher than in 2003 – will rise by a further half, to £1.7 billion by 2016.
- This means fuel poor households will face costs nearly £600 a year higher on average than better-off households with typical costs.

The report also argues that:

- Fuel poverty exacerbates other hardship faced by those on low incomes, has serious health effects (including contributing to extra deaths every winter), and acts as a block to efforts to cut carbon emissions.
- The current official way of measuring it, based on whether a household would need to spend more than 10 per cent of its income on energy, is flawed, giving a misleading impression of trends, excluding

some affected by the problem at some times and including people with high incomes at others.

- Interventions targeted on the core of the problem – especially those that improve the energy efficiency of homes lived in by people with low incomes – can make a substantial difference, but the impact of those planned to be in place by 2016 is only to reduce the problem by a tenth.

Professor Hills said:

*There is no doubt that fuel poverty is a serious national problem – increasing hardship, contributing to winter deaths and other health problems, and blocking policies to combat climate change. But the official measure has fed complacency at times and gloom about the impact of policies at others.*

*When one focuses on the core of the problem in the way I propose, the outlook is profoundly disappointing, with the scale of the problem heading to be nearly three times higher in 2016 – the date legislation set for its elimination – than in 2003.*

*But this daunting problem is one with solutions. Our analysis shows that improving the housing of those at risk is the most cost-effective way of tackling the problem, cutting energy waste, with large long-term benefits to society as a whole. We need a renewed and ambitious strategy to do this.*

*Notes to Editors*

1. After its publication copies of the final report, *Getting the measure of fuel poverty*, will be available at:

[www.decc.gov.uk/hillsfuelpovertyreview](http://www.decc.gov.uk/hillsfuelpovertyreview)

<http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/> (as CASE report 72)

The interim report (CASE report 69) is also available at these addresses.

3. Professor John Hills, Director of the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics, was appointed in March 2011 to conduct an independent review from first principles of the fuel poverty definition and target. See [www.decc.gov.uk/hillsfuelpovertyreview](http://www.decc.gov.uk/hillsfuelpovertyreview) for additional background. A consultative interim report was published in October 2011.

4. The approach set out in the report would capture households where required spending is higher than the median (typical) required levels and where spending this amount would reduce household income below the poverty line. The report finds that 7.8 million people in 2.7 million households were in this position in England in 2009, compared to 7.2 million people in 2.8 million households in 1996. This definition reflects the wording of the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000, which states:

*“A person is to be regarded as living “in fuel poverty” if he [sic] is a member of a household living on a lower income in a home which cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost.”*

5. The new indicator is supplemented by a “fuel poverty gap” which is the difference between the required spending faced by fuel poor households and the median level. In England in 2009, the aggregate gap was £1.1 billion, with an average gap of £414 per household. The gap shows how badly fuel poverty affects those households who experience it. It has risen since 2003 as rising prices have increased bills and have pulled more people into fuel poverty.

6. The current definition of fuel poverty is based on a ratio of required spending to income: if a household would need to spend more than 10 per cent of its net income (before housing costs) to achieve adequate warmth, it is classed as fuel poor. Using this definition, fuel poverty was said to have fallen by four-fifths between 1996 and 2004 (from 5.1 million to 1.2 million households) but has more than trebled since. The latest official statistics, published in July 2011 and relating to 2009, found 4.0 million households (containing 7.4 million people) to be fuel poor in England.

7. Technical enquiries about the content of the report may be addressed to:

[hillsfuelpovertyreview@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hillsfuelpovertyreview@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

## 4. Parliamentary Questions

### Asked by: Ms Karin Smyth

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, how many children were living in households classed as being in fuel poverty in (a) Bristol South constituency, (b) Bristol, (c) the South West and (d) England in each year since 2010?

### Answering member: Andrea Leadsom | Department for Energy and Climate Change

Fuel poverty is measured at the household level rather than the individual level and detailed data on the age of household occupants is not available at the sub-regional level.

The table below shows the number of fuel poor households which contain at least one child under the age of 16 in (a) England and (b) the South West, in each year since 2010.

