A Manifesto for Eradicating Fuel Poverty in Scotland by 2016
- Key Action Points for Local Government from Energy Action Scotland -

While the Scottish Government has a statutory duty - under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 - to eradicate fuel poverty in Scotland by November 2016, local authorities also have a significant role in contributing to this target through their Local Housing Strategies.

The level of national fuel poverty has swung from a high of over 730,000 households in 1996 to a low of just over 250,000 in 2002 and has now soared to an estimated 900,000 households – nearly 40%. While rising energy prices can largely be blamed for the recent increase, efforts to improve domestic energy efficiency and maximise household incomes are crucial in mitigating the effects. Without them the number of fuel poor would otherwise be much higher.

As the national charity with the mission to eradicate fuel poverty, Energy Action Scotland is calling on all Scottish political parties to commit to three key actions in their manifestos for the local government elections in 2012. While not an exhaustive list, we believe that by acting on these commitments, they will help set Scotland on course to reach the 2016 target.

**Action Point 1**
Commit significant investment in increasing the energy efficiency of the housing stock.
Improving the energy efficiency of homes is the most sustainable route out of fuel poverty and will help to protect households against fluctuations in energy price and in income. This step will also contribute considerably to delivering obligations under the Climate Change Act.

Energy Action Scotland believes that local authorities should be working now to go beyond the basic levels of energy efficiency in the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and should be seeking to achieve a more modern living standard, as indicated by a stock energy rating of at least NHER 7. Energy Action Scotland also believes that the Scottish Housing Quality Standard should be extended to the Private Rented Sector. In this way, no home in Scotland would be let unless it meets this energy efficiency standard as a minimum.

**Action Point 2**
Commit to supporting advice agencies that promote the financial health of individuals and communities
Holistic one-stop-shop advice agencies have been shown to be very effective in delivering advice and education to the public on money and household management. This includes managing bills, avoiding debt, payment methods and benefits/tax credit checks. Face-to-face advocacy is considered essential when assisting those who are vulnerable.

**Action Point 3**
Maximise opportunities to develop energy choices appropriate to the area
Local authorities have an opportunity to develop and support a changing energy landscape in their area that is appropriate to local needs. These opportunities might include community renewable initiatives, bulk fuel buying schemes, district heating, combined heat and power, gas in-fill, community benefit funds, matching procurement for energy efficiency measures in private sector homes, etc. Local authorities can help maximise the funding brought in to the area for such initiatives and take a proactive approach that ensures multiple outcomes for fuel poverty, sustainability and climate change across all housing tenures.

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