

London Borough of Enfield

Warmer Homes

A Fuel Poverty Strategy for
Enfield

Acknowledgements

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- Enfield Somali Association
- Global Action Plan
- Islamic Foundation for Ecology & Environmental Sciences (IFEES)
- Jobcentre Plus
- Over 50s Forum
- Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
- Ruth Winston Centre
- Samafal
- West Lea School

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1 Foreword

It is all too easy to think of fuel poverty as an issue that doesn't affect modern people. Unfortunately, this couldn't be further from the truth, as fuel poverty has never been more relevant. In 2013, nearly 13,000 households in Enfield couldn't afford to heat their homes to an adequate level.

Living in a cold home can make vulnerable people ill and make their existing illnesses worse, which places extra strain on overstretched health and social care services. Fuel poor homes are often substandard and expensive to heat due to inadequate insulation and inefficient boilers. These substandard homes increase the borough's carbon footprint and make the lives of residents more difficult. Fuel poverty affects the outcomes of children, depriving too many of the warm, safe environment they need to thrive. It also means that money which could otherwise be spent on Enfield's high streets, helping to strengthen local businesses and providing local employment, is collected by national energy companies.

In previous years, Enfield Council has taken steps to reduce fuel costs for residents. We improved the energy efficiency of Scott House by securing funding to install a new heating system, energy efficient windows and insulation. We also helped over 1000 residents reduce their energy bills by switching their energy supplier via the Big London Energy Switch. However, there is a pressing need for more comprehensive action to help residents escape from fuel poverty and the scale of the problem is such that no organisation can tackle it alone.

Enfield Council is delighted that such a wide variety of organisations have come together to help alleviate fuel poverty in the Borough and would like to thank National Energy Action for their help in producing this strategy and action plan.

Cllr Keazor,
Cabinet Member for Public Health & Sport

Cllr Sitkin,
Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration & Business Development

Cllr Oykenner,
Cabinet Member for Housing & Housing Regeneration

2 What is Fuel Poverty?

2.1 The definition

In England, a household is considered to be in fuel poverty if its energy bills are high and its income is low. If a household pays more than £1,239 a year for its energy (annual energy costs for a typical household) and its household income is less than £12,213 (60% of the average household income after housing costs), it could be in fuel poverty.¹

Fuel poverty is also measured using the fuel poverty gap - the difference between the energy bills of fuel poor household in comparison to a typical non-fuel poor household. In 2013, the average fuel poverty gap was £374 per fuel poor household and nationally this added up to a staggering £877 million.

Many households choose to use less energy than they need to be comfortable. However, for those on low incomes occupying inefficient properties, living in a cold environment is often unavoidable.

When faced with fuel poverty, low income households generally react in one of three ways:

- They use less energy than they need, potentially making existing health problems worse and making them vulnerable to other cold related illnesses;
- They try to meet their energy needs by rationing other necessary items, such as food; or
- They borrow money to pay their energy bills and fall into debt.

2.2 Who's affected?

The following groups are at the greatest risk of fuel poverty:

- Low income households (particularly families);
- Those living in homes built before 1944;
- Those without access to mains gas;
- Those using pre-payment electric or gas cards; and
- Elderly or disabled residents.²

¹ *Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report, 2015*; DECC, p. 6

