

Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Strategy 2016-2020

Consultation Report

Stakeholder Consultation Workshop

A wide range of individuals and organisations from the community and voluntary sector, the NHS, emergency services and within the Council were invited to attend a consultation workshop. The workshop was held at the Brighthelm Centre on 7th January 2016. Invitees and attendees were also offered the opportunity to discuss the strategy and issues separately to the consultation event.

The consultation workshop was attended by 29 people from the following organisations;

Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) – Public Health	Citizens Advice Bureau
BHCC – International & Sustainability Team	AgeUK Brighton & Hove
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	Specialist Older Adults Mental Health Service
BHCC – Housing	Trust for Developing Communities
BHCC – Financial inclusion	Healthwatch Brighton & Hove
Older LGBT Project Switchboard	Southdown Housing
East Sussex Association of Blind and Partially Sighted	BHCC –Welfare Reform
BHCC – Stronger Families, Youth & Communities	Moneyworks
Money Advice Plus	BHCC – Adult Social Care Commissioning
Brighton Housing Trust	Brighton & Hove Energy Services Coop
The Fed Centre for Independent Living	

Attendees received a presentation on fuel poverty, excess winter deaths and the health risks of cold homes in both the national and local context. The attendees were then asked to discuss and feedback on a series of consultation questions framed around some broad draft strategic objectives;

Objective 1	Increase the energy efficiency of the City's housing stock
Objective 2	Support residents struggling to pay their energy bills
Objective 3	Improve awareness and understanding of fuel poverty for residents in all tenures
Objective 4	Work together to tackle fuel poverty through partnership and learning
Objective 5	Increase Effective targeting of vulnerable fuel poor households
Objective 6	Maximise resources and opportunities for tackling the causes of fuel poverty

Groups provided the following feedback that has been reflected in the final drafting of the strategy where possible and will be influence delivery of future actions;

1. How can we reach / engage the vulnerable groups that you work with?

Importance of face to face support to help people, i.e. if they are reluctant to put their heating on, need to be aware of the health risks via health workers	Target large families and single parent families (impacted by welfare reform)
GP surgeries (new outcomes framework for GPs)	Need to reach people in private rented accommodation
Care coaches	Through temporary accommodation team
Floating support services	Training for frontline workers
Local Discretionary Social Fund and Welfare Reform teams	Publicity – Adverts, on-line, social media
Meals-on-wheels	Care providers (private and public)
Through landlords and their associations	Advise tenants how to approach their landlord
Befriending services	Tenancy enforcement officers
Use face to face contacts that all agencies do to include checks on fuel poverty	Share info. via newsletters (incl. audio newsletters)
Through early help hubs	Through schools
Foodbanks	Family Information Service
Day centres	Health visiting service
Existing groups/meetings	City-wide connect hubs
Children’s Centres (current review re. integrated hubs)	Try and attend meetings to talk about issues
GP clusters/locality hubs	Health visitors

2. What do you believe to be the key existing strategies, work and services we should be linking into?

Services & Existing work

All housing related services including tenancy sustainment officers or equivalent across all housing providers i.e. BHT, Southdown Housing	Through services supporting 16-25 year olds, vulnerably housed, care leavers
City-wide connect hubs (March)	AgeUK are a key partner
Befriending services allied to faith groups	Services supporting people with mental health issues
Try and include in assessment processes i.e. hospital social worker	Low income families
Through existing local services at community level i.e. Hangleton & Knoll project, Trust for Developing Communities	All agencies that complete financial assessments

Through the Fed 'It's local actually'	Move on mentors
Poverty Action Groups	All warmth for wellbeing agencies
Tenant forums	Temporary Accommodation team
Local Action Teams	BHCC Revs & Bens team
BHESCO	Libraries
NHS organisations including CCG	Work with energy companies
Police and fire service	Build into CCG commissions
BME, refugee and EU migrant support groups	Through foodbanks
Link with faith based groups	

Strategies

Housing strategy	Fairness Commission
Your Energy Sussex	Food Poverty Strategy & Action Plan
Financial Inclusion Steering Group	City Employment and skills
Better Care	Health & Wellbeing Strategy

3. a. Would you suggest any amendments to the below objectives?
- b. Are there further objectives you think should be included in the strategy?
- c. Are there specific actions, linked to the objectives, that you think should be included?

Reducing the need for fuel use is key	Target the worst quality housing
In general - set goals and hold someone to account for achieving these	Bulk buying of energy? Getting a better deal for energy
Advice and education	Basic energy advice
Work in partnership	Source funding to support the work
New buildings need to be more sustainable/energy efficient	Community owned renewable energy should be promoted and invested in
Take the emphasis of it being an individual problem and make it collective responsibility	Need a 10 year plan and needs to be a priority, be creative
Communication is key as knowing what's out there continues to be difficult	Link to universities and their own accommodation strategies
Need a focus on how we work with and engage landlords, including focus on possible reaction to changes i.e. risk of rent increases if improvements are made, greater regulation of landlords and ensuring standards are met. Also opportunity to see them as an asset, a way of increasing investment	Communicate relevant legislation through objectives in particular Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards
Objectives need to be more targeted and specific, 'they're very vague'	Ensure objectives and actions are sustainable beyond the 'Warmth for Wellbeing' funding period
Need to link to new regulations re. energy efficiency standards	Explore private sector partnerships

Need to link to new bill re. de-regulation & retaliatory evictions	Link to 'poverty premium', digital inclusion and wider social isolation agenda
Need to link to licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System	Obj. 3 should be frontline workers and community groups as well as residents
Re. Objective 3 – enable quick and easy referral processes	Raise awareness via a clear, simple and consistent message

In addition to the consultation workshop the following consultation and briefing sessions were held through the strategy development;

- Strategic Housing Partnership 7th July 2015 & 26th January 2016

Reports were provided to the Strategic Housing Partnership on the NICE guidelines and the developing Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Strategy.

- Reports updating on strategy development and context for Brighton & Hove were presented to the Housing & New Homes Committee 23rd September 2015 and the Health & Wellbeing Board 20th October 2015
- Meeting with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership 11th January 2016

Due to the clear link between Food & Fuel and the choices some families have to make between heating and eating we are keen to ensure that strategy aligns to the work of the partnership and the Food Poverty Action Plan 2015-18.

- Briefing for BHCC Private Sector Housing Team 19th January 2016