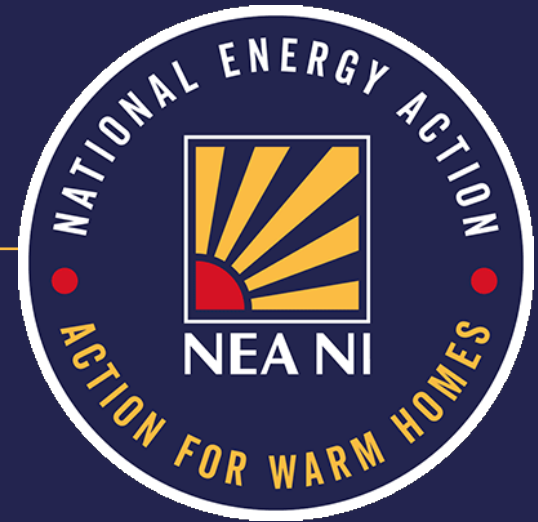


**Pat Austin, Director
National Energy Action NI**

**Energy Action Scotland
14 November 2024**



National Energy Action NI

Who we are:

National Energy Action (NEA) is the national fuel poverty charity, working across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland to ensure that everyone can afford to live in a warm, safe and healthy home.

In NI, we chair the **Fuel Poverty Coalition NI** (over 100 members) and serve as the secretariat for the **APG on Fuel Poverty**.

Vision:

To end fuel poverty.

What we do:

- Advice and support
- Campaigning and advocacy
- Research
- Training



NI Landscape

- Population 1.9M 820,000 HH
- 277,000 or 35.5% of dwellings are in rural areas
- Oil 63% non-regulated / Gas 33%
- Pre-payment Meters (PPM) high incidence
- No SMART Meters yet
- Most recent Fuel Poverty Strategy 2011
- Fuel Poverty Rate 2016 HCS 22% (10% defn)



Interventions

Affordable Warmth Scheme

Measures available: Loft and/or Cavity Wall Insulation, Upgraded Central Heating System, Windows, Solid Wall Insulation (circa £7,500 grant-aid. Properties with solid wall construction may get grant-aid up to £10,000).

The scheme may be available to you if you:

- Live in Northern Ireland; own and occupy your property as your main home or rent from a private landlord; have a total annual gross income of less than £23,000.

To qualify, you must:

- Be over 65/Have a child in receipt of Child Benefit/Receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Attendance Allowance.



Interventions

Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP)

Measures available: Natural gas central heating system if on the gas network or Oil central heating system where gas is not available, Loft and/or Cavity Wall Insulation.

The scheme may be available to you if you:

- Live in Northern Ireland, and own and occupy your property as your main home or Rent from a private landlord.

To qualify, you must be:

- a Single Person or a Single Parent Family/Couple with a with an income/pension less £50,000 (Income varies for fully funded and part funded schemes).



Interventions

Belfast Warm and Well Project

Northern Exposure Programme, NEA NI, Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast City Council.

Aim:

- Energy advice; Practical support to stay warm and well; The provision of heating measures and discretionary financial assistance; Support directly individuals and organisations.

The Project is targeted at People with/who/have:

- Cardiovascular, respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma), mental health conditions and disabilities.

Sustainable Energy Communities

- Supported by the Big Lottery Fund and working across four communities across NI.

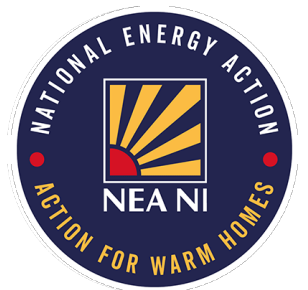


NEA NI Policy Priorities

NI Assembly & Executive

There are 4 key areas in NI we have long been calling for:

- Introduction of a **statutory fuel poverty target** (NI is the only region of the UK without one).
- The development and implementation of a **new Fuel Poverty Strategy** for NI (the last one is from 2011 and is no longer fit for purpose). NI Fuel Poverty Coalition recommendations for the new strategy can be found [here](#).
- Introduction of **minimum energy efficiency standards**, especially within the private rented sector.
- **Financial support** for low income and vulnerable households in NI. This includes both short-term measures to boost incomes and a longer-term commitment to invest in energy efficiency measures in homes in NI as part of the Just Transition to Net Zero.



NEA NI Policy Priorities

Westminster

Our **GE24 Manifesto** Asks:

- Introduce the **Warm Home Discount (WHD) scheme** in Northern Ireland.
- Make **domestic energy efficiency** an infrastructure priority.
- Ensure a '**Just Transition**' towards Net Zero.



Current Fuel Poverty Crisis

LucidTalk polling for NEA NI, September 2024



**NI Representative Survey
(September 2024)
1,199 responses**

Fuel poverty rate: 40%

- 40% of households spending at least 10% of their total household expenditure on energy costs and were therefore living in fuel poverty.

Detrimental 'coping' mechanisms:

- Such as self-disconnection or rationing of heat.
- 27% of people in NI said that in the last 24 months they have gone without heating or electricity on at least one occasion due to not being able to afford the costs of energy. This is up from 19% in 2023.
- 1 in 10 households admitted to skipping meals to ensure they had enough money to pay for their energy.

Health and wellbeing impacts:

- 31% of households reported health and wellbeing impacts due to rising energy prices and the cost of living. E.g. Mental health impacts (21%); Deterioration of an existing health condition (14%); Requiring more visits to a GP or hospital (5%).
- 57% of people are worried about paying for their energy at present or in the coming winter.



New Fuel Poverty Intervention



PHASE 3

PHASE 3

By March 2026

- Develop Business Case and receive DoF approvals
- Assembly approval for new Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants Regulations
- Design new operating model and MOU with provider

PHASE 2

PHASE 2

By March 2025

- Draft policy options and receive Ministerial approval
- Undertake public consultation
- Undertake impact assessments
- Begin review of Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants Regulations

PHASE 1

PHASE 1

March 2024 – September 2024

- Identify and analyse options and make recommendations
- Stakeholder engagement workshops and focus groups
- Collation of engagement feedback

Thank you!

