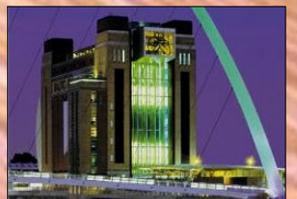


# The North East Fuel Poverty Declaration



# The North East Fuel Poverty Declaration

In signing this declaration, .....  
are demonstrating our commitment to the reduction of Fuel Poverty within our communities.

## We acknowledge

- that Fuel Poverty is an inequality in our society with consequences of cold, damp homes being inextricably linked to ill health, affecting the wellbeing of individuals.
- the right of every householder to attain affordable warmth.
- that social, economic and environmental benefits will come from combating Fuel Poverty, and there is recognition by many sectors of the need for change.
- the transient nature of fuel poverty, that households move in and out of fuel poverty dependent on their income and the cost of fuel.

## We welcome

- the opportunity to support the development and implementation of national, regional and local Fuel Poverty strategies and plans, through
  - Improving the living conditions and health of householders, whilst reducing household fuel bills
  - Saving our natural resources and promoting renewable energy sources, therefore contributing towards combating climate change
- the opportunity to work in partnerships with other organisations at a regional and local level, to tackle Fuel Poverty.
- the opportunity for local government to steer the response at a local level and thereby play a major role in helping local authorities to deliver a regional programme.

## We commit

- to raising awareness of Fuel Poverty issues within our organisation and our partners.
- to encourage all sectors of the local community to take the opportunity to remove themselves and others from Fuel Poverty.
- to liaise with Key Providers to produce effective solutions.

Signed .....

on behalf of .....

Position .....

Please detach and send to the address overleaf. Your Declaration Certificate will then be sent to you.

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***The North East Domestic Energy Forum  
c/o Jarvis Accommodation Services  
The Innovation Centre  
Vienna Court  
Kirkleatham Business Park  
Redcar  
TS10 5SH***

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affix  
stamp

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# The North East Fuel Poverty Declaration

## Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>The North East Fuel Poverty Declaration</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Executive Summary</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>What is Fuel Poverty?</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy</i>	<b>7</b>
– <i>Fuel Poverty Definitions and Targets</i>	
– <i>Who are those in Fuel Poverty?</i>	
– <i>What causes Fuel Poverty?</i>	
– <i>Building Regulations</i>	
– <i>Fuel Poverty in Rural Areas</i>	
<i>Fuel Poverty in the North East</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>Fuel Poverty and Health</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>Actions for Change</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>Case Studies</i>	<b>18</b>
<i>Key Energy Organisations</i>	<b>20</b>
<i>Copy of Declaration</i>	<b>23</b>
<i>NEDEF Contact Details</i>	<b>24</b>

# Foreword

Fuel poverty – the inability to afford adequate warmth for health and comfort in the home - is a problem faced by 3 million households in the UK today. In a modern industrialised society, one with the fourth largest economy in the world, this is a national disgrace. Can any society, which allows millions of its citizens to suffer the misery of living in cold damp homes every winter, really call itself civilised?

Until recently the numbers of households in fuel poverty had been falling. This was largely as a result of falling fuel prices and increased incomes. However since 2003, the trend of falling fuel prices has been reversed pushing many more households back into fuel poverty. It has also exposed the danger of relying particularly on reducing fuel prices to address fuel poverty. The only long term, sustainable solution is to improve the energy efficiency – effectively fuel poverty proofing – the properties occupied by low-income and other vulnerable households.

For this reason I am delighted to endorse the North East Fuel Poverty Declaration and commend the vision and commitment of all those involved. National Energy Action will lend its full support to help to ensure that the objectives of the declaration are met.

***William Gillis***  
***Chief Executive***  
***National Energy Action***



*Campaigning for Warm Homes*

# The North East Fuel Poverty Declaration

This declaration has been developed as a means to generate action and facilitate partnership working, with the ultimate goal of helping people remove themselves from fuel poverty. It has been developed by a special working group of the North East Domestic Energy Forum, in a bid to focus attention on the dilemma of those living in fuel poverty and to encourage organisations that can make a difference to also take action.

The problem of fuel poverty is a complex one. These are people who cannot afford to adequately keep warm and who, because of this, are at increased risk of health problems, loneliness and misery. Often, people living in fuel poverty are excluded from social life because of their circumstances and as such can go unnoticed. Our aim is to help them.

Fuel poverty can financially affect and have an emotional impact on a household at any time. This may be due to many varied factors, such as the death of a family member, the increase in fuel prices, or loss of employment. Its effects reach all social classes.

There exist a wide range of organisations that can make a difference to the plight of the fuel poor. These range from the obvious large organisations such as local authorities, to small community and voluntary groups, Primary Care Trusts to carers groups, or large housing providers to welfare rights agencies.

In fact, any organisation that comes into contact with households at risk can make a difference. Awareness of the problem is key – the more signatories to the Declaration, the more people will know of this crippling problem, and more susceptible households can be assisted in accessing help.

Please sign the North East Fuel Poverty Declaration. Our priority is to ensure that vulnerable households all across our region are helped to escape from fuel poverty.

There are no catches. All we ask is that organisations maintain an awareness of fuel poverty, and remain willing to help those in need. Together we can make a difference.

Thank you.

**Steve Kent**  
**Chair**  
**North East Domestic Energy Forum**



## Executive Summary

Fuel poverty is a phenomenon that affects all social classes. It is a silent killer, resulting in thousands of excess winter deaths each year. Recent research indicates that for every °C below the winter average in the UK there are 8,000 extra deaths.

The recent rise in fuel prices will exacerbate this already huge problem. Those who are unable to heat their homes adequately will find themselves less and less able to keep warm and therefore stay healthy. An increase in gas and electricity prices of only 1% will result in an additional 40,000 households in fuel poverty.

The facts are stark – many people within our society are not able to live in a warm home, and each year a large proportion of people particularly at risk die or suffer ill health because of this circumstance.

It is estimated that across the UK there are over 3 million households currently living in fuel poverty. Three quarters of these are categorised as vulnerable - elderly, sick, disabled or children.

The inability to maintain adequate temperatures in the home can lead to the development or exacerbation of respiratory and circulatory conditions such as bronchitis, asthma, emphysema, heart disease and stroke. In many cases people become ill needlessly, simply through the circumstance of their living conditions. Treating these illnesses is thought to cost the National Health Service £1 billion every year.

Our Government has set targets for the eradication of fuel poverty. Action at local level can make an enormous difference and contribute towards these national targets. The key to success in this area is organisations working together to identify households at risk and help them escape from this crippling situation.

This document lays out the facts on fuel poverty and suggests ways in which many diverse organisations can help households who are not able to keep their homes warm.



