



Halton Affordable Warmth Strategy

2016 -2020

*Improving health and well-being by reducing living in
cold homes*

Table of Contents

Forward	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Our Vision, Outcomes and Objectives	5
What is Fuel Poverty?	6
How many households are in Fuel Poverty?	6
What causes Fuel Poverty	7
Who is at risk of Fuel Poverty and Living in a cold home?	7
How does Fuel Poverty affect people’s health and Health Inequalities?	8
What is the Cost of Fuel Poverty	9
Policy Drivers	10
National policy context	10
Local policy context	10
Links to local strategies	11
About Halton	11
Fuel Poverty in Halton	11
Fuel Poverty Risk Factors in Halton	12
Population estimate (2012)	12
Deprivation, Income and poverty	12
Health Status	13
Housing in Halton	13
Occupancy level	13
Housing Tenure and Decent homes	13
Thermal comfort: Central Heating in homes across Halton	13
Energy efficiency of dwellings in Halton	14
Strategy Review Process	15
Fuel Poverty Needs Assessment	15
Strategy consultation and engagement	15
Halton Affordable Warmth Strategy Review Contributors	15
Taking Action to Reduce Fuel Poverty in Halton	16
Aim 1: Increase Awareness across all sectors and individuals in Halton of the risks associated with fuel poverty and living in cold homes	16
Aim 2: To identify people who are living in cold homes	17
Aim 3: Identify and monitor internal and external support that is available to people living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty	18
Aim 4: Provide support for people who are living in cold homes	19
Aim 5: Ensure the health and social care sector takes full account of the issue of fuel poverty when supporting clients	21
Delivering this Strategy	22
Expenditure on reducing cold home – related harm	22
Appendices	23
Appendix 1: Halton Affordable Warmth Strategy Action Plan 2016 – 2020	23
Appendix 2: Tackling Fuel Poverty and Living in Cold Homes across the Life Course	32
Appendix 3: National Policies	38
Appendix 4: Respondents to Survey	44
Appendix 5: Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency of Dwellings	45
Appendix 6: Existing Referral options for fuel poverty in Halton	47

Foreword

Welcome to our Affordable Warmth Strategy for Halton. Our vision is to enable households in Halton to achieve the heating levels they need to maintain comfort and good health, at an affordable cost. Living in cold homes can damage the health and wellbeing of the pregnant woman, the growing toddler, school-aged children, the long-term ill and the elderly. It can affect both the low income households and households of people with greater heating needs due to ill -health and disability.

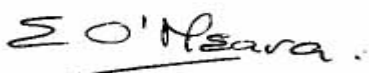
This strategy builds upon a wide range of support that our partners already provide for households to address fuel poverty and living in cold homes. It outlines how we will work in partnership to provide a 'single point of contact' for affordable warmth referrals in Halton to facilitate a coordinated approach. It will increase awareness of the disadvantages of living in cold homes, identify people at risk and ensure effective support is available.

The strategy highlights recent developments in affordable warmth. It describes how we will work to attract and maximise external funding opportunities and shows how we will continue to encourage households to participate in the 'collective switch' programme so that they can get best value energy tariffs. It will also assist our residents to access the financial support they are eligible for and support back to work programmes for adults who are able to work so they have less risk of being in fuel poverty.

We are pleased that the action plan outlined in the strategy has been agreed upon by all our partners from the Council, NHS Clinical Commissioning group (CCG) and our community and voluntary sector. Together we will work to improve the health and wellbeing of our people in Halton by reducing the risk of living in cold homes



Cllr Marie Wright, Halton Borough Council's portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing



Eileen O'Meara, Halton Borough Council's Director of Public Health,

Executive Summary

About one in ten households in Halton are living in fuel poverty. This means they are either unable to heat their homes to an acceptable level to maintain their health and wellbeing or they are spending so much on heating their homes that they do not have enough disposable income to pay for other essential household needs.

Living in cold homes can lead to discomfort in the home and poor health including: increased risk of cold related illnesses, worsening of existing health conditions such as heart and lung diseases and untimely death. Living in cold homes also worsens peoples' mental health state and dietary opportunities and choices. Cold homes affect the health of all people, from toddlers to older people over 65 years.

Recommended minimum indoor temperature is "21 degrees in living areas in the daytime and a minimum 18 degrees night-time temperature for bedrooms to ensure good health and wellbeing.

Three main factors influence the risk of fuel poverty: **energy efficiency of our homes, household income and fuel cost.** The **Halton Affordable Warmth Strategy** was developed in 2011 to address these issues. We have reviewed and updated the strategy, following a **Needs assessment**, in collaboration with several agencies who are already working to assist households who are vulnerable to the cold. Together we have agreed on the vision, objectives, required actions and outcomes to further reduce the harms from living in cold homes in Halton. A full report and Visual summary of our Fuel Poverty Needs Assessment can be found at <http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/health/JSNA.aspx>

"Our Vision is: All households in Halton can achieve the heating levels they need to maintain comfort and good health, at an affordable cost".

To achieve this vision, this strategy will address five main objectives:

1. Increase awareness, across all sectors and individuals, of the risks associated with fuel poverty and living in cold homes.
2. Identify people who are living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty.
3. Identify and monitor **internal and external support that** is available to people living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty.
4. Ensure that people living in cold homes or fuel poverty are able to access available support to address the problem.
5. Ensure the health and social care sector takes full account of the issue of fuel poverty when supporting clients.

