Rural

**Energy Action Scotland Policy Position Statement - Rural Fuel Poverty**

Energy Action Scotland acknowledges the particular difficulties faced by the fuel poor in rural areas. These include:

* higher fuel costs
* lack of access to the mains gas grid
* premiums on energy
* challenging housing stock
* difficulty getting companies delivering energy efficiency measures to operate in some areas

Rural premiums on energy bills can be a huge financial burden on those living in rural areas. Energy Action Scotland believes a consultation should take place on the distribution price control mechanism that can add or take away premiums on all consumers’ energy bills to ensure that no one group of consumers suffers unfairly.

Consumers in rural areas, off the mains gas grid, can pay significantly more for the same fuel sold in urban areas. Energy Action Scotland believes that the reason for this discrepancy in price can be attributed, in some part, to the lack of regulation of most rural heating fuels. Price control is therefore needed on domestic fuels such as heating oils, solid fuels, and LPG.

Many rural properties may have electricity as the main source of heating deployed through storage or convection heaters. Electric heating is considerably more expensive than gas and despite energy tariffs that offer lower cost off-peak energy the highest rates of fuel poverty are still found in these households.

Older, stone built houses with greater wall surface areas, that are more likely to be detached or semi-detached and poor or no insulation in often exposed areas mean that retrofitting is difficult and therefore expensive.

Energy Action Scotland believes that there needs to be targeted support provided to upgrade inefficient rural homes, grants and loans should recognise the additional costs for delivering measures in rural areas and governments should invest in training, supporting local contractors to deliver installation and maintenance services.