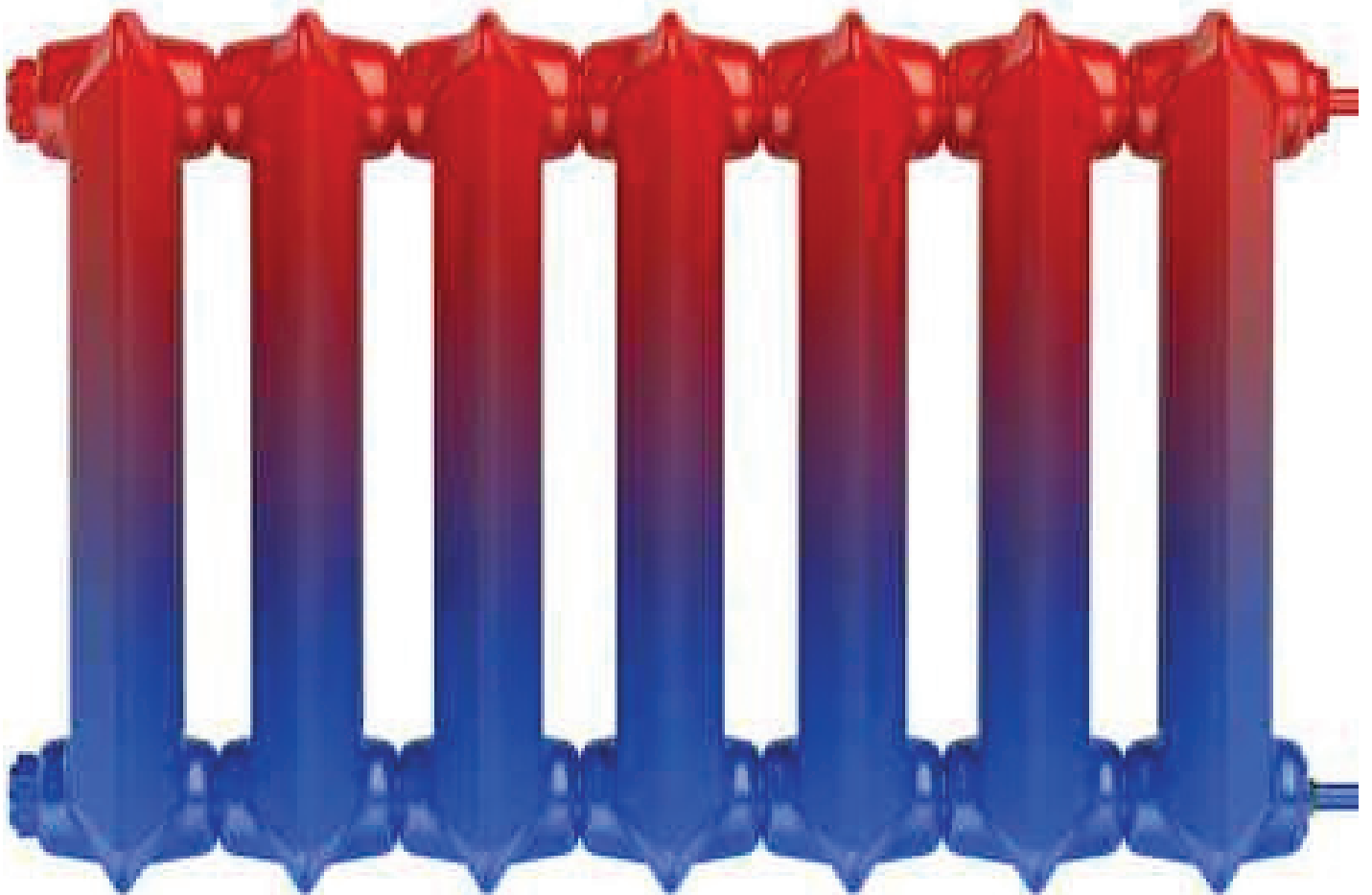


Herefordshire Affordable Warmth Strategy

2016-19

Published February 2016



Foreword

I am delighted to be able to write this foreword to the Herefordshire Affordable Warmth Strategy. Herefordshire Council is committed to ensuring that affordable warmth is available to all the residents of Herefordshire, especially to the most vulnerable people.

A fuel poor household is one that cannot afford to keep adequately warm at reasonable cost. Many of these households are at an increased risk of ill-health as well as often facing the difficult choice of either paying for sufficient fuel to keep warm or paying for other basic necessities.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with a wide range of partners. The strategy and action plan it contains will help by bringing agencies together to reduce health and poverty impacts through providing advice on cutting fuel bills and saving energy as well as helping residents gain access to energy efficiency grants and benefits.

It is intended that the strategy, when linked to other local initiatives, will play an important role in reducing health and debt problems associated with living in cold, energy inefficient homes and at the same time achieving comfort and energy savings for low-income households throughout the county.

Cllr Philip Price



Introduction

Herefordshire Council and its partners will continue to work hard to enable effective action to tackle fuel poverty and associated challenges through co-operative approaches. Activity will look to achieve the three key aims of the affordable warmth action plan:

- To raise awareness of fuel poverty and affordable warmth among all stakeholders
- To encourage and support households to achieve affordable warmth
- To develop sustainable strategies and delivery models via co-operation and evaluation

This latest affordable warmth strategy document for Herefordshire follows the Herefordshire Council Affordable Warmth Strategy of 2008.

This document;

- sets out the scale of fuel poverty in the UK and specifically in Herefordshire
- introduces the effects of fuel poverty
- reports performance to date in regard to activity to alleviate fuel poverty
- identifies areas of focus for activity in future
- introduces an affordable warmth action plan.

Nationally, fuel poverty remains a key priority. Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (2013) figures show that 2.35 million English households live in Fuel Poverty, approximately 10.4 percent of all households in England.

In response to these latest figures, the government's Fuel Poverty Advisory Group is strongly encouraging the Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England to support the development of preventative action with a strong focus on fuel poverty alleviation. This follows Professor John Hill's independent review into Fuel Poverty in the UK (released in March 2012) which advised the Government as to how it could best tackle the problem of Fuel Poverty.

At the same time, significant changes have occurred to the way energy efficiency measures are encouraged and supported in the UK. Energy supplier based 'obligations' remain the key delivery mechanism for energy efficiency improvements in the UK, the most significant being the Energy Company Obligation (or ECO).

Against the backdrop of such changes, accelerating energy prices have had a significant effect on both the extent and depth of fuel poverty across the country. According to the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group's 11th Annual report (2012-13), since 2007 the average domestic electricity bill has increased by 31% and the average domestic gas bill by 55% over the same period. Such rises in this period (2007 – 2013) have not been mirrored by increases in household incomes.