This strategy is supported by a detailed action plan (Appendix 1) with realistic time scales and key partners who have agreed to ensure successful implementation of our desired objectives.

Introduction

About one in ten households in Halton are living in fuel poverty. This means they are either unable to heat their homes to an acceptable level to maintain their health and wellbeing or they are spending so much on heating their homes that they do not have enough disposable income to pay for other essential household needs. Fuel poverty can have significant adverse effects on health and wellbeing of people, especially those considered to be vulnerable.

Public Health England (PHE) ¹ recommends a minimum indoor temperature of 21 degrees in living areas in the daytime and a minimum 18 degrees night-time temperature for bedrooms in order to safeguard health and wellbeing.

Three main factors influence the risk of fuel poverty: energy efficiency of our homes, household income and fuel cost.

Our Vision, Outcomes and Objectives

Although the impact of fuel poverty on health and well-being is great, it is 'preventable'.

"Our Vision is: All households in Halton can achieve the heating levels they need to maintain comfort and good health, at an affordable cost".

To achieve this vision, and increase affordable warmth in Halton, this strategy will seek to deliver two overarching outcomes:

1. Reduce the number of households living in cold homes, thereby reducing harms from living in cold homes.
2. Reduce inequalities and protect the vulnerable.

Our overriding *value* in achieving the outcomes is to "work in partnership", since no single organisation can tackle the factors that cause fuel poverty or living in cold homes alone.

In order to achieve our desired outcomes, the affordable warmth steering partners have identified the following objectives, all of which are linked to our *Outcomes*:

- Increase awareness across all sectors and individuals of the risks associated with fuel poverty and living in cold homes.
- Identify people who are living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty.
- Identify and monitor internal and external support that is available to people living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty.
- Ensure that people living in cold homes or fuel poverty are able to access available support to address the problem including:

¹ PHE, 2015, the Cold Weather Plan for England 2015. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468160/CWP_2015.pdf

- Providing a single contact point for cold home referrals,
 - Developing networks and partnerships to support those vulnerable to fuel poverty and cold homes by working with frontline services (such as primary care, housing, social services, heating engineers and meter installers) and voluntary organisations across Halton,
 - Improving the energy efficiency of housing across the Borough in partnership with Social Housing Providers, Private landlords and Owner Occupiers,
 - Maximising people's incomes by ensuring they receive appropriate benefits,
 - Ensuring that our residents are on the best value energy tariffs at any given time,
 - Providing and promoting advice on energy saving in the home,
 - Encouraging greater uptake of national initiatives,
 - Working to attract external funding for energy improvements to housing,
 - Contributing to national and regional advocacy efforts to tackle fuel poverty.
- Ensure the health and social care sector takes full account of the issue of fuel poverty when supporting clients.

What is Fuel Poverty?

Using the "Low income High Costs (LIHC) definition, a household is considered to be in Fuel Poverty where they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level), and were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line. The "Low Income High Costs" indicator measures both number of households in fuel poverty and the extent of Fuel Poverty amongst these Fuel poor households (This is called the 'Fuel Poverty gap').

How many households are in Fuel Poverty?

**4992 (9.2%) households in
Halton are living in Fuel
Poverty**

In 2013:

- 4,992 households in Halton, (9.2% of all households) were living in Fuel Poverty. This varied from 4.2% in Birchfield to 14.1% in Appleton.
- 2.35 Million households in England were living in Fuel Poverty, representing 1 in 10 of all households in England with regional variations across the country.
- Households in England spent a total of £877 million more than the median required fuel costs, an average of £374 per household.

What causes Fuel Poverty?

Fuel Poverty can be caused by three main factors:

- The energy efficiency of a house which determines the amount of energy required to heat and power the home. This depends on the level of thermal insulation of the home and how good the heating system is. The energy efficiency of a dwelling is indicated by the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating. The higher the SAP rating, the more energy efficient a building is, and the lower the cost of heating the building to an acceptable indoor temperature.²
- Cost of domestic energy.
- Household income: Low income which can arise from factors such as unemployment, underemployment, being a Pensioner, lone parent or having low paid jobs can increase the risk of living in fuel poverty and cold homes.

The Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014 set a Fuel Poverty target of minimum energy efficiency rating of Band E by 2020, Band D by 2025 and Band C by 2030.

Who is at risk of Fuel Poverty and Living in a cold home?

A wide range of people are vulnerable to the cold. This is either because of: a medical condition such as heart disease; a disability that, for instance, stops people moving around to keep warm, or makes them more likely to develop chest infections; or personal circumstances such as being unable to afford to keep warm enough. These vulnerable groups include:

- People with heart disease.
- People with respiratory conditions (in particular chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma).
- People with mental health conditions.
- People with disabilities.
- Older people (65 and older).
- Households with young children (from new-born to school age).
- Pregnant women.
- People on a low income.

The following groups of people are also more likely to live in cold homes:

- Households living in privately rented accommodation;
- Lone parents;
- Households with single person occupancy or having more rooms than individuals in the home;
- People living in fear of high energy bills.

² See Appendix 4 for " Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency of Dwellings"

How does Fuel Poverty affect people's health and Health Inequalities?

Fuel poverty, living in a cold home and generally, poor housing conditions can affect the health of people from all age groups. In all age groups, living in cold homes increases the frequency and severity of illnesses such as colds and flu and also leads to excess winter deaths, (EWDs)³.

