

Minutes of Meeting on 30th June 2026



Venue: Online via Teams
Time: 02:00 pm – 05:00 pm
Type: Panel

Attendees



Panel: Matt Cole, Kirsten Jenkins, Bryan Leask and Alister Steele.
Olivia Swann – agenda items 1-2.
Apologies: Fraser Stewart
Secretariat: Philippa Brosnan and Roanna Sefton.

Agenda item 1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The action to set up standalone briefing meetings on the Warm Homes Plan and the Scottish House Condition Survey was discussed. The difficulty of finding a time which works for all was acknowledged. It was decided to put provisional holds in the for the two July meetings and the Secretariat will test if it is possible to record briefing sessions so that those unable to attend can still benefit from briefings.

The Panel discussed the idea of having a lead Panel member for discrete pieces of work to facilitate a faster pace on Panel work, recognising that the Panel is now bigger and the Secretariat is, at least temporarily, smaller. There was agreement to this in principle as long as the whole Panel can contribute to the work as it matures, with the opportunity for all to share views and insights. Challenges around the deficit of an efficient internal communication tool for the Panel was also expressed. The Secretariat noted that a decision was made on this at the November 2025 Panel meeting.

The Chair noted that next steps on the 2026-2027 workplan and the findings on the cash versus bills' report, with accompanying blog, both of these will now be signed off by him, with the rest of the Panel's agreement. It was also noted that next year's workplan, a pared down version of the workplans to date, will be published in March 2027.

Action: The Secretariat to organise placeholders for the July meetings.

Action: The Secretariat to re-circulate the November 2025 paper on the Panel's approach to internal communication.

Action: Chair to sign off 2026-2027 workplan and the findings on the cash versus bills' report and blog, and the Secretariat to upload these to the Panel website.

Agenda item 2: Health Work Findings

The Social Researcher gave a presentation on the health work which she has been leading for the Panel. This covered the work undertaken by the **Panel intern**, on understanding the interactions between fuel poverty and public health policy within the Scottish Government earlier this year. This was previously presented and discussed at a standalone meeting of the Panel on 9th February. After a reminder on the intern's findings, the Social Researcher gave an overview of her work to identify UK projects addressing both fuel poverty and health.

Three key themes emerged: social prescribing, multi-agency collaboration, and effective use of data. Cross-cutting case study findings indicate that interventions addressing fuel poverty can have positive impacts on wellbeing, comfort, and wider determinants of health, although there is limited robust evidence of long-term clinical health outcomes. Success is strongly associated with cross-sector collaboration, integration within existing healthcare systems, and person-centred, holistic approaches. Most initiatives focus on supporting people with existing conditions rather than preventing ill health before it occurs. However, several challenges remain, including difficulties in identifying and engaging eligible households, securing long-term funding to sustain and expand programmes, and overcoming barriers related to data access, linkage, and governance. Limited evaluation capacity further constrains the ability to demonstrate impact and support the scaling of successful interventions.

1. Findings from social prescribing projects suggest that the strongest evidence of effectiveness comes from larger, well-evaluated programmes. Effective use of data is critical for identifying eligible households and targeting support, while close collaboration between healthcare providers and fuel poverty or energy advice services is essential to successful delivery. Sustainable funding is also necessary to maintain and expand programmes over time. Reported outcomes include improved home temperatures and, in some cases, reductions in GP visits and emergency care use, indicating potential benefits for both household wellbeing and healthcare demand.

2. Findings from multi-agency collaboration projects highlight that working through existing organisations and community networks can improve the effectiveness of interventions and increase reach into local communities. Partnership-based approaches have been shown to reduce stress and social isolation while contributing to improvements in wider determinants of health. NHS-linked initiatives are often more successful in identifying, accessing, and supporting eligible patients, although capacity and resource constraints across partner organisations remain an important consideration.
3. In relation to data and targeting, the use of analytics and dashboards can support more effective population health management and improve the identification and targeting of households most likely to benefit from interventions.

In discussion, the Panel touched on the following points:

- There is a clear relationship between fuel poverty and health outcomes, with a need for better integration of public health considerations into fuel poverty policy and strategy. The barriers which stop this happening need to be better understood.
- Primary health prevention early in life, significantly influences lifelong respiratory, immune, cardiovascular, and overall health outcomes. Therefore early prevention delivers greater long-term benefits and value for money. There is strong alignment here between fuel poverty intervention and the wider child poverty agenda. Awareness of fuel poverty impacts on health could usefully be included in the health curriculum.
- The fuel poverty definition is valuable in estimating prevalence but difficult to operationalise for targeting support - defining the problem and identifying eligible households are separate but related challenges.
- Data sharing can offer great benefits in targeting support but there are barriers to data-sharing which overcome would have significant potential to improve health and related fuel poverty outcomes.
- There is an increasing focus (e.g. Awaab's Law) on the connection between air quality inside the house and health outcomes.
- Warm Homes Prescription has been highlighted by the Panel before and has a growing evidence base as a successful intervention.

The Panel discussed how these findings can be used to advise the Scottish Government on its revision of the Fuel Poverty Strategy and wider, commending the Social Researcher for the quality of her health case study work.

Action: The Secretariat to organise a follow up discussion with Panel member, Olivia Swann, and contact Public Health Scotland, who contributed to the health work, for any comments on the findings.

Agenda item 3: Island Fuel Poverty recommendations

Building on discussion at the previous Panel meeting on the 16th of June, the Panel discussed the narrative and shape of the Island Fuel Poverty recommendations, commenting on specific points of detail.

Action: The Secretariat will revise the recommendations in the light of Panel input and share with the Chair.

Agenda item 4: Innovation research – next steps

Following the scoping discussion at the last meeting on innovation research, the Secretariat have explored a potential avenue for undertaking this research. The Panel are content for the Secretariat to pursue this further and to explore timescales for completion.

Action: The Secretariat to proceed with the commission and update the Panel at the next meeting.

Agenda item 5: Work for the 2nd Quarter (July-September)

The Secretariat took the Panel through the key pieces of work planned for the next quarter. The approach to reviewing the Panel's advice to date was discussed with the agreement that it would be the focus of the September meeting, with the Panel coming prepared to contribute their views at the meeting. The approach to revising the Panel's funding landscape work was discussed, particularly how to develop to the local authority fuel poverty funding picture. This will be achieved by looking for data from representative local authorities.

Action: The Secretariat to send the Panel a context paper for the advice review.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 21st July 2026, online (MS Teams), 2.30 – 5.00 pm