

Warwick District Council

Fuel Poverty Strategy

2021 to 2026



Executive Summary

Fuel poverty is a significant issue nationally and in Warwick District over 10% of households are living in fuel poverty. Fuel poverty is complex to understand and solutions for making homes more energy efficient are in themselves not always easy. The way people choose to live in their homes is very personal but also linked to wider poverty issues and social circumstances. Some homes are 'hard to treat' meaning that straightforward energy efficiency measures are not always possible. This Strategy aims to provide some clarity on the issues of fuel poverty, outline the work that has already been happening and introduces an action plan of practical actions to take along with partners with a focus on helping our most vulnerable residents to keep warmer in their own homes along with reducing carbon emissions.

About Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty occurs when a household cannot keep its home warm, well-lit and with hot water at an acceptable cost. In 2013, the government adopted the new definition of fuel poverty, with the "Low Income High Costs" (LIHC) indicator, that categorises a household as fuel poor when it has:

- An income below the poverty line (including if meeting its required energy bill would push it below the poverty line); and
- Higher than typical energy costs (higher than the median).

Being on the poverty line, refers to household income below 60% of the average. Also, in terms of the median energy costs, according to Ofgem, the average dual fuel variable tariff is approximately £105 per month or £1,254 a year (as of April 2019).

The current indicator presents two challenges. Firstly, that households move in and out of fuel poverty with no change to their own circumstances. And secondly, that there will always be a roughly similar proportion of households within the indicator irrespective of progress against the target and milestones.

These challenges make it difficult to assess whether adequate progress is made, or if the level of effort is adequate. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) propose a new indicator, looking at the level of income and the energy efficiency of properties, whereby a household would be fuel poor if they: a) have an income below the poverty line and; b) are living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of Bands D, E, F or G as determined by the most up-to-date Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating Methodology (FPEER).

The energy efficiency part of this new indicator removes some of the relativity of the indicator and means that as progress is made against the fuel poverty target, the number of households in fuel poverty would decrease. BEIS also considered using Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) as the energy efficiency

measure instead of FPEER but judged that “Factoring in the Warm Home Discount enables a more flexible approach to measuring progress against the fuel poverty target”.

The recent data shows that in 2018, 10.3% of all households in the UK lived in fuel poverty, according to the Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics report 2018. Meaning that more than 2million people cannot afford to heat their homes to recommended standards, leaving many living in homes that are damp and cold. In Warwickshire, the percentage of households in fuel poverty has reduced from 12.0% in 2012 to 9.5% in 2018. This pattern is the same for all districts and boroughs in Warwickshire, although the proportion of households in fuel poverty varies across Warwickshire.

Fuel Poverty Risk Factors

Understanding fuel poverty is really important – it is very complex and can be caused by a number of factors operating together including but not limited to the following.

- **Energy Performance Certificate rating.** Homes rated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) D, E, F or G (with a poor energy rating) are more difficult to heat and keep warm at an affordable cost. There is a much higher proportion of fuel poor households in poor energy rated homes than non-fuel poor households. Households with no boiler or a non-condensing boiler have higher levels of fuel poverty compared to those with condensing boilers. The level and depth of fuel poverty is also greater for households not connected to the gas network.
- **Property type.** Linked to the EPC of the property is the property type as those constructed with solid walls have a higher prevalence of fuel poverty compared to those with cavity walls. Inadequate insulation where there are some types of properties that prove difficult to insulate are termed as ‘hard to treat’ properties. Furthermore, older and larger buildings also see higher levels of fuel poverty compared to new builds and smaller dwellings. The size of property and under-occupancy has an impact, as large properties need a higher level of energy spending to heat and they also tend to have some rooms unheated.
- **Low income households.** Households with low incomes coupled with children and people with disabilities or with unemployed occupants are at a higher risk.
- **The price of energy.** The typical spikes in energy prices may also push a household into fuel poverty. Energy suppliers also influence fuel poverty and the larger energy organisations, referred to as ‘the Big Six’, have had a tendency of setting higher tariffs than independent suppliers and this particularly affects households that have never switched to an alternative energy supplier in order to reduce their fuel bill.

- **Location.** A much higher proportion of households are located in rural areas than urban areas and these are most often not connected to the gas grid and therefore rely on more expensive heating fuels such as electric only, LPG and oil thus having a higher level and depth of fuel poverty.