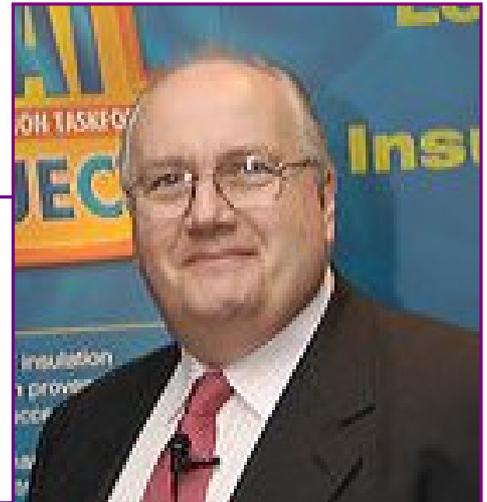
**Alan Simpson MP**

Chair, Parliamentary Warm Homes Group

"I welcome this Declaration and the way it will put fuel poverty targets on everyone's agenda. Climate change will force this challenge on us all - both private and public, statutory organisations and the voluntary sector. It is the biggest challenge of our lives, and for some it will be the challenge that could keep them alive."

"What a great initiative, it is good to see that the most vulnerable in our society are being given due regard in the North East.

I am sure that this initiative will develop and roll out across the country."



**Bruce Pittingale**  
**UK HECA Chair**

Fuel poverty is a serious issue in the North East and requires committed support from a wide range of organisations to reduce and eliminate the problem, particularly in a time of rising energy prices. On behalf of the Energy Saving Trust I am pleased to support this declaration and look forward to seeing the commitment to its principles bearing fruit and improving the lives of those who currently find it difficult to heat their homes adequately.

Stephen Calvert  
**Energy Saving Trust North East**  
**Coordinator**



Energywatch is committed to eliminating fuel poverty and fully supports the North East Fuel Poverty Declaration. By working together we can put in place effective Fuel Poverty strategies that will ensure people have access to the right support and no longer have to put up with living in a cold damp home.

Carlene Golightly, Priority  
Consumer Manager  
**energywatch**



*“Few people choose to live in cold damp homes that they cannot afford to heat well enough to protect their health. Yet for millions of British households this is the reality of poor quality housing, inefficient heating systems and inadequate building standards stretching back over generations.”*

From a *British Medical Journal* Editorial, by Dr Noel DL Olsen, 2001



**Over 3 million households in the UK are fuel poor.**

(source: NEA UK Fuel Poverty Monitor 2004)

*“Fuel poverty is an insidious problem. It wears people down, increasing their chances of ill health as well as making it harder to recover, and contributes to the excess winter death toll among pensioners. It holds back children’s education. It means people fail to get the most out of their community or their community from them. It adds to the pressures on health and social care services.”*

From the *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy Consultation Paper Ministerial Foreword*  
Lord Whitty, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Peter Hain, Minister for Energy and Competitiveness in Europe

**Children are particularly vulnerable to respiratory conditions such as asthma, which have been linked to cold damp homes.**

(UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001)



## What is Fuel Poverty ?

A fuel poor household is defined as one that cannot afford to keep adequately warm at reasonable cost, more accurately defined as a household that needs to spend more than ten percent of its income on all fuels, in order to heat the home adequately.

An adequate standard of warmth is generally defined as 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other occupied rooms. These are the temperatures that are recommended by the World Health Organisation.



**Resistance to respiratory disease falls when temperatures fall below 16°C**

(UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2001)

Fuel poverty is complex in nature and is brought about by various factors –

- Energy inefficient housing
- Insufficient heating equipment
- Fuel costs
- Low household income
- Dwelling size in relation to the number of occupants

Fuel poverty damages people's quality of life and imposes wider costs on the community. The most direct effects are in relation to the health of people living in cold homes. Although these risks apply to all people, older people, children and those who are disabled or have a long-term illness are especially vulnerable.

**Treating cold related illnesses costs the NHS £1 billion per year**

(source: Hunt and Boardman 1994)



# The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy

A 'household in fuel poverty' in the UK is now generally defined as one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use including heating its home to an adequate standard of warmth. This is double the percentage of income that the average household spends. **Five per cent of households spend more than 30% of their income on fuel.**

The indoor temperature levels recommended in the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy are shown in Table 1.

	Minimum (Maintains health)	Standard (Achieves comfort)
Living room	18°C	21°C
Other used rooms	16°C	18°C

Table 1 Indoor temperature levels recommended in the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy

Table 2 shows the effect on comfort and health of exposure to varying living room temperatures. People vary widely however and many people, particularly older people, do not feel cold even when living in cold rooms which are likely to have an adverse effect on their health.

Indoor temperature	Effect
21°C	Comfortable temperature for all, including older people, in living rooms.
18°C	Minimum temperature with no health risk, although older and sedentary people may feel cold.
Under 16°C	Resistance to respiratory diseases may be diminished.
9–12°C	Exposure to temperatures between 9°C and 12°C for more than two hours causes core body temperature to drop, blood pressure to rise and increased risk of cardiovascular disease.
5°C	Significant increase in the risk of hypothermia.

Table 2 The effect on comfort and health of exposure to varying living room temperatures

Source: Adapted from Baker (in press), based on source material from Collins (1986)

Current estimates state that there are currently over 3 million households in the UK who are suffering from fuel poverty.

The *UK Fuel Poverty Strategy* was published in 2001. It is jointly led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and focuses primarily on measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce the cost of fuel for poor households. Measures to raise household income, which form part of a long-term solution, are being addressed in wider poverty and social exclusion policies. The strategy identifies older people, children, disabled people and those with a long-term illness as especially vulnerable to ill health from fuel poverty.

## Fuel poverty definitions and targets

The goal for the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy is to end fuel poverty for vulnerable households by 2010. Fuel poverty for other households will also be tackled once progress is made on the priority vulnerable groups. There are slightly different definitions of fuel poverty and different interim targets for each country. The definitions and targets for England are as follow:

### Definition

The definition on which the interim target is set is:

*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 (ISMI), on all household fuel use.*

However, a second definition that excludes Housing Benefit and ISMI was used in the 1991 English House Condition Survey and will continue to be monitored.

### Target

The interim target for England is: by 2004 to have assisted 800,000 vulnerable households through the Warm Front Team and to reduce the number of non-decent social sector homes by one-third.

The overarching targets for England are:

- The eradication of fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010 and
- The eradication of fuel poverty in all households by 2016.

## Who are those in fuel poverty?

In England, over half of those households in fuel poverty are of older people (aged over 60), particularly those living alone and especially if they live alone in a large house. Over two-thirds of households in fuel poverty are in the private sector (owning their own homes or renting privately).

