



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

# Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel meeting: 14 September 2021

Includes key decisions and actions arising from the virtual meeting.

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## Present

## Present

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Christine Wheeler (Chair) Welsh Government Head of Climate Change and Fuel Poverty

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Jo Atkinson Active Building Centre

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Joanna Seymour Warm Wales

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Ceri Cryer Age Cymru

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Chris Jones	Care and Repair Cymru
Karen Henwood	Cardiff University
Sean O'Neill	Children in Wales
Sam Hughes	Citizens Advice Bureau
Stuart Ropke	Community Housing Cymru
Alex Osborne	Disability Wales
Laura McGaide	Energy Savings Trust
Daniel Alchin	Energy UK
Sam Worell	Gypsies and Travellers Wales
Andy Regan	Institute of Welsh Affairs
Lee Phillips	Money and Pensions Services
Ben Saltmarsh	National Energy Action (NEA) Cymru
Peter Smith	National Energy Action
Tim Thomas	National Residential Landlords Association
Mike Anderson	Ofgem
George Jones	Office of Older People's Commission for Wales
Laura Morgan	Public Health Wales

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Dr Steffan Evans	The Bevan Foundation
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Nigel Winnan	Wales & West Utilities
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Nicki Johnson	Western Power Distribution
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## **Welsh Government**

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Mark Alexander	Head of Domestic and Public Sector Energy Efficiency
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Nina Ley	Head of Domestic Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty
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Hayley Floyd	Delivery & Performance – Health
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Gethin While	Smart Living
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Sally Hunt	Prosperous Futures
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Rachel Bowen	Knowledge and Analytical Services
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Gowan Watkins	Knowledge and Analytical Services
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## **Secretariat**

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Steve Chamberlain	Fuel Poverty Policy
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Sarah Paul	Fuel Poverty Policy
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Matt Jenkins	Fuel Poverty Policy
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# 1. Apologies for non-attendance

1.1. Apologies for non-attendance were received and recorded on behalf of Chris Jones (Care and Repair Cymru), Hywel Lloyd (Active Building Centre), Neville Rookes (WLGA), Dr Rose Chard (Energy Systems Catapult), Simon Markall (Energy UK), Jack Wilkinson - Dix (Energy Saving Trust). Tudur Jones (Welsh Government).

## 2. Introductions

2.1. On behalf of the Ministers for Climate Change and Social Justice, representatives were welcomed to the second meeting of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel and invited to introduce themselves.

## 3. Notes of Previous Meeting

3.1. Agreed.

## 4. Actions from the Previous Meeting

4.1. The Welsh Government agreed to clarify wording within the Terms of Reference to make clear the role of the panel and reflect the points made by members. The updated Terms of Reference have been published to the Welsh Government Website and will be recirculated to panel members for ease of reference.

4.2. The panel was invited to share any evidence for the gap analysis discussed in the previous meeting to inform officials ahead of the consultation for the next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme. A request for information and evidence to be received by Friday 24 September was made, before the action

will be closed.

4.3. The Cold Weather Resilience Plan sub group was convened. A virtual meeting was held on 26 July. Changes suggested have been adopted where it has been appropriate to do so.

**Action 1: Panel members to send any relevant information and evidence for the gap analysis to the secretariat by 24 September.**

## **5. Homes Fit for the Future Presentation – Office of the Future Generations Commissioner**

5.1. Eurgain Powell from the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner provided a short presentation on the proposals set out in Homes Fit for the Future – The Retrofit Challenge published in July.

5.2. In discussion, points made by Panel members included:

- A need to consider the impact of the upcoming UK Government spending review on the identified funding priorities.
- The Office of the Future Generations Commissioner has been working with Welsh Treasury to help them find ways to support funding priorities in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.
- Welsh Government will continue to make strong representations to the UK Government with regard to the upcoming spending review.
- Confirmation the modelled costs were purely on the capital costs and not on the wider expenditure (i.e. the costs to provide advice and support to the householder or support to the supply chain to enable the works). Additionally, members identified a need to look at the customer journey and behaviours and indicate where the responsibility for delivery of the recommendations will lie.
- A need to support financial well-being in the future.
- The importance of engagement with residents.
- A need to build capacity in the retrofit sector to avoid the mistakes of the green homes voucher scheme

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## 6. Agenda Item 3 Cold Weather Resilience Plan - Paper FPAP/02/01

6.1. A revised version of the cold weather resilience plan was circulated to members. It has been informed by the sub group convened after the last meeting of the panel in June.