Fuel poverty has become a significant public health priority. Preliminary excess winter death (EWD) figures for the period 2014-15 showed an increase of 141% on the equivalent period from 2012-2013. This increase equates to more than 25,700 more EWD's taking the yearly figure to 43,900.

In addition, a link can be made between fuel poverty, the unsustainable use of energy and climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are 95% certain that humans are the 'dominant cause' for the continuing warming of the planet, as detailed in their latest assessment.

Around a third of the UK's emissions come from energy generated for heating, so any actions to tackle fuel poverty such as insulation, education initiatives and accelerating the deployment of renewable energy are likely to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, cut wasteful usage and have the potential to reduce human impacts on the climate.

The fuel poverty challenge

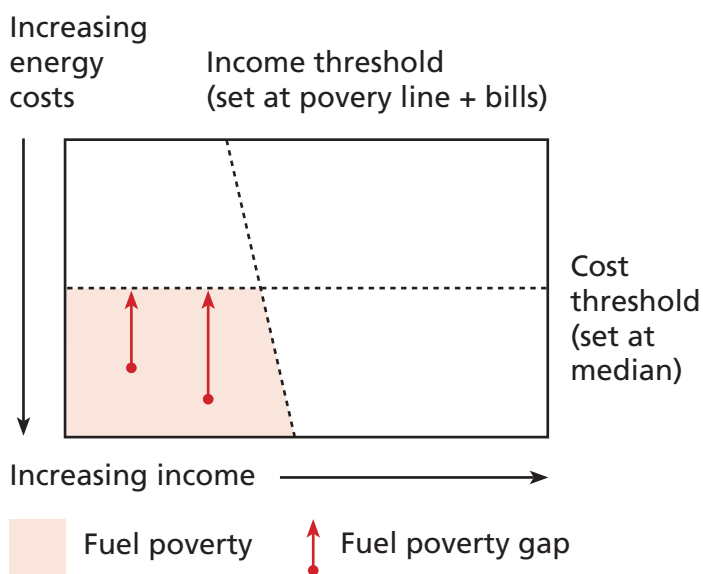
The terms fuel poverty and affordable warmth are used interchangeably. The government has implemented the recommendations set out in the Hills report and has amended the approach taken to define fuel poverty by adopting a 'Low Income High Cost' (LIHC) definition.

The new indicator (LIHC) finds a household to be in fuel poverty (or fuel poor) if:

- Their income is below the poverty line (taking energy costs in to account); and
- Their energy costs are higher than is typical for their household type.

The indicator (or definition) includes a fuel poverty gap. This gap is the difference between a modelled bill (i.e. what the bill for the particular household type should be) and what the bill would need to be for the household to no longer be classed as fuel poor. The fuel poverty gap intends to help measure the severity of fuel poverty. The strength of the new indicator is the ability to distinguish between the extent (number of people) and depth (how badly people are effected) by fuel poverty. Figure 1 (below) depicts the new indicator.

Figure 1 - The low income high cost definition



Source: Fuel Poverty – Framework for Future Action, DECC, July 2013.

It is hoped that the new indicator will help to identify those households that are suffering the most severe fuel poverty. Sensitivity to energy bill increases should also better highlight the upward pressure of energy bills on fuel poverty.

Put more simply a household is deemed to be in fuel poverty if they are unable to adequately heat their home at an affordable cost. Affordable warmth is therefore seen as the ability to heat a home affordably.

The three key factors that influence fuel poverty are:

- Household income
- Energy efficiency of a property
- Cost of energy

Vulnerable households and effects of fuel poverty

A combination of low income, poor energy efficiency of a property and the cost of energy are often present in fuel poor households. This makes it possible to identify certain groups who may be particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty, where the likelihood of the three factors mentioned above having an impact are higher and therefore more likely to impact on the ability to adequately heat a home.

Alongside the vulnerable, where income status plays a role in perceived vulnerability to fuel poverty, those living in energy inefficient housing are also at risk. Typically, older properties are less energy efficient and are often less likely to have had other efficiency improvements installed. They are also often harder to insulate because of cost constraints and due to the complexities of their construction.

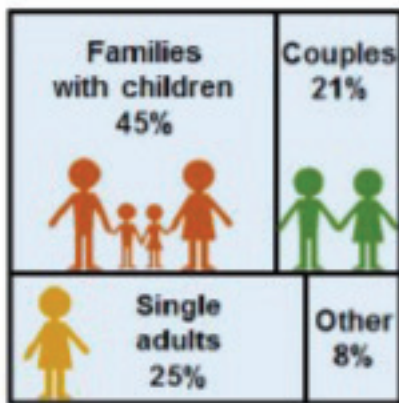
Who are the fuel poor?

The annual fuel poverty statistics reveal a lot about the typical fuel poor household, including dwelling and economic conditions.

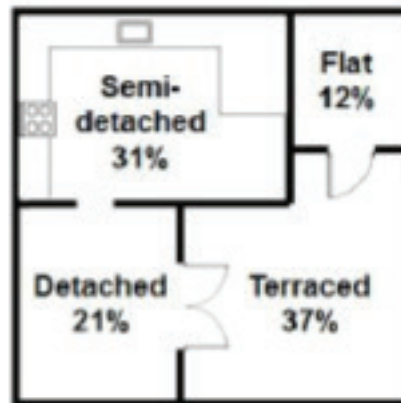


Department of Energy & Climate Change

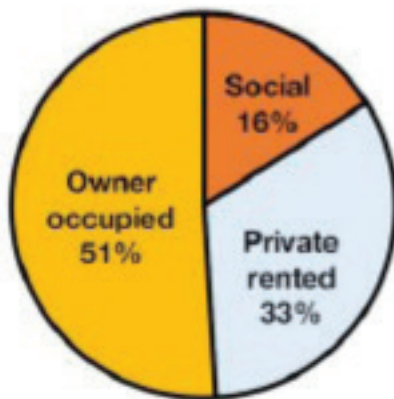
Mainly families



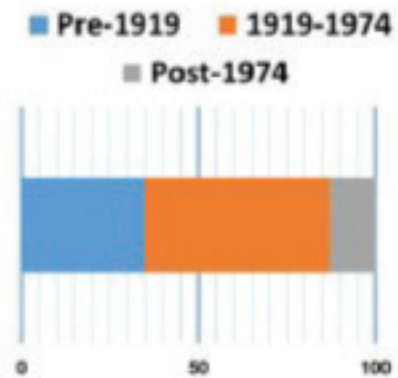
Living in larger homes



Usually private tenure



Living in old dwellings



Information is drawn from the annual statistics for 2012 which were published in June 2014 and which are available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics

Source: Fuel Poverty Strategy for England; Cutting the cost of keeping warm (DECC, 2015)

The National Insulation Association (NIA) estimate that around 36% of UK homes are of non-cavity or solid wall construction. Such properties are also known as hard to treat homes. Indicative figures from the Healthy Housing survey for Herefordshire show that there are around 13,000 solid walled properties in the county. Current funding mechanisms to help improve the efficiency of hard to heat homes remain limited due to the complexity and cost associated with retrofitting hard to treat homes.

