

Fuel Poverty: West Sussex Framework for Action 2021- 2026

Overview:

The West Sussex Affordable Energy Partnership are committed to addressing and reducing the impact of fuel poverty across West Sussex. The purpose of this framework is to bring West Sussex in line with [NICE guidance \(NG6\)](#)¹, England's fuel poverty target², [Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England policy paper](#), promote best practice and engage policy makers in the wider conversations about impacts of fuel poverty across West Sussex. This document builds upon the evidence and information set out in the previous [Fuel Poverty: Framework for Action across West Sussex 2015-2018](#) which includes explanations of what fuel poverty is, influences, Local and National incidences and who it typically affects.

Vision:

To work towards a West Sussex where residents have the information, resources and support available so they can afford to keep warm and well in their homes.

Aims:

- 1. To support and empower residents to improve household energy efficiency, reduce their energy costs, and increase income.**³
- 2. Identify and support residents in the greatest need, and at most risk of living in a cold home.**

Fuel poverty is a complex public health issue in the widest sense. It affects people's ability to keep warm, which in turn can impacts their physical and mental health. Evidence shows living in a cold home can increase the risk of respiratory problems, circulatory problems and exacerbate existing health conditions. It is linked to reduced educational attainment in young people, increased social isolation, increased accidents at home and can lead to increased health and social care interventions in the elderly and vulnerable.⁴ Reducing fuel poverty can improve many aspects in people's lives, including enabling them to keep adequately warm (reducing health and wellbeing risks of living in a cold home), and increase household income which will help maintain their health and wellbeing. Fuel poverty is not just one agency's

¹ Nice guideline (NG6) Published March 2015 Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes

² The fuel poverty target is to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030

³ Drivers of fuel poverty - [Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics LILEE Report 2021 \(2019 data\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Local action on health inequalities: Fuel Poverty and cold home- related problems, Public Health England](#)

responsibility; it therefore requires a partnership approach to both identify vulnerable households and provide tailor-made approaches to enable them to live healthier lives.

As such we have identified 7 key areas for action. These areas will have objectives on how we will achieve our aims in line with the vision set out in this framework. This separate working document will be regularly reviewed and updated during West Sussex Affordable Energy Partnership meetings, coordinated by the West Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator.⁵

7 Key Areas for Action:



1. COMMUNITY

Provide accessible guidance and information on reducing energy costs; income maximisation; and keeping warm and well at home for residents, front line workers and stakeholders. To work towards the recommendation for a commissioned single point of contact health and housing referral service for fuel poor as set out in the NICE guideline (NG6). Work together as a County and alongside community health, energy, and food partners to actively increase the diversity and scale of home energy provision and support for residents in most need.

⁵ The West Sussex Fuel Poverty Coordinator role is hosted by Arun district Council.

2. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Develop and bid on funding for county-wide and local energy efficiency improvement programmes for fuel-poor households, ensuring a consistent service. Take action to improve the poorest energy performing homes that vulnerable fuel poor residents reside in. Use data modelling tools, and local reports to actively target areas with higher levels of fuel poverty.

3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We want to reduce health inequalities across West Sussex by working together and expanding partnerships to reduce the impact and incidence of fuel poverty, excess winter deaths, reducing pressure on social care services and promoting good practice as outlined in the NICE guidelines (NG6)⁶. Raise awareness, provide training, develop referral networks, and support front line professionals to identify, refer and support householders. Householders should not be forced to “heat or eat” and we will actively work with food partners to help prevent householders living in a cold home to choose to “heat or eat”.

4. INCOME MAXIMISATION:

Work alongside community groups and partners to enhance the provision and diversity of income maximisation advice and signposting. Work in an effective, informed and coordinated way with partners to increase household income of the fuel poor - ensuring maximum take-up of national government and local forms of financial support.

