

A man with a beard and a young girl are looking out of a window at night. The man is pointing his finger towards the window. The girl is looking out with a concerned expression. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.

THE SCOTTISH **FUEL POVERTY** ADVISORY PANEL

Newsletter

JULY 2025

When the sun is shining and the heating is switched off, fuel poverty can easily slip from people's minds.

But with growing concerns over potential energy price hikes sparked by renewed instability in the Middle East, the issue of energy affordability is more pressing than ever.

And even though *average* energy bills reduced from the 1st July, we know that these only tell half the story: many households in Scotland use significantly more than the GB average figure quoted by Ofgem. Many households don't have access to gas which often means a reliance on unregulated heating oil or very high electricity consumption, and we remain a stubbornly long way from the 'average' £1200 energy bill that we saw before the energy crisis started to bite.

In this summer edition of our newsletter, we want to share the work we've been doing to raise awareness of critical issues like rural fuel poverty, the upcoming RTS switch-off, and our future plans.

ANNUAL REPORT

In June we published [our Annual Report for 2024-2025](#), which outlines our key initiatives and our progress over the last 12 months.

It's been a busy year for the Panel and one of great change in Scotland, with a new First Minister and a new Labour government at Westminster. Sustained high energy prices, the scale of energy debt and a slower than expected drop in inflation, coupled with the First Minister's focus on tackling child poverty and the UK Government manifesto commitments on energy, have kept the high cost of energy in the headlines.

There has been a UK-wide conversation over the last year about energy affordability currently and in the future. We've worked hard to influence this debate through our activities, actively engaging in consultations with Ofgem and the UK Government.

Throughout, we have consistently advocated for the introduction of an energy discount mechanism, also known as a social tariff, and have supported the Scottish Government's work to promote the benefits of an energy discount mechanism to the UK Government.

During this year we:

- Explored aspects of the fuel poverty experience in rural and remote communities, concluding that a targeted approach is needed to address the structural disadvantage suffered by rural and remote areas.
- Looked at health vulnerabilities exacerbated by cold and damp homes. We also learned more about the wellbeing social value of the Warm Homes Prescription approach. It shows how people can be kept warm, while offering the promise of long-term savings to the public purse.
- Considered some of the implications of energy system reform – how heat networks as a decarbonising heat source will not be beneficial for those in fuel poverty unless pricing and support for vulnerable consumers is built into business models at the outset.
- Reviewed the fuel poverty funding landscape and made recommendations to the Scottish Government on tactical and strategic improvements which they could make or influence.

Our reflections on what we have heard and learned have also informed our response to the Scottish Government's invitation to provide feedback to aid the production of its first Periodic Report Tackling Fuel Poverty in Scotland: periodic report 2021-2024 - gov.scot.

This details the progress towards 'achieving the statutory fuel poverty targets' and was published at the beginning of April. The Panel is now reviewing the periodic report and will formally provide a response by the end of the summer.

If you would like to offer your views on the periodic report to the Panel – please contact us at enquiries@fuelpovertypanel.scot.

OUR WORKPLAN

The next 12 months are going to be important for the Panel.

Along with reviewing the periodic report we will:

- Continue our work to find solutions to rural and remote fuel poverty.
- Explore the benefits of a public health approach to fuel poverty.
- Advocate for the introduction of a flexible energy discount mechanism, highlighting the opportunity this offers to close the fuel poverty gap.
- React to emerging fuel poverty issues.
- Engage with Consumer Scotland on their workstreams on a new approach to energy affordability and a future energy retail market designed for consumers.
- Engage with the Poverty and Inequality Commission on the Scottish Government's next Child Poverty Delivery Plan.



Our Chair, Matt Cole, said: “The fuel poverty crisis has had a devastating impact on households across Scotland and the cumulative effect of years of high energy bills is taking its toll on many people who have run out of options of ways to pay them.

“Now is the time for action and we will be redoubling our efforts to drive the long-term systemic strategic change that is needed to find real, long term, targeted solutions to fuel poverty.”

[You can view the workplan in full here.](#)

FUEL POVERTY - THE HARD FACTS

This year’s Scottish House Condition Survey paints a difficult picture of what increasingly looks like an entrenched fuel poverty figure of around a third – with 34% of Scotland’s households in fuel poverty.

More worryingly the figures showed that 19.4% of these households are in extreme fuel poverty, with the fuel poverty gap now estimated at £1,250.

While all communities are affected, this year our focus has been on rural fuel poverty and we worked with ALLenergy, Tighean Innse Gall and Scarf to highlight the very real experiences of people living in more remote areas of Scotland.

Our findings ranged from the specific rural drivers of fuel poverty to metering and energy advice support.

RTS SWITCH-OFF

We, along with others, highlighted the issue of the Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) switch-off, which was due to happen on the 30th June.

The RTS, a legacy system used across GB, but disproportionately impacting Scotland which has around 25% of the total number of GB RTS meters, controls certain electricity meters and tariffs remotely via radio signals. RTS meters may no longer work properly once the signal is switched off, meaning that a customer's heating and hot water supply could stop functioning.

While we welcome the news that the RTS switch-off will now be phased we'll continue to stress the need for effective and timely support for those with RTS to enable the replacement of these meters ahead of the full switch-off.



If you would like to find out more about any of the stories in this newsletter please contact: enquiries@fuelpovertypanel.scot

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