

ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

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WELCOME TO THE ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

Welcome to the ninth edition of our Energy eBulletin. As always, we have lots of fresh information to share with you as we forge ahead with the Energy Strategy.

This month we will be talking about how we are placing you, our consumers, at the heart of our energy future; we look at what we are doing to address fuel poverty across Northern Ireland in the months ahead, and, for those of you who are interested in this year's COP26, we share how you can register your interest.



Thomas Byrne

Thomas Byrne
Director, Energy Strategy

PLACING YOU AT THE HEART OF NI'S ENERGY FUTURE

In meeting our commitment to net zero energy, there will be many new opportunities for consumers. There will also be the need for behavioural change in how we live, travel and work. This is why we are putting you, at the heart of our energy transition.

We realise that everyone's circumstances are different, so we are working to ensure that we can provide a range of information, support and advice that can be tailored to suit your individual needs. To achieve this, we will be engaging directly with consumers over the coming months to help us to understand the issues that really matter the most.

Right now, we are working across each of our departments to help establish the range of support that may be necessary. The following key areas have been identified, however we continue to listen to the needs of our community and will reassess on an ongoing basis:

- 1) We will be opening up an opportunity for you to have your say on our future energy options through our public consultation, which will be issued through the Department's website from 31 March
- 2) We are exploring the development of a 'one stop shop' for tailored and practical advice, information and support for our energy users
- 3) We will aim to design programmes to aid and guide our consumers to integrate and utilise zero carbon technologies within their day-to-day home and working lifestyles
- 4) Consideration will need to be given to provision of financial support, such as grants and low interest loans
- 5) We will be looking at the development of policies to ensure that our new direction and commitment toward positive change is enshrined in local NI regulations



FUEL POVERTY IN NI

As we move ahead with the NI energy transition, we are working to ensure that those experiencing fuel poverty are protected against any potential negative impacts.

Fuel poverty is experienced when a household cannot afford to keep adequately warm at a reasonable cost. This can be caused by:

- Low income
- High energy prices
- Poor energy efficiency such as inadequate insulation and old or inefficient heating systems

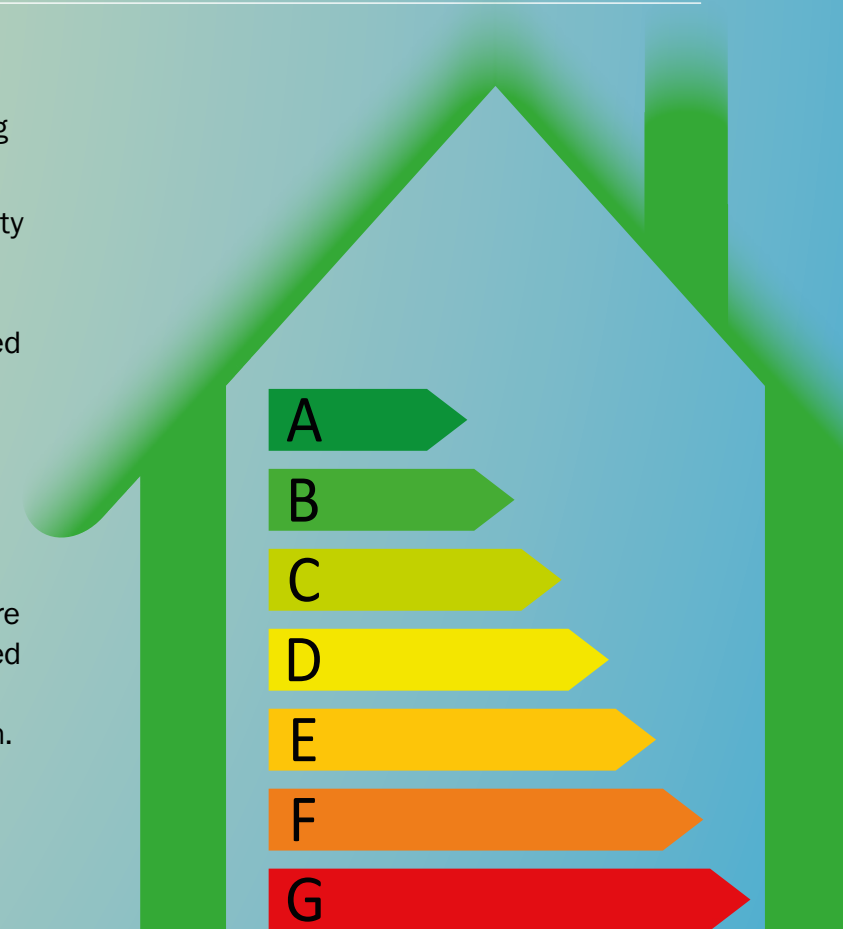
Fuel poverty is known to negatively impact:

- Mental health and social seclusion due to various factors which may include increased incidences of household debt and a sense of loneliness or social isolation

- Educational attainment and employment opportunities
- Diet, with people often having to choosing whether they heat or eat

Northern Ireland currently has a fuel poverty rate of 22% and it is estimated there are approximately 43,800 households in extreme fuel poverty. This means they need to spend over 15% of their total income to heat their homes.

Households living in older dwellings, rural areas, those headed by an older person, or those who are unemployed or retired are at higher risk of fuel poverty. Certain groups are also more susceptible to the risks associated with fuel poverty such as those with a disability, older persons, and young children.



FUEL POVERTY IN NI *(continued)*

In [New Decade, New Approach](#), assurance has been given that despite setting ambitious targets in a new energy strategy, the government will ensure a fair and just transition towards a zero carbon society.

Net zero cannot be reached without ensuring that homes are well insulated so that they emit as little carbon as possible, which offers homeowners many benefits such as:

- Lower bills
- Better health
- Reduced air pollution
- Wider economic and social gains

To ensure that we can adequately address these issues DfC are working with DfE and DAERA to develop policies and programmes that will ensure that those impacted by fuel poverty benefit from these measures, and that they are protected from paying for wider societal benefits through their energy bills.

COP26 Expression of Interest portal now live

The online portal for the COP26 Summit is now live. Expressions of Interest are sought from businesses, civil society, academia, trade unions, indigenous groups, young people and others who would like to get involved in the UK Government managed spaces in the Glasgow 2021 event.

The Expression of Interest process closes at 17:00 GMT on Friday 5 March 2021. Further guidance and a link to the online form can be found [here](#). A downloadable PDF guidance pack can also be found [here](#).