5. CARBON REDUCTION:

Work with colleagues and partners to support work to reduce carbon emissions from our domestic homes, increase the uptake of low carbon heating measures and improve the energy performance of the worst performing homes across our District. Using these opportunities to upskill our local workforce and engage with schemes that promote the use of local contractors and organisations where possible. We will work with partners at District and County level to support and enhance their work to raise awareness, mitigate and to adapt to climate change, whilst ensuring those on the lowest incomes are not left behind and are not disproportionately affected by any price increase or new low carbon technologies.

6. FAIR ENERGY COSTS:

Provide advice, support and signposting on fuel tariffs, and other Government and local initiatives to reduce energy costs. Target households with known higher energy costs, such as those on electric, standard tariff, private rented tenants (*The PRS accounts for a disproportionate number of fuel poor households, 18% of PRS households are in fuel poverty under the Low-Income High Cost*

⁶ Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes

[What is this guideline about?](#) | [Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes](#) | [Guidance](#) | [NICE](#)

(LIHC) measure, compared to 8% of owner-occupied households and 9% of social housing households)⁷ and inefficient homes.

7. HOUSING

Support, develop and coordinate local and countywide programmes and initiatives that aim to mitigate the risk of living in a cold damp home. Working alongside housing departments, voluntary sector housing support groups to target vulnerable groups and low income.

Framework Updates:

Alignment with Key National and Government Strategies

[NICE guidance \(NG6\)](#)

This guideline covers reducing excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes. It aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people vulnerable to the cold. Improving the temperatures in homes, by improving energy efficiency, may also help reduce unnecessary fuel consumption.

[Sustainable warmth: protecting vulnerable households in England](#)

The updated Fuel Poverty Strategy for England sets out how we will tackle fuel poverty, while at the same time decarbonising buildings, so that those in fuel poverty are not left behind on the move to net zero, and, where possible, can be some of the earliest to benefit.

[Cold Weather Plan for England](#)

It is a framework that aims to reduce the harm to health from cold weather. As well as defining the actions that are required in response to cold weather, it also recommends long term year-round planning to reduce the risks that result from fuel poverty.

[The Clean Growth Strategy](#)

The Clean Growth Strategy expands on the aspirations of the Industrial Strategy to grow the UK's economy in a clean and sustainable manner through investing in and growing a cleaner economy which will assist the government in fulfilling its carbon reduction targets. The strategy sets out the government's proposed actions to decarbonise the UK economy over the next 10 years.

Key Influencing reports

- [Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on](#)
- [BEIS Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics LILEE Report 2021 \(2019 data\)](#)
- [NEA - Under one roof – Health and Housing sectors tackling fuel poverty and cold related ill health together](#)
- [Ofgem Consumer Vulnerability Strategy 2025](#)

⁷ [Annual fuel poverty statistics report: 2021](#)

Alignment with Local Frameworks and Strategies

This framework is not in isolation in West Sussex. Each District, Borough and the County Council has its own policies and plans in relation to the wider influencing factors of fuel poor residents. Some of the main influencing County wide strategies are listed below:

- [West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019- 2024](#)
- WSCC Energy Strategy – **this is currently being updated**
- [Adult Social Care IN West Sussex \(2019-2021\)](#)

Governance and Local Action

Action takes place at a District and Borough as well as County level depending on need. A countywide partnership approach has therefore been developed with Arun District Council hosting a countywide Fuel Poverty Coordinator. Part of the role of this post is to bid for funds to pay for interventions within West Sussex, often in partnership with either the County Council, Districts and Boroughs or Community partners to ensure a joined-up approach. The partnership includes representatives from each West Sussex Local Authority, West Sussex County Council and community partners. They will regularly review this framework to ensure the vision, aims and needs of resident are being met.

