



# FACTSHEET 12/2016

## Fuel Poverty

### What is fuel poverty?

Glasgow City Council has adopted the Scottish Government's definition of fuel poverty which states:

*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 on all household fuel use. If over 20% of income is required, then this is termed as being in extreme fuel poverty.*

*(Source: The Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement, 2002)*

A satisfactory heating regime is defined as:

*For "vulnerable" households, 23°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms. For other households, this is 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms.*

### Causes of fuel poverty

The main causes are:

- Poor energy efficiency of the dwelling
- Low disposable household income
- High price of domestic fuel

Of the three main causes of fuel poverty, two of them i.e. household income and energy regulation, are matters reserved to the UK Government, while energy efficiency is a matter devolved to the Scottish Government.

### Fuel poverty in Glasgow

According to the Scottish Government's Scottish House Condition Survey, 34% of households in Glasgow were in fuel poverty between 2012 and 2014, with 8% estimated to be in extreme fuel poverty. This equates to approximately 102,000 households in fuel poverty in Glasgow. This compares with the national averages of 35% and 10% respectively.



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Whilst considerably lower than rural regions of Scotland, Glasgow's position remains worse than the averages for the majority of local authorities which make up the Clyde Valley Planning Authority area e.g. East Dunbartonshire 28% and 6%; West Dunbartonshire 29% and 6%; South Lanarkshire 30% and 7%. Compared to the capital, Edinburgh at 25% and 6%, Glasgow continues to lag behind as Scotland's largest lowland city.

## Health and Well Being

Fuel poverty in Glasgow is strongly linked to health and wellbeing. The WHO report of 2007 [Housing, Energy and Thermal Comfort](#) established the link between poor health and low indoor temperatures in properties. Since then, further research has cemented the view that living in cold conditions can have an adverse effect on the physical and mental health of all age groups. This can increase the seasonal mortality rate. Seasonal increases in mortality usually affects the elderly, especially those aged 75 and over and in the Glasgow City Council area, there were an additional 150 excess winter deaths in those aged 75 and over in 2013-14. In 2013-14, there were a total of 2,179 excess winter deaths in the Glasgow area.

## Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

Fuel poverty and climate change are linked, particularly in terms of the "carbon footprint" left by individual properties and the resultant cumulative effect on emissions produced within the city. Glasgow City Council's affordable warmth strategy, whilst primarily focussed on the means of improving the quality of life for our citizens in respect of energy costs, also takes into account innovative ways of reducing emissions.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act requires emissions to be reduced by 42% by 2020 and by at least 80% by 2050. It also requires Scottish Ministers to set annual emissions targets, as well as including measures relating to adaptation, energy efficiency and waste reduction. The City is aiming to join up and connect its approach to the reduction of carbon emissions in both the domestic and non-domestic fields. The Affordable Warmth Strategy covers the domestic element and the Energy and Carbon Masterplan addresses the non-domestic element.



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## **Fuel Poverty Target**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 89(5)(b), placed a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers 'to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that people are not living in fuel poverty in Scotland by November 2016'. In June 2016, Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government and Housing, announced that the Government would not meet its target to eradicate fuel poverty by this date. He emphasised the amount of money spent by the Scottish Government on improving the energy efficiency of homes and attributed the failure to factors beyond the Government's control, such as high energy prices.

## **Scottish Government Policy**

The Scottish Government has designated energy efficiency as a National Infrastructure Priority. The cornerstone of this policy will be Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) which will offer support to improve the energy efficiency ratings of all domestic and non-domestic buildings in Scotland. SEEP will be launched in 2018 and will be supported by over £500 million of public funding.

The Scottish Government also intend to bring forward a Warm Homes Bill during the Parliamentary session to support accelerated deployment of renewable and district heating. There is no details of this available yet.

## **Energy Efficiency**

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases. Social housing providers have to meet targets by 2020. However, there will be a review of ESSH by the Scottish Government in 2017.

The Regulation for Energy Efficiency for Private Sector Homes (REEPS) is an initiative that the Scottish Government intend to consult on in this parliamentary session which is aimed at improving the energy efficiency of private sector homes.



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The Scottish Government will also consult on a new overarching energy strategy which will take a holistic approach to energy by integrating power, transport and heat.

## **Devolved Powers**

As part of the Scotland Act 2016, new powers will come to Scotland over Winter Fuel Payments (WFPs), Cold Weather Payments (CWPs), Warm Home Discount and the Energy Company Obligation. Also in the Scotland Act are obligations such as the Warm Home Discount and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). Plans are underway to develop a 'Scottish ECO'. Further details about this are yet to be released.