



Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board

Title of Paper:	Fuel Poverty Action Plan
Author (including organisation):	Bristol City Council Communities and Public Health team, Bristol Energy Service
Date of Board meeting:	20 April 2022
Purpose:	Decision

- Paper to be no more than two pages long; full reports or more information can be added as appendices
- Draft papers are reviewed by the Public Health team
- Final papers will be published on the [public website](#)
- Board correspondence: HWB@bristol.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

The No Cold Homes Steering group and Bristol City Council have worked in collaboration to produce a *One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan*. This action plan aims to guide cross-sector, city-wide collaboration to tackle the challenge of cold homes and aims to galvanise action to support vulnerable households. The key goal is that by 2030, nobody in Bristol will suffer from a cold home due to fuel poverty. The final version of the action plan has now been prepared and brought to the Health and Wellbeing Board for approval and sign-off. Once approved, this action plan will form the framework to continue to engage stakeholders, coordinate and build action across the city.

2. Purpose of the Paper

Fuel poverty is a key priority of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25 and the One City Plan goal of making Bristol a fair, healthy and sustainable city by 2050, where every person lives in a home which they can afford, is secure and warm. Developing this fuel poverty action plan was initiated by the No Cold Homes Steering group. This paper is asking for a decision from the Health and Wellbeing Board to approve the One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan.

3. Background and evidence base

Fuel poverty can have a huge impact on individuals, families, and our communities. Fuel poverty and living in a cold home can have negative impacts on physical health and mental health, in addition to wider social impacts such as educational attainment, household debt and social isolation. Older people and children are two of the groups at a greater risk of harm to health. Fuel poverty is generally understood to refer to the situation where a low-income household is struggling to afford their energy costs. The national definition of fuel poverty has been updated recently to recognise how energy efficiency is an indicator of how affordable it is to heat a home, defining fuel poverty as when a household's disposable income (after housing and energy costs) is below the poverty line, **and** the property they live in has an energy efficiency rating of Band D or lower.

The [Bristol JSNA Chapter on Fuel Poverty](#) and [data profile](#) highlights the inequalities in households living in fuel poverty across the city. In 2019, 13.8% of households in Bristol

were living in fuel poverty, and there were more than 20,000 homes in Bristol with an EPC rating of band D or worse which require retrofit improvements to meet the goal that all fuel poor homes will be EPC band C or higher by 2030 (Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy). The number of fuel poor homes is predicted to rise due to the global energy crisis and the resulting steep rise in UK energy prices, which will significantly contribute to a rise in the cost of living. It should be recognised that fuel poverty does not exist in isolation and can both reflect and contribute to a broader range of inequalities experienced by some of the most disadvantaged areas and people in Bristol. For example, there is a well-established overlap between fuel poverty and food insecurity which may leave individuals and families facing dilemmas between paying bills or cutting back on food (the so-called 'heat or eat' trade-off).

4. Community/stakeholder engagement

This action plan has been developed collaboratively with the No Cold Homes Steering group. The No Cold Homes Steering group is a self-formed group that is committed to driving and co-ordinating action on tackling fuel poverty in Bristol. Active representatives are from leading organisations, including Bristol City Council, private and voluntary sector energy organisations, wider VCSE organisations, local advice and support providers, clinical commissioning groups, health researchers and representatives from the community energy sector. The draft action plan was presented to the Health and Wellbeing board in 2019. We will continue to engage stakeholders to develop the action plan in response to the cost of living crisis.

5. Recommendations

To approve the One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan, and to discuss how the Health and Wellbeing Board can support this work through development and implementation of the action plan.

6. City Benefits

The purpose of this action plan is to guide cross-sector, city-wide collaboration to tackle the challenge of cold homes and aims to galvanise action to support vulnerable households. The key goal is that by 2030, nobody in Bristol will suffer from a cold home due to fuel poverty. The actions are grouped into five strategic themes which aim for: every person to live in an affordable, energy efficient home; access to affordable, low carbon heating; an inclusive smart energy system; provision of specialist cold homes advice services and referral pathways; and fuel poverty actions to align with broader work to counter poverty. This action plan will help achieve the goals the city has already committed to under the *One City Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25* and the *Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy*.

7. Financial and Legal Implications

The changes recommended in this action plan will require significant investment. Multiple funding streams are available, such as the Government's energy efficiency schemes and social housing decarbonisation schemes. Energy Service Bristol is administering the delivery of retrofit/energy saving measures through the current funding streams of the Bright Green Homes fund and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. Notably, both funding streams come to an end in 2022 and the Energy Service is pursuing options for the next rounds of funding, with the goal to ensure funding is targeted at fuel poor households.

8. Appendices

Appendix One: Fuel poverty action plan 2020-2030