6.2. Partners were invited to comment on this latest draft and appropriate changes have been adopted. The plan now contains more active language, clarifying who is leading on what and who is supporting. There are clear links to the goals outlined in the Tackling Fuel Poverty Plan 2021-2035. The Panel anticipated seeing the financial impacts of the National Insurance increase and the Universal Credit uplift reversal. This will potentially have a devastating impact on lower income households. There are considerable global pressures on gas and oil prices. However, the panel can bring sector initiatives together and support energy companies to reach out to householders in winter months.

6.3. The plan will be submitted to the Minister for Social Justice for consideration. If approved, the Welsh Government's aim is to publish the plan on Fuel Poverty Awareness Day on 3 December 2021.

6.4. In discussion, points made by panel members included:

- A need to register the impact of the pandemic on debt, and the unequal nature of it. The scarring effect will be there for a while. The Minister for Social Justice has noted the scarring issue and as a result has policy officials working more holistically to support poverty in all forms.
- The impact of debt is significant for winter 2021/22 and disproportionately affects lower income households. There is an opportunity with domestic energy suppliers to engage with energy efficiency schemes, with scope for referral into the ECO4 scheme.
- The Cold Weather Resilience Plan represents a chance to implement a year round preventive approach and an opportunity to work together. However, the feeling is, more must be done to engage with health sector partners.
- Welsh Government Health Policy team are progressing six goals relating to

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discharging, staying at home and avoiding readmissions to hospital.

Stakeholder groups are being developed for the delivery of these goals and panel members are invited to continue a dialogue with the team.

- Ofgem is currently undertaking wide ranging work on the distribution impact of policy decisions on specific regions and considering the impact on different groups. The analysis will be available in due course.
- A need to highlight the money guidance networks in the plan.

**Action 2: Additional comments on the cold weather resilience plan to be received by Welsh Government COP Friday 17 September.**

**Action 3: Welsh Government to liaise with Money and Pension Advice Service on an action relating to the money guidance networks.**

**Action 4: Panel members to express an interest to Welsh Government Health Policy colleagues about taking part in the work to develop a national programme approach to deliver goals 5 and 6 of the goals for urgent and emergency care.**

## **7. Agenda Item 4: UK Government Consultations**

7.1. Since meeting in June, there have been two important consultations undertaken by BEIS on the future of schemes that have a significant impact on lower income families in Wales.

7.1. Influencing the UK Government is the fourth goal of the fuel Poverty plan 2021-2035.

7.2. The consultations, both short in duration, have closed.

7.3. The Welsh Government's response to the Warm Homes Discount consultation was circulated to partners - Paper FPAP/02/03. No further substantive points were raised.

7.4. The Welsh Government response to the ECO4 consultation is being prepared. The Panel discussed the ECO4 consultation and raised the following

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points:

- ECO4 represents much more of a multi measure and fabric first approach.
- Boiler repairs won't give a SAP improvement so no incentive for companies to offer the measure as they won't get paid for the intervention.
- The scope for Welsh Government to play a more proactive role is positive. Wales had not fully capitalised on UK wide programmes such as the ECO funding in the past.
- Panel members agree with the general intent of ECO 4. However, there are some elements which should be improved. The identified risks have been raised with BEIS by industry and third sector.
- There is an opportunity in ECO4 for the flex scheme and industry initiatives to help those not entitled to financial rebates.

**Action 6: Panel members to submit contributions to inform the Welsh Government response to the ECO4 consultation by Friday 17 September. Welsh Government to share their ECO4 consultation response with panel members.**

8. The final points to note were:

- NEA's Warm Homes Week 2021 will run at the end of September. Fuel Poverty Awareness Day was confirmed as 3 December 2021.
- Welsh Government has received approval for a single award to produce fuel poverty projections. Welsh Government should be on target to have initial statistics available by end of March 2022. These projections will then inform meaningful interim targets for the Tackling Fuel Poverty Plan.

9. **Concluding remarks:** The next meeting is due to take place in December, date to be confirmed. The Chair thanked Panel members and invited them to email the secretariat with suggestions for inclusion on the agenda. The next agenda will include a discussion on the progress with delivering the Cold Weather Resilience Plan. The main topic for discussion will be the next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme.

**10. The meeting closed at 16:15**

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