For children, Fuel poverty and living in a cold home can:

- affect normal development including unhealthy weight gain,
- worsen health problems like asthma, increasing hospital admissions,
- reduce educational achievement leading to poorer emotional and mental well-being and ability to cope with the stress of life.

For adolescents and young people,

- Fuel poverty can lead to poor mental health.

For adults, Fuel Poverty can:

- worsen existing health problems such as chest and heart disease;
- cause poor mental health;
- increase the risk of falls and untimely death.

We also know that:

- the lower a person's income is, the more likely they are to be at risk of fuel poverty;
- Children, the elderly and the vulnerable are more likely to be affected by cold housing and fuel poverty.

Children living in cold homes are twice as likely to suffer from a variety of chest problems than children living in warm homes.

More than 1 in 4 adolescents living in cold homes are at risk of multiple mental health problems compared to 1 in 20 adolescents who have always lived in warm homes.

People are more likely to die if they live in homes with low thermal efficiency and low indoor temperature.

Countries which have more energy efficient housing have lower Excess Winter Deaths*

Around 40% of Excess Winter Deaths are caused by cardiovascular diseases and around 33% of EWDs are caused by respiratory diseases

³ Excess Winter Deaths are deaths which occur during the winter months over and above the expected number of deaths when compared with the other months in the year.

What is the Cost of Fuel Poverty?

Fuel poverty and living in cold homes comes at a huge cost to the Health Services, individuals, their families and the community as a whole. We understand that:

- The NHS (primary care and hospital) spends about £1.36 billion per year to treat the illnesses caused and worsened by cold homes.
- Reducing hazards in poor housing could deliver £600 million of savings a year for the NHS.
- Addressing fuel poverty yields a great “Return on investment”. Every £1 spent on improving homes saves the NHS £70 over 10 years
- Tackling cold homes will also result in savings beyond those directly related to the NHS. Such savings come from improved mental wellbeing, increased mobility within the home, healthier lifestyles and greater social connection.

The NHS (primary care and hospital) spends about £1.36 billion per year to treat the illnesses caused and worsened by cold homes.



Return on investment

Housing interventions to keep people warm, safe and free from cold and damp are an efficient use of resources. Every £1 spent on improving homes saves the NHS £70 over 10 years.

Policy Drivers

National policy context

There is a wide range of health, environmental and social policies that support action on fuel poverty and cold homes in the United Kingdom. **Table 1** summarises those most relevant to local authorities, health and wellbeing boards, and Public Health and primary care teams. A full description of the policies can be found in Appendix 3.

Table 1: National Policies Underpinning Fuel Poverty	
Policy Area	Policy
Health Policies	Health and Social Care Act 2012
	Public Health Outcomes Framework
	NHS Outcomes Framework
	Social Care Outcomes Framework
	The Cold Weather Plan for England
	Making every contact count
Policies targeting Fuel poverty	Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 (amended with Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014)
	UK Fuel poverty strategy
	NICE guideline on Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes
	The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)
Environmental policies	The Climate Change Act 2008
Policies Targeting Household Energy (Energy efficiency policy and programme aimed at those in fuel poverty)	The Energy Act 2011
Household energy bill policy	The Energy Act 2013(making provision for the reduction of number of tariffs and OFGEM regulating switching comparison sites)
Social and housing policies	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
	Decent Homes Standard 2000–2010
Income measures	Winter Fuel Payment
	Cold Weather Payment
Energy tariff measures	The Warm Home Discount
Others	Priority Service Register for vulnerable people

Local policy context

The harms related to living in cold homes are well recognised by partners across Halton. We undertook a survey of on-going activities to tackle fuel poverty across Halton in 2015 and the result showed that a wide range of activities/interventions are currently on-going across the Borough to reduce the risk of people living in cold homes.⁴

⁴ See the Fuel Poverty Needs Assessment for a summary of these activities -

In addition, Halton Borough Council, in partnership with registered social landlords, has funded home energy efficiency projects worth millions of pounds across the Borough since 2011. This includes the Castlefields estate regeneration programme and has been carried out with the support of funding schemes such as Warm Zone and Energy Company Obligation (ECO2).

Links to local strategies

Many local strategies are linked to, and can influence fuel poverty. The main strategies are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Affordable Warmth and associated local strategies