Fuel Poverty Effects

The effects of fuel poverty mostly result in cold, damp homes and reduced income and lifestyle choices. However, fuel poverty has a significant impact on people's health. Every year, health related issues resulting from cold and damp homes are estimated to cost the NHS around £1.36 billion. In addition, excess winter deaths, calculated as the ratio of excess winter deaths to average non-winter deaths, can have a significant impact but is less clear, because often other factors are involved such as those already at risk of health issues including older people and those with poor health and/or reduced mobility. Due to these conflicting issues, these excess winter deaths can be overlooked, as a result. In 2017/18, there were 80 excess winter deaths in Warwick District – this is the highest since 2010/11 (also 80 deaths). There were, however, just 30 excess winter deaths in the previous year (2016/17).

Excess Winter Deaths. Around a third of excess winter deaths are caused by respiratory illness. Cold homes lower resistance to respiratory infections and for every 1°C drop in temperature below 5°C, GP consultations for respiratory illness in older people increase by 19%. People with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) are four times more likely to be admitted to hospital with respiratory problems over the winter and increases in mould, which is associated with cold homes, can increase prevalence of asthma. Cold housing increases the level of minor illnesses such as colds and flu and exacerbates existing conditions such as arthritis and rheumatism.

Children and Young People. Children who are exposed to cold, damp homes for an extended time are twice as likely to suffer from respiratory problems and aggravated asthma symptoms. Health-related absences from school and deterioration of the mental health environment of the family due to stress from dealing with fuel poverty may even have a negative effect on the educational attainment of children. More generally, fuel poverty reduces the disposable income of a family, which may lead to deficient diets, decreased involvement in the community and overall lower quality of life.

Mental Health. Mental health is negatively affected by fuel poverty and cold housing for any age group. More than 1 in 4 adolescents living in cold housing are at risk of multiple mental health problems compared to 1 in 20 adolescents who have always lived in warm housing.

Older People. Older people are at greater risk of circulatory and respiratory problems, as well as an increased likelihood of falls due to reduced mobility caused by a cold environment. Cold homes affect mobility and increase falls and non-intentional injuries. In addition, symptoms of arthritis become worse and strength

and dexterity decreases, increasing the risk of falls in older people. While excess winter deaths occur in both cold and warm housing, there is greater risk of death in colder housing, especially for people aged 75 and over.

Health Impacts. The health effects from cold homes are significant and there is a strong relationship between cold temperatures, cardio-vascular and respiratory diseases amongst all ages. In addition, the level of minor illnesses such as colds and flu can be exacerbated along with conditions such as arthritis and rheumatisms.

Climate Change. Inefficient homes are not only more expensive to heat, but they result in more carbon emissions being released. According to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), from 2012 to 2018, domestic emissions decreased by 28% in Warwick District which is on par with a national decrease of 29%. Increased energy efficiency with domestic appliances, combined with renewable energy technology, would also improve air pollution in addition to reducing carbon emissions.

The National Context

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA). HECA requires local authorities to report on the energy conservation measures that the authority considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. The local authority is required to report on progress in this area to the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy every two years. Warwick District Council last provided an update in 2019 and so the next update will be required in March 2021.

The Fuel Poverty Strategy 2015. The Government's 2015 fuel poverty strategy, "Cutting the Cost of Keeping Warm," set out the Government's plan to improve as many fuel poor homes to a minimum energy efficiency rating, by the end of 2030. The Strategy set a fuel poverty target to ensure that as many fuel poor homes 'as is reasonably practicable' achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030. This includes two interim milestones of Band E by 2020 and Band D by 2025. This phased approach aims to prioritise assistance to those in the deepest levels of fuel poverty.

The Committee on Fuel Poverty. The Committee regularly produce reports to update progress and make recommendations to ensure that the Government's fuel poverty target and milestones can be met. The Committee's October 2018 report highlighted the following progress in tackling fuel poverty and what still needs to be done.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO). The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation that government has placed on the larger energy suppliers to reduce the UK's energy consumption and support those living in fuel poverty. Energy

suppliers are required to provide households with energy efficiency improvements. It is available in three parts:

- Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO): obligated suppliers must promote 'primary measures', including roof and wall insulation and connections to district heating systems.
- Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO): obligated suppliers must promote measures which improve the ability of low income and vulnerable household to heat their homes. This includes actions that result in heating savings, such as the replacement or repair of a boiler. ECO "flexible eligibility", local authorities can declare certain households that meet the eligibility criteria for a measure under the Affordable Warmth (i.e. HHCRO) element of ECO. Flexible eligibility is being piloted in the current ECO programme. It is currently capped at 10% and participation by suppliers or local authorities is not mandatory. It is intended to help two groups of households:
 1. Fuel poor households, especially those that are not in receipt of ECO eligible benefits; and
 2. Low income households that are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