As the cost of energy is a key factor in regard to vulnerability to fuel poverty, households relying on expensive heating fuels (such as electricity and oil) can be more vulnerable than those on more affordable fuel types, such as mains gas. For that reason, 'off-gas' households and communities are thought to be at high risk of fuel poverty. Analysis by the Centre of Sustainable Energy (CSE) shows that in rural areas across England, lack of mains gas dominates the make-up of hard to treat properties where hard-to-treat or HTT is classified as solid walled properties and or lack of access to mains gas. 45% and 51% of properties have no access to mains gas in villages and isolated areas respectively. In the most isolated rural areas the majority of HTT properties (28%) are both without mains gas and of solid walled construction. Such a picture is expected to be evident in a rural county such as Herefordshire.

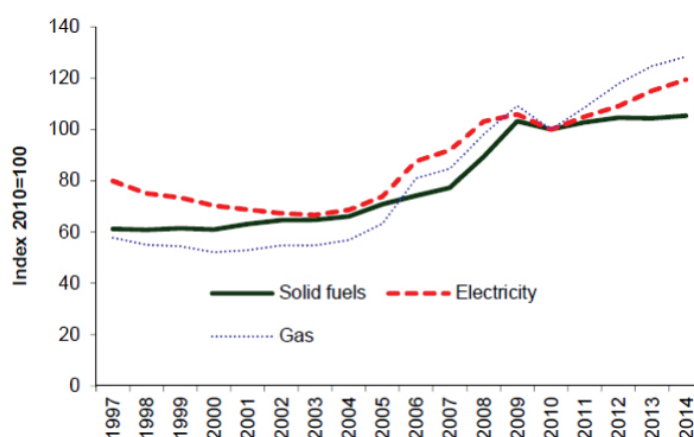
A series of other factors can influence the extent of fuel poverty including weather patterns (especially the severity of winter), household composition (single person households can often struggle to heat larger homes), the amount of time spent at home (demand for heating) and tenure (where responsibility for improvements may differ between landlord and occupant).

Efforts to tackle fuel poverty primarily focus on the three causal factors at play, low incomes, poor efficiency of properties and high energy prices. Approaches often combine income maximisation, support to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, the use of energy within them and efforts to reduce energy prices or mitigate against price increases.

Traditionally, energy efficiency improvements have been a low priority for householders and many households are unaware of the support that is available or the benefits that such improvements can have. The role of council's can be key in emphasizing the effects that an energy efficient home can have on energy bills, comfort of living and health. In addition financial support available through various schemes has been inconsistent and such schemes are often characterised by complexity meaning the installation of required energy saving measures is not always possible.

It is widely accepted that the cost of energy is the key driver among many aspects that can result in people being unable to heat their home adequately. Figure 2 shows energy price trends between 1996 and 2014.

Figure 2 - Fuel price indices in the domestic sector 1996 to 2014.



Excess winter deaths & cold related illness

Fuel poverty remains a significant public health issue. Cold-related illness, stress and excess winter deaths can all be linked to the prevalence of fuel poverty. In 2011, the Marmot Review team set out the Health Impacts of Cold Homes. Headlines from the report were:

- Countries with more energy efficient housing have lower numbers of Excess Winter Deaths (EWD's).
- There is a relationship between EWD's, low thermal efficiency of housing and low indoor temperatures.
- Approximately 40% of EWD's are attributed to cardiovascular diseases while 33% are attributable to respiratory problems.
- There is a strong relationship between cold temperatures and such cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.
- Children living in cold homes are twice as likely to suffer from a respiratory illness than those living in a warm home.
- Mental health is negatively affected by cold homes, across all demographics.

Source: The Health impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty, Marmot Review Team, May 2011

The Marmot report identified the improvement of the UK's housing stock as the essential step that needed to be taken to reduce the number of fuel poor households and the associated impacts of living in cold homes. It is widely recognised that cold homes have health, environmental and economic impacts on households, communities and regions.



Health impacts: Excess winter mortality in Herefordshire

Table 1 - Excess winter deaths index (single year, all ages) August 2013 - July 2014

Herefordshire 2.8
Shropshire 13.6
Telford & Wrekin 9.4
West Midlands 13.2

Source: ONS: Excess Winter Mortality in England and Wales, 2014/15 (Provisional) and 2013/14 (Final)

According to latest figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Herefordshire's proportion of excess winter deaths was significantly lower than the West Midlands average and of neighboring council areas (see table 1).

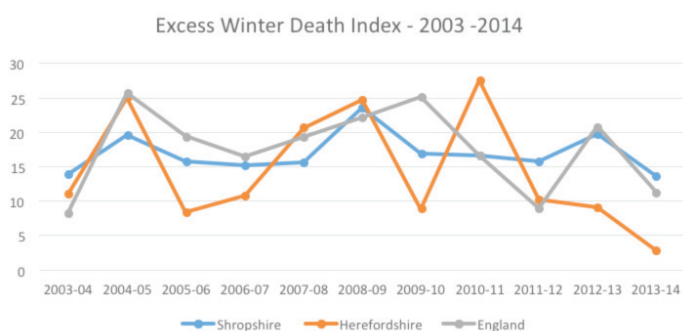
The EWM (Excess Winter Mortality) index is calculated so that comparisons can be made between sexes, age groups and regions, and is calculated as the number of excess winter deaths divided by the average non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage:

$$\text{EWM Index} = \frac{\text{EWM}}{\text{Average of non winter deaths}} \times 100$$

An EWM index of 20 shows that there were 20 per cent more deaths in winter compared with the non-winter period.

Looking at EWM index figures across Herefordshire over the last decade (figure 3); we can see that the rate of EWD's fluctuates significantly, often but not always reflecting the severity of winter weather. Other factors such as the success of national vaccination programmes can have a significant impact. This underlines the fact that a low EWD index figure one year is by no means a measure of success in regard to reducing incidences of EWDs and serves to further underline the importance of continuing actions to support fuel poor households and reduce the impacts of cold related homes. The graph also includes the national average figures for the same period and those of neighbouring Shropshire. Both figures show less fluctuation in comparison to Herefordshire.