² DECC, *Detailed Tables, Low Income High Cost Definition*, Updated May 2015

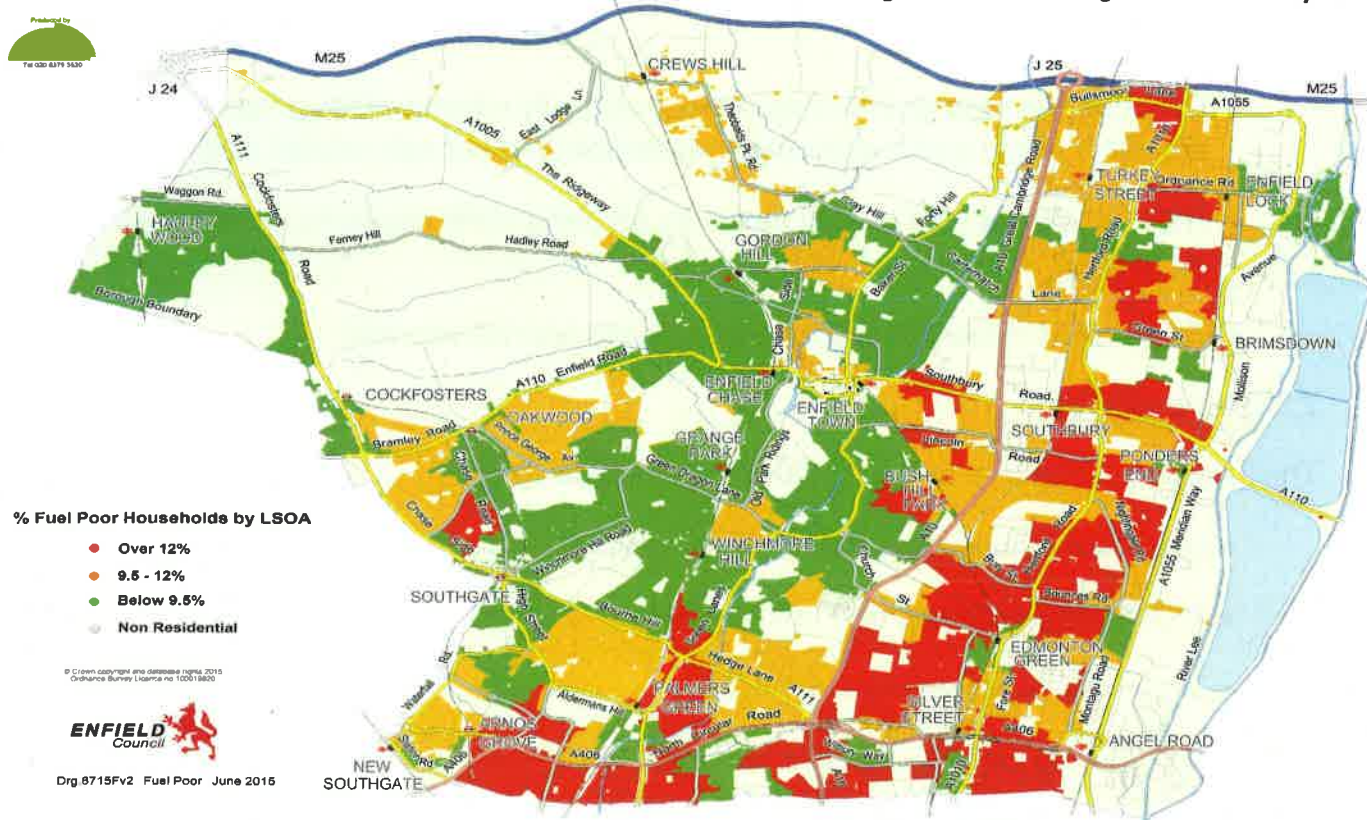
3 Why Should We Act?

3.1 The Enfield Statistics

Fuel poverty in Enfield is a serious problem and the number of households affected is growing.

- In 2012, 10,077 households were in fuel poverty. In 2013 this had increased to 12,927 households.³
- Enfield has the 6th largest number of households living in fuel poverty in London and the 37th largest total in England.⁴
- 10.6% of the borough's households live in fuel poverty; this is above both the national average of 10.4% and the London average of 9.8%.⁵
- As the map below demonstrates, the majority of fuel poor residents live in the east and south west of the borough, but there are pockets of fuel poverty across Enfield.