The Energy Company Obligation Flex (ECO Flex). Since October 2018, Warwick District Council has signed-up to ECO Flex which offers more help to vulnerable residents that may not be in receipt of benefits to help with boiler installs and insulation measures. Residents that made be eligible include those that have a health condition such as diabetes, cancer, heart conditions or other health conditions, severe learning difficulties, small children (under 5 years) living in the property, expecting a baby, a low income (below the District average), a property that is ex social housing, a pre-payment meter, in receipt of disabled facilities grant and over the age of 60.

Smart Meters. The government target for all households to have SMART meters by 2020 has been extended to 2024, however, suppliers are expected to provide SMART meters in all new homes. It is acknowledged that it is for the consumer to decide whether they want this type of meter and it is understood that the 'smart' element of the meter can be disabled should a consumer not wish to have the technology activated.

Housing Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).

In many parts of England, the rapid growth of private rented homes in recent years is welcomed but also raises concern that many properties are not of suitable quality. Since April 2018, private landlords have not been allowed to re-let existing rented homes rated EPC F or G, unless they have applied for exemption. Local authorities will have a key role in enforcing the regulations. From 1st April 2020, minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) will be enforced in respect of all properties let on assured shorthold tenancies which are required to hold an EPC where the EPC fails to meet a minimum energy rating of 'E' and where an

exemption has not been registered. HHSRS is a tool that can be used to deal with excess cold, and this can positively combat fuel poverty. We will have due regard to excess cold hazards whenever inspecting private sector dwellings, and make use of enforcement under Part 1 Housing Act 2004 whenever appropriate.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 106 (S106)

Local authorities can use S106 to fund or co-fund improvements to housing. A local planning authority can use S106 to enter into a legally binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner or developer over a related planning issue, which may include funding. The Public Health Outcomes Framework directly puts a duty on upper tier local authorities to tackle fuel poverty and reduce Excess Winter Deaths.

The Planning Act 2008 – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Planning Act 2008 introduced powers for local authorities to charge a community infrastructure levy on all developments over 100 square metres, or one or more dwellings. The levy can be used to finance a range of physical, social or green infrastructure arising from increased development in an area.

Cold Weather Plan for England

The Cold Weather Plan for England helps prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of cold weather in England and is produced by the Department of Health, Public Health England and NHS England. It recommends a series of steps for the NHS, local authorities, social care and other public agencies, professionals working with those at risk, individuals, local communities and voluntary groups to prevent harm to health during periods of cold weather.

Future Homes Standard

BEIS have announced an intention to significantly reduce the carbon emissions from new homes by 2025 including banning fossil fuelled heating in new homes. As a stepping stone towards this, they are consulting on new building regulations that will be implemented as of next year. To do this, they propose two options: A 20% reduction in carbon emissions compared to the current standard for an average home. Its anticipated this could be delivered by very high fabric standards typically with triple glazing and minimal heat loss from walls, ceilings and roofs. The standard sets to achieve a 31% reduction in carbon emissions compared to the current standard and it is expected this could be delivered based on the installation of carbon-saving technology such as photovoltaic solar panels and better fabric standards.

Green Homes Grant Fund

The green homes grant fund enables homeowners and landlords in England to apply for a voucher towards the cost of installing energy efficient and low-carbon heating improvements to homes, which could help save money on energy bills. The government will provide a voucher to help cover up to two thirds of the cost of qualifying improvements. A higher level of subsidy is available if you are a member of the household receives one of the qualifying means-tested benefits.

The Green Homes Grant – Local Area Delivery (LAD) Fund is aimed at helping low income vulnerable households with installing non-fossil fuel measures in both private and social properties.

Profile of Warwick District

Warwick District is a very attractive location for tourism and residency purposes. However, this has led to higher housing prices and as a result, to a higher proportion of rented accommodation. Tenants do not have as much incentive to upgrade their homes with energy efficient measures, so an increase of rented housing carries the risk of delays in implementation. This and other factors enable the persistence of pockets of deprivation in a relatively affluent area: The median annual gross income for full-time employees in 2019 was £33,649, higher than the national average (£30,661), consequently, it stands as one of the 20% least deprived districts or local authorities in the country.