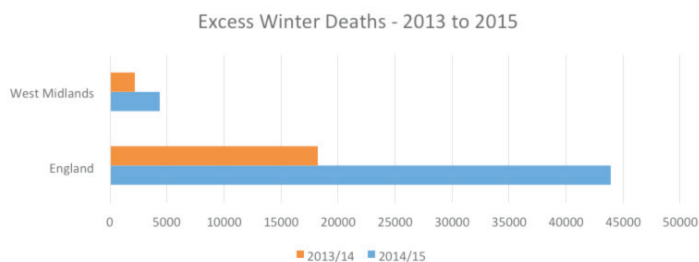
Figure 3 - Excess winter death index figures 2003-14 (England, Herefordshire and Shropshire)



Source: ONS: Excess winter deaths for local/unitary authorities in England and Wales, 1991/92 to 2013/14

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) have released provisional EWD figures for the year 2014-15, which show that there were 43,900 EWD's in England and Wales. This was an increase of 25,700 on the previous winter and the highest level since 1999. The large majority of these deaths were registered in the 'aged 75 and over' age category, over 36,000. More than 27% more people died in the winter months opposed to the non-winter months. Figures at Local Authority level are not currently available. Regional figures for the West Midlands region show an increase from 2,200 EWD's (2013-14) to 4,400 EWD's (2014-15) (figure 4) over the same period.

Figure 4 - Changes in excess winter death index for England and West Midland region - 2013-15



Source: ONS; Excess winter mortality for regions of England, and Wales, 2013/14–2014/15

If the trend in Herefordshire follows that shown in England and the wider West Midlands region then an increase in the number of EWD's over the 2014-15 period could be expected.

It is known that excess winter death figures fluctuate wildly in relation to the severity of winter. Therefore a reduction in figures during a relatively mild winter is no guarantee that actions have been successful and the impacts of cold weather lessened. The large increase in the latest national EWD figures were directly attributed to a severe influenza epidemic, which the ONS suggest may have been due to the influenza vaccine not being as effective compared to previous winters. This may explain a significant increase during what was a relatively mild winter in 2014-15.

Benefits of affordable warmth

The cost to the NHS in Herefordshire owing to cold homes is thought to be significant.

Research from the national charity Age UK in 2012 (Age UK: The Cost of Cold - http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Campaigns/The_cost_of_cold_2012.pdf?dtrk=true) suggested that the cost of cold homes to the NHS in England and Wales is £1.36 billion a year. This figure does not include the cost to social care services, which is also expected to be significant.

Considering this national figure, any activity to reduce fuel poverty and its associated effects in Herefordshire is likely to lead to consequential reductions in local health spend, GP referrals and hospital admissions. Reducing household energy costs will have a positive effect on the most vulnerable in society, as well as increasing disposable income and resulting in increased economic activity within communities.

An increase in energy efficiency measures locally could also stimulate the economy in this area allowing skills development and increased employment opportunities.



A fuel poverty strategy for England

In March last year, the Coalition Government published England's first fuel poverty strategy for 13 years, 'Cutting the cost of Keeping Warm'. It is underpinned by a new fuel poverty target 'to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030'.

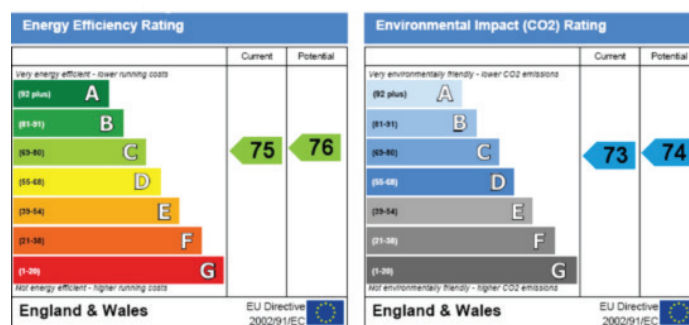
The strategy places emphasis on the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), which is the industry standard rating system to measure the energy efficiency of a property. Any improvements in the SAP ratings of properties will be measured as part of efforts to track progress towards alleviating fuel poverty. SAP improvements will be recorded as and when measures are installed that seek to address some of the structural problems that cause fuel poverty - improving cold, drafty and hard to heat homes by increasing insulation and installing more efficient heating systems.

The SAP rating is expressed on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for a property. An EPC is required whenever a property is built, sold or rented and contains information relating to the property energy use, typical energy costs and recommendations for improvements.

An EPC gives a property an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). EPC's are valid for 10 years.

The diagram below shows how energy ratings (SAP scores) relate to the A – G grading system.

Figure 5 - Energy efficiency ratings based on the standard assessment procedure



Source: Energy Performance Certificates, Gov.UK.

According to latest data, only 5% of fuel poor homes in England currently have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band of C or above. This figure rises to 18% in households not deemed to be fuel poor. Of fuel poor households, 36% are Band D, more than half are band E and around 14% are either Band F or G.

The new fuel poverty definition recognises that fuel poverty is caused by low income and high cost. Activity to improve the affordability of energy will therefore be crucial as well as supporting the delivery of energy efficiency measures.

The strategy includes interim milestones to assess progress toward the fuel poverty target:

- As many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to Band E by 2020
- As many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to Band D by 2025

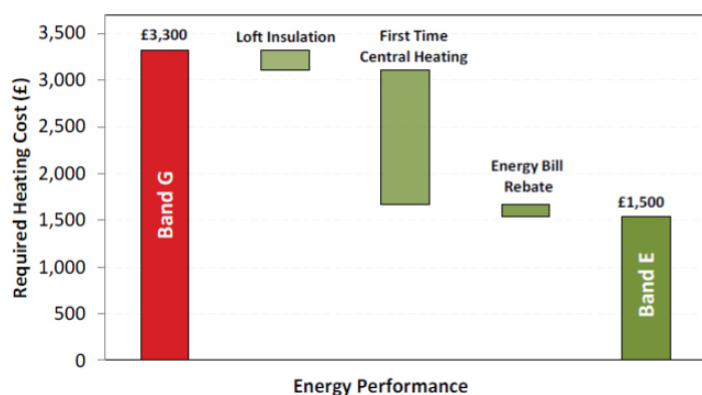
The strategy and the targets do not state any precise number of measures or households to be supported but makes reference to a number of additional fuel poverty indicators;

- Energy Efficiency: DECC will monitor the presence of central heating and loft and cavity wall insulation in fuel poor households.
- Renewable Energy: DECC will monitor installation of renewable technologies in fuel poor households – to better assess impact.
- Non-Gas Homes: Particular attention will be paid to non-gas homes (both urban and rural).
- Children: DECC will track the number of children in fuel poor households.

