



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

Piloting local fuel poverty innovation

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Contents

A collaborative approach to piloting local fuel poverty innovation	4
Context.....	4
New funding in 2015/16.....	4
How you can get involved.....	5
Next steps	5
Annex A	6
The role of partnership and learning in the new strategic approach to fuel poverty.....	6
Vision.....	6
Principles	6
Challenges.....	6
Policies	7
Commitments.....	7
Outcomes	7
Annex B	8
The challenge – working together to help the fuel poor through partnership and learning	8

A collaborative approach to piloting local fuel poverty innovation

The fuel poverty strategy has partnership and learning at its heart. A collaborative approach will be vital in achieving our vision to cut bills and increase comfort in the coldest low income homes.

Context

In the fuel poverty strategy, the Government has set out a specific policy of improving the design and delivery of schemes to support the fuel poor by engaging partners directly, supporting them in their work and learning from experience. In addition we have a policy to evaluate the success or otherwise of activities taken, monitoring performance against intended outcomes.

There can be no one size fits all solution to fuel poverty. Truly effective and innovative approaches are most likely to emerge when partners join their efforts and expertise as highlighted throughout strategy. DECC funding has already played an important role in helping many local projects get off the ground and share their learning.

Our work is set to build on earlier initiatives. These include the successful switching scheme Cheaper Energy Together and ongoing work such as Green Deal Communities. The Big Energy Saving Network will soon roll into its third year, as announced in the 2015 Budget.

Across the next year, new and focused activity such as the Community Energy Saving Competition, the Central Heating Fund and Fuel Poverty and Health Booster Fund will continue to test new approaches in specific homes, for specific types of people and involving specific partners in line with the renewed strategic approach to tackling fuel poverty.

All of this activity can tell us a lot about what works and what doesn't, offering vital learning for the next generation of fuel poverty support schemes. In identifying additional funding of up to £2m to support local fuel poverty innovation, DECC is continuing to learn and test approaches, building capability and understanding across a broad range of partners at national and local level.

New funding in 2015/16

Across 2015/16 DECC is making up to £2 million of funding for new fuel poverty pilots to encourage local fuel poverty innovation.

The fuel poverty strategy highlighted potential areas that could be further explored with this funding to complement and enhance earlier investment – for example community energy, park homes, non-gas homes, advice, targeting and health. Such pilot activity has potential to:

- inform the design of national schemes to work 'with the grain' of local delivery;

- identify where the greatest value can be gained from new software tools, guidance and data sharing, not least in relation to identifying households eligible for support;
- identify ways to make customer referrals and eligibility checks simpler and quicker to do;
- provide evidence for thinking on how cross-Government activity could be co-ordinated in future.

How you can get involved

DECC is inviting partners to offer their ideas for the shape and focus of the next wave of pilot activity in 15/16 through a survey.¹ This is just the first step in a more collaborative approach to shaping the objectives and criteria of this fuel poverty pilot funding, in line with the fuel poverty strategy.

Through this survey we are inviting views on:

- where and how to focus objectives to meet local need and get the best learning in line with the new strategic approach;
- how to make the bidding process simple, effective, and reflective of local capability; and
- how to involve partners in the next phase of co-design.

Next steps

- Survey closes Thursday 28 May
- DECC consider survey responses
- Further opportunity to engage on design of pilots informed by survey
- Pilot design
- Pilot fund opens to bids (during Q2 2015/16)
- Assessment of bids
- Allocation of funds

Please note that completing this survey is not a pre-requisite for applying for funds later in 2015/16.

¹ The survey can be found at www.surveymonkey.com/r/VM7TVJ5

Annex A

The role of partnership and learning in the new strategic approach to fuel poverty

As set out in the fuel poverty strategy we have adopted a new approach to guide work. This is set out in full in that document, but summarised here.



The strategic approach to tackling fuel poverty in England²

Vision

Our vision is to cut bills and increase comfort and well-being in the coldest low income homes, and to achieve the new statutory fuel poverty target.

Principles

- Prioritisation of the most severely fuel poor
- Supporting the fuel poor with cost-effective policies
- Reflecting vulnerability in policy decisions

Challenges

Tackling fuel poverty means facing up to a number of clear challenges that can be summarised as follows:

- improving energy efficiency standards in fuel poor homes;
- working together to help the fuel poor through partnership and learning;
- increasing effective targeting of fuel poor households;
- improving the reach of support to certain high cost homes – such as non-gas or park homes;

² For full discussion of the strategic approach to tackling fuel poverty see *Cutting the cost of keeping warm: a fuel poverty strategy for England* www.gov.uk/government/publications/cutting-the-cost-of-keeping-warm.

- improving the reach of support to certain low income households – such as those who have health conditions linked to living in a cold home;
- tackling the financial burden of energy bills for those on low incomes;
- ensuring the fuel poor are able to get maximum benefit from a fair and functioning energy market; and
- enhancing and improving understanding of fuel poverty.

Below we set out an extract from the fuel poverty strategy relating to the challenge of working together to help the fuel poor through partnership and learning.

Policies

The different courses of action needed to meet our target.

Commitments

The strategy includes a wide range of specific commitments whose fulfilment will underpin design and delivery of future schemes, and progress towards the vision.

Outcomes

Government will be interested in a range of outcomes, not all of which will apply to all schemes. Those judged to be most important are set out below.

Outcomes	
Progress against the target and interim milestones	
Lower bills	
Increased comfort	
Improved health and wellbeing	
Improved partnership	
Improved evidence base and understanding	
Improved targeting	
Lower carbon emissions	

Annex B

The challenge – working together to help the fuel poor through partnership and learning

Policy - to improve scheme design and delivery by engaging partners directly, supporting them in their work and learning from experience. In addition it will be our policy to evaluate the success or otherwise of activities taken, monitoring performance against intended outcomes.

Commitments - Government will:

- explicitly examine the potential to involve local partners ...
- consider which partners are most appropriate to enable delivery to different segments ... or delivery of different measures ...
- further understand the role of partners in delivery by carrying out research ... focus on costs of delivery and supply chains;
- improve capability of partners through collaborative action ...
- improve capability of partners by providing guidance ... and support on evaluation



Commitments - Government will:

- ... ensure that delivery schemes have evaluation built in from the outset ... apply a consistent approach to measuring fuel poverty impact
- ensure design of new schemes and reviews of existing schemes have regard for fuel poverty.
- ... reflects strategic principles for fuel poverty; and
- develop schemes that are flexible and able to adapt



The role of partnership and learning in the strategic approach to tackling fuel poverty in England

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