



Although a formal committee of Brighton & Hove City Council, the Health & Wellbeing Board has a remit which includes matters relating to the Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Local Safeguarding Board for Children and Adults and Healthwatch.

Title: Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Plan

Date of Meeting: 12 November 2024

Report of: Corporate Director for Housing, Care & Wellbeing

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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Executive Summary

Many households face challenges in heating their home, particularly over the winter months. Fuel poverty is the problem faced by households living on a low income in a home which cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost. For many households, the result can be living in a home that is cold and/or falling into debt, both of which have cumulative negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

The previous local Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Strategy was developed in response to the release of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) NG6 guideline (2015), '[Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes](#)' and agreed at the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2016.

Reflecting a revised national strategy and changes to the national definition of fuel poverty, our intention is for this refreshed Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Plan to both reflect and drive local action to tackle fuel poverty and cold homes. The objectives



and subsequent actions will be jointly owned by the Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Steering Group and wider city partners as appropriate.

1. Decisions, recommendations and any options

- 1.1 The Board is asked to note the content of this report and the plan as attached at Appendix 1.

2. Relevant information

- 2.1 The Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth (FPAW) Plan has been developed as an update to the [Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Strategy 2016-2020](#), agreed at the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2016. It seeks to respond to the National Fuel Poverty Strategy for England, [Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England](#) (2021) and the ongoing cost of living (COL) crisis and higher energy prices experienced since 2022.
- 2.2 The previous local FPAW strategy was developed in response to the release of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) NG6 guideline released in 2015, [Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes](#). This guidance provides evidence-based recommendations on how to reduce the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home. The NICE guideline and the risks identified remain current today.
- 2.3 The current national definition for fuel poverty measurement was released in 2021. The Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) measure¹ considers a household to be fuel poor if:
- it lives in a property with an energy efficiency rating below Band C²
 - it's disposable income (after housing and energy costs) would be below the poverty line³
- 2.4 A household's fuel poverty status using the LILEE measure depends on the interaction of four key drivers: home energy efficiency, household income, housing costs and energy prices. The LILEE measure shows both the extent as well as the severity of fuel poverty, through the fuel poverty gap. The [latest available figures released in April 2024](#) using this definition estimate that in 2022, 13.2% of households in Brighton and Hove were in fuel poverty, which equates to 16,527 households in the city (9.7% of households in the South

¹ [Annual fuel poverty statistics in England, 2024 \(2023 data\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

² Energy efficiency rating is measured using [Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating \(FPEER\)](#)

³ The poverty line (income poverty) is defined as an equivalised disposable income of less than 60% of the national median in Section 2 of the ONS publication, [Persistent poverty in the UK and EU: 2017](#)

East and 13.1% of households in England were estimated to be in fuel poverty in 2022)⁴.

- 2.5 Following approval of the previous local strategy, the Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth (FPAW) Steering Group⁵ was convened to coordinate our collaborative approach to tackling fuel poverty and cold homes. Co-chaired by Public Health and Housing officers, the multi-agency group brings together key statutory partners including Public Health, Housing, Food Policy and Welfare teams in the council, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Community and Voluntary Sector partners. The group meets on a quarterly basis with frequency increased as required e.g. during the pandemic and subsequent COL and energy crises.
- 2.6 The FPAW Steering Group has facilitated extensive and dynamic partnership working between the council, NHS and Community & Voluntary Sector partners since 2016. This work includes coordination of national and local funding streams, development of synergistic initiatives across the city to support residents experiencing fuel poverty and cold homes and developing successful bids for significant external funding (e.g. £395,000 from British Gas Energy Trust during 2016-17 and £110,000 from UK Power Networks and SGN during 2023-24, with a continuation bid currently in development to access further funds for 2024-26).
- 2.7 Key support currently available to residents in the city experiencing fuel poverty includes:
- **Energyworks**⁶ (Citizen's Advice Brighton & Hove and Brighton & Hove Energy Services Cooperative, BHESCO) - single point of contact energy advice service, offering energy advice and home energy checks.
 - **LEAP** (Local Energy Advice Partnership) – free national service providing personalised advice and small energy efficiency measures via phone and home visits to help people keep warm and reduce their energy bills.
 - Details of Housing specific actions, including the current solar PV installation programme, are detailed in the plan at Appendix 1.
- 2.8 Reflecting the national strategy, our intention is for the Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Plan to be a 'living document', aligned with

⁴ Sub-regional fuel poverty modelling provides estimates of the level of fuel poverty for all Output Areas (OAs) across England, using a regression model that uses predictors of fuel poverty from the English Housing Survey (EHS) data.