Figure 1 Household composition of the numbers in fuel poverty in England, 1998

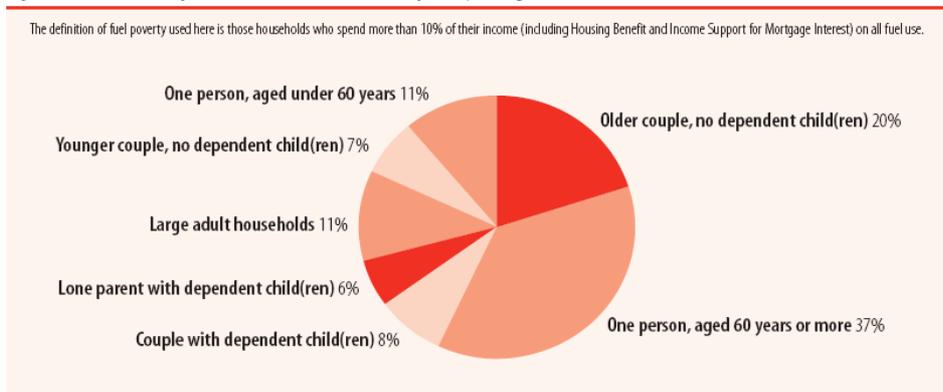
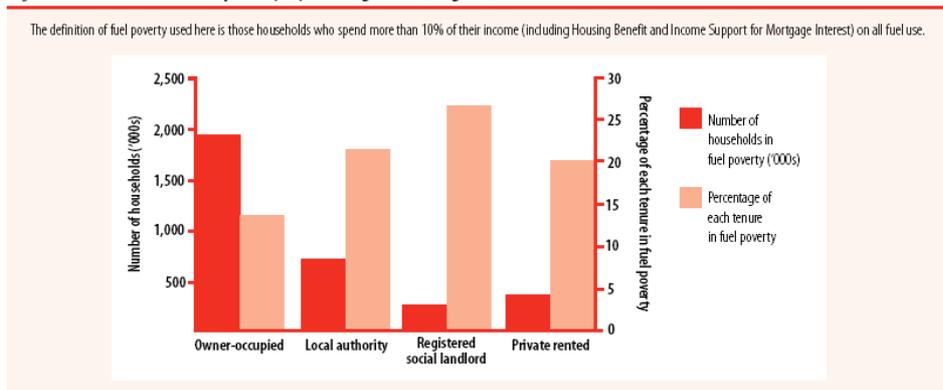


Figure 2 The numbers in fuel poverty, by housing tenure, England, 1998



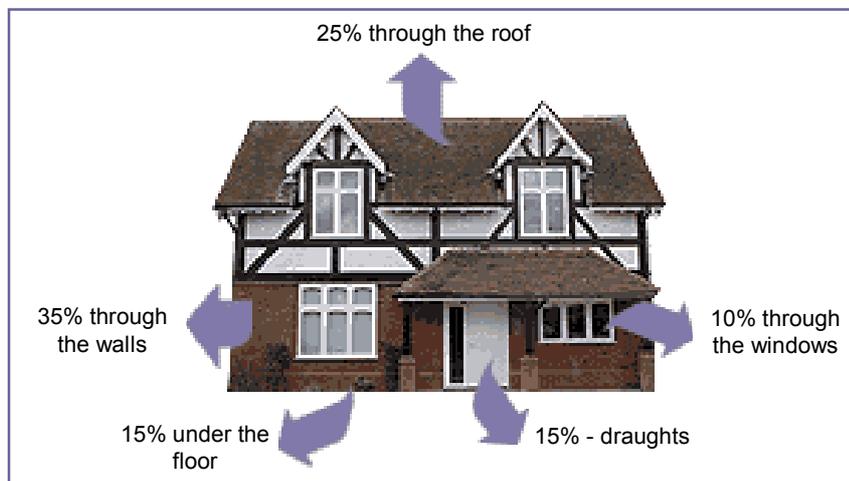
Source : Building Research Establishment, 2001. Fuel Poverty in England in 1998: A Summary Report.

## What causes fuel poverty?

Five factors determine how easy it is to keep a home warm:

- the energy efficiency of the house
- occupancy level related to the size of the house
- household income
- the cost of fuel
- the external environment.

Those in fuel poverty tend to live in homes that are the most expensive to heat due to poor energy efficiency and often also due to low occupancy level (for example, one person in a large house). Energy efficiency is dependent on both heating and insulation. The diagram below shows the amount of heat that is lost from different parts of a house.



When outdoor temperatures are 2°C or less, 18% of homes have living rooms below 16°C. Although household income is a major factor in fuel poverty, 14.5% of households in fuel poverty are not in the lowest 30% of household incomes.

## Building regulations

It would be safe to assume that new or modernized homes would not be included within the problem of fuel poverty. However, recent research has identified that many new or modernized properties fail to meet current building regulations and as such will not be as energy efficient as expected.

On behalf of the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes a survey of 100 houses was conducted by BRE & NEA to evaluate building regulation compliance - of the 100 houses 90 properties failed to comply with building regulations. Further evaluation should be undertaken to further establish the extent of non-compliance, however the study projects a worrying trend and new and modernised properties should not be excluded from fuel poverty initiatives.

## Fuel poverty in rural areas

There are a number of features of rural areas that increase the prevalence of fuel poverty:

- inaccessibility to the gas network
- the high proportion of older houses without cavity walls (which means that cavity wall insulation is not possible)
- the high proportion of detached houses, leading to higher heat loss
- a lack of good quality housing for those on low incomes.

*The full UK Fuel Poverty Strategy of 2001 and the subsequent annual reports, can be viewed and downloaded from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/fuelpov/> Responses and comments on progress from the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group can be viewed at [http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel\\_poverty/index.shtml](http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/index.shtml)*