#### Number and proportion of fuel poor households with at least one child under 16

	England		South West	
	(000s)	%	(000s)	%
2013	1064	45	115	42
2012	1101	47	77	35
2011	1029	42	74	33
2010	988	40	74	29

Government is committed to supporting fuel poor households in line with our fuel poverty obligations. For example, the Energy Company Obligation supports around 260,000 households per year on low incomes or in low income areas with insulation and heating measures to bring their bills down. Further, the Warm Home Discount provided support to over 2 million low income households with £140 discounts on their electricity bill last winter.

**18 Jun 2015 | House of Commons | W900406**

### Asked by: Seema Kennedy

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what steps she is taking to ensure that the fuel poverty strategy benefits people living in park homes.

### Answering member: Andrea Leadsom | Department for Energy and Climate Change

The Government will be guided by the fuel poverty strategy published in March 2015 which sets out a clear policy of working towards improving energy efficiency standards across the English housing stock, including in the homes of the fuel poor. The strategy highlighted a concern relating to issues faced by park home residents in keeping their homes

warm. Therefore, the Government is undertaking further research and working with stakeholders to understand the drivers of fuel poverty in park homes.

DECC has also been ensuring park homes residents are able to benefit from our existing schemes targeted at the fuel poor such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Warm Home Discount (WHD).

**21 Jul 2015 | House of Commons | W7569**

**Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are currently taking to reduce fuel poverty among older people; and what further steps they plan to take.

**Answering member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

Government is fully committed to tackling fuel poverty, including meeting a new 2030 target now enshrined in law.

In policies such as the Warm Home Discount and the Energy Company Obligation continue to deliver vital support to millions of low income and vulnerable homes each year, with households in receipt of Pension Credit being eligible for assistance under both policies.

The Government will be guided by the fuel poverty strategy published in March 2015, which sets out a clear policy of working towards improving energy efficiency standards across the English housing stock, including in the homes of the fuel poor.

**17 Jul 2015 | House of Lords | HL1284**

**Asked by Jonathan Reynolds**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, how many fuel-poor households there are for which her Department plans to fund insulation measures over the next five years.

**Answering member: Andrea Leadsom | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

The Government is fully committed to tackling fuel poverty in England, including meeting the 2030 target now enshrined in law.

Decisions on future energy bill and energy efficiency support for consumers have not yet been taken. The Government will be guided by the fuel poverty strategy published in March 2015, which sets out a clear policy of working towards improving energy efficiency standards across the English housing stock, including in the homes of the fuel poor.

In the meantime, the Energy Company Obligation, currently in place to March 2017, will support insulation and heating measures in fuel poor homes. The Impact Assessment is available here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/373650/ECO\\_IA\\_with\\_SoS\\_e-sigf\\_v2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373650/ECO_IA_with_SoS_e-sigf_v2.pdf)

This year, we are also delivering a £25m central heating fund focused on increased support for those in fuel poverty off the mains gas grid.

**18 Jun 2015 | House of Commons | W2416**

**Asked by: Pamela Nash**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, how many households in fuel poverty in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland, (c) England, (d) Wales and (e) Northern Ireland used prepayment meters to pay for (i) gas and (ii) electricity in each year since May 2010; and what the average monthly bill of such households was.

**Answering member: Andrea Leadsom | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

For the first part of this question, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 12th March to Question 226662:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-03-09/226662/>

DECC do not have data on average actual bills for the fuel poor, or any particular cut of them, as fuel poverty estimates are produced on a notional basis (what the bill would be for a household if they used sufficient energy to meet the heating requirement for the home they live in). A large volume of data on fuel poverty is available on the DECC web site at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics>.

**24 Mar 2015 | House of Commons | W226764**

**Asked by: Paisley, Ian**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if he will make it his policy to implement the Affordable Warmth Manifesto published by the End Fuel Poverty Coalition in September 2014.

**Answering member: Andrea Leadsom | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

There has been a constant decrease in fuel poverty since 2010, Government is committed to tackling fuel poverty.

