

**Energy Action Scotland Policy Position Statement - Fuel Poverty and Health**

The World Health Organisation estimates that 30% of winter deaths are caused by cold housing. In Scotland this means that six people die every day of winter from causes directly attributable to fuel poverty.

Scotland has integrated health and social care to improve outcomes and support disease prevention. By tackling the causes of ill health earlier it is hoped that people will live longer, healthier lives “at home or in a home like setting”.

Energy Action Scotland contends that with 25% of households of Scotland living in fuel poverty we are tying our own hands at improving outcomes, reversing pressure on GPs and on NHSScotland budgets. For example,

* Visits to GP consultations for respiratory disease increase by 19% for every one degree that the temperature drops below 5 degrees centigrade
* 9% of hypertension cases could be prevented by maintaining indoor temperature about 19 degrees
* More than one of four young people living in a cold household are at risk of multiple health problems

Those who are fuel poor are more likely to turn their heating down below the level adequate for their wellbeing and are more likely to live in energy inefficient homes, which are poorly insulated and prone to dampness.

An adequate standard of living is a human right and as such must be at the heart of our service design both locally and nationally. Inadequate housing cannot support good health and wellbeing and should be key to all decisions made about population health.

During the peak of energy costs and inflation Scotland experienced its highest rates of winter deaths in over 30years.