# Fuel Poverty in the North East

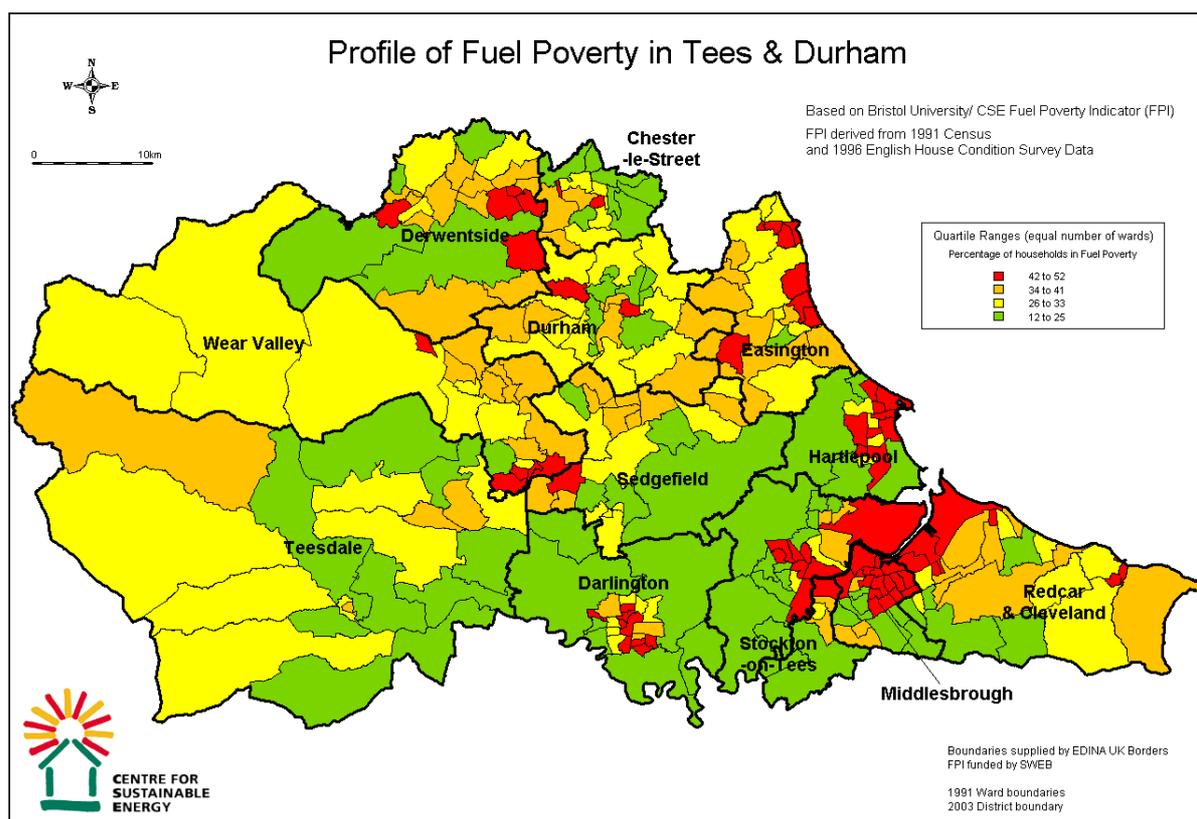
The Fuel Poverty Indicator (FPI) is a tool for predicting levels of fuel poverty in each electoral ward in England.

It can help policy-makers, local authorities, energy utilities, energy efficiency advisers, health professionals and others identify and target programmes to eliminate fuel poverty.

**The FPI avoids commonly used measures of fuel poverty which are now known to be imprecise, such as entitlement to specific welfare benefits or general indices of deprivation. Developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and Bristol University with funding from SWEB, the FPI is instead statistically derived from 1991 Census and 1996 English House Condition Survey data.**

CSE and Bristol University are currently planning to update the Fuel Poverty Indicator with 2001 Census data which will increase its power, reliability and accuracy including data at sub-ward level.

**The average level of fuel poverty in the North East in 1996 was 31%, compared to 22% in England, according to 1996 English House Condition Survey. The rates were even higher in some North East wards, according to the CSE/Bristol University Fuel Poverty Indicator, with some wards in Middlesbrough, for example, experiencing rates of 40% or more.**

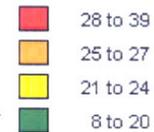


## Profile of Fuel Poverty in Northumberland

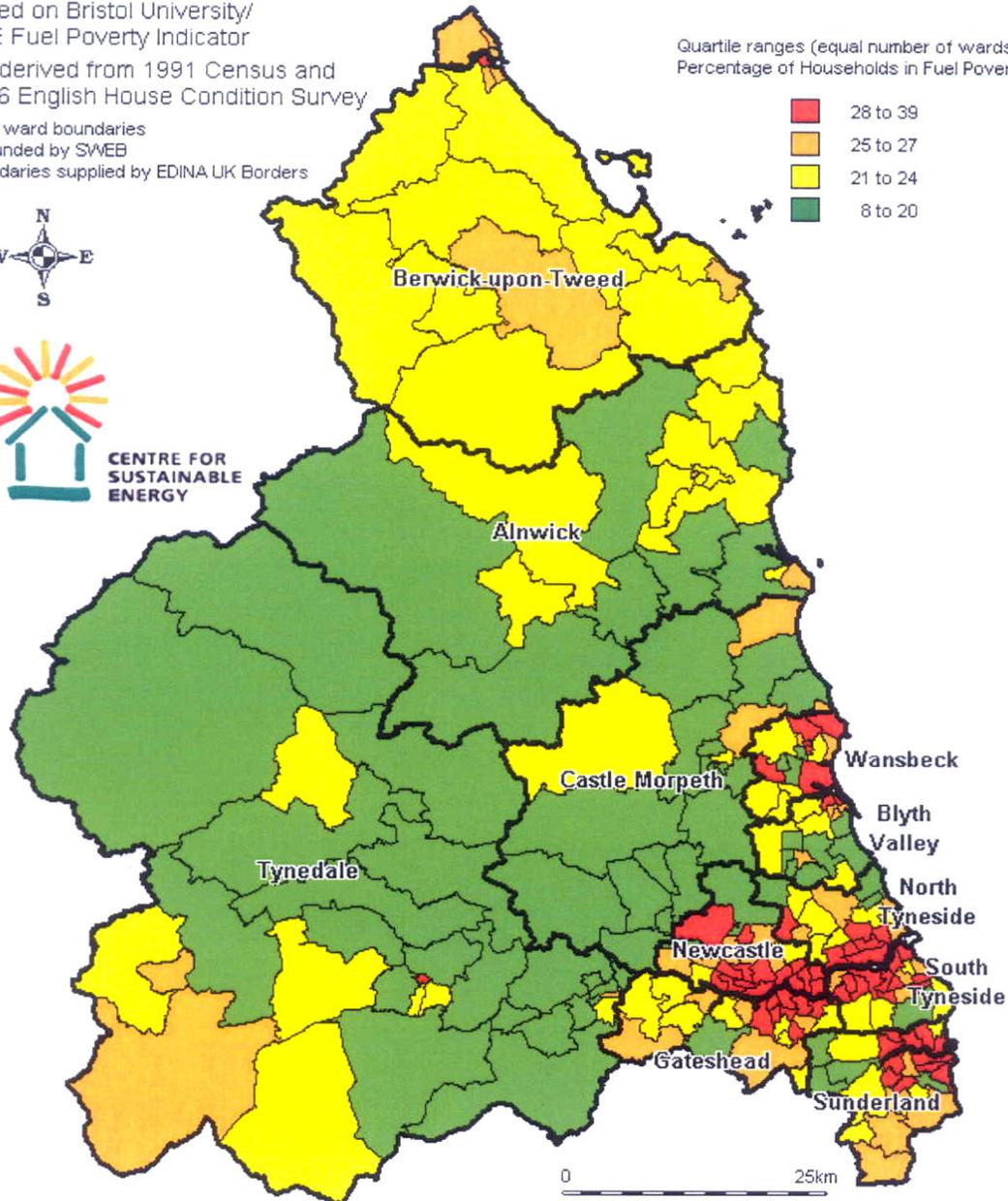
Based on Bristol University/  
CSE Fuel Poverty Indicator  
FPI derived from 1991 Census and  
1996 English House Condition Survey