Figure 6 demonstrates the kind of impacts installing energy efficiency measures can have on the SAP scores of a property and the potential cost savings on energy as a result.

Figure 6 - Example - impact of energy efficiency improvements on household sap scores

Example 1: Moving from Band G to Band E



A household not using mains gas, with after housing costs income of £10,500

- Current required energy costs: £3,300
- Required energy costs after installations: £1,500
- Modelled reduction in required energy costs = £1,800

Source: Cutting the Cost of Keeping Warm - fuel poverty strategy for England, DECC, 2015.

The strategy helps to identify the key challenges that need to be addressed:

- Improving energy efficiency standards in fuel poor homes.
- Working together to help the fuel poor through partnerships and learning
- Increasing effective targeting of fuel poor households
- Improving the reach of support to certain low income households– such as those with health issues linked to cold homes
- Tackling the financial burden of energy bills for those on low incomes
- Ensuring the fuel poor are able to get maximum benefit from a fair and functioning energy market
- Enhancing and improving the understanding of fuel poverty.

Government is required by law to implement the strategy, assess and report on the impact of its actions and the progress made towards the target. It is also required to revise the strategy if appropriate.

The full Fuel Poverty Strategy can be found at; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408644/cutting_the_cost_of_keeping_warm.pdf



Fuel poverty in Herefordshire

Fuel poverty is measured by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) at a range of levels and helps to monitor and target actions to help support fuel poor households. Councils are required to set and meet targets as part of their Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) requirements. DECC (2013) reported that 11,098 households in Herefordshire were deemed as fuel poor using the new Low Income High Cost (LIHC) definition, Table 2 shows this further:

		All Households	Fuel Poor Households	Percent Fuel Poor
Low Income High Cost Definition	Herefordshire, County of	78,628	11,098	14.10%

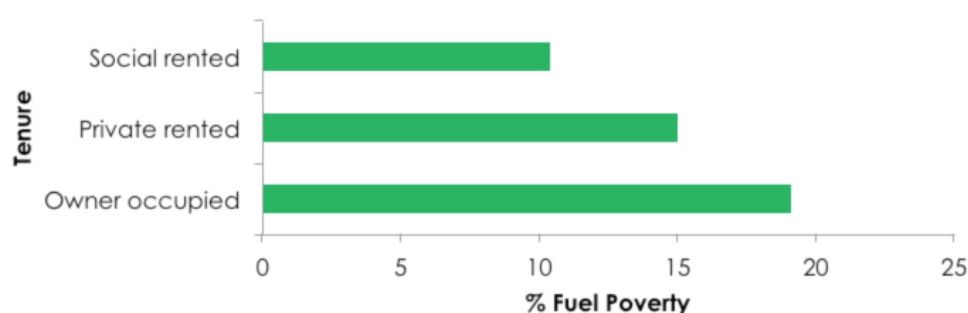
Table 2 - Fuel poverty in Herefordshire

Source: DECC Sub-regional Fuel Poverty Levels, England 2013.

Key fuel poverty statistics from the Herefordshire Healthy Housing report (2012):

The highest percentage of fuel poor households, (31.6%) live in older properties (pre 1919)

Figure 7 - Fuel poverty by tenure - Herefordshire



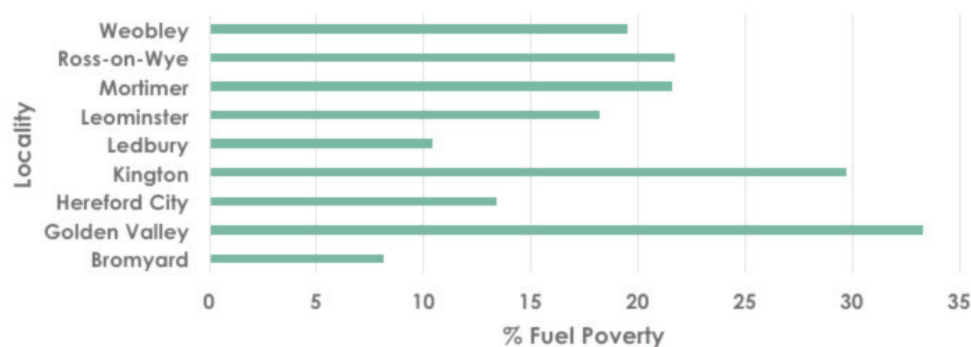
Source: Herefordshire Healthy Housing Survey, 2012.

As can be seen in Figure 7, owner occupiers and those privately renting are most susceptible to fuel poverty. The element of housing condition relating to fuel poverty and mandated through the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) provisions of the Housing Act 2004 is the excess cold hazard and where required Herefordshire Council will enforce on this in line with its Enforcement Policy 2016. The policy states that while these provisions relate to all housing,

irrespective of tenure, most enforcement action will involve requiring a private landlord or more rarely a registered social landlord (housing association) to carry out works as owner occupiers have control over any hazards, while tenants in the main, do not.

High proportions of fuel poverty are also prevalent amongst those of pensionable age (27%), particularly those living alone (33%) as well as among lone parents (20%).

Figure 8 - Fuel poverty by locality - Herefordshire



Source: Herefordshire Healthy Housing Survey 2012.

Figure 8 shows that fuel poverty levels were particularly high in the localities of Golden Valley and Kington.

Herefordshire, as a large rural county, faces exceptional challenges in relation to the age and type of housing, the availability of mains gas, and the population profile. In 2011 there were an estimated 82,521 domestic dwellings in Herefordshire. The data collected through the Healthy Housing Survey (2012) indicates that 20.5% of homes in Herefordshire were built before 1919. Mains gas is available to only 69.4% of properties, compared to 87% nationally. Of vulnerable households in Herefordshire, 25.5% inhabit dwellings classified as 'non-decent' under the Decent Homes Standard, 33.0% of whom live in pre-1919 homes and 23.2% of whom live in properties with a SAP rating of below 55 (band E).

These figures are supported by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) living environment data, which shows Herefordshire having a high proportion (0.35) of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) in the most deprived 10% nationally for this set of indicators. These include housing condition and houses without central heating.

In addition to the above findings of the Herefordshire Healthy Housing Survey (2012) household income levels in Herefordshire are significantly lower than those nationally and of the West Midlands region (Herefordshire Facts & Figures, 2016). There are also fewer affordable social housing options, with only 14.6% of housing being in the social sector compared to 16.9% nationally. These factors, older housing, restricted access to mains gas, relatively low income levels and lower than average social housing options combine to create complex affordable warmth challenges, each of which has a cumulative adverse impact on the other. A low income household living in a hard to heat pre-1919 home with no access to mains gas is unlikely to be able to afford to fully heat and maintain the property. This in turn may increase their risk to cold related ill-health.

