

# FUEL POVERTY: A NEW STRATEGY AND A NEW SCHEME

Held on 09/04/2024, 15/04/2024 and 18/04/2024

## S1: WORKSHOP 1 – ELIGIBILITY

How to determine who should receive support

## S2: WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Welcome and introductions
- Background and context
- Eligibility criteria for support
  - Principles for a new strategy
  - Criteria for a new fuel poverty scheme
- Presentations and group discussions

## S3: WELCOME

- Department for Communities – Climate Change Division
- Practicalities

## S4: WHY ARE WE HERE?

- We are developing a new fuel poverty strategy and a new fuel poverty support scheme for Northern Ireland
- We want to tell you more about this work
- We want your input, experience and advice

## S5: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### S6: WHY NOW?

- Nearly a quarter of Northern Ireland's population is in fuel poverty
- The Climate Change Act commits government to take action to reduce carbon
- Fuel poverty contributes to poor mental and physical health

### S7: RECENT CONSULTATIONS

- Included are: draft Housing Supply Strategy, draft Green Growth Strategy, The Path to Net Zero Energy, Consultation on Northern Ireland's 2030 & 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets & First Three Carbon Budgets & Seeking views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland, Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

### S8: OUR FOCUS

- Placing people at the centre of energy and residential decarbonisation
- A Just Transition

### S9: A NEW FUEL POVERTY STRATEGY

### S10: WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN WE SAY 'FUEL POVERTY IN NORTHERN IRELAND'?

(Mentimeter word cloud)

### S11: STRATEGY AND SCHEME

- Descriptive text: a triangle with three sections (energy use, income and energy price), with a circle in the middle of the triangle labelled “Information and advice” and two circles around the triangle representing public health and carbon emissions

### S12: DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- **Energy efficiency lever is key** – move spend from crisis intervention to long-term home energy efficiency support, information and advice
- **Energy prices are largely beyond our control in the short term** – we have some limited levers to impact bills; new levers will emerge over time
- **Accountability** – this could mean ownership, clear objectives and responsibilities, regular updates on progress, aligning priorities with budgets and transparency, among others
- **Better health is an outcome** – improved mental and physical health is a key outcome and targeting should be improved

### S13: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Eligibility:** How to determine who should receive support – criteria, principles and a practical look at Affordable Warmth (Workshop 1)
- **Collaboration:** Identifying partners and their roles – finding those who need help the most, developing pathways from short-term assistance to long-term solutions (Workshop 2)
- **Understanding and framing:** Improving our definition and developing a vision and principles – using different indicators to support our work, considering high-level principles to guide us (Workshop 3)

### S14: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA - PRINCIPLES

### S15: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- **Limited resources** – government has limited funds and must make decisions about where to use it
- **Competing priorities** – how do we balance carbon reduction, health outcomes and cost if they each suggest different groups?
- **We don't have a list** – we use proxies or estimates and people can and do move in and out of fuel poverty
- **Unique opportunity** – government is developing new schemes and a new strategy – is this a time to build a more cohesive framework?

### S16: DISCUSSION

- Who should be eligible for home energy support schemes in future? How do we prioritise government support?
- What principles could be used to determine eligibility for future home energy interventions?
- Principles: Needs-based; Consumer protection; Energy performance of homes; Data-driven; Universal; Flexibility; Transparency

## **S17: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – A NEW FUEL POVERTY SUPPORT SCHEME**

### **S18: SCHEME DEVELOPMENT:**

**Stage 1:** Data and evidence gathering

**Stage 2:** Scheme design

**Stage 3:** Outreach and awareness

**Stage 4:** Skills and trusted providers

**Stage 5:** Delivery and Evaluation

#### Lessons Learned:

- **Targeting** – Wasn't effective
- **Whole House Approach** – not applied consistently, low uptake of insulation
- **Income threshold** – not now fit for purpose
- **Private Rented Sector** – uptake low

#### Opportunities:

- **Blank Sheet** – opportunity for energy efficiency and carbon reduction
- **Streamline process** – applicants, referral pathways, contractors
- **Consumer Protection** – Trusted Contractors, Code of Practice, Quality Standards

## **S19: MENTIMETER WORD CLOUD**

- What is the most important criteria to qualify for support from a new fuel poverty scheme??