Figure 1 DECC Sub Regional Fuel Poverty Data 2013



³ DECC, Sub-Regional Fuel Poverty England 2013, LIHC Definition, Updated May 2015; DECC, Sub-Regional Fuel Poverty England 2012, LIHC Definition, Updated June 2014

⁴ DECC, Sub-Regional Fuel Poverty England 2013, LIHC Definition, Updated May 2015

⁵ DECC Detailed Tables England, Low Income High Cost Indicator, 2013; DECC, Sub-Regional Fuel Poverty England 2013, LIHC Definition, Updated May 2015

3.2 Health & Housing

Those in fuel poverty live in homes that lack proper insulation and efficient boilers, making them expensive to heat and bad for the environment. These homes emit more carbon, increasing the size of Enfield's carbon footprint, and often force householders to live in cold, damp conditions which can have a serious impact on health. Fuel poverty can make the following illnesses worse:

- Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Emphysema, Chronic Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Arthritis, Rheumatism, Colds, Flu, Depression, Stress and Anxiety.

Every year the total of deaths in the winter months is compared to the total for the rest of the year. The difference is known as excess winter deaths. In 2012/13 there were 150 excess winter deaths in Enfield and 30% of these can be attributed to low indoor temperatures. This means that fuel poverty had a direct effect on 45 of the excess winter deaths in Enfield during 2012/13.⁶

Previously, fuel poverty has been a problem for housing providers or home owners, but the health sector is now beginning to acknowledge that tackling poor housing can have a major impact on patients. Fuel poverty is already recognised as an issue in Enfield's Housing Strategy, as well as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. By working together to address poor housing the individual efforts made by providers of housing, health and social care to tackle fuel poverty in Enfield will be far more effective and will make better use of scarce resources.

3.3 Child Poverty

Household debt and ill health are both highlighted in Enfield's Child Poverty Strategy as serious limitations on a child's long-term outcomes and both are made worse by fuel poverty. Children living in fuel poverty are:

- 1.5 to 3 times more likely to suffer from a respiratory illness;
- Young children are at risk of failing to gain weight due to the extra calories needed to keep warm and/or not eating enough due to food rationing;
- More likely to suffer from mental health problems;
- At risk of failing to do well at school due to the lack of a warm home to study in.⁷

3.4 Employment & Income

The unemployed and those in low paid work are particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty, as they're exposed to energy price rises and are often unable to increase the energy efficiency of their homes. Maximising income by improving employability, finding work and reducing monthly expenses is an effective and sustainable way to

⁶ Braubach, M. Et al. Environmental Burden of Disease associated with Inadequate Housing, Copenhagen: World Health Organisation Europe, 2011, p.82

⁷ *Fuel Poverty How To Improve Health & Well-being through action on affordable warmth*, UK Health Forum, 2014, pp. 15-16

remove a household from fuel poverty and will support the objectives of Enfield's Employment and Skills Strategy.

Tackling fuel poverty in Enfield has the potential to support and/or create local employment in the energy efficiency sector. A recent study suggested that making all fuel poor homes energy efficient could create up to 108,000 jobs across the UK.⁸ Reducing fuel debt and the monthly outgoings of low income families will increase the amount of disposable income available to be spent on Enfield's high streets, which could create local jobs and support local businesses.

4 Our Plan to Tackle Fuel Poverty

4.1 How do you solve a problem like fuel poverty?

Ensuring that all residents can afford to heat their home is not a task that any organisation can accomplish alone, nor can it be tackled quickly. Eradicating fuel poverty in Enfield will require sustained effort and cooperation over a longer period of time. Community groups and organisations that already work with vulnerable residents - such as Enfield Council, Enfield Citizens Advice Bureau, Enfield Age UK, Enfield CCG and local GPs – need to work together to tackle fuel poverty. This strategy and action plan will lay the foundations on which future work can be based.

Enfield has chosen to deal with fuel poverty by bringing together the organisations with the skills and expertise to tackle the issue in the borough to form a fuel poverty partnership. A member of each organisation will sit on the Fuel Poverty and Energy Retrofit Steering Group, which will:

- Oversee the delivery of the Fuel Poverty Action Plan;
- Pool knowledge and resources to ensure that fuel poor residents receive support; and
- Take the strategic decisions necessary to help alleviate fuel poverty in Enfield.