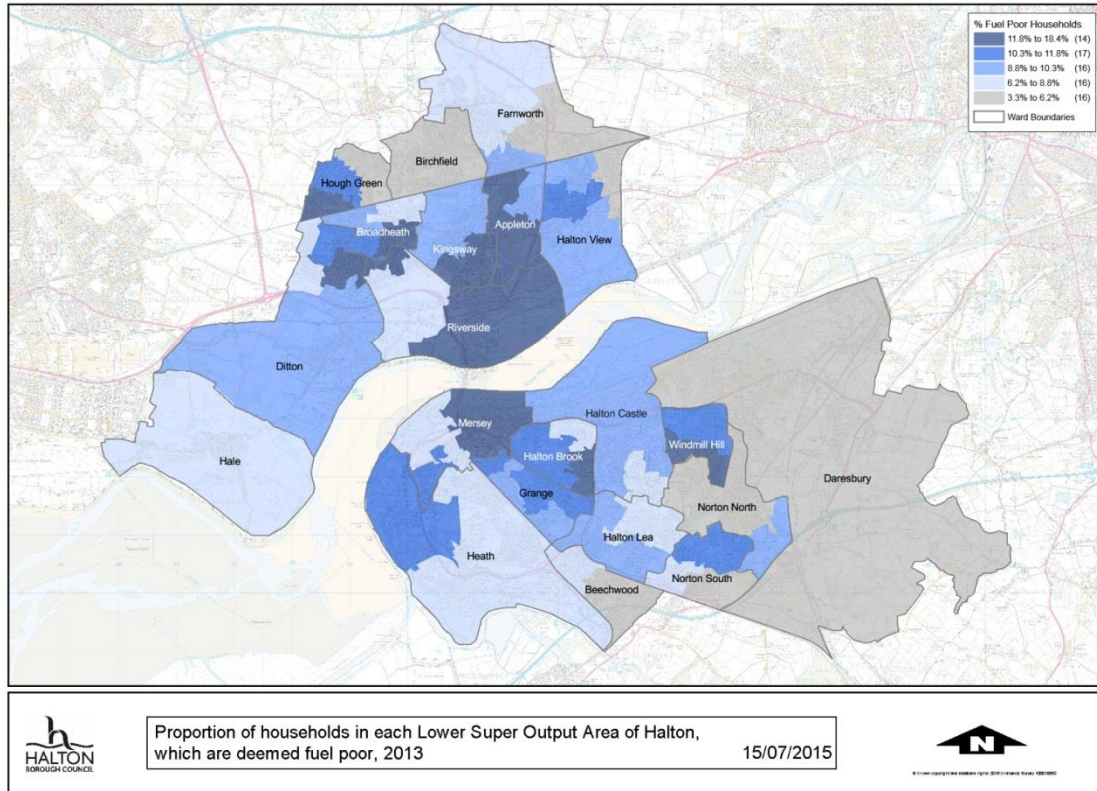
About Halton

Fuel Poverty in Halton

- In 2013, 4,992 households (9.2% of households in Halton) were estimated to be in Fuel Poverty. This varied between ward, from 4.2% in Birchfield to 14.1% in Appleton.
- This wide variation is shown in **figure 2** between Lower Super Output areas

- Fuel poverty rate in Halton is slightly lower than the England average of 10.4% households and Halton has the 4th lowest proportion of households in fuel poverty among 16 comparable local authority areas.

Figure 2: Percentage of Households in Fuel Poverty in Halton by Lower Super Output Areas in Halton (2013)



Source: Department of Energy & Climate Change

Fuel Poverty Risk Factors in Halton

The following statistics about Halton reveal the risk factors for fuel poverty in Halton

Population estimate (2012)

- Total population: 125,700
 - Ages 0-15 years: 24,900 (19.8%)
 - Ages 16-64 years: 81,200 (64.6%)
 - Ages 65+ years: 19,600 (15.6%)

Deprivation, Income and poverty

- Deprivation: Halton is the 27th most deprived local authority area in England (out of 326) and 26% of Halton's population live in areas that fall in the top 10% most deprived nationally, more than the national figure (10%).

- Child poverty: about 25.6% (6,400) children in Halton live in poverty.
- Unemployment: As of January 2014, about 4.1%, (3,233) people were claiming Job Seeker's Allowance, 37th highest out of 326 Local Authorities. This rate varies across wards with Windmill Hill having the highest rate (9.3%) followed by Halton Lea (7.1%) and Halton Castle (6.4%).
- Worklessness: The percentage of working age people claiming out of work benefits in Halton is 16.2%. This compares to 13.8% for the North West and 10.9% for England. In some areas of the Borough rates are significantly above the Borough average e.g. Windmill Hill (33.5%), Halton Lea (27.4%) and Halton Castle (26.5%).

Health Status

- Long Term Condition (LTCs): In Halton, 21.4% of all people in Halton say they have a long-term health problem or disability.
- 4.3% of patients registered with a GP in Halton suffer from Coronary Heart disease, varying from 2.1% -5.1%. This is higher than 4.1% in Merseyside area, 4.0% in the North of England and 3.3% in the whole of England
- 2.5% of patients registered with a General Practice GP in Halton suffer from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Housing in Halton

Several housing characteristics impact on the risk of a household living in fuel poverty. They include occupancy levels, type of tenure, the heating system and the energy efficiency of dwellings. This section gives an overview of these housing characteristics in Halton.

Occupancy level

- There was an average of 2 people per dwelling in Halton which was similar to England in 2014. This was 55,900 dwelling per 125, 000 people

Housing Tenure and Decent homes

- In 2014, 25% of dwellings in Halton were provided by the public sector including Registered Social Landlords and 75% by the private sector compared with 17.7% and 83% for England.