Nonetheless, there are certain areas that face important levels of deprivation that the Warwick District is keen to address. In 2018/19, 12.1% of children under 16 lived in relatively low income families, while in the 2011 census, 17% households reported that they were deprived in more than one way, a smaller figure than 27% regionally and 24% nationally. This degree of deprivation, in convergence with the general trend of an increase in energy prices, has led many local authorities in the UK to identify fuel poverty as a pressing issue. In the last assessment:

- 11% of households lived in unsuitable housing
- 20% lived in fuel poverty
- 21% of housing was still under category F or G – the two lowest ratings – in Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), and
- 10% of private houses failed the Decent Homes Standard because they were hard to keep warm

The breakdown of housing tenures in the district was last measured in the Census of 2011 when the figures were as follows:

Owner Occupation	67%
Private Rented	18%
Social Rented	13%
Shared Ownership	1%
Other	1%

In June 2019, the authority declared a 'Climate Emergency' with the aim of facilitating as close to zero emissions by 2030. The current figures show that in 2018, 218 kilo tonnes of carbon emissions (CO₂e) came from the domestic sector. The Council's Climate Emergency Action Programme outlines plans to reduce the carbon emissions from the District.

Appendix 1 shows the overall levels of fuel poverty in both Warwickshire as a comparison against our neighbouring authorities in Warwickshire.

Warwick District has six LSOAs in the top ten LSOAs within Warwickshire with the highest percentage of households in fuel poverty. The LSOAs were: Brunswick North East, Leamington Old Town North West, Brunswick North West & Foundry, Stoneleigh, Brunswick South West & Kingsway, and Brunswick South East – the majority of these are located in the Leamington area. Appendix 2 shows the overall concentrations of fuel poverty which unexpectedly coincide with the most deprived areas of the District.

The groups most likely to be in fuel poverty were Mosaic groups 'Renting Rooms' and 'Learners and Earners', younger age groups (18-30), living in rented accommodation, with no children and relatively low incomes.

According to the latest 2018 figures, 8.6% of households are in fuel poverty in Warwick District which is a larger than average decrease on the previous year (previously 10%) compared to other Warwickshire Councils.

The Role of Warwick District Council

Understanding Fuel poverty. Addressing fuel poverty and cold homes has multiple benefits, both for the household receiving support and for local communities. This includes better standards of living and conditions for people with low incomes, improved and more energy efficient houses, fewer avoidable winter deaths and reduce costs for the health, wellbeing and care services. Fuel poverty and its contribution to social and health inequalities is recognised as avoidable. The links between poor housing and health have been established for some time. Fuel poverty occurs when a household cannot afford to keep their home adequately warm at a reasonable cost, meaning that people living within the home are often cold, or if they choose to heat their house, don't have enough money for pay for food or other services. This can often lead to poor physical and mental health for members of that household.

Health and Wellbeing Boards. Responsibility to improve the health of their populations and reduce excess winter deaths. The 1848 Public Health Act was one of the first Acts to link population health and housing. Health and Wellbeing Boards have a critical role to focus and lead affordable warmth and fuel poverty strategies. They embed a preventative and social determinants approach within the working practices of the local authority, NHS, and social care commissioners and providers. Local Authorities can use their leadership role and bring together it's services with health, voluntary and community partners and local residents to tackle fuel poverty and cold homes.

Public Health. The overall aim is to improve healthy life expectancy of the population they serve. Reducing fuel poverty and improving warmth is an important element of improving life chances and closing that gap.

Health and social care. The Council has a strategic role to improve health and wellbeing, reduce health inequalities, reduce fuel poverty, save lives and deliver public health, NHS and social care national outcome frameworks, reduce pressure on the health and care system and support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Planning. Use S106 to fund improvements to housing and Community Infrastructure Levy on large developments to fund physical, social or green improvements.

Environmental Health. Enforcement powers to tackle hazards and improve housing conditions that can improve health and housing in homes, particularly in the private rented sector.

Benefits and grants promotion. By working together, the local authority can use discretionary funds to help people stay warmer for less. The use of welfare funds such as help with Council Tax and Discretionary Housing Payments can help to increase income. Other options could include social services, concessionary fares or blue badge schemes to raise awareness or target those customers to help.

Bid for capital and revenue funds. Supporting other partners to bid for funds to invest in energy efficiency.