Strategic links in Herefordshire

Understanding Herefordshire assesses health needs and wellbeing across the county of Herefordshire. The latest report was published in 2015 and is part of the statutory requirement to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The report highlights a number of factors that can be identified as contributing to fuel poverty, notably low household income, incidences of poverty, housing affordability and access to services.

The strategy will contribute towards the following local and regional strategic priorities, targets and legislation:

- Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - o Priority Three- For older people – quality of life, social isolation, fuel poverty
 - o Priority Four- Impact of housing – fuel poverty and poverty and the impact on health and wellbeing

- Herefordshire Council Corporate Plan 2016-20
 - o Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives
 - o Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
- The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) and associated undertaking of the 2015 HECA report action plan
- Herefordshire's commitment to achieve the UK Climate Change Act (2008) target; to reduce overall emissions by 80% by 2050.



National context and actions

In recent years, successive governments have used a number of policy measures to attempt to tackle the causes of fuel poverty. Many have sought to deliver subsidised energy efficiency measures or assist fuel poor households with the affordability of fuel during cold periods.

Publicly funded programmes (in which general taxation has funded schemes) have included;

- **Warm Front Scheme** – nationwide scheme to offer subsidised heating replacements and insulation to vulnerable households.
- **Warm Homes Discount** – a one-off payment (of around £135 a year) to UK residents in receipt of a means tested benefit to assist with the paying of fuel bills.
- **Winter Fuel Payment** – Tax-free payments of between £100 - £300 are made annually to those in receipt of State Pensions. Payments are typically made in November and December.
- **Cold Weather Payments** – payments that are made when the temperature is either recorded as, or forecast to be, an average of zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days. Vulnerable households receive a payment of £25 for each 7 day period of such very cold weather.
- **Decent Homes Standard** – a minimum standard of decency, which includes thermal efficiency standards, introduced for social housing and initially supported by £1.6 billion of government funding.
- **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** – a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings and includes energy or thermal inefficiency issues.

Alongside the programmes mentioned above, the government has legislated to make it an obligation for energy companies to deliver carbon savings, to be achieved through the delivery of insulation measures. The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) and the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)

were two such schemes and their successor the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) follows the same approach. Such schemes are ultimately funded by consumers as 'levies' and are often recovered through household energy bills.

A number of schemes, such as the Feed-in-Tariffs (FIT's) and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) also encourage UK residents and businesses to generate their own renewable energy or heat. Both schemes offer financial incentives via tariffs which are paid based on the amount of energy or heat that an installed unit provides.

Recent or ongoing national schemes include:

Green Deal Communities – A share of £88 million was made available by Central Government to roll-out street-by-street energy efficiency projects. A consortium bid covering the Marches and Staffordshire was not successful in receiving funding.

Big Energy Saving Network – a programme of funding that provides frontline worker training and consumer outreach sessions regarding energy bills, tariffs and additional support. A network was run in Herefordshire in 2014-15 and again in 2015-16.

Central Heating Fund – A £25 million capital pot to help council's and partners identify households without central heating and subsequently install new heating systems. Herefordshire Council was part of a West Midlands consortium bid that was unsuccessful in securing funding.

Local Fuel Poverty Innovation – Up to £2 million is to be made available for local fuel poverty pilot projects to boost understanding and learn better ways of delivering support.

Redressing the Balance Fund – £26 million capital pot delivered through National Energy Action (NEA), to support new technical approaches to fuel poverty and improve health and housing links. Herefordshire Council are seeking to access funding from a £10 million WarmZones fund through Keep Herefordshire Warm to help deliver measures to fuel poor homes.

NICE Guidelines on Excess Winter Mortality

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have released guidance on how to reduce the risk of illness or mortality associated with living in a cold home. The guidance is aimed at any practitioner who may come in to contact with those vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home, including commissioners, health and social care workers and voluntary sector, housing sector and energy industry workers and/or agencies. This strategy will aim to develop affordable warmth activity in line with these guidelines.

The guidance aims to help:

- Reduce preventable excess winter death rates
- Help vulnerable groups achieve improved health and wellbeing
- Help reduce pressure on health and care services
- Support work to reduce fuel poverty
- Improve energy efficiency in homes.

To summarise, NICE made 12 recommendations for stakeholders.

Recommendation 1 - Develop a strategy

Recommendation 2 - Ensure there is a single point of contact health and housing referral service for people living in cold homes

Recommendation 3 - Provide tailored solutions via the single point of contact health and housing referral service for people living in cold homes

Recommendation 4 - Identify people at risk of ill health from living in a cold home

Recommendation 5 - Make every contact count by assessing the heating needs of people who use primary health and home care services

Recommendation 6 - Non-health and social care workers who visit people at home should assess their heating needs

Recommendation 7 - Discharge vulnerable people from health or social care settings to a warm home

Recommendation 8 - Train health and social care practitioners to help people whose homes may be too cold

Recommendation 9 - Train housing professionals and faith and voluntary sector workers to help people whose homes may be too cold for their health and wellbeing

Recommendation 10 - Train heating engineers, meter installers and those providing building insulation to help vulnerable people at home

Recommendation 11 - Raise awareness among practitioners and the public about how to keep warm at home

Recommendation 12 - Ensure buildings meet ventilation and other building and trading standards

The guidance has been well received and is seen as an important working tool to help bridge activity between health and housing stakeholders.

The guidance and recommendations will help guide strategy and activity on the ground in Herefordshire over the course of the duration of this affordable warmth strategy.

Full detail on the guidance and the 12 recommendations can be found at <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG6/chapter/1-recommendations>



Affordable warmth activity in Herefordshire 2008-15

HECA report

The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) was introduced in 1995, to address emerging concerns over greenhouse gas emissions and climate change and the recognition that tackling energy use in homes is a key priority. Under HECA, all Local Authorities with some housing responsibility must declare proposed improvement plans to achieve a voluntary target of a 30% energy efficiency improvement within ten to fifteen years. Tackling poor energy efficiency in homes is one method of improving affordable warmth and recent HECA reporting has a more detailed look at the impacts of activity on fuel poverty. .

Following the first HECA reports councils are required to submit further progress reports every two years. Herefordshire Councils' latest further HECA Report was published in March 2015 and can be found at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7964092/herefordshire_further_report_heca_2015.pdf

Herefordshire Council enforcement action

Over the period 2010-15 over 3000 enquiries were received by Private Sector Housing/Environmental Health relating to all aspects of housing condition. Over the same period over 1700 inspections took place, of which around a third took place as part of the Warm Homes Healthy People scheme outlined below. As a result of these 436 notices were served with 3 leading to successful landlord prosecutions. Failure to address the excess cold hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) may be due to poor thermal insulation, insufficient space heating or excess ventilation. These measures go some way to tackling fuel poverty, particularly in Herefordshire's older rented stock.