Data from the 2009 Halton Stock Condition Survey showed that:

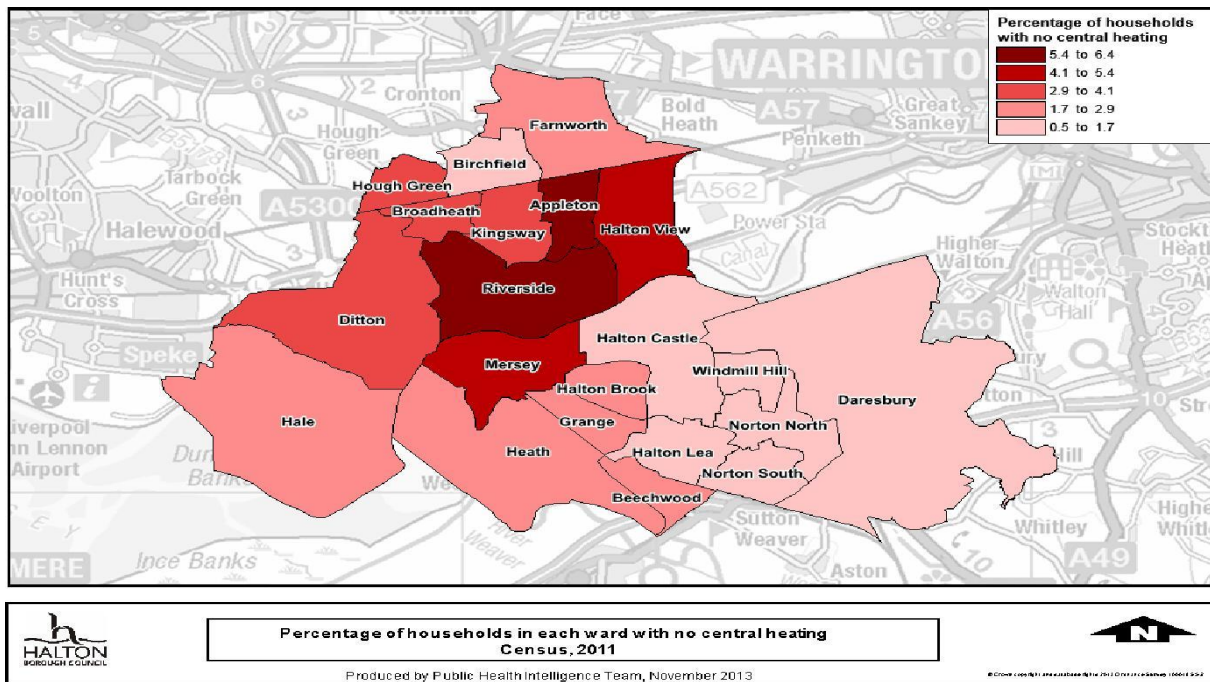
- All social housing stock in Halton met the Decent Homes Standard
- 26.2% of private sector dwellings in Halton (10,500 dwellings) failed the Decency Standard

Thermal comfort: Central Heating in homes across Halton

Figure 3 shows the percentage of households with no central heating based on the 2011 census. However, due to housing improvement programmes and energy efficiency campaigns since 2011, the vast majority of housing in Halton now has central heating

installed. However there are still some properties that do not. The highest proportion of these is located in the Riverside and Appleton wards in Widnes.

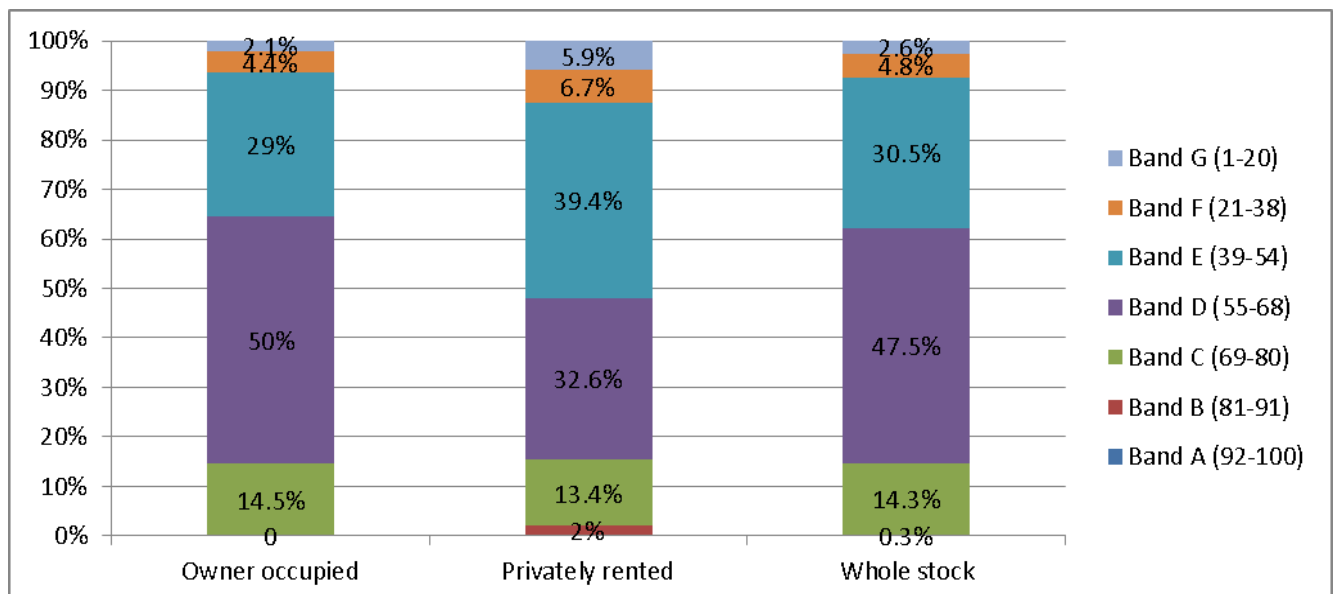
Figure 3: Central Heating in Dwellings in Halton (2011)



Energy efficiency of dwellings in Halton

Figure 4 below illustrates the distribution of energy efficiency measures (Standard Assessment Procedure, SAP/Energy Performance Certificate, and EPC, for private sector housing in the Borough.

