

Minister to Address National Conference on Fuel Poverty

NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 0600 Thursday 9th November 2017

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Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government and Housing will launch the Scottish Government's new consultation on a new fuel poverty target and strategy when he opens Scotland's national conference 'Resolving Fuel Poverty' today (9th November).

The Minister will outline the Scottish Government's aims in inviting responses to a consultation which will form the core policy and timetable to eradicate fuel poverty in the coming years.

Everyone from tenants and home owners to industry specialists will be able to contribute thoughts and ideas to improve the energy efficiency of homes across the country over the coming years and how the Scottish Government can support the delivery of programmes to help mitigate the cost of energy for Scottish households.

Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart said:

"We know that far too many people find themselves struggling with unaffordable energy costs, including the elderly, families with young children and those with serious medical conditions. This is unacceptable in a modern, progressive and compassionate country like ours.

"This is why we are now seeking views on a new long-term strategy which sets out ambitious targets to reduce fuel poverty. By lifting those experiencing fuel poverty into a better quality of life we can create a fair and more equal society.

"Energy Action Scotland has been a valued member of the Fuel Poverty Forum for a number of years. I look forward to continuing to work alongside them as we develop our approach to tackling fuel poverty and know they will make a valuable contribution as we consult our ambitions to tackle fuel poverty."

Fuel poverty is a cross-cutting issue that impacts on housing, energy, health and consumer rights and so representatives from the private, public and third sectors will gather for this conference in Crieff to discuss plans and solutions.

Director of Energy Action Scotland, Norman Kerr commented: “Energy Action Scotland welcomes the consultation on the fuel poverty strategy. As the national fuel poverty charity we are fortunate to be able to draw upon decades of experience and relationships within our national network of experts. We benefit from a wealth of knowledge and experience about what is happening across Scotland in order to turn cold, damp houses into warm, dry homes. It is our aim that this conference contributes to ending the blight of fuel poverty in Scotland.”

Kerr continued “We encourage every group who is active in the fuel poverty arena to respond to the consultation and make their thoughts and wishes known to the Scottish Government. We need the Government to hear from as many groups and organisations as possible as this forthcoming strategy is too important for us not to have a voice in shaping.”

The input of the commercial sector for energy is essential and the conference is being supported by Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks and Scottish Power Energy Networks.

Topics for discussion at the conference include the new definition of fuel poverty, partnerships between energy advice services and foodbanks, engaging with the private rented sector and the effects of fuel poverty on physical and mental health.

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Contact

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Scottish Government

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For photo/interview opportunities

Members of the media are welcome to come to the conference venue or can contact Energy Action Scotland as above to make arrangements to attend.

The Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart MSP will open the conference at 9.30am on Thursday 9th November 2017.

Norman Kerr, Director, Energy Action Scotland will address the conference in the opening session (times as for the Minister).

Conference Programme details

www.eas.org.uk

Notes for Editors:

1. The Energy Action Scotland Annual Conference and Exhibition runs on Thursday 9th and Friday 10th November 2017 at Crieff Hydro. Details can be found at www.eas.org.uk
2. Energy Action Scotland is the national organisation that campaigns for an end to fuel poverty and works to promote warm, dry homes for all in Scotland.
3. Fuel poverty is the inability to afford adequate warmth in the home, defined as needing to pay more than 10 per cent of income on energy costs.
4. The main causes of fuel poverty are poor energy efficiency of the home, high domestic fuel prices and low household income.
5. The official Scottish Government figures show that in 2015 there were 748,000 households in Scotland in fuel poverty i.e. 31%. Source: Scottish House Condition Survey: Key Findings Report 2015.