Warm Homes Healthy People

The Department of Health offered funding to councils to deliver affordable warmth outcomes, particularly a reduction in cold related illness and excess winter deaths, under the Warm Home Healthy People banner between 2011 and 2013. During the winter

of 2012 and 2013, the private sector housing team at Herefordshire council was successful in receiving funding under this stream to deliver Get Warm, Stay Warm. Under the project, vulnerable residents in Herefordshire were supported through a range of activity from the Council and 14 voluntary and community groups. Activity included;

- Distribution of cold weather packs
- Delivery of emergency heating, draught exclusion measures, sand and salt buckets etc. from the Herefordshire Handypersons service.
- Home Start Herefordshire offered support to parents of young children
- Cold weather advice from all 14 partners
- Befriending service from Age UK (Hereford and Localities)
- Budgeting and fuel tariff / income maximisation support from CAB Herefordshire
- Cold Homes inspections from Private Sector Housing Teams at Herefordshire Council.

Warm Homes Healthy people funding is no longer available from the Department of Health however Herefordshire Council does still run an annual winter awareness campaign entitled Get Warm Stay Warm Stay Well, which is funded through Public Health

Marches Sustainable Housing Partnership

Herefordshire Council are members of the Marches Sustainable Housing Partnership. The Partnership brings together seven key housing providers and the three councils from the Marches (Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin) to network and undertake collective action regarding unsustainable energy in homes. Although not solely focused on fuel poverty and affordable warmth, both these challenges remain important to the partnership and are discussed routinely whilst knowledge and experiences of partners is shared across the partnership.

Green Deal Pioneer Places

In January 2012, Herefordshire Council (along with Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council) were successful in a bid for Green Deal Pioneer Places funding on offer from the Department of Energy and Climate Change. The funding, of which around £150,000 was allocated to Herefordshire, was focused on supporting householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The funding was used for a range of activity, including the delivery of over 100 free green deal assessments to householders, a range of public events with a home energy efficiency exhibition unit and a scoping exercise to assess potential of key government schemes.

Keep Herefordshire Warm

Keep Herefordshire Warm (KHW) is the name of Herefordshire Council's affordable warmth service, which is delivered in partnership with Marches Energy Agency. The service ran between July and December 2012 and was re-commissioned in May 2014. The service was recently re-procured until May 2018 via a competitive tender process and will continue to be delivered by Marches Energy Agency.

The service includes honest broker advice through a dedicated free-phone advice line, which is available to all residents of the county. Local installers are also assessed in order to offer pathways to installations of energy efficiency measures and up to date information on grants and financial support. A small number of home visits are also available under the scheme and some events will be undertaken across the county to offer residents face to face advice and to promote the service and brand.

The previous KHW scheme heavily promoted insulation measures under the Carbon Emissions Reduction target (CERT). Between July and December 2012 the service received 493 calls and 400 were referred for insulation measures (loft and cavity wall insulation under the CERT scheme). Of these referrals, 316 measures were installed (168 loft insulations and 148 cavity wall insulations). The retained economic benefit of the measures was £48,640 per year, and £972,000

over their lifetime. The measures will save over 199 tons of carbon dioxide a year and nearly 4000 tons (3,787t) over their lifetimes. KHW continues to seek to secure good offers for residents through the latest energy efficiency support mechanism, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) whilst offering advice on other schemes such as the Renewable Heat Incentive.

Big Energy Saving Network (BESN)

Marches Energy Agency delivered activity through BESN over the winter of 2014-15 through Keep Herefordshire Warm. Frontline worker training focused on spotting the signs of fuel poverty and avenues of support with a focus on tariffs and bills and was delivered to 48 frontline workers. In addition 96 consumers received face to face advice through 5 consumer outreach sessions. Funding has been secured for the winter of 2015-16 to undertake more activity.

Herefordshire Affordable Warmth Network

As part of the Keep Herefordshire Warm scheme, Marches Energy Agency is working with Herefordshire Council to develop and facilitate an affordable warmth network. The network brings together key public, community and voluntary sector partners to better enable effective action to tackle fuel poverty and excess winter deaths through shared learning and experience, coordinated delivery and support. The network holds bi-annual meetings and receives support through Keep Herefordshire Warm. The network also acts as a vehicle to help deliver complementary activity should additional funding be leveraged into the county. A workshop was held to allow members to input into the affordable warmth strategy and they will be key partners to help deliver the associated action plan.

Herefordshire affordable warmth action plan

A key part of this strategy is an action plan or road map, which sets out the key steps that will be taken by Herefordshire Council and partners to improve affordable warmth across the county.

The action plan is the working element of this strategy. It is intended to be a 'live' document and

will be reviewed frequently through the duration of its implementation by an appropriately appointed affordable warmth strategy steering group.

The action plan can be found on the following pages and is set out into 12 key focus areas.

Actions	Lead partner	Partners /Links	Outcomes sought	Success measure
1. Advice and support for households				
Provide energy efficiency advice for householders to encourage and help residents consider improvements to their homes	Keep Herefordshire Warm (KHW)	Link to partner organisations and relevant funding streams e.g. ECO	Increased energy efficiency across Herefordshire homes	Number of households receiving advice
2. Awareness and communication				
Develop a communications plan to raise awareness of fuel poverty county-wide and maximise uptake of services and recognition of activities being undertaken to tackle fuel poverty. Use a range of communication methods including joint working with Herefordshire Council Communications team on parallel schemes such as Get Warm, Stay Warm, Stay Well	KHW	Involve relevant stakeholders to assess 'what works best'. Link to national campaigns and maximise wider media coverage	Increased awareness of affordable warmth and the services to support	Number of partners engaged and referrals Number of advice line enquiries
Plan and deliver a programme of public events to promote affordable warmth services.	KHW	Target events to communities / areas of high fuel poverty vulnerability.	Increased awareness and uptake of services.	Number of events & breakdown (rural / low income / health / partner / general). Numbers engaged at events. Number of referrals for energy efficiency improvements Number of advice line enquiries per area