We have a strong package of policies delivering assistance to the fuel poor, these include; The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), The Warm Home Discount Scheme, The Big Energy Saving Network, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments. The Affordable Warmth element of ECO alone has delivered around 398,000 measures to around 313,000 low income and vulnerable households to the end of November 2014.



In addition, we have introduced a new fuel poverty target for England to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency standard of Band C by 2030.

**23 Feb 2015 | House of Commons | W222995**

**Asked by: Lord Wigley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government which areas they define as the poorest quarter of rural areas for the purposes of eligibility for assistance with the provision of gas.

**Answering member: Baroness Verma | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

Ofgem operates a scheme – the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES) which provides support to eligible households in relation to the provision of mains gas. At present, if a household is within the 20% most deprived areas in Great Britain it may be eligible under this scheme. These areas are identified using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measured at the lower super output area (LSOA) level. Note that there are separate IMDs for England, Scotland and Wales.

Ofgem is currently conducting a review of FPNES. We expect the outcome of the review to be published in March 2015.

**05 Feb 2015 | House of Lords | W4511**

**Asked by: Pat Glass**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that families with children are treated as a vulnerable group by energy companies.

**Answering member: Matthew Hancock | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

A new Strategy and Policy Statement, which Government consulted on last year makes it clear that helping vulnerable households is one of the Government's strategic priorities to which Ofgem should have regard when carrying out its regulatory functions. The statement will replace the existing Social and Environmental Statutory Guidance to the Gas and Electricity Market Authority, as recommended by the Ofgem Review of 2010-11.

**02 Feb 2015 | House of Commons | W221924**

**Asked by: Gregory Campbell**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if he will discuss with his counterparts in the devolved administrations the merits of a common formula for the Warm Home discount and grant schemes across all those administrations.

**Answering member: Amber Rudd | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

The Warm Home Discount Scheme operates to a single set of rules across Great Britain.

The scheme does not apply in Northern Ireland as fuel poverty is devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive, which decides its own fuel poverty objectives and policies.

**23 Jan 2015 | House of Commons | W221330**

**Asked by: Mr Angus Brendan MacNeil**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, with reference to the Government's Fuel Poverty Consultation document of July 2014, if he will review his policy so that the off grid gas sector will be eligible for supporting measures such as the upgrading of old oil fired boilers.

**Answering member: Amber Rudd | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

Supporting off-grid households is an important principle in our approach to tackling fuel poverty. In England, the use of a new indicator – the fuel poverty gap – has highlighted the particular circumstances such households can face.

We are making a number of changes to policies to ensure increased levels of support to such households. For example, we have made changes to the operation of ECO to create incentives for energy suppliers to deliver more measures in these non-gas fuelled homes, including oil fired boilers replacements. While fuel poverty is a devolved issue, ECO operates across Great Britain, and these changes could have an impact in Scotland.

Furthermore, at Autumn Statement 2014, the Government announced new funding in England to support off-grid households (with Barnett consequential).

**09 Jan 2015 | House of Commons | W219876**

**Asked by: Caroline Flint**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what estimate his Department has made of the number of fuel poor households in the private rented sector living in properties with an energy performance certificate rating of (a) A, (b) B, (c) C, (d) D, (e) E, (f) F and (g) G.

**Answering member: Amber Rudd | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

The estimated number of fuel poor households under the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) definition living in the private rented sector, in England in 2010-2012 by Standard Assessment (SAP) band are given

below. Due to small sample sizes some SAP bands have been aggregated.

**The estimated number of fuel poor households in England**

Standardised Assessment band (SAP)	2012		All private rented households (000s)
	Fuel Poor (000s)	Non-Fuel Poor (000s)	
A/B/C/D	217	2,373	2,591
E	393	588	982
F/G	145	212	357
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>3,174</b>	<b>3,929</b>
2011			
A/B/C/D	191	2,055	2,246
E	402	673	1,075
F/G	190	206	396
<b>Total</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>2,934</b>	<b>3,716</b>
2010			
A/B/C/D	141	1,732	1,874
E	377	714	1,091
F/G	183	253	436
<b>Total</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>3,401</b>

*Notes:*

*The above is based on the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) definition living in the private rented sector, in England in 2010-2012 by Standard Assessment (SAP) band*

## 10 Dec 2014 | House of Commons | W216840

### Asked by: Caroline Flint

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of funding from the Energy Companies Obligation directed to non-fuel-poor households.