## **S20: SCHEMES AVAILABLE IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS (PART 1)**

### England: Home Upgrade Grant (HUG)

- live in the property
- do not use a gas boiler as their main heating system
- have an EPC rating of D-G
- less than £31,000 annual household income

### England: The Great British Insulation Scheme

- owns their own home (or, in some cases, rent from a private landlord)
- is living in a home with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below (EPC E or below if renting)
- is living in a home that falls within Council Tax bands A-D in England or A-E in Scotland and Wales
- has someone living at the property qualifies for certain benefits, such as pension credit, universal credit, child benefit (subject to income limit), income support and housing benefit

### Scotland: Warmer Homes Scotland

- be a homeowner or rent from private landlord

- live in the home as main residence and have lived there for at least six months
- live in a home with a poor energy rating
- live in a home which has a floor area of 230m<sup>2</sup>
- live in a home that meets the tolerable living standard set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.
- live in a home where the council tax band is A-F and
- live in a household that includes either a person who is over 75 with no central heating, a person who is in receipt of a DS1500 or a person who is in receipt of at least one of the passport benefits

#### Wales: Nest

- own or privately rent their home
- home is energy inefficient and expensive to heat
- they or someone they live with receives a means tested benefit or has a chronic respiratory, circulatory or mental health condition and an income below the defined thresholds

### **S21: SCHEMES AVAILABLE IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS (PART 2)**

#### Northern Ireland

- Live in Northern Ireland
- Own and occupy your property as your main home
- Have your day / life interest in the house
- Rent from a private landlord, and
- Have a total annual gross income of less than £23,000

#### Republic of Ireland

- Qualifying homeowners must be in receipt of certain welfare benefits
- Prioritise homes that were built and occupied before 1993 and have a BER (Building Energy Certificate) of E, F or G

#### New Support Scheme

- ✓ Continue to be criteria based
- ✓ Prioritise those in most need
- ✓ Assist in achieving carbon targets
- ✓ Increase uptake in Private Rented Sector

### **S22: MENTIMETER RANK ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Rank criteria in order of importance

- A. Based on income
- B. Energy Rating of House
- C. Qualifying for certain benefits
- D. Age of applicant
- E. Health condition

Is there anything missing and discuss at your tables?

### **S23: MENTIMETER RANK CRITERIA**

Having discussed please rank criteria in order of importance again

- A. Based on income
- B. Energy Rating of House
- C. Qualifying for certain benefits
- D. Age of applicant
- E. Health condition

What changed your decision / perspective??

### **S24: MENTIMETER INCOME THRESHOLD**

Choose Income Band that reflects current need

1. £25,000 - £30,000
2. £30,000 - £35,000
3. £35,000 - £40,000
4. £40,000 - £45,000

Discuss why at your tables

### **S25: MENTIMETER BENEFITS**

Which qualifying benefits should be included?

1. Recipients of all benefits
2. Recipients of Means Tested benefits only
3. Recipients of Passported benefits only

Discuss at your tables

### **S26: UPCOMING WORKSHOPS**

**Workshop 1 – Eligibility:** How to determine who should receive support

- |          |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 9 April  | Belfast – 10.00 – 13.00             |
| 15 April | Londonderry / Derry – 13.30 – 17.00 |
| 18 April | Online – 10.00 – 13.00              |

**Workshop 2 – Collaboration: Identifying partners and their roles**

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|----------|---------------------------|
| 30 April | Belfast – 10.00 – 13.00   |
| 7 May    | Dungannon – 10.00 – 13.00 |
| 9 May    | Online – 10.00 – 13.00    |

**Workshop 3 – Understanding and framing: Improving our definition and developing a vision and principles**

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|--------|-------------------------|
| 23 May | Newry – 10.00 – 13.00   |
| 29 May | Belfast – 10.00 – 13.00 |

3 June Online – 10.00 – 13.00

**Feedback Session**

20 June Online – 10.00 – 13.00

**S29: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP**

[fuelpovertystrategy@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:fuelpovertystrategy@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Thank you