



Action for Warm Homes

A NATIONAL SCANDAL: THE COLD HOMES CRISIS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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THIS PRESENTATION

- **About National Energy Action**
- **The cold homes crisis in the United Kingdom: understanding fuel poverty**
- **UK Government response to the cold homes crisis: fuel poverty policy**
- **Local actors on the ground: lifting people out of fuel poverty**

ABOUT NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION

- National charity set up over 30 years ago to address the scandal of fuel poverty in the UK
- Campaigns at the political level *and* delivers practical projects on-the-ground
- Membership base and funding from public, private and non-governmental sectors
- Our vision: that no one should be living in fuel poverty in the UK



FUEL POVERTY IN EUROPE IS BAD...

Fuel poverty indicators across EU27 (data from 2010-11)

Indicator	Year	
	2010	2011
Ability to keep home warm	9.5%	9.8%
Leaks, damp, rot	16.0%	15.5%
Arrears on utility bills	8.9%	8.9%

Source: EU SILC indicators (Thomson, H. 2014. 'The perception and incidence of fuel poverty across the European Union')



...AND CAN BE EVEN WORSE IN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES...

Ability to keep warm: EU-27 versus Mediterranean

Population	Indicator	% of population
EU-27	Ability to keep home warm	~10%
Portugal, Greece, Malta and Italy	Ability to keep home warm	20-30%

Source: Data drawn from Thomson (2014) and Pye et al. (2015).



...BUT A NATIONAL SCANDAL IN THE UK

UK's ranking in Europe across key fuel poverty indicators¹

Indicator	2011 (previous assessment)	2013 (this briefing)
Affordability of space heating	14/15	16/16
Arrears on utility bills in last 12 months	(9/16)	14/16
Level of fuel poverty	13/16	14/16 ²
Homes in poor state of repair	12/16	12/16
Thermal performance of...		
<i>Walls</i>	6/8	7/11
<i>Roof</i>	n/a	8/11
<i>Floor</i>	n/a	10/11
<i>Windows</i>	n/a	11/11

Source: Energy Bill Revolution and ACE (2015). *The Cold Man of Europe*.

...so despite being one of the richest European countries the UK is also one of the coldest – with people suffering and sometimes dying in their homes: a national scandal.