### Answering member: Amber Rudd | Department for Energy and Climate Change

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) uses a range of proxies to find low income and vulnerable households at risk of fuel poverty. These proxies are used to define eligibility for the Affordable Warmth and Carbon Savings Community Obligation elements of ECO.

## 21 Nov 2014 | House of Commons | W214565

### Asked by: Frank Field

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if he will take steps to ensure that no child living in poverty grows up in a cold home.

### Answering member: Amber Rudd | Department for Energy and Climate Change

Our new fuel poverty target will focus on improving the energy efficiency of all fuel poor households, including children in poor households. We will be starting with the most inefficient and coldest homes first.

We have a strong package of policies already delivering assistance and making steps to help those in need. Under our current plans from April 2018, domestic and non-domestic privately rented property will need to meet a minimum standard, which we have proposed to be an E EPC rating.

Meanwhile, we continue to provide help to the most vulnerable by supporting over 2 million households a year with the Warm Home Discount as well as providing Winter Fuel Payments of up to £300.

We also have in place the Big Energy Saving Network which is providing outreach to consumers, helping them understand tariffs and switching options as well as how they could benefit from energy efficiency programmes available to them.

Our Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funds efficient boilers and insulation measures to low income and vulnerable households is now guaranteed until at least 2017. This has contributed to Government's target of improving the energy efficiency of 1million homes from January 2013 to March 2015.

We have already made significant progress towards achieving this with around 797,000 homes improved through a combination of ECO, Green Deal Cashback, Green Deal finance and the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund to the end of August 2014.

**03 Nov 2014 | House of Commons | W212423**

**Asked by: Caroline Flint**

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what estimate his Department has made of the number of fuel poor households under the low-income high costs definition in (a) Wales and (b) Scotland.

**Answering member: Amber Rudd | Department for Energy and Climate Change**

Fuel poverty is a devolved matter. The 2014 fuel poverty statistics include a discussion of fuel poverty in the United Kingdom. They are available here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/319280/Fuel\\_Poverty\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319280/Fuel_Poverty_Report_Final.pdf).

**10 Sep 2014 | House of Commons | W208328**

## 5. Other Parliamentary material

### **Ministerial Statements**

The Conservative Government has not so far made any major announcements on fuel poverty. However, in responding to this question from the opposition spokesperson, the Minister has indicated that further announcements will be made in autumn 2015.

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [...] The issue that we have discussed, perhaps more than any other, is the desperate need for the UK to have a stable energy efficiency policy and for there to be some serious political will to tackle fuel poverty. This Government have already scrapped the green deal and zero-carbon homes. There is no taxpayer-funded fuel poverty programme and the Government's manifesto commitment proposes a huge drop in the already inadequate levels of insulation measures delivered in the last Parliament. That lack of ambition is disastrous for the environment and for consumer bills. What do this Government intend to do to end fuel poverty?

**Amber Rudd:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his question. I, too, have enjoyed our exchanges. He spoke as if it were our last one; I certainly hope that that is not the case. Fuel poverty is an essential part of what this Government are trying to address. As he knows, we set out new regulations under the previous Government for the private-rented sector to ensure that we reach new standards in houses by 2030, 2025 and 2020. We have more ambitious targets. We have committed to making a minimum of 1 million houses more secure against fuel poverty, and I will bring forward more proposals in the autumn.<sup>5</sup>

### **Debates**

#### **Westminster Hall Debate Energy Policy and Living Standards**

[10 Dec 2014 589 cc353-362WH](#)

#### **Westminster Hall Debate Domestic Energy Efficiency**

[21 Oct 2014 586 cc228-235WH](#)

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<sup>5</sup> HC Deb, 17 September 2015, c1184

### **Select Committee**

#### **Energy and Climate Change Committee**

Oral evidence: [Home Energy Efficiency and Demand Reduction](#), HC 552  
17 November 2015