Figure 4 – Energy Performance of Private sector Halton dwellings by EPC (SAP) rating



It is necessary to note that the energy efficiency ratings of Halton's housing stock, private or otherwise would have improved since 2009. This is because of several home improvement initiatives which have taken place across the borough since 2009.

(More details about Fuel poverty risk factors in Halton can be found in the Halton Fuel Poverty Needs Assessment 2015).

Strategy Review Process

Fuel Poverty Needs Assessment

We undertook a Fuel Poverty Needs Assessment in 2015 to understand the burden of fuel poverty and the available programmes to address fuel poverty. The full Needs Assessment report and a visual summary of the result can be found at

<http://www4.halton.gov.uk/Pages/health/JSNA.aspx>

Strategy consultation and engagement

In addition to formulation of a strategy review group, an audit of activities taking place across Halton to tackle Fuel Poverty was conducted in 2015 using the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) assessment tool. The audit assessed Halton's compliance against the 2015 NICE guideline recommendations

A total of 24 responses were received across the borough. These included responses from 6 charitable organisations, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, four social housing providers, the respiratory team and 12 departments within Halton council. Following the audit, a workshop was held to review the key issues/gaps highlighted by the audit and action plans (**Appendix 1**) for the strategy.

The partners involved in reviewing this strategy are outlined below.

Halton Affordable Warmth Strategy Review Contributors

Agency/Department

Age UK Mid Mersey

Energy Projects Plus

Halton Adult Safeguarding

Halton Environmental Health

Halton Health Improvement Team

Halton Housing Trust - Asset Management

Halton Intermediate and Urgent Care

Halton Sure Start to Later Life

Halton Welfare Rights Service

NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group

Plus Dane and SHAP

Riverside Housing Community Engagement

Brookvale & Windmill Hill Children's Centres, Team around the Family

Halton BC - Contact Centre Halton Carers Centre

Halton Citizens' Advisory Bureaux (CAB)

Halton Housing Solutions Team

Halton Inclusion 0-25

Halton Senior Services

Halton Trading Standards

HBC Public Health

Plus Dane - Asset Management

Protection and Prevention/Cheshire Fire & Rescue

Halton Respiratory Team Service

Sustainable Communities-Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside

Taking Action to Reduce Fuel Poverty in Halton

Our action plan (**Appendix 1**) sets out how we will address fuel poverty and living in cold homes in a cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary way, reflecting the complexity of fuel poverty. It also takes a life-course approach, (**Appendix 2**), ensuring that fuel poverty is tackled across all age groups.

We aim to:

1. Increase awareness across all sectors and individuals of the risks associated with fuel poverty and living in cold homes
2. Identify people who are living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty
3. Identify and monitor internal and external support that is available to people living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty
4. Ensure that people living in cold homes or fuel poverty are able to access available support to address the problem
5. Ensure that the health and social care sector takes full account of the issue of fuel poverty when supporting clients

This section outlines how we will achieve these aims.

Aim 1: Increase awareness across all sectors and individuals in Halton of the risks associated with fuel poverty and living in cold homes

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of Fuel Poverty at a Strategic Level across Halton
- Embed Affordable Warmth into relevant strategic areas
- Increase awareness of fuel poverty among all people in Halton
- Increase awareness of fuel poverty among frontline professionals, voluntary organisations and community groups in Halton
- Increase awareness of fuel poverty among Gas engineers
- Work with local letting agents to Increase awareness of Affordable warmth, legal / EPC rating for dwellings
- Increase awareness of regional or national campaigns such as 'Keep warm, Keep well'
- Deliver annual cold home awareness campaign for Halton

Current activities in Halton

- Reducing Fuel poverty is a priority in the Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Halton Housing Strategy, and other strategies outlined in Figure 1
- Tackling fuel poverty and improving energy security is a 'work stream' in the NHS Halton CCG's Sustainable Development Management Plan (SDMP) 2016-2019

- Majority of staff at agencies who responded to our survey are aware of the risks associated with living in cold homes
- 15 out of 24 survey responders provide cold home-related information for their clients' through a wide range of avenues : face-to-face contact, telephone conversations, leaflets and booklets in accessible formats (including large print and voice recorded advice), and online resources.

Gaps in activity identified in Halton

- There is still room for more frontline staff, community groups and volunteers to be aware of fuel poverty and cold homes
- We also need to ensure that all our residents are aware of the risks associated with living in cold homes.

To increase awareness of fuel poverty, we will:

- Ensure that Fuel poverty remains on the agenda of key directorates and agencies in Halton
- Continue work to ensure that affordable warmth remains a part of strategic plans across the borough
- Support our frontline organisations by providing information to disseminate to their clients
- Develop campaigns to increase awareness of fuel poverty and associated harms among people who are vulnerable to the cold, their families, carers and friends
- Work with gas engineering training centres to include fuel poverty in their training
- Continue to disseminate information about external fuel poverty campaigns residents can benefit from

Aim 2: To identify people who are living in cold homes

In 2013, 4992 households in Halton, (9.2% of all households) were living in Fuel Poverty. This varied from 4.2% in Birchfield to 14.1% in Appleton.