West Sussex District and Borough Home Energy Conservation Act reports 2021



Adur and Worthing District Council - <https://westsussexenergy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Final-Adur-Worthing-Councils-Housing-Energy-Conservation-Act-Report-2021.pdf>



Arun District Council - <https://www.arun.gov.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n17970.pdf&ver=18662>

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Strategy (waiting for link)



Chichester District Council - https://westsussexenergy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Home_Energy_Consevation_Act_Report_2021-Chichester-.docx



Crawley Borough Council - https://crawley.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/Home%20Energy%20Conservation%20Act%20Report%202021_0.pdf



Horsham District Council -



Mid Sussex District Council -

National and Regional Context:

In 2019, there were an estimated 13.4 per cent of households (3.18 million) in fuel poverty in England under the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) definition, down from 15.0 per cent in 2018 (3.52 million).⁸

Table 1: Sub-regional fuel Poverty 2019 data⁹:

Area Name	Number of households	Number of households in fuel poverty	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
West Sussex	372,658	26,185	7.0
Adur	29,120	2,264	7.8
Arun	72,015	5,165	7.2
Chichester	53,740	4,053	7.5
Crawley	46,153	3,441	7.5
Horsham	59,157	3,538	6.0
Mid Sussex	61,810	3,572	5.8
Worthing	50,663	4,152	8.2

Table 2: Fuel Poverty by Region, 2019¹⁰

Region	Number of households	Number of households in fuel poverty	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
North East	1,191,912	176,869	14.8
North West	3,177,487	461,364	14.5
Yorkshire and The Humber	2,368,747	396,771	16.8
East Midlands	2,034,809	282,909	13.9
West Midlands	2,454,896	429,730	17.5
East	2,616,126	344,779	13.2
London	3,483,960	530,740	15.2
South East	3,838,572	288,025	7.5
South West	2,495,242	264,792	10.6

⁸ [Annual fuel poverty statistics report: 2021](#)

⁹ [Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ [Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Risks Ahead

The Affordable Energy Partnership is coordinated by the West Sussex fuel poverty coordinator post. The post is hosted by Arun District Council and externally funded; 2021 reserves show 4 years of funding available on current spend and hours. It is therefore imperative to continue to look at ways to fund the post past this and into the future.

The current West Sussex Citizens Advice home energy telephone service only has funding confirmed until March 2022. This single point of contact service was set up following some of the NICE guidelines (NG6). It will therefore be vital to continue to fund a service that follows and builds upon this best practice.

Call for action

The next few years ahead present many new challenges as we emerge from the Covid Pandemic. The winter of 2021-2022 poses a significant risk for the most vulnerable households across the UK. Wholesale gas prices have increased, reaching record levels, the reduction of Universal Credit, increasing inflation, and the end of furlough will see vulnerable fuel poor households disproportionately affected. "Without a suitable intervention, many will sadly not be able to heat or power their homes this winter and we could see a surge in preventable deaths."¹¹ As a partnership we must reflect and regularly review any gaps in service provision or where there are trends in the demand for support in West Sussex, act swiftly and look to tailor make support in local and county need.

Summary

Addressing fuel poverty and cold homes has multiple benefits, both for the household receiving support and for local communities. This includes better standards of living and conditions for people with low incomes, improved and more energy efficient houses, fewer avoidable winter deaths and reduce costs for the health, wellbeing and care services. Fuel poverty and its contribution to social and health inequalities is recognised as avoidable.

¹¹ [National Energy Action \(NEA\) briefing on Budget & Comprehensive Spending Review \(CSR\) representations 2021](#)

Appendices:

Table 3: West Sussex District and Borough 3-year Fuel Poverty trend: 2017-2021¹²

AREA	Proportion of Fuel Poor Households (%)		
	2021 (2019 data)	2020 (2018 data)	2019 (2017 data)
West Sussex	7.0	7.6	8.2
Adur	7.8	7.7	8.5
Arun	7.2	7.9	8.6
Chichester	7.5	9.5	9.3
Crawley	7.5	6.6	6.9
Horsham	6.0	7.2	7.3
Mid Sussex	5.8	6.5	7.5
Worthing	8.2	7.9	9

- Excess Winter Deaths West Sussex and District & Borough Council's Excess Winter Deaths three-year trend, compared to England average – from Public Health England **Waiting for information from WSCC Public health team.**

¹² [Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2021-2019 Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2021-2019)