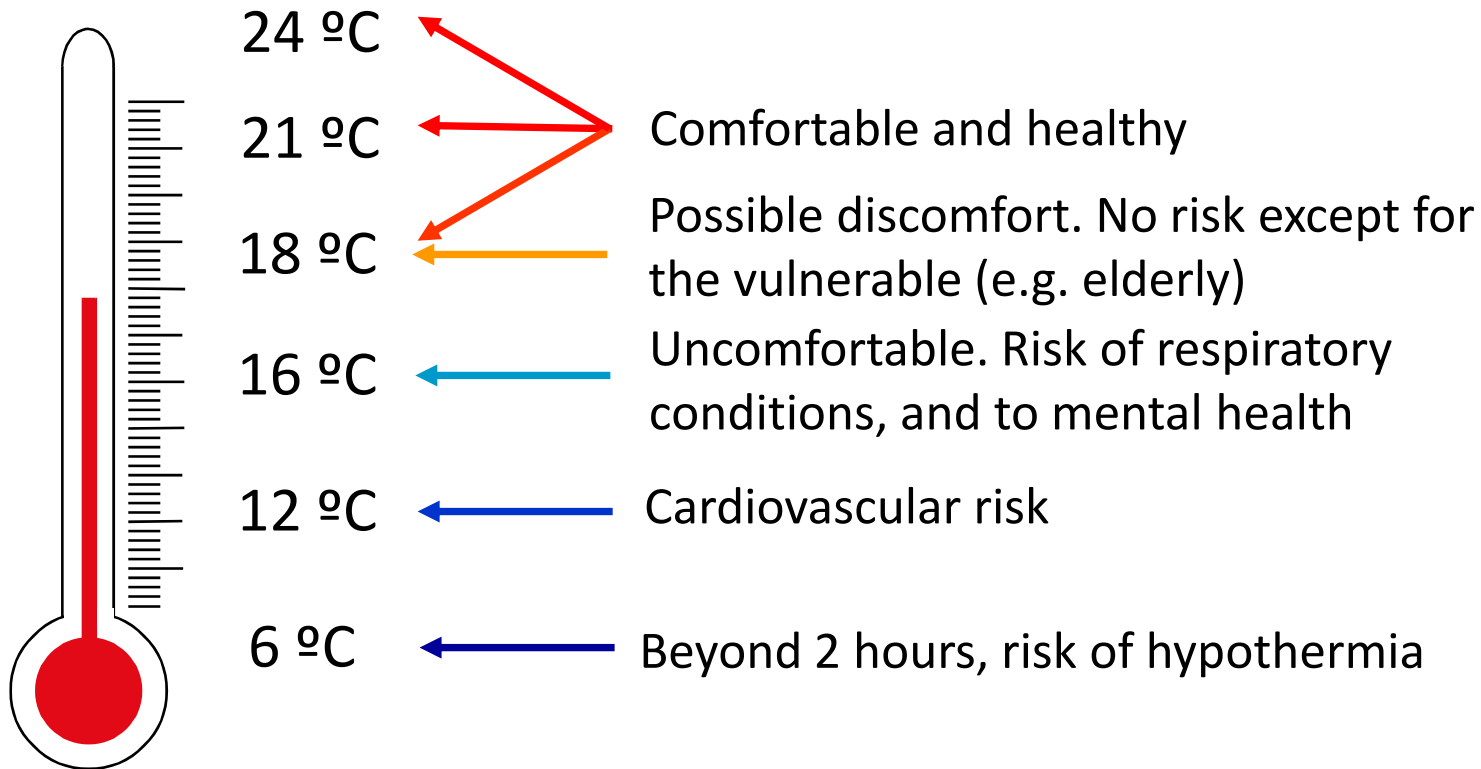
1. Number of countries varies according to data availability.





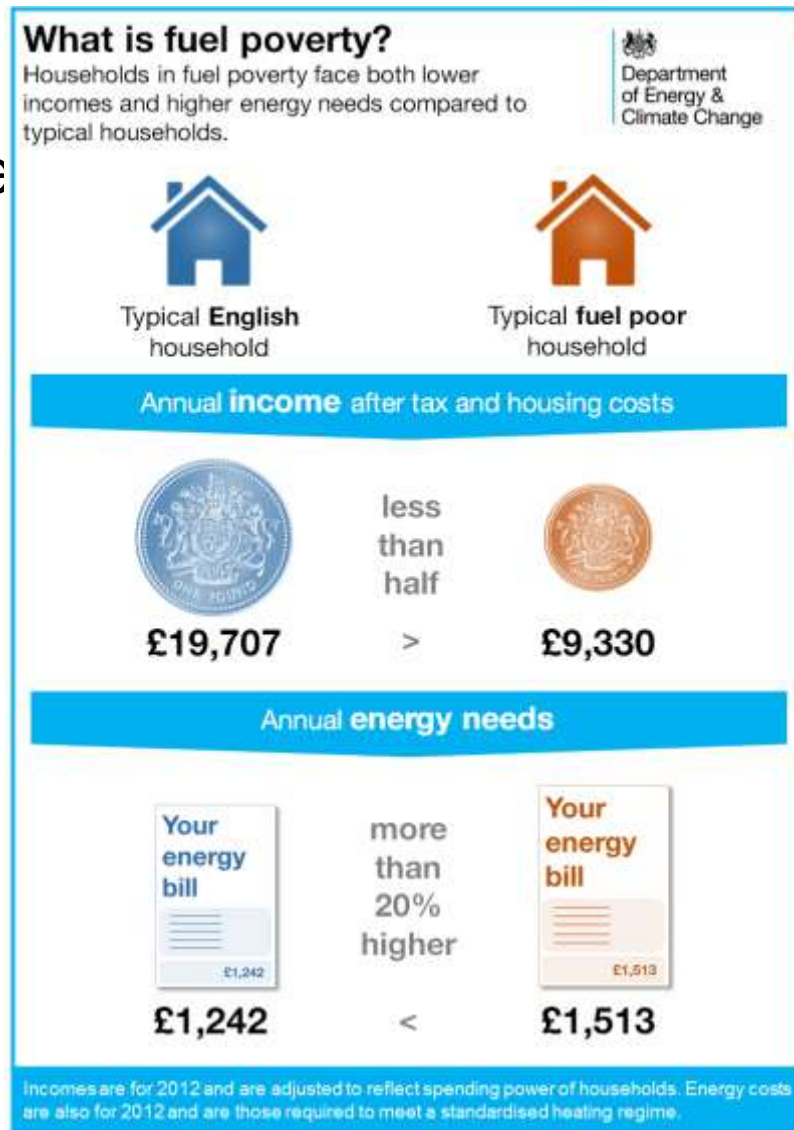
WHY ARE UK FUEL POVERTY LEVELS SO BAD?