Our objectives

- To facilitate a proactive identification of people living in cold homes.
- To ensure that people living in cold homes are referred for support

Current activities

- Some of our frontline staff are trained to recognise issues relating to fuel poverty
- Some agencies review their clients' energy bills to understand energy usage and potential impact on health
- 6 out of 24 agencies responding to our survey have a 'winter checklist' to identify vulnerable people, 4 of which were housing providers.
- 8 out of the 24 agencies have system/s in place to identify young people who are living in cold homes

Gaps in activity identified in Halton

- There is a need for a more proactive approach to identifying people who may be living in cold homes in Halton or at risk of fuel poverty and for this approach to be carried out by all frontline agencies who work with people who are vulnerable to the cold.
- Assessing heating needs of clients: 21 out of 24 organisations/departments who responded to our survey carry out home visits. This was not applicable to the other 3. However only 12 out of the 21 organisations who undertake home visits assess the heating needs of people who use their services, whether during a home visit or elsewhere.
- 10 of the agencies surveyed would consider having a winter checklist for active identification.

To identify people who are living in cold homes and refer them for support, we will:

- Produce a fuel poverty checklist to facilitate identification and referral for people who may be living in cold homes
- Train our frontline professionals across all sectors to recognise people who may be living in cold homes using the fuel poverty checklist and how to refer them for help
- Make every contact count to reduce fuel poverty: We will work with partner agencies to identify people living in cold homes during home visits and assessment procedures such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Safe and well visits by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Aim 3: Identify and monitor internal and external support that is available to people living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty

Our objectives

- Research and identify all current support available to residents at risk of fuel poverty or living in a cold home
- Share this information across network
- Monitor availability of support and update information to reflect changes
- Monitor for opportunities to attract external support

Current activities

Different agencies or departments within the borough source for funding to tackle fuel poverty in Halton.

Gaps in our provision

- We do not have a designated staff or department taking charge of a proactive identification of resources and support to address fuel poverty or living in cold homes.
- There is no formal communication between agencies to raise awareness of available support for people living in fuel poverty or cold homes.

To identify and monitor available fuel poverty related support, we will:

- produce and regularly update a directory of affordable warmth related services within Halton and beyond
- make this directory accessible to all relevant agencies
- work with the 'external funding team' to identify and secure external funding to tackle fuel poverty
 - ensure that this information is disseminated to all relevant partners working with people who are vulnerable to the cold.

Aim 4: Provide support for people who are living in cold homes

Objectives

- Establish a 'single point of contact' (AWSPC) or equivalent in Halton for cold home referrals. The AWSPC will receive referral from frontline practitioners, assess needs and identify appropriate support for each referral, monitor progress and obtain feedback
- Train all relevant frontline practitioners on how to refer into the SPC
- Ensure that help and support is provided for households most in need to reduce inequality
- Ensure effective data sharing between partner agencies to facilitate support for vulnerable people/households
- Provide a 'winter check list' for agencies to share with their clients
- Energy cost: Negotiate better energy deals with energy suppliers on behalf of Halton residents through schemes like Collective switch to improve access to affordable fuel
- Housing: Facilitate the Improvement of the housing stock, across all sectors, so that none falls within the High Cost category of Low Income High Cost (LIHC)
- Income: Maximise income through benefits uptake and maximisation programmes and back to work support programmes

Current activities

Our survey showed that we already have a wide range of referral options for help with fuel poverty within Halton. Some of the agencies involved are listed in appendix 5. In addition,

majority of the recommendations by the National Institute for Health and Healthcare Excellence (NICE) to reduce the risk of living in cold homes and excess winter deaths are already being carried out within Halton. These activities include:

- Advice on how to avoid the health risks of living in a cold home. This includes information about what these health risks are
- Advice on managing energy effectively in the home
- Registration on priority service registers
- Provision of services that address common barriers to tackling cold homes such as 'fixing a leaking roof', or help to clear a loft ready for insulation
- Provision of short-term emergency support in times of crisis
- Housing insulation and heating improvement programmes and grants
- Financial literacy work
- Collective switching
- Budgeting advice
- Specialist debt advice

Gaps we have identified

- The audit showed that most of the activities are not being carried out by all relevant agencies.
- Some of these services or programmes are only available to specific tenures Others depend on availability of funding as the services are non-statutory and therefore rely on commissioned or grant funded programmes
- 'Single point of contact for affordable warmth: 'A coordinated approach to tackle fuel poverty: there is a need for a recognised 'hub' for fuel poverty in Halton to maximise the efforts of various agencies currently offering help for people. Hence the need for a 'single point of contact' or its equivalence for affordable warmth.
- Housing condition survey: the latest housing condition survey was carried out in 2009. Since then, several initiatives have taken place to improve housing conditions across the borough. We will ensure that any future Housing stock condition survey provides detailed information on the energy efficiency of dwellings in Halton.