Addressing the energy performance of the housing stock. Ensuring that existing homes and new homes reach the highest energy performance levels possible.

Recent Progress

In order to join up resources and expertise to help our residents in the most efficient manner, WDC has formed several partnerships, the most important of which are with Act on Energy and the "Warm and Well in Warwickshire" Partnership. WDC has also undertaken several projects of its own to make the district more energy efficient. It has facilitated access to residents to available funding schemes for energy upgrades: ECO (Energy Company Obligation) a combination of programmes with the aim of saving carbon and acquiring more efficient boilers and insulation; FITs (Feed-in-Tariffs) a subsidy available to those who install and generate surplus electricity from a renewable or low carbon technology source; and finally, RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive) which gives quarterly payments during a seven year period for those who produce a certain amount of energy from renewable sources.

Act on Energy - Act on Energy is a charity procured by Warwickshire County Council to provide the Warm and Well fuel poverty service for Warwickshire that works with local businesses and organisations and provides a wide range of services to the public.

Warwickshire's Warm and Well Service - provided by Act on Energy, aims to reduce fuel poverty in Warwickshire and protect those who are most vulnerable to

the health effects of living in cold homes. The service has two overarching functions:

- Provision of information advice and guidance (delivered in a variety of ways, including through provision of a freephone advice line, through direct referrals from partners/self-referral, and through outreach work (including advice surgeries, events and home visits as appropriate)), with the aim of supporting vulnerable individuals and families to keep their homes warm in an affordable manner. A free-phone energy advice line. Through Council awareness campaigns and referral network at clinics, food banks and dementia cafes, residents are referred to Act on Energy so they can receive personalised advice on reducing energy bills, switching supplier via a lowest bid system, and informing people of funding available.
- Co-ordination and management of the provision of physical interventions including boiler/heating system repairs and boiler replacements (with carbon monoxide detector provision), loft and cavity wall insulation, provision of energy meters, referrals to damp and mould removal services, and provision of an emergency heater service. Home visits. Offering attentive advice to the most vulnerable households. "Warm and Well in Warwickshire" Partnership is a collaboration between the five district/borough councils, Warwickshire County Council, Act on Energy, Age UK, Warwickshire Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice South Warwickshire and Warwickshire Public Health. During the period 2017 – 2019, this partnership allowed WDC to receive £50,000 additional funding, which enabled the installation of new heating systems for 12 residents and as a result, improved EPC and SAP ratings.

ECO Flex - During the period of 2017 to 2019, there have been almost 100 measures installed with a breakdown as follows: 50 heating measures, 16 loft installs and 30 cavity wall installs.

Warwickshire Switch and Save - Provides a countywide fuel switching campaign, commissioned by Warwickshire County Council. Further details can be found here: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/switchandsave

Landlord project - Under new legislation that came into effect 1 April 2018, properties with an EPC of F or G cannot be relet without an exemption. The Council is currently assessing whether there are any breaches. Previously, WDC informed landlords through the landlord forum and via mailings on energy advice, encouraging them to contact Act on Energy and install more energy efficient equipment, but received only 11% take up. More enforcement measures will be carried out in the future for non-compliant landlords, now that the landlords expenditure limit of £3,500 has been set for the works required to meet the minimum energy rating of E.

Social Housing Retrofit and New Build Properties - The Council has or is currently in the process of upgrading its own housing properties, and so far has installed 393 new boilers and upgraded Sayer Court (social housing) and void properties. Additionally, some thermal improvements have been carried out as follows:

1. Upgrading of roof insulation to part L of building regulations where properties have inadequate loft insulation.
2. Upgrading of wall insulation to properties on the roofing programme where vertical tile hanging has been replaced.
3. Upgrading of wall insulation to flats, upgrading of ceiling insulation to will be having air source heat pumps fitted.
4. Upgrading the roof at Pickard Street community centre with a warm roof, thus improving its insulation capabilities.

There are currently a number of actions in relation to our housing stock and this work is being commissioned as follows.

- A review all Council homes to identify current standards and provide funding to expand the property retrofit programme needed to bring councils homes to the required EPC level 'C' by 2030.
- Examine the business case and other benefits of going beyond the EPC requirements on all the Council's residential portfolio i.e. achieving EPC 'B' or higher.
- The installation of solar PV on council owned homes following a roof and energy usage survey.

In addition, a net zero carbon specification is being developed for new affordable housing for the future programme. Different construction methods for housing on garage sites and monitoring performance against the net zero carbon specification against the cost of provision to inform future housing provision.