KEEPING WARM AND HEALTHY IN YOUR HOME



FUEL POVERTY: THREE KEY FACTORS

- Low household income
- High energy costs
- Energy inefficient dwelling



FUEL POVERTY: DEFINITION IN ENGLAND

- Low Income High Costs indicator of fuel poverty finds a household to be fuel poor if:
 - has an income below the poverty line (after housing and fuel bill costs); and
 - has higher than typical energy costs.



FUEL POVERTY: IN NUMBERS

- 4.5 million UK households in fuel poverty – 17% of the UK population
- 44,000 Excess Winter Deaths 2014/15, the highest this century
 - Estimated 30% of those deaths are caused by living in a cold home = over 13,000 dying from cold
- Cold homes kill more people across the UK than road accidents, drug abuse and alcohol abuse combined



FUEL POVERTY: EFFECTS

- Premature death, ill-health, extra demands on public health services, social isolation, poor outcomes for young people, fuel debt, carbon emissions from energy inefficient homes...the list goes on

THE COLD HOME CRISIS

CAN WE AFFORD TO WAIT?

WE ESTIMATE THAT OVER THE NEXT 15 YEARS...

COST TO NHS

£22
BILLION

Health: £22bn spent on the NHS (England & Wales) treating cold related admissions.

EXTRA DEATHS

125,000
EXPECTED

EWM: 125,000 premature deaths in the UK as a result of living in cold homes.

FUEL DEBT

£950
MILLION

Fuel debt: £950m of public indebtedness will not be spent in local economies.

FUEL POVERTY: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

“If I couldn’t afford to put the heating on, I couldn’t afford to do the washing! I was always trying to catch up when we did top up the heater, trying to get a mountain of clothes dry on radiators. When we didn’t have electricity, we’d just eat sandwiches and rubbish. One time my little boy ate cold beans. I used to eat cold beans but I never wanted my children to have to but he said, ‘Mum, I don’t want sandwiches’.”