Oral evidence: [Home Energy Efficiency and Demand Reduction](#), HC 552  
3 November 2015

### **Early Day Motions**

#### **[WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME - EXCLUSION OF NORTHERN IRELAND](#)**

That this House notes with concern the exclusion of pensioners resident in Northern Ireland from the Warm Home Discount Scheme since its inception in 2011; recalls that the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), in its Fuel Poverty Statistics Methodology and User Manual, described fuel poverty as a partially-devolved matter and has stated that the purpose of the Warm Home Discount Scheme is to reduce fuel poverty in the UK; acknowledges that, despite having high levels of fuel poverty amongst pensioners, Northern Ireland is the only region of the UK that is excluded from the scheme; further notes the strong case being made by Age Sector Platform reflecting a Pensioners' Parliament resolution on these issues; and calls on ministers in DECC to enter into discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive in order to agree the extension of this important scheme so that pensioners in Northern Ireland can enjoy the benefits of this annual rebate on the cost of household energy bills.

**18 Nov 2015 House of Commons | 721 (session 2015-16)**

#### **[OUR POWER ENERGY](#)**

That this House welcomes the establishment of Our Power Energy, the first UK energy company to operate on a non-profit distribution basis, which hopes to reduce bills to customers by as much as 10 per cent; recognises that Our Power Energy has been founded by 35 organisations, including many of Scotland's housing associations, and has been supported by £2.5 million from the Scottish Government and a further £1 million from Social Investment Scotland; and, given that fuel poverty currently sits at its highest level in a decade and energy bills have risen by seven per cent between 2012 and 2013, looks forward to Our Power Energy starting to trade later this year in direct competition with the Big Six energy suppliers.

**16 Jul 2015 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 323 (session 2015-16)**

### ENDING COLD HOMES

That this House welcomes the Ending Cold Homes: Affordable Warmth Manifesto launched by the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, an alliance of over 50 poverty, environmental and consumer groups, trade unions and other civil society organisations; supports the Manifesto's core aim of ending the misery of fuel poverty in the UK; further supports the six key pledges set out in the Manifesto: to improve the energy efficiency standards of all low income homes to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2025, to make energy efficiency a national infrastructure priority, to implement a cross-departmental fuel poverty strategy, to use trusted agencies and organisations, such as local authorities, to improve homes and encourage health and social workers to refer people for home improvements, to require fuel companies to provide a better deal for low income households, with rebates on fuel bills to all low income consumers and to ensure employment and income policies provide a sufficient income to pay fuel bills and maintain a good standard of living; and therefore urges current and future governments to support the Affordable Warmth Manifesto and take immediate action on fuel poverty to improve the quality of millions of people's lives across the UK.

**17 Dec 2014 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 643 (session 2014-15)**

## 6. Further Reading

Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)  
[Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report, 2015](#)  
28 May 2015

Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC)  
Fuel Poverty Advisory Group (for England)  
[12th annual report 2013-14](#)  
23 February 2015

Energy and Climate Change Committee  
Inquiry [Home energy efficiency and demand reduction](#)  
Written evidence submitted by the [National Energy Action](#) (HEE0031)  
October 2015

Energy and Climate Change Committee  
[Energy Prices, Profits and Poverty: Government and Ofgem Responses to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2013–14](#)  
Fifth Special Report of Session 2013–14, HC 717  
10 October 2013

Energy and Climate Change Committee  
[Energy Prices, Profits and Poverty](#)  
Fifth Report of Session 2013–14,  
Volume I and Volume II  
29 July 2013

Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion  
[Getting the measure of fuel poverty: Final Report of the Fuel Poverty Review](#)  
John Hills  
CASE Report 77  
22 March 2012

House of Commons Library Note  
[ECO, the Energy Company Obligation](#)  
28 October 2015

House of Commons Library Note  
[Warm Home Discount](#)  
21 May 2015

Energy Saving Advice Service [Website](#)



Home Energy Scotland [Website](#)

Energy UK  
[Fuel poverty](#)

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