1991 ward boundaries  
FPI funded by SWEB  
Boundaries supplied by EDINA UK Borders

Quartile ranges (equal number of wards)  
Percentage of Households in Fuel Poverty



CENTRE FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
ENERGY



FPI information on a Local Authority basis can be downloaded from the CSE website - <http://www.cse.org.uk>

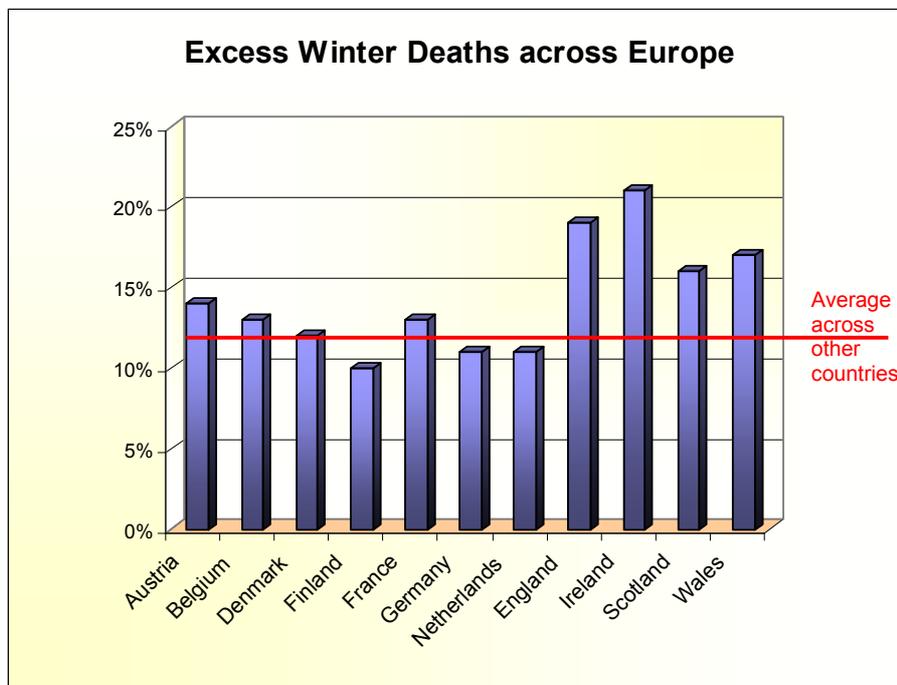
CSE also provide GSI mapping and scoping services – contact William Baker on 0117 934 0941 or [william.baker@cse.org.uk](mailto:william.baker@cse.org.uk) for details.

# Fuel Poverty & Health

It is widely accepted that fuel poverty and ill health are inextricably linked. Cold, damp homes lead to exacerbations of respiratory and circulatory illnesses, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, including the elderly, infants and the infirm.

The likelihood of ill health is increased by cold homes, with illnesses such as influenza, heart disease, and strokes all exacerbated by the cold. Cold homes can also promote the growth of fungi and numbers of house dust mites. The latter have been linked to conditions such as asthma. Ill health can lead to enforced absences from work and certain types of illnesses, such as respiratory disease, may restrict choices of potential employment for those without work. The need to spend a large proportion of income on fuel means that fuel poor households may have to make difficult choices about other household essentials. This can lead to poor diets and withdrawal from the community.

The level of excess winter deaths across the UK far exceeds those in other, colder countries across Europe. This is thought to be due to the fact that colder countries are more aware of the risks of cold and better prepared for lower outdoor temperatures. Certainly, the condition of the housing stock in colder countries is better than that here in the UK, particularly in terms of insulation and adequate heating provision.



Compared with colder countries, at the same outdoor temperature,

- living rooms in the UK are colder
- bedrooms are less likely to be heated
- when we go outside, we are less likely to wear warm clothing such as anoraks, hats and gloves, and we are less active
- we are also more likely to shiver when outside, showing that we are cold.

***“For every °C below the winter average in the UK there are 8,000 extra deaths”***

(Source: Fuel Poverty & Health, produced by the National Heart Forum, the EAGA Partnership Charitable Trust, the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Help the Aged and the Met Office)

Cold homes are often also damp homes. Everyone who lives in these conditions is at risk, but vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, disabled people and those with long-term illnesses are at greater risk, not only because they are more susceptible to illnesses caused by the cold, but they also tend to spend longer at home.

Health risks due to living in cold, damp housing are listed below –

Health Risk	Effect
Increased respiratory illness  Worsening asthma and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)	People with asthma are two to three times more likely than the general population to live in damp homes. Temperatures below 16°C are thought to lower resistance to respiratory infection. Damp leads to growth of moulds and fungi which can cause allergies and respiratory infections.  The cold impairs lung function and is an important trigger of broncho-constriction in asthma and COPD.
Increased blood pressure and risk of heart attack and stroke	Blood pressure rises in older people with exposure to temperatures below 12°C. The risk of heart attacks and strokes increases with increasing blood pressure.
Worsening arthritis	Symptoms of arthritis, particularly pain, become worse among people who live in cold, damp homes.
Increased accidents at home	Having a cold home increases the risk of falls in the elderly, and the risk of accidents due to loss of strength and dexterity in the hands and due to open or free-standing heating.
Increased social isolation	People may become more socially isolated due to economising and reluctance to invite friends into a cold home. Increased social isolation is a risk factor for depression and coronary heart disease.
Impaired mental health	Damp housing is associated with increased mental health problems.
Adverse effects on children's education	Home energy improvements have led to an 80% decrease in the rate of sickness absence from school for children with asthma and recurrent respiratory infections. In many cold homes, only one room is heated, which causes difficulties for children doing homework. Loss of education can lead to loss of job opportunities for life, itself a risk of early mortality.
Adverse effects on nutrition	Homes in fuel poverty have a choice between keeping warm and spending money on other essentials. Poor diet can be the result, with increased long-term health risks of cancer and coronary heart disease.

Source: Fuel Poverty & Health, produced by the National Heart Forum, the EAGA Partnership Charitable Trust, the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, Help the Aged and the Met Office

*The full report "Fuel Poverty & Health", can be viewed and downloaded from the National Heart Forum website - <http://www.heartforum.org.uk/pdfs/book.pdf>*

# Actions for Change

For such a huge problem to be overcome diverse partnerships need to be forged in order to effectively help those most at risk. Many different organisations can all contribute to the overarching aim of removing as many households as possible from fuel poverty. The information in this section gives guidance on some of the things that you and your organisation can do to help make a difference.