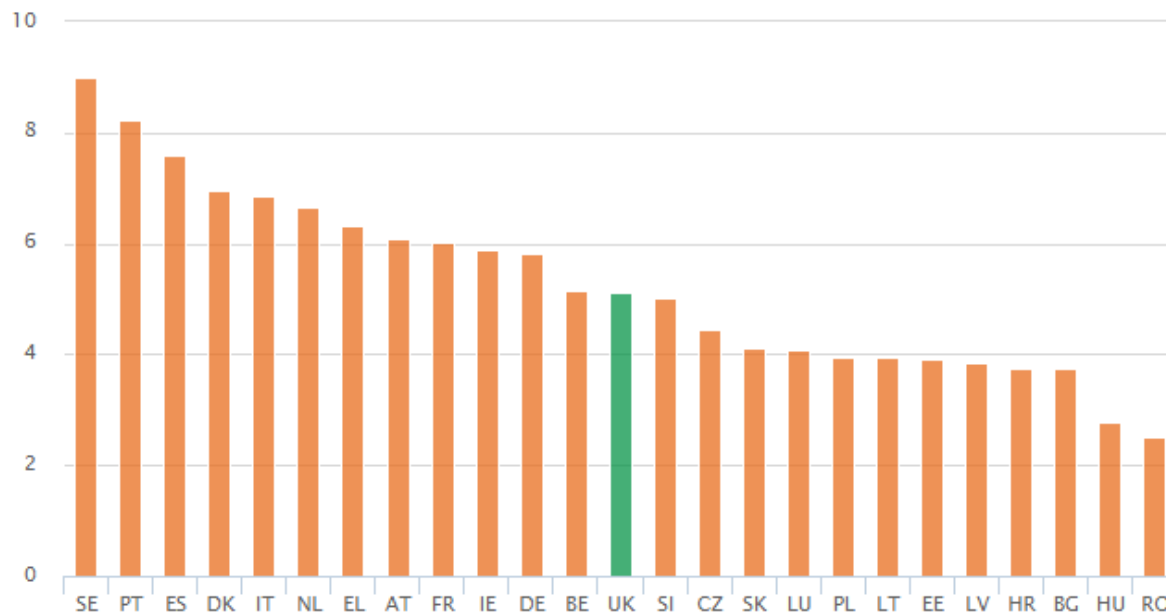
Source: CAP (2015). *The Poor Pay More: Prepayment meters and self-disconnection*



FUEL POVERTY: A PROBLEM OF POOR HOUSING

- UK household incomes not lower than the rest of Europe
- UK domestic energy prices not higher than the rest of Europe

Domestic price of gas compared to Europe, ≡
medium user, July to December 2014
(p/kWh)

