

16 February 2023

Chair of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel

E: c/o Philippa.Brosnan@gov.scot & Trisha.Melvin@gov.scot &

To: Director of Retail, Ofgem

cc: Scottish Fuel Poverty Panel Members – Ms Margaret Corrigan, Dr Kirsten Jenkins, Mr Alister Steele & Mr Fraser J Stewart

Dear Neil

Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel – energy supply to new and existing social housing

I am writing to seek your help and assurance on securing the energy supply to social housing which plays such a key role in mitigating and containing fuel poverty in Scotland.

The Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel, in our role of advising Scottish Ministers on fuel poverty matters and building collaborative networks to tackle fuel poverty, is engaging with stakeholders across Scotland including the social housing sector.

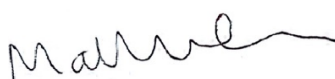
The Panel has engaged with a number of Housing Associations (HA), ranging from a small rural island-based HA with up to a thousand units to a larger national HA with over six thousand. We are hearing that HAs are routinely encountering issues with the installation of meters to both existing (for heating upgrades) and new housing stock. We are also hearing of rising void rates, at a time of unprecedented demand for social & mid-market rent housing, because faulty meters are not being fixed, preventing new tenants from moving in. (In one case we heard about, the meter issue took over nine months to resolve!).

As you will realise this is causing and exacerbating hardship to:

- prospective tenants for whom an HA property offers the only prospect of an affordable, warm home, or indeed for some, a settled home at all
- HAs – already financially impacted by inflationary pressures in the supply chain (costs are even higher for rural HAs) and rent rises lower than inflation, are facing a loss of revenue stream on which their business plans are predicated, undermining their financial resilience

These metering delays are impacting on optimal housing occupancy and this is a situation in which nobody wins. As the regulator, we would welcome your views on how this situation might be resolved to the benefit of all. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss.

Yours



Matthew Cole

Matthew Cole, Chair, Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel

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