Ideally, action needs to be taken to resolve each of the contributory factors to fuel poverty.

- Energy inefficient housing
- Insufficient heating equipment
- Fuel costs
- Low household income
- Dwelling size

Whilst some of these can be tackled by strategic and local action some are much harder to deal with.

Energy efficiency and adequate heating can be provided via national schemes, such as Warm Front and the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) and via local schemes provided by individual local authorities. Whilst these schemes are well publicised, there are still many households who have not taken advantage of these schemes and there is still much to be done.

***“The average Scandinavian cow-shed is better insulated than the average British home.”***

(British Fenestration Rating Council)

Fuel costs are at the mercy of market trends, which are affected by global events, and in recent years fuel prices have risen significantly. Furthermore, the Department of Trade and Industry estimates that electricity prices in particular, will rise by 10% by the year 2010, although the DTI also expect gas prices to decrease due to expected improvements in the import infrastructure. Nonetheless this is a worrying trend.

***“It is estimated that a 1% increase in both gas and electricity prices will result in an additional 40,000 households in fuel poverty.”***

(source: Trends in energy prices between 2003 and 2010, DTI)

Low Household income can be helped by offering benefit checks to vulnerable households to ensure that they are in receipt of all entitlements. This, in turn, can open access to grants for insulation and heating measures via schemes such as Warm Front thereby reducing fuel bills.

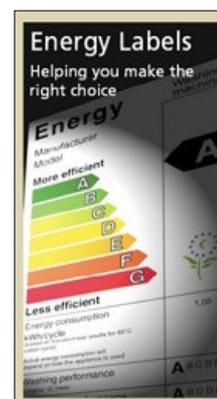
Dwelling size is often a major hurdle to overcome. In many cases, an elderly couple or person may be living in a large house once shared by the family who have now moved on. Ultimately, it becomes more difficult to heat the whole of the house and keep it adequately warm, particularly if the household income is at a low level. A simple solution would be for the householder to move to a much smaller property but in many cases they are either unwilling to leave the home that they have lived in for so long or they are unable to do so.

## Information and advice

This section gives a brief description of information areas that can contribute towards the alleviation of fuel poverty. The subjects are interconnected and do not need to be taken in isolation. The list is to give guidance on the type of subjects covered, or if there is an area you think is relevant and not covered below please ask one of the partner organisations listed.

### Energy Labels

Energy labels identifying the energy efficiency of electrical appliances are becoming more common. This along with Energy Saving Trusts (EST) Energy Saving Recommended label for other products can help cut electricity bills. Further labelling is to be introduced for housing showing how energy efficient they are at the point of sale or re-let to a new tenant. Understanding these different labels will help reduce fuel bills and save energy.

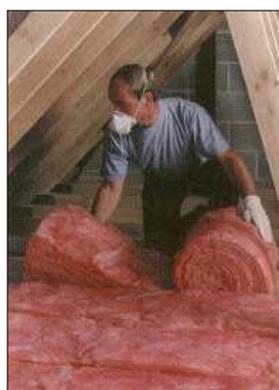


### Low cost energy tips

There are a range of simple improvements and changes in lifestyle that can reduce fuel bills and make a home warmer. Examples include closing the curtains at night to reduce heat loss, only filling the kettle with enough water for the task and using low energy light bulbs which are 80% more efficient than normal bulbs. Most Local Authorities or Utility companies provide this type of information usually in the form of free leaflets.

### Central Heating Systems

Choosing and controlling a home's heating system correctly can save up 40% of the heating costs. There are a wide variety of heating systems used in the domestic sector, including electric storage heaters, a range of gas boilers and solid fuel heating systems. Each system works in different ways and, along with the different controls such as programmers and thermostats, can be confusing and difficult to use. Having a better understanding of traditional heating and alternative heating systems when changing the systems will make a significant difference to heating costs.



### Insulating homes

A large amount of the heat provided by a home's heating system is lost through the fabric of the building - walls, floors, roof and windows. Insulating these elements can reduce the heat loss allowing the occupier to heat their home for longer periods for the same cost and/or reduce their heating bills. Insulating lofts and cavity walls is simple and can be low cost or free with the current grants available. Solid wall insulation, double glazing and floor insulation are more expensive and disruptive and are more appropriate where refurbishment is taking place. Dispelling the concerns around insulation and ensuring that householders access the best grants will help to keep the home warm and reduce fuel bills.

### Managing fuel bills

Utilities bills are often confusing to understand and a large number of people have trouble solving problems with their supplier. Help is available on how to read bills, outlining consumer rights and also providing assistance dealing with the utilities companies.

### Climate Change

Reducing our use of energy helps combat climate change and protects the environment. Information and help is available to explain the impacts of climate change and cover wider aspects including transport, waste and the local environment. Sometimes people's priorities are not saving money but saving the environment.

### Renewable technology

There are a range of new technologies which can be used to heat and power the home - ranging from solar or wind power to district heating and wood fired boilers. The energy generated from these technologies is lower in cost than traditional sources and are climate friendly. "Hard to heat" homes are homes which cannot have traditional insulation and/or are off the gas network. These homes may need help from alternative power sources.



### Health

The links between living in a cold home and ill health have been clearly established. Understanding how the cold affects the body and how to combat the cold will improve health encouraging people to become more proactive.

### Water

Water is often forgotten about when trying to save running costs. Many people are now on water meters and pay for the amount they use. Dripping taps and general wasting of water can significantly increase the cost. There is a wide range of simple ideas that can reduce these costs.

### Grants

There are a wide range of grants available for the majority of measures that can be installed in the home. The assistance can be up to 100% of the cost but will depend on the household's circumstances and location. In the majority of cases some financial assistance will be available. Providing information on the types of grants and eligibility criteria and identifying vulnerable households ensures that help reaches the most needy.

### Benefits Advice

Increasing the income level of a household can alleviate fuel poverty. Where a household is on a low income or benefits there are now a range of services available that can check if they are eligible for other benefits and provide assistance with the claim. Raising the awareness and take up of the service can significantly increase income levels.



**Children are particularly at risk from ill health through fuel poverty. Simple benefits advice to parents can remove this risk.**

## Delivery Methods

Raising awareness and signposting for help requires a range of delivery methods that will depend on the type of organisation. Any combination of the methods below can be used to assist in the delivery of the subjects above. It is hoped that an organisation will be able to use them to enhance the service that they provide with little additional work for the organisation. The list below covers a brief outline of the delivery methods and in most cases they can be tailored to your specific need.



### Information leaflets

Leaflets are available free of charge from a range of organisations on all the above topics. Leaflets are easy to manage; they can be left in entrance halls, handed out at meetings or sent out in the post. Clients can then read the information at their leisure and request the help directly without increasing your workload.