Enfield Council's Sustainability Service will support the Steering Group, co-ordinating and monitoring the efforts to tackle fuel poverty in the borough. The Steering Group will report annually to the Enfield Strategic Partnership and Enfield Council's Cabinet.

4.2 What are we going to do?

Enfield Council and its partners have created an action plan (see appendix 1) designed to help alleviate fuel poverty in the borough. There are three main aspects to tackling fuel poverty which are reflected in the Action Plan's themes:

⁸ Washan, P., Stenning, J. & Goodman, M. *Building the Future: Economic and fiscal impacts of making homes energy efficient*, Verco & Cambridge Econometrics (October, 2014)

1. Data

- Current national data shows the size of the problem and the areas in which fuel poor households can be found, but it doesn't identify individuals. Using the data we already collect more effectively will make it easier to identify residents in or at risk of fuel poverty. It will also enable the Council to measure the effect of work to tackle fuel poverty in the borough.

2. Maximising Income; Raising Awareness and Improving Energy, Debt and Benefit Advice

- Removing a household from fuel poverty doesn't always require major changes. Sometimes it's simply a case of switching a household to the cheapest energy supplier, ensuring a household is claiming its maximum benefit entitlement, working with people in a household to increase their incomes or teaching householders how to use existing heating systems efficiently. We need to ensure that Enfield residents are aware of fuel poverty and have access to advice.
- Officials that work with vulnerable residents are a key part of the fight against fuel poverty. Recognising the signs, providing basic advice and referring a resident to someone who can help will have a major impact on the lives of fuel poor residents in the borough.

3. Energy Efficient Homes

- Some homes are so inefficient that large improvements - such as new boilers, internal or external wall insulation and new radiators - are required to remove the household from fuel poverty.
- There are plenty of grants available for energy efficiency measures, but they rarely cover the total cost of the work, effectively excluding those in fuel poverty. We need to help these residents by finding a way to bridge the funding gap.
- In March 2015, the government set the first national fuel poverty target which requires all F & G rated properties to be improved to EPC band C by 2030. The government also introduced legislation that will prevent landlords letting properties (domestic or commercial) that fall below EPC band E from 2018. Enfield Council will use these pieces of legislation to reduce fuel poverty and to improve the quality of Enfield's housing.

Appendix 1 – Enfield's Fuel Poverty Action Plan

Fuel Poverty Action Plan					
Data					
Project(s)	Expected Outcomes	Outputs	Lead Agency	Supporting Agency	Timescale
Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents vulnerable to fuel poverty will be identified using existing Council Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National fuel poverty indicators will be used to identify residents vulnerable to fuel poverty from existing data. - A fuel poverty indicator will be incorporated into the single view of the customer. 	<p>Data & Management Information Reporting Hub, LBE</p> <p>Web Team, LBE</p>	Sustainability, LBE	July 2017
Maximising Income; Raising awareness and Improving Energy, Debt and Benefit Advice					
Project	Expected Outcomes	Output	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Timescale
Home Energy Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding will be sourced to commission a home energy advice service for Enfield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The service will provide energy awareness advice and home energy checks for vulnerable residents. - The service will install minor energy efficiency measures, assist residents to switch energy supplier and help them use existing heating systems effectively. - The service will carry out benefit entitlement checks and provide income maximisation advice. 	Sustainability, LBE	HHASC, LBE	Ongoing