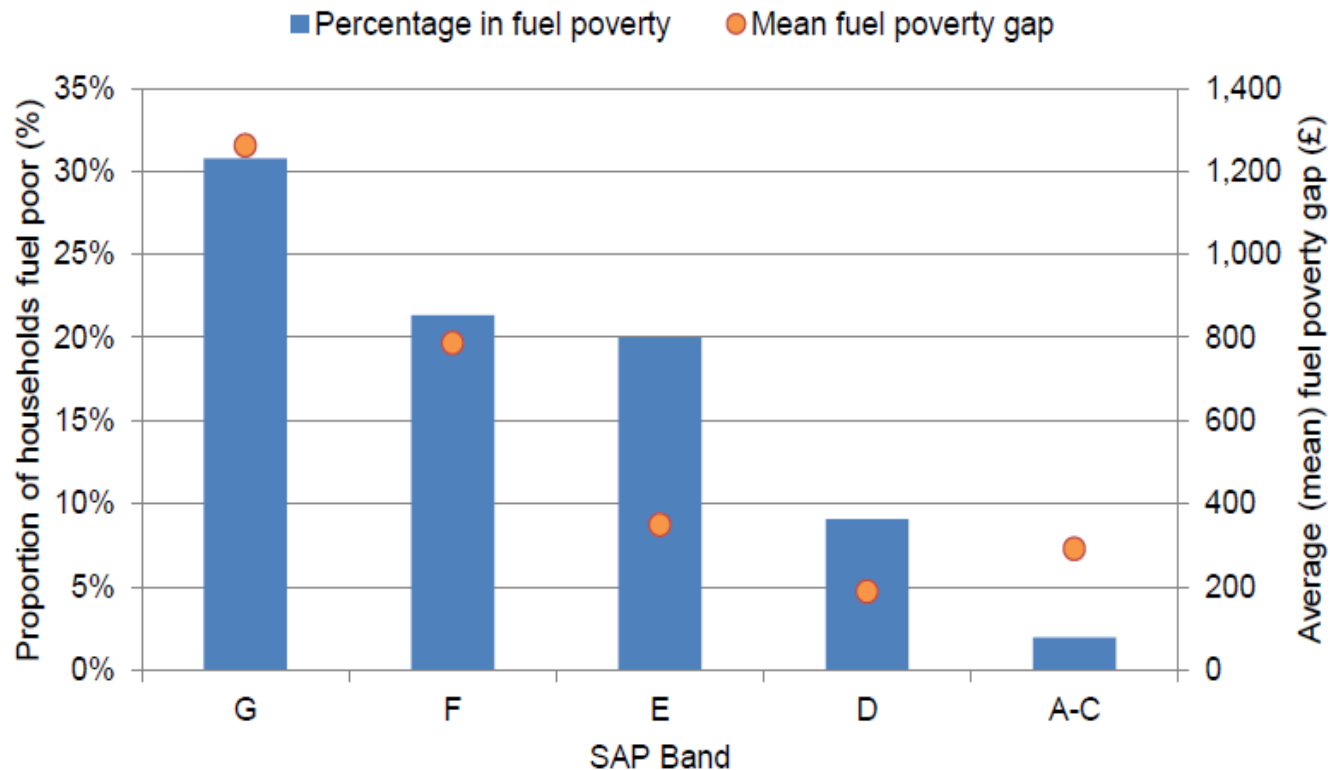


Source: Ofgem



UK HOMES ARE OLD AND COLD

- ...but UK housing stock one of the worst in Europe! Nearly 7 million English homes (1/3) rated E, F and G.
- If you live in a G-rated home there is a 1 in 3 change you will be fuel poor.





WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT FUEL POVERTY IN THE UK?

MAKE HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY AN INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY IN THE UK

- Improving the energy efficiency of UK housing stock the only long-term sustainable solution to ending the cold homes crisis.
- But...this is a big task that requires government policy commitment and public funds:
 - There are around 28 million homes in the UK and about **17 million UK homes** have a poor standard of energy efficiency, rated below EPC Band C. This equates to **62% of homes**.



TARGETS ACROSS UK TO END FUEL POVERTY

- Legal fuel poverty target for **England**: by 2030, as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable must achieve a Band C energy efficiency standard → 95% of fuel poor homes currently below this standard
- **Scotland**: eradicate fuel poverty by November 2016 → 39% of all Scottish households still in fuel poverty
- **Wales**: eradicate fuel poverty by 2018 → 30% of all Welsh households still in fuel poverty
- **Northern Ireland**: no fuel poverty target but 42% of all Northern Irish households still in fuel poverty



UK GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO TACKLE FUEL POVERTY

Two main policy responses

1. Financial assistance → payments or rebates off energy bills to help meet energy costs of fuel poor households
 - Warm Home Discount → £140 annual rebate off electricity bill of low income and vulnerable households
 - Winter Fuel Payment → £100-300 annual payment to pensioners in Great Britain
 - Cold Weather Payment → £25 payment for 7-day period of cold weather to low income and vulnerable households
2. Energy efficiency programmes → improving the homes of fuel poor households
 - First Government-funded energy efficiency programme set up in 1991
 - Government funding for energy efficiency now ended in England → funding only through levy on consumer energy bills
 - Energy suppliers to fund 5-year scheme at £640m per annum from 2017 → funds woefully inadequate – UK Government on track to miss its 2030 fuel poverty target by 80 years



LOCAL LEVEL ACTION TO TACKLE FUEL POVERTY

- NEA works with front-line staff, community workers and volunteers to tackle fuel poverty on the ground
- Offer training courses to up-skill staff to identify fuel poor households and provide assistance
- 25,000 trained to date in Energy Awareness Level 3 course



FIVE KEY STEPS TO SUPPORT FUEL POOR HOUSEHOLDS

1. Maximise income
2. Get the best deal from the energy supplier
3. Tackle poor housing: heating and insulation
4. Energy advice
5. Refer on for other assistance

Local-level actors can make the biggest difference to households suffering and isolated in cold homes



THANK YOU

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