Renewable sources - Similarly, WDC has installed solar PV panels and biomass boilers for social housing properties. Furthermore, with the support of Act on Energy's advice, between 2014 and June 2018, there were 136 installations of renewable technologies for domestic users under the RHI scheme. These technologies are biomass boilers, solar water heating and certain heat pumps. As for the FIT scheme, up to March 2018 there were 1,726 installations of domestic solar photovoltaics, 1 of wind technology and 1 of hydro technology.

Housing Services have led in developing a financial inclusion partnership county plan recognising that fuel poverty amongst our tenants and the wider community can lead to financial stress and failure to maintain tenancies.

Climate Change Development Plan Document (DPD) – At the time of writing a climate change DPD is being produced that will set high energy efficiency standards for new build developments. It is expected for the DPD to go beyond building regulations standards and put requirements on developers within planning.

HEART (Home Environment Assessment and Response Team) is a partnership venture by all Warwickshire District and Borough Councils

- Provide advice and assistance to deliver disabled adaptations and home improvements

- Have a range of central heating and external insulation projects across the County (using Disability Facility Grant funding)
- A number of enquiries received per week related to energy efficiency

During 2017-19, the HEART Partnership has achieved over 30 installs in Warwick District of a combination of boiler repairs, heating installations and other referrals for category 21 hazards for excess cold.

Age UK offer a care Navigators project funded by North and South Warwickshire CCG and Warwickshire County Council. The navigators work with all GP practices throughout Warwickshire. The Hospital Social Prescribers scheme works out of Warwick hospital. Information and Advice is an internally funded service, supporting anyone aged 50+ with benefits, housing or social care advice.

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW) provides support across Stratford and Warwick Districts as follows.

- Making Every Contact Count offers training for frontline workers (any and all workers who may come across people in need of support) to recognise signs and triggers and seek the appropriate channels for help.
- Back on Track offers Money Advice in the community. This includes Financial inclusion work within Lillington ward in Leamington. Two full time caseworkers carrying out community outreach and home visits and support for people to manage their bills, reduce their energy costs, maximise their income and access hardship grants. This is funded by Warwickshire County Council.
- Hardship and crisis grants administer a variety of external grants on behalf of external agencies - particularly in Warwick to external grant providers. Grants go towards: white goods, beds, carpets to emergency electricity payments or winter coats.
- Home visiting projects for those in crisis or vulnerabilities that limit them from accessing services outside of the home (Reach Out and Help (ROAH), Reach Out to Older People (ROOP) and Reach out to Warwick Town) offer support on mental health issues, rural and social isolation, health and social care needs, disabilities as well as fuel poverty, hardship and adequate housing needs.

Next Steps – Further Work

The following details an Action Plan which brings together the partnerships and work already in operation and aims to build further on new opportunities to help reduce fuel poverty levels in the District. The responsibilities have been identified although the target dates would need to be determined to link to service plans for 2021/22

Fuel Poverty Action Plan

Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
1.0	Increase the energy efficiency of the Districts' Council housing stock		
1.1	<p>Continue investment into the council's own housing stock through available grant funding and the HRA capital programme in line with the HRA Asset Management Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all Council homes to identify current standards and provide funding to expand the property retrofit programme needed to bring councils homes to the required EPC level 'C'. • Examine the business case and other benefits of going beyond the EPC requirements on all the Council's residential portfolio i.e. achieving EPC 'B' or higher. • The installation of solar PV on council owned homes following a roof and energy usage survey. • For all Council homes to be heated by non-fossil fuels by 2030. 	<p>Number of properties with EPC of at least C. Number of properties that have moved up from D or below over the period.</p>	<p>Housing Strategy & Development Manager</p>

Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
1.2	New-build scheme Develop a net zero carbon specification for new affordable housing for the future programme.	Net zero carbon specification in place.	Housing Strategy & Development Manager
2.0	Increase the energy efficiency of the private housing stock		
2.1	Work with registered housing providers, private landlords, letting agents and tenants to improve the energy efficiency of homes and to ensure compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards guiding the energy efficiency of private rented homes Housing Team (e.g. Housing Health and Safety Rating System, Houses of Multiple Occupation Standards), work with landlords to ensure quality housing in the private rented sector.	Monitor and report on the number of improvements made as a result of enforcement interventions. Develop a target to have percentage of private rented sector improved energy efficiency.	Private Sector Housing team
2.2	Ensure standards in new developments support households to achieve affordable warmth.	Climate Change DPD to include high energy efficiency requirements for new build properties.	Development Services
2.3	Explore programmes of behaviour change aimed to reduce energy bills and keep warm affordably through energy saving advice. To be considered as part of the Climate Emergency Action Programme review for Spring 2021.	Number of properties moving from a Band D to a Band C based on EPC registrations and measures undertaken through grants, including ECO, ECO Flex, HEART,	Climate Change Strategic Director and Sustainability Officer

Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
		Warm & Well and Climate Action Fund.	
3.0	Support households struggling to pay their energy bills		
3.1	Tenants. Advise tenants of the average energy cost for homes at the point of sign up of tenancy , pass referral to Financial inclusion team and/or an Act on Energy if issues of affordability are raised. Work with local advice agencies to ensure residents have access to advice on housing, benefits, money and energy.	All new tenants receive information about energy efficiency at home and affordability check completed.	Business Administration Manager (Housing)
3.2	Tenants. Complete home visits for vulnerable people where appropriate , advise on winter fuel payments, cold weather payments and other support. Explore effective methods to assess heating needs of those most at risk who use primary health and home care services.	Number of visits undertaken.	Business Administration Manager and Community Development Officers
3.3	Tenants. Automatic fuel switching. Investigate opportunities for council tenants through existing or new arrangements.	Partnership with an energy firm to deliver to customers.	Business Administration Manager and Sustainability Officer
3.4	Tenant Assessment Tool. Continue to develop a more in-depth assessment tool for our new tenants to include the cost of	Assessment tool implemented.	Landlord Services Manager

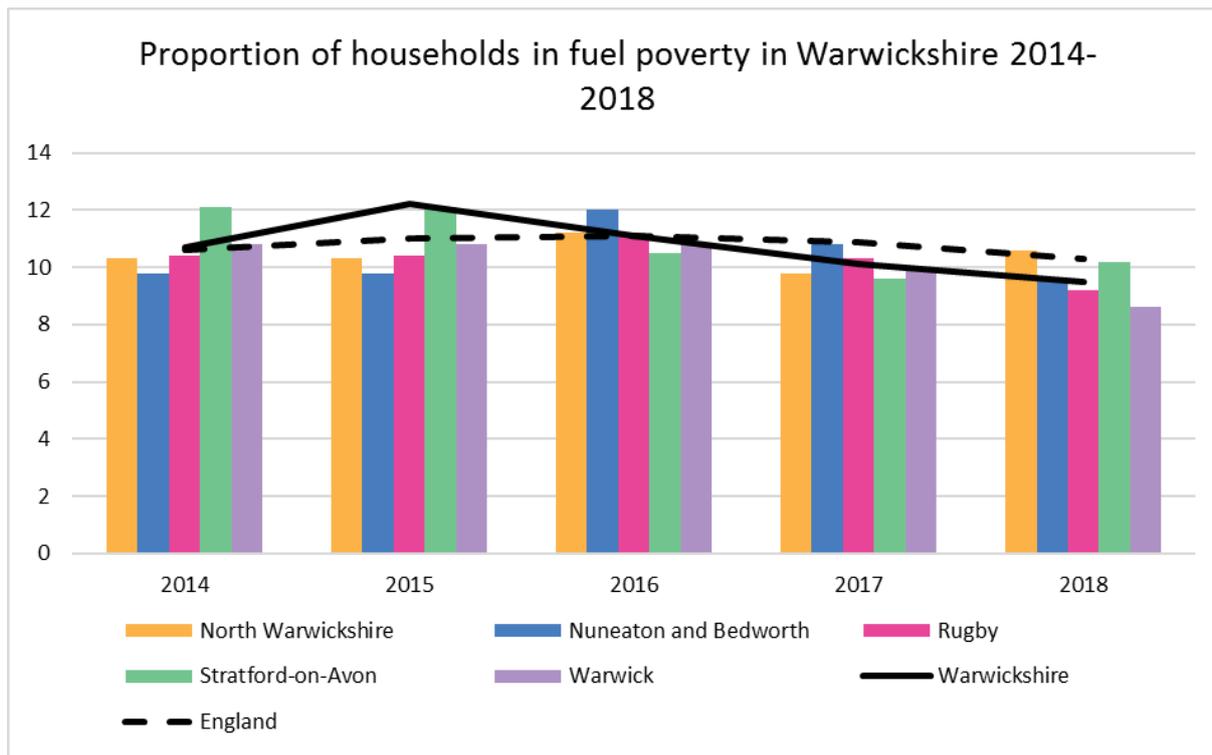
Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
	energy and the impact on the household budget, so that this is taken into account to ensure that our customers can manage their home well.	Number of assessments undertaken.	
3.5	Private Sector. Using areas of highest fuel poverty, define 'warm zones'. Area based schemes to target delivery of various energy efficiency services.	Number of households referred for help. Number of households with measures completed. EPC assessment from D, E and F to C.	Private Sector Housing Manager and Sustainability Officer
3.6	Private Sector. Continue to promote the ongoing freephone advice line single point of contact referral system. Ensure information is easily available. Ensure every household knows where to get help on home energy efficiency. Target younger families who tend to have a lower uptake of help and support available. Raise awareness through community wide newsletters and social media.	Number of queries through the Freephone advice line. Number of referrals and installations Number of social media posts.	Private Sector Housing Manager and Sustainability Officer
3.7	Private Sector. Promote the collective Energy 'Switch & Save' scheme	Number of 'drop in' sessions for energy support to promote the 'Switch & Save' scheme.	Sustainability Officer
3.8	Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme. This provides payments over a	Number of RHI registered installations	Sustainability Officer

Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
	seven-year period where heat pumps are retro fitted to replace fossil fuel boilers.		
3.9	Retrofit and Planning. Maximise development management and building control support for external wall insulation installations and renewable technologies.	Number of external wall insulation installs. Number of micro-renewable energy installs.	Sustainability Officer
4.0	Smart Meters		
4.1	Assess, learn lessons and determine if Smart Meters could benefit residents. Explore funding opportunities to support if recommended to pursue.	Recommendations report to be developed.	Landlord Services Manager and Sustainability Officer
5.0	Improve our awareness and understanding of fuel poverty		
5.1	Undertake further work and analysis of population groups in Warwick District most likely to experience fuel poverty to better target those groups. Complete a focused piece of work between WDC, Insight service and existing home energy providers to establish robust forms of targeting to younger groups and any other groups deemed to be appropriate.	Analysis completed and further actions identified.	Sustainability Officer and Insight Team at WCC

Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
5.2	<p>Ensure appropriate individuals understand fuel poverty. Councillors, Officers and key partners to attend training and offer training to the voluntary sector and partners.</p> <p>Provide easy to understand and accessible information to professionals, front line workers and volunteers to support and refer people in fuel poverty and living in cold homes</p>	<p>Number of persons trained.</p> <p>Number of organisations information provided to.</p>	Sustainability Officer
5.3	<p>Annually monitor the take-up of measures in the District through ECO, ECO flex, HEART and other schemes for reporting purposes.</p>	<p>Number of ECO and ECO flex installations.</p> <p>Number of cold related measures through HEART</p> <p>Number of Warm & Well measures</p> <p>Number of collective energy switch registrations</p> <p>Others measures in relation to other funding</p>	Sustainability Officer
6.0	Work together to tackle fuel poverty through partnership and learning		

Ref.	Actions	Measures	Responsibilities
6.1	Through the Health & Wellbeing Board, explore how the actions related to this strategy can work with and complement other programmes aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of local people	Number of programmes linked into through the Health & Wellbeing Board.	WDC Health & Wellbeing Board
6.2	Explore opportunities to promote support available through the Communities Together Network, the Poverty Forum, WCAVA CAF and Community Forums	Number of Forums and Networks supported.	Community Partnership Manager and Sustainability Officer
6.3	Explore opportunities to work together with Housing Associations to support their Tenants. Develop and deliver appropriate partnership actions.	Partnership arrangement in place, actions developed and delivered.	Community Partnership Manager and Sustainability Officer
7.0	To maximise resources and opportunities for tackling the causes fuel poverty		
7.1	Through a partnership approach and steering group, coordinate bids and business cases for additional funding to support work in this area. e.g. Warm Homes Fund.	Number of external bids applied for.	All
7.2	Embed within the contracts for the commissioning of voluntary and community sector services.	Include within revised contract specifications and service level agreements the requirement to support delivery of the Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy	Community Partnership Manager

Appendix 1 - Proportion of Households in Fuel Poverty in Warwickshire 2014-2018



Appendix 2 - Proportion of Households in Fuel Poverty in Warwick District Council 2018

