

### Minutes of Meeting on 27th June 2025



**Venue:** Online  
**Time:** 02:00 pm – 05:00 pm  
**Type:** Panel Meeting

### Attendees



**Panel:** Matt Cole, Kirsten Jenkins, Alister Steele and Fraser Stewart  
**Apologies:** Margaret Corrigan  
**Secretariat:** Philippa Brosnan and Roanna Simpson

## Agenda item 1: Introductory Remarks and Updates

Matt welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that the focus of the meeting would be the Scottish Government's [Tackling Fuel Poverty in Scotland: periodic report 2021-2024](#), which the Panel has a statutory duty to respond to by the end of September 2025.

The Panel's Annual Report for 2024-2025 and its 2025-2026 Workplan have now been published on the website. The Panel discussed how these should be disseminated. It was agreed that this would be done via a summer newsletter and the Secretariat were asked to organise this.

## Agenda item 2: Discussion and agreement of feedback to the Scottish Government's Warmer Homes Scotland Team

The Panel met with the Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings - Warmer Homes Scotland Team on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June to hear about the 2025-2026 iteration of the WHS scheme, and to offer their reflections.

The Panel agreed to the following written feedback for the WHS Team and asked the Secretariat to forward it on:

- I. The Panel would, as last year, still advise a wider eligibility criteria and not allow the funding window to constrain the eligibility criteria. Given the Panel's role in

monitoring the Scottish Government's progress towards meeting the statutory fuel poverty targets, and the fact that the Panel has identified the need for more investment to meet these, it does not believe that the Scottish Government should be looking to contain the funding demand for WHS. It seems inevitable that doing so will dampen demand and reduce progress towards meeting the fuel poverty targets – although the Panel acknowledges that predicting actual take up of WHS is, inevitably, an imperfect science.

- II. Accepting that budget allocation has to be done and the ongoing fiscal challenge, on balance the Panel's preference would be for the Scottish Government not to reduce or continually change the eligibility criteria but to let the funding potentially run out, whilst looking to see where else more might be sourced from. Evidence of demand (i.e. demand outstripping supply) can only add weight to the business case for more budget to be allocated next year – setting a benchmark for future budget allocations – not running out of money as the trigger for asking for more.
- III. The focus on SAP rather than EPC appears to be inconsistent with the framing of energy efficiency improvements around EPC in the Fuel Poverty Strategy. SAP is also harder to understand.
- IV. Scottish Government should consider a marketing approach to WHS given the drop in demand – which does not match the need shown in the fuel poverty figures and the Scottish House Condition Survey data for energy efficiency improvements.
- V. Scottish Government budgetary approval for 2025/26 should be given as quickly as possible – and in future, budgets should be approved ahead of the relevant financial year, and any delay in doing this should be expedited as soon as possible. It is difficult to understand an approach which seeks to manage demand to meet budgets when budgets are not known.

### **Agenda item 3: Questions on the Scottish Government's Periodic Report**

Following on from its discussion of key points to be made in its periodic report response at its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, the Panel considered further the questions which it would like to ask in support of its response. It agreed that it would comment on a further draft of these, with a subsequent final version to be signed off by Matt.

### **Agenda item 4: The Panel's response to the Scottish Government's Periodic Report**

The Panel discussed the first draft and structure of the periodic report response prepared by the Secretariat. In discussion, the following points were made:

- The inclusion of an appendix setting out the Panel's existing advice to Scottish Ministers, of relevance to the periodic report response, would be useful.
- It would be desirable for the response to be short.
- The plan – although tight – still seems achievable.

**Next meeting** - 19th August, 2:00-5:00 pm - online