### Talks/presentations

Leaflets can be impersonal and sometimes fail to get the message across. Hearing a presentation and being able to ask questions can often be a more effective way of delivering the message. Presentations can be tailored to your organisation's requirement and can be formal or informal, to small or big groups. Most Local Authorities or larger organisations such as Age Concern will be happy to provide this service.

### Home Visits

Visiting a person at home and providing one to one advice can be very effective as the advice is tailored to the individual and often additional problems can be identified. This service is limited however and for further information please contact the EST Energy Advice Centre.



### Road shows and events

Manned stalls and displays at local events can provide leaflets and one to one advice to attendees. These can be interactive and enhance events that you are planning.

### Telephone Advice

Various freephone and local numbers are available for all energy related queries. The advertisement of the number allows people to talk through their question with a qualified helper who can give good quality advice.

### Web Sites

There are a large number of helpful web sites that give a range of information from basic to in-depth. Providing links from your organisation's web site to the relevant energy advice web site will increase your staff and client access to these services. The key organisation can give you advice on the most relevant site to link to.

# Case Studies

## Health Through Warmth

Two-year-old Jessie Irwin lives with her parents, Lorraine and Geoff, and twin brother in Westerhope, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Jessie has cystic fibrosis, resulting in regular hospital visits and a steady stream of intravenous and oral antibiotics. Her condition often leaves her susceptible to chest infections.



Recurring problems with the central heating boiler meant that the Irwins were often left without hot water. Following a referral from Jessie's cystic fibrosis liaison nurse who was concerned that this was having an adverse effect on treating Jessie's illness, a full assessment resulted in the installation of a brand new boiler.

The new boiler was installed thanks to the financial support of charities Barnardos and William Moulton, with the remaining balance coming from the Health Through Warmth crisis fund.

*"Without the help of Health Through Warmth we would still be in a situation where we have no hot water in the family home. We have to be extremely careful with Jessie's condition. It is vital that we keep her strong and in good health so that treatment is effective. Thanks to the help we've received from Health Through Warmth this is no longer an issue for us."*

## Maximising Income

The Redcar & Cleveland Warm Zone benefits project has raised over £1.1m in increased benefits. The programme contacted 80% of all residents within the Borough, to offer an energy efficiency and income assessment, who in addition were offered the chance of a confidential benefit check.

Benefit advisers arranged initial benefit checks, completed claim forms for people and took cases to appeal to help them get the correct benefit entitlement.

Two elderly couples with health problems have had their annual incomes increased by over £14,000 a year.

Increasing the uptake of entitled benefits ensures that people are then able to access means tested grants such as Warm Front, for insulation and heating measures to their homes.

## Major Benefits

Mr & Mrs S had a weekly income of £160.95: the minimum income guarantee for a retired couple. Although they just got by, the cost of heating alone swallowed a large portion of their income. Older people tend to feel the cold more but this was intensified in the case of Mr S who has Parkinson's disease and Arthritis and Mrs S who has Osteoporosis and Arthritis.

The Newcastle Warm Zone Benefits Team applied for Attendance Allowance for the couple, which was awarded at the higher weekly rate of £58.80 per person, which in turn generated extra pension credits to the tune of £139.63 per week for the couple.

Newcastle Warm Zone increased benefits income for Mr and Mrs S by £13,377 a year.

## HOT NEWS FROM NEWCASTLE WARM ZONE



The possibility of a cold winter holds no fear for 77-year old George Atkinson, thanks to the efforts of Newcastle Warm Zone.

George who lives at Denhill Park Road, Newcastle has just had a full central heating system, fire, cavity wall and loft insulation in his home and is absolutely delighted with the results.

“It’s fantastic”, said George. “I had a heating system but it didn’t work properly and my house was very cold and I had no hot water. Not only is my house starting to feel warmer already but I’ve been told that I’m going to save on my fuel bills too, which I’m really pleased about.”

The cavity wall and loft insulation measures put into George’s home will save him around £200 a year on his two bedroom semi-detached house and because he meets the necessary criteria, George has not had to pay for any of these improvements.

David Connor, Newcastle Warm Zone’s Director said “There are many people in Newcastle who are in a similar situation to George who we can help. Contrary to belief you don’t always need to be of a certain age, live in a particular type of property, receive benefits or be unemployed, we help many people and look to improve homes that are energy inefficient, cost a lot of money to heat or indeed are too cold.”



Newcastle Warm Zone is a £27m not-for-profit four year partnership between Newcastle City Council, Your Homes Newcastle, Scottish Power and National Grid which aims at eradicating fuel poverty in Newcastle.

During the project all houses across the City will be visited and many residents will be eligible for free insulation and if you live in a certain area free central heating systems too.

Households who are found to be in fuel poverty plus all city council housing can benefit from this scheme with the result that their quality of life will be improved and their fuel bills will be reduced. At the same time Newcastle Warm Zone assessors will be offering free benefits checks and free energy advice to everyone, so everyone wins.

### Vida Bagnall

Mrs Bagnall, aged 81, lives on her own in the small rural village of Endon, in North Staffordshire. She suffered a stroke three years ago and has mobility problems and spends a lot of time indoors. Keeping warm, healthy and mobile is vitally important to her. Mrs Bagnall receives Income Support, amongst other Warm Front qualifying benefits and she qualified for a Warm Front grant of up to £2,500 for heating and insulation improvements.

She applied for the scheme in November 2002 and within a couple of weeks, a Warm Front Assessor visited her at home to talk to her about what work could be done under the grant and provide some energy saving tips which would make an immediate difference.

Two months later, Mrs Bagnall was visited by local Warm Front installers, who fitted a gas central heating system, insulated her loft and draught proofed the windows and doors. Mrs Bagnall said, *“before I applied for a grant, winter was always a worry. I only had heat in one room and the house was so damp and draughty. But thanks to the Warm Front scheme, my house is warm throughout and I don’t have to worry that I’ll catch a cold.”*

Mrs Bagnall's daughter, who lives nearby, has also noticed what a difference Warm Front has made to her mother: *“Mum relied on a gas heater before she applied for the scheme. Since the central heating was installed, she can use the whole house. Now she doesn't have to worry about the house being cold when her three year old great granddaughter, Megan, comes to visit.”*

# Key Energy Organisations

Help is available through a range of key organisations covering the North East, smaller area base schemes may be available in your area which can be contacted through the Energy Saving Trust Energy Advice Centre or your Local Authority.

The organisations listed below cover the majority of the North East and would welcome contact requesting help.