Actions	Lead partner	Partners /Links	Outcomes sought	Success measure
2. Awareness and communication				
Develop a directory of services/contacts which communities and residents can be directed / signposted to.	Marches Energy Agency (MEA)	Link to affordable warmth network (see 9).	Increased reach of promotional and awareness material	Number of organisations receiving communications.
Keep abreast of policy developments and news with regard to affordable warmth and energy efficiency; update partners through policy updates.	MEA	Co-ordinate with council to develop a circulation list to all relevant partners.	Increased awareness of affordable warmth challenges and policy environment.	Number of partners / groups receiving policy updates.
3. Maximising householder income				
Continue to provide financial advice to householders	Herefordshire Council	Link to organisations and partners offering financial advice	Maximising householder incomes. Support for householders in fuel debt.	Number of householders receiving financial support.
4. Reducing energy expenditure				
Support householders to reduce expenditure through energy saving advice	KHW	Provide wider energy efficiency advice through KHW. Link to h.energy week. Big Energy Saving Network programme	Wider awareness of no / low-cost actions	Estimated householder bill savings
Support householders to seek the best available tariff and advise on tariff-switching	KHW	Ensure KHW partners are engaged and confident in discussing tariff switching. Big Energy Saving Network programme	Greater awareness of benefits of switching	Number of householders receiving tariff switching advice
Boost uptake of micro-generation technologies (to reduce demand) through provision of sound / honest advice and routes to reputable installers. Investigate county-wide offers around renewable technologies (discounts / bulk-buy etc.)	KHW	Link to wider government schemes such as FIT's and RHI	Improved knowledge of technologies, advantages and key considerations Increased uptake	Number of householders receiving micro-gen advice Estimated % conversion to installs
Promote bulk-buying schemes of partner organisations and any other relevant partner schemes and/or activity	KHW	Combine resources where appropriate – link to relevant KHW activity	Increased range of options for residents	Number partner schemes supported

Actions	Lead partner	Partners /Links	Outcomes sought	Success measure
5. Improving energy efficiency				
Develop an offer for householders not eligible for Energy Company Obligation or alternative grant funding	KHW	Ensure that all possible funding routes are exhausted. Develop an 'Able to Pay' offer as last option	Install options across the County, regardless of scheme eligibility	Number measures delivered outside of grant arrangements.
Support private landlords to improve the energy efficiency of the private rented sector and make most of current funding opportunities.	Herefordshire Council	Use Private Landlord's forum to highlight activities of HC/KHW and introduce funding options	Increased uptake of measures in the private rented sector.	Number of landlords engaged. Number installs in private rented sector
Support the social housing sector to improve energy efficiency through continued co-operation with key housing providers.	Herefordshire Council	Continued participation in the Marches Sustainable Housing Partnership (MSHP)	Collaborative working, knowledge sharing and delivery across sectors	Review of activity within the MSHP and with RSL partners in the county. Social housing provider average SAP ratings
Continue to investigate possibility of fuel-switches (gas connections) to support particularly energy inefficient communities or properties (i.e. electrically heated properties / areas)	Herefordshire Council	Use KHW resources to promote any viable schemes	Reduction in number of difficult to heat electrically heated properties	Number of fuel switches supported.
6. Strengthening health and housing Links				
Ensure professionals in the health and social care sectors are aware of the impacts of cold homes, and what support is available to support fuel poor households	Herefordshire Council	Engage health professionals through targeted promotion and or training. Public Health promotion; Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)	Strengthen links with health and housing	Number of training sessions delivered Number of targeted promotions delivered
Engage with GP surgeries to target support to those most vulnerable from cold-related illnesses / excess winter deaths	Herefordshire Council	Engage Health & Wellbeing Board and CCG. Secure input from third sector health providers and link to hospital discharge services.	Reduction in hospital admissions related to cold health	Number of GP surgeries engaged Number of patients contacted

Actions	Lead partner	Partners /Links	Outcomes sought	Success measure
7. Securing funding & resources				
Continue to drive uptake of measures through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO)	KHW	Use KHW as central point to deliver measures and support householders	Increase in delivery of funded measures through ECO	Number of ECO funded measures installed.
Continue to investigate funding opportunities that could a) supplement current schemes or b) offer funding for new opportunities	MEA	Multi-partner approach to funding opportunities	Increase in number of projects to be delivered	Details of any additional funding secured
8. Training and supporting partners				
Develop E-Learning affordable warmth training to maximise outreach to relevant organisations.	MEA	Link to KHW, affordable warmth network and build-in referral mechanisms.	Wider range of referral partners	Numbers completing training. Number of partners referring to KHW.
Offer support to any partners / agencies wishing to engage with the Keep Herefordshire Warm Scheme	KHW	Through Affordable Warmth Network and partner engagement	Greater awareness of scheme among partners and groups	Number of organisations receiving support.
9. Develop referral / knowledge networks				
Develop a network of partners to share affordable warmth /energy efficiency knowledge and support partners to refer through to additional schemes	MEA	Continue to develop the Affordable Warmth Network and grow the presence and reach of the group	Increased awareness of AW Increased referrals to services	Number of referral partners referring Number of measures installed through partners
10. Supporting low income communities				
Target affordable warmth promotion and events to areas of high deprivation / low income	MEA, Herefordshire Council, Third Sector Partners	Utilise communication channels of organisations working in low income areas. Use Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to identify low income areas. Correlate with identification of high-risk fuel poverty areas (see 2)	Increased awareness and uptake of support in low income areas targeted	Number of low income communities targeted

10. Supporting Low Income Communities				
Engage with CSCO (Carbon Savings Community Obligation of ECO) to drive delivery of insulation measures in low income areas, both urban and rural.	MEA and Herefordshire Council	Trusted intermediaries including GP surgeries, schools, resident groups etc	Increased uptake of funded measures in low income CSCO areas	Number of CSCO measures installed CSCO specific partners supported
Continue to support organisations helping to deliver additional support to low income communities	MEA – Through affordable warmth network (no.9)	Joint partner delivery in areas of low income. Co-ordinate with housing partners e.g. Herefordshire Housing and Stonewater.	Increased uptake of services on offer from partners. Stronger partnership working	Project and partner feedback Number of households receiving multiple support
11. Support in winter				
Develop and deliver specific promotion around the risks posed by winter weather and ways to keep warm	Herefordshire Council	Linked to KHW communications plan	Greater resilience to winter weather	Number and types of material produced Number of households contacted / reached
12. Embracing technology to reduce demand				
Continue to promote and inform residents of new technologies that help reduce heating and or electricity demand (e.g LED lighting, smart meters, panel heaters). Investigate specific projects focused on new technology and attempt to source funding for such	MEA	Use KHW advice line to discuss such options where relevant. Secure technology to offer to fuel poor households	Greater number of options to reduce demand	Type of advice given regarding new technologies. Number of measures (within a mini-project) installed.

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call the Energy and Environmental Management Team on 01432 383262 or e-mail: eem@herefordshire.gov.uk.

www.herefordshire.gov.uk