⁵ Membership of this group consists of representatives from the Council's Public Health, Housing, Food Policy, and Welfare, Revenues & Business Support teams, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, as well as Community & Voluntary Sector organisations including Brighton & Hove Energy Services Cooperative (BHESCO), Citizen's Advice Brighton & Hove, Money Advice Plus, National Energy Action, and the British Red Cross.

⁶ Energyworks is promoted through the local network of community and voluntary organisations and key Council and NHS services. To ensure the support is targeted and available to households in greatest need, it is not advertised widely to the general public due to capacity constraints.

current local and national strategy, that both reflects and drives local action to tackle fuel poverty and cold homes. The over-arching objectives and subsequent actions will be jointly owned by the Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth (FPAW) Steering Group and wider city partners as appropriate.

2.9 The following objectives have been developed to reflect those within the national fuel poverty strategy, in consultation and collaboration with the FPAW Steering Group, the Council's Net Zero and Policy Teams, and insights from the citywide Cost of Living Action Plan consultation (autumn 2023):

- 1. Improve the energy efficiency of the city's housing stock and increase access to cheaper, lower carbon energy**
- 2. Support residents struggling to pay their energy bills**
- 3. Increase effective targeting of households experiencing fuel poverty, prioritising those who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable**
- 4. Work together to tackle fuel poverty through partnership and learning**
- 5. Maximise resources and opportunities for tackling fuel poverty in the city and providing support for residents**

The plan supports delivery of the Brighton & Hove City Council Plan to create 'A better Brighton & Hove for all - a city to be proud of, a healthy, fair and inclusive city where everyone thrives', and in particular supports delivery across Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. Further key local and national strategies and workstreams are detailed within the plan at Appendix 1.

3. Important considerations and implications

Legal:

3.1 The HWBB are asked to note the Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth (FPAW) Plan developed as an update to the Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Strategy 2016-2020. Under the National Fuel Poverty Strategy for England (published under the previous government in 2021) to which the report refers a household is in fuel poverty "if they are on a lower income and unable to heat their home for a reasonable cost."

Addressing the issues arising from fuel poverty identified in the report will assist the Council, NHS and other agencies to meet their statutory duties to a range of vulnerable people, including by a focus on the city's housing stock as set out in Section 6 of the plan.

Lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson

Date: 28.10.2024



Finance:

- 3.2 As indicated in the report the funding will come from external funding and therefore have no financial implications on General fund.

Finance Officer consulted: Jamiu Ibraheem

Date: 28/10/2024

Equalities:

- 3.3 An associated Equalities Impact Assessment to inform implementation of the plan is underway in collaboration with council Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Officer. The nature of the causes and severity of fuel poverty means that it has a disproportionate impact on some groups. These impacts have been identified within the plan and will be reflected in the subsequent work to deliver the objectives, in particular under Objective 3: 'Increase effective targeting of households experiencing fuel poverty, prioritising those who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable'.

Sustainability:

- 3.4 Much of the work carried out through the plan and associated workstreams will have positive sustainability outcomes as they are aimed at improving the energy efficiency of homes and advising households on how to safely reduce energy use and bills.

Improving the energy efficiency of the city's housing stock and access to cheaper renewable sources of energy will directly impact the carbon emissions of the city. Where possible through these workstreams we will also explore wider sustainability benefits that can enhance and protect the environment and bio-diversity in the city.

Health, social care, children's services and public health:

- 3.5 The plan and objectives are underpinned by the NG6 NICE guideline, 'Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes'. This guideline provides evidence-based recommendations on reducing the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home and identifies groups at elevated risk. The FPAW Plan will therefore contribute to improvement of health and wellbeing and reduction of health inequalities related to fuel poverty and cold homes.

Supporting documents and information

Appendix 1: Brighton & Hove Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Plan