Raising Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Welfare Benefits Hub, Private Sector Homes and Housing Enforcement teams will receive energy awareness training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Energy Action will provide fuel poverty awareness training to frontline teams at Enfield Council - The teams that receive training will be able to provide basic help to customers suffering from fuel poverty. 	National Energy Action	Sustainability, LBE	March 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of fuel poverty and the danger it poses to health via a winter marketing campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enfield Council and National Energy Action will run a Winter Marketing Campaign aimed at vulnerable residents to alert them to the dangers of fuel poverty. - The campaign will contain advice about saving energy and keeping warm during winter 	Sustainability, LBE	National Energy Action Marketing & Communications, LBE Enfield Community Groups and Charities	October 2015 - March 2016
Self-help & Simplifying Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A fuel poverty self-assessment will be incorporated into the new financial assessment tool on the Council website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tool will give fuel poor residents information about the help available and their eligibility for Council grants. 	Sustainability, LBE Private Sector Homes, LBE	Enfield 2017 Web team, LBE	July 2017

Building Capacity	- 22 Energy Champions will be trained to City & Guilds Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Energy Champions will be given the opportunity to gain the Level 3 City & Guilds Energy Awareness Qualification. - The Energy Champions will then help other residents and will deliver community energy awareness sessions. 	Sustainability, LBE	National Energy Action	March 2016
Energy Efficient Housing					
Project(s)	Expected Outcomes	Output	Lead Agency	Support Agency	Timescale
Smart Homes	- 250 Smart Homes grants will be taken up in Enfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Smart Homes project will be promoted and take-up of the £6k grants will be encouraged. Local energy retrofit installers will be integrated into the supply chain. 	Sustainability, LBE	Business & Economic Development, LBE	October 2015
Self Help & Simplifying Access	- Funding will be sourced to establish an energy efficiency gap fund for fuel poor residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The fund will provide the gap funding necessary to enable fuel poor households to take advantage of energy efficiency schemes. 	Sustainability, LBE	HHASC, LBE	Ongoing

Retrofit London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 147 businesses will receive support - Local retro-fit companies will be better placed to compete for retrofit work related to combatting fuel poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retrofit London will provide local companies with 12 hours of free support to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to compete for retrofit contracts. A strong, local retrofit network will multiply the effect of money spent on anti-fuel poverty measures within the borough. - Some local companies will also be allowed to use the Council logo on marketing material related to specific projects and grants. 	Business & Economic Development, LBE	Sustainability, LBE	2015-16
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advice provided by the Sustainability Service will help the Housing Enforcement Team to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, all private rented properties in Enfield will be above EPC band E by 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide advice and guidance to help landlords understand their obligations and to improve their properties. - Support Housing Enforcement team to develop an enforcement strategy. 	Housing Enforcement, LBE	Sustainability, LBE	2015 - 2018
Statutory Compliance			Housing Enforcement, LBE	Sustainability, LBE	2015 - 2018

Decent Homes Programme/ECO projects	- 15,000 tonnes of carbon saved Per resident: - 40-60% reduction in energy bills	- 6 Tower Blocks will be fitted with external wall insulation (funded by ECO) and new windows (funded by decent homes works).	Enfield Council Housing	N/A	2017
	- As far as is reasonably practicable, all council owned F & G rated properties in Enfield will be improved to at least EPC band D, where works have not been refused.	- 18 F rated properties will be improved through Decent Homes works. - Funding will be sought to improve 3 G rated properties.			
	- Annual carbon saving of 4-8 tonnes per property	- A programme to install A rated windows in Council owned properties will be undertaken.			
	- British Gas boiler scheme	- 200+ boilers will be installed in vulnerable homes by British Gas			
		Private Sector Homes, LBE	British Gas Sustainability, LBE		TBC

<p>Health and Housing Project</p>	<p>- Funding will be sourced to run the Health and Housing Project.</p>	<p>- The project will target vulnerable, fuel poor residents with cold-related illnesses. It will seek to improve the health of the participants by making their homes more energy efficient.</p> <p>- The project will collect health and energy data from the recipients of the energy efficiency measures and will create an evaluation framework capable of quantifying the effect of the measures on the recipients' health.</p>	<p>Enfield CCG; Sustainability, LBE; Public Health, LBE; HHASC, LBE</p>	<p>LB Barnet, LB Haringey, Westminster City Council, GLA, RE:NEW</p>	<p>2017</p>
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