## Energy Saving Trust Advice Centres

 energy saving trust	<i>Contact Details</i> Tel 0845 727 7200	Web Site <a href="http://www.est.org.uk">www.est.org.uk</a>
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National network of advice centres providing energy advice

## EAGA Partnership

 eaga partnership	<i>Contact Details</i> Tel 0800 316 2808	Web Site <a href="http://www.eaga.co.uk">www.eaga.co.uk</a>
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Eaga manages programmes on behalf of central government, the devolved administrations, utilities and social housing providers as well as private customers. Current programs include the delivery of energy efficiency, central heating and income maximisation through Benefit Entitlement Checks. Management of Warm Front scheme and other energy efficiency programmes.

## National Energy Action (NEA)

 NEA Campaigning for Warm Homes	<i>Contact Details</i> Tel 0191 261 5677	Web Site <a href="http://www.nea.org.uk">www.nea.org.uk</a>
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NEA develops and promotes energy efficiency services to tackle the heating and insulation problems of low-income households. Working in partnership with central and local government; with fuel utilities, housing providers and health services; and with consumer organisations, NEA aims to eradicate fuel poverty and campaigns for greater investment in energy efficiency to help those who are poor or vulnerable.

- research and analysis into the causes and extent of fuel poverty and the development of policies which will address the problem
- providing advice and guidance to installers on good practice in delivering energy efficiency services to low-income householders
- developing national qualifications and managing their implementation to improve standards of practical work and the quality of energy advice
- producing educational resources to teach people about the importance of energy efficiency
- managing demonstration projects in inner cities and rural areas which show innovative ways of tackling fuel poverty and bring the wider benefits of energy efficiency to local communities.

### Energywatch

	<i>Contact Details</i>
	<i>Tel 08459 06 07      Web Site <a href="http://www.energywatch.org.uk">www.energywatch.org.uk</a></i>

Energywatch is the independent watchdog for gas and electricity consumers. They provide free, impartial advice on a range of energy issues. They also take up complaints on behalf of consumers who are experiencing difficulty in resolving problems directly with their energy suppliers.

### The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)

	<i>Contact Details</i>
	<i>Tel 0117 929 9950 Web Site <a href="http://www.cse.org.uk">www.cse.org.uk</a></i>

CSE is a national charitable company that was established in 1979. Their mission as an independent charity is to advance sustainable energy policy and practice, seeking energy solutions that engage people and communities to meet real needs for both environmentally sound and affordable energy services.

They aim to achieve this mission by:

- delivering effective advice, education and practical projects for people in our local area
- developing innovative energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives and inspiring education and training programmes
- undertaking original research, policy analysis and strategy development to enhance understanding and improve policy-making at local, regional and national level.

### Age Concern

	<i>Contact Details</i>
	<i>Tel 0117 929 9950      Web Site <a href="http://www.cse.org.uk">www.cse.org.uk</a></i>

Age Concern supports all people over 50 in the UK, ensuring that they get the most from life. We provide essential services such as day care and information. We campaign on issues like age discrimination and pensions, and work to influence public opinion and government policy about older people.

### Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes (EEPfH)

	<i>Contact Details</i>	<i>Web site</i>
	<i>Tel 020 7222 0101</i>	<i><a href="http://www.est.org.uk/partnership/">http://www.est.org.uk/partnership/</a></i>

The Partnership is an independent network of over 300 UK organisations working together to promote energy efficiency and eradicate fuel poverty. The Partnership brings together major stakeholders in home energy efficiency from private, public and voluntary sectors.

### Partnership aims

- Providing more effective marketing and delivery of energy efficiency in homes
- Ensuring smooth growth in industry supply capacity, including skills and training
- Providing constructive dialogue with Government for its long-term support and endorsement for the energy efficiency industry and its products and services
- Supporting the development and maintenance of national standards for energy efficiency
- Encouraging effective links between different sectors in energy efficiency and spreading best practice.

The Partnership is funded by Defra, with an annual budget of £1 million. The Energy Saving Trust (EST) facilitates the Partnership, including establishing and servicing 16 working groups which meet quarterly, organising events and coordinating information dissemination. In-kind contribution from partners is worth £1.3 million.

### Warm Zones Ltd

	<p><i>Contact Details</i></p> <p><i>Tel 0191 269 6113 Web Site <a href="http://www.warmzones.co.uk">www.warmzones.co.uk</a></i></p>
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Warm Zones is the only large-scale, Defra/DTI/EST independently evaluated area-based programme delivering an effective, targeted approach to identify fuel-poor households and deliver real benefits through energy efficiency improvements and income maximisation.

Warm Zones is part of National Energy Action (NEA), the national fuel poverty charity. Warm Zones Limited (WZL) is a separate, wholly owned, not-for-profit subsidiary of NEA operating in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines.

The overall business mission of Warm Zones Limited (WZL) is: “To use its experience to facilitate the efficient, integrated and appropriate delivery of practical measures to alleviate fuel poverty and improve domestic energy efficiency of all households in defined geographical areas.”

### Home Heat Helpline

	<p><i>Contact Details</i></p> <p><i>Tel 0800 33 66 99</i></p>
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The helpline is a single number service through which consumers who are on low income benefits will be able to speak to an energy company advisor about debt management or energy efficiency.

### Local Authorities - HECA Officers

Each Authority has an officer or department dealing with fuel poverty who will be able to give you advice on help within your area. Contact your local authority or NEDEF for more details.

### Utility suppliers

All energy utility suppliers will provide information and advice on the services they can provide to customers and local authorities in assisting to tackle fuel poverty. Contact your supplier for more details.

### Voluntary Groups

**Many voluntary groups working within the community are able to pass on valuable advice to households at risk, and signpost them to other Key Organisations who are able to help them.**

# The North East Fuel Poverty Declaration

In signing this declaration, .....  
are demonstrating our commitment to the reduction of Fuel Poverty within our communities.

## We acknowledge

- that Fuel Poverty is an inequality in our society with consequences of cold, damp homes being inextricably linked to ill health, affecting the wellbeing of individuals.
- the right of every householder to attain affordable warmth.
- that social, economic and environmental benefits will come from combating Fuel Poverty, and there is recognition by many sectors of the need for change.
- the transient nature of fuel poverty, that households move in and out of fuel poverty dependent on their income and the cost of fuel.

## We welcome

- the opportunity to support the development and implementation of national, regional and local Fuel Poverty strategies and plans, through
  - Improving the living conditions and health of householders, whilst reducing household fuel bills
  - Saving our natural resources and promoting renewable energy sources, therefore contributing towards combating climate change
- the opportunity to work in partnerships with other organisations at a regional and local level, to tackle Fuel Poverty.
- the opportunity for local government to steer the response at a local level and thereby play a major role in helping local authorities to deliver a regional programme.

## We commit

- to raising awareness of Fuel Poverty issues within our organisation and our partners.
- to encourage all sectors of the local community to take the opportunity to remove themselves and others from Fuel Poverty.
- to liaise with Key Providers to produce effective solutions.

Declaration Signed on .....



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