To provide support for people living in cold homes we will:

- Establish a 'single point of contact' for affordable warmth in Halton
- Support a future housing stock condition survey
- Continue to explore funding opportunities to improve the housing stock and availability of services across the borough
- Ensure the availability of practical financial help such as: Benefit checks and other income maximisation support, budgeting advice and back to work support
- Facilitate the development of data sharing agreements between the range of organisations working in Halton
- Undertake more proactive work to promote better energy deals such as the 'Collective switch'.
- Produce a 'winter check list' for agencies to share with their clients

Aim 5: Ensure the health and social care sector takes full account of the issue of fuel poverty when supporting clients

Our Objective:

- Ensure that the risk of fuel poverty and cold homes form part of any assessment of patients/clients when presenting at health services or with the social services
- Ensure patients are discharged into homes that are warm enough to support their health and wellbeing
- Train all relevant frontline practitioners on how to refer into the 'single point of contact'

Current activity in Halton

- Patients are assessed for the risk of returning to cold homes, and supported in consultation with their housing providers and family members to address any problems
- Some Frontline practitioners have referral pathways for some circumstances related to fuel poverty

Gaps in our provision

- Housing providers would welcome better communication between the hospital and themselves so they can support their residents better following their discharge from hospital
- Fuel poverty or cold home assessment is not routinely integrated into consultations across the Health and Social Care sector

To ensure the Health and Social Care sector takes full account of fuel poverty when supporting clients, we will:

- Facilitate effective communication and partnership working between Hospital discharge teams, housing providers and organisations who can help clients who are in private rented accommodation
- Facilitate the inclusion of fuel poverty assessment into standard assessment procedures across the Health and Social care sector.
- Explore the potential for referral on schemes such as the 'social prescription scheme'.

Delivering this Strategy

Expenditure on reducing cold home -related harm

There is currently no direct funding allocation to tackle fuel poverty or living in cold homes in Halton. However there are on-going programmes addressing different aspects of fuel poverty. These include the Warm and Healthy Homes programme with funding till December 2016. The Warm and Healthy Homes programme is funded to provide measures to improve the energy efficiency of dwellings for people who are most at risk of fuel poverty.

We will work with partners to address this finding gap in the following ways:

- Integrate some of the strategy's action plans into on-going programmes at no extra cost.
- Work with the External funding team to apply for funding to implement the strategy

Appendices

Appendix 1: Halton Affordable Warmth Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020

Key Aim 1: Increase Awareness of fuel poverty and living in cold homes

Objectives	Targets/ outcomes	No	Actions	Time-scale	Lead agency
Increase awareness of fuel poverty at a Strategic Level across Halton and embed Affordable Warmth into relevant strategies	All key directorates, departments and agencies in Halton BC are aware of the harms associated with living in cold homes	1	Include fuel poverty on the agenda of key directorates and agencies, and ensure it remains on agenda	On-going Review annually	Affordable Warmth (AW) Steering group
	Affordable warmth is embedded into other related strategies such as: Housing Strategy, Respiratory strategy, Child & Family Poverty Strategy, Sustainable Communities Strategy.	2	Work with professionals in associated fields to recognise and incorporate affordable warmth into their strategic plans	On-going Review annually	Affordable Warmth (AW) Steering group
Increase awareness of fuel poverty among all people in Halton	Residents, frontline professionals, voluntary organisations and community groups in Halton across all sectors	3	Develop campaigns to Increase awareness of the harms posed by living in cold homes among Halton residents Deliver talks to groups of residents at	On-going	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact

	are aware of the harms posed by living in cold homes.		<p>risk of fuel poverty</p> <p>Attend events to raise awareness of fuel poverty and living in cold homes</p> <p>Link local cold home campaigns with regional or national campaigns such as 'Keep warm, Keep well'</p>		(AWSPC)
		4	<p>Set up a winter warmth task and finish group</p> <p>Organise a 1 week annual fuel poverty awareness campaign in Halton</p>	<p>July 2016</p> <p>September/October 2016</p> <p>Repeat annually</p>	Affordable Warmth (AW) Steering group
		5	<p>Provide briefing sessions and reports on Fuel Poverty and living in cold homes to frontline professionals, voluntary organisations and community groups in Halton</p> <p>Provide cold home related resources for frontline organisations to disseminate to their clients</p>	On-going Review annually	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)

Key Aim 2: Identify people who are living in cold homes

Objectives	Targets/ outcomes	No	Actions	Time-scales	Lead Agency
Facilitate a proactive identification of people living in cold homes.	People living in cold homes are identified and referred for appropriate support	1	Produce a fuel poverty checklist, in consultation with partner agencies, to facilitate the identification and referral for people who are living in cold homes	June 2017	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)
		2	Train our frontline professionals across all sectors to recognise people who are living in cold homes using the fuel poverty checklist and how to refer them for help	June 2018 -All relevant professionals trained Annual updates provided	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)
		3	Make every contact count to reduce fuel poverty: We will work with partner agencies to identify people living in cold homes during home visits and assessment procedures such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the Safe and well visits by the Fire and Rescue Service.	June 2018	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)
Facilitate cross - sectorial data sharing to identify at risk people for targeted support	Data about Halton residents held by various agencies are accessible to identify people who are at risk of living in cold homes	4	Create a priority list of areas in Halton where households are most at risk of living in cold homes for targeted intervention	June 2017	Affordable Warmth Lead/ Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)

Key Aim 3: Identify and monitor internal and external support that is available to people living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty

Objectives	Targets/ outcomes	No	Actions	Time-scales	Lead agency
Research and identify all current resources and support available to residents at risk of fuel poverty or living in a cold home	Halton has an up-to-date directory of resources and support to address fuel poverty or living in cold homes	1	Produce a directory of services to help people who are living in cold homes in Halton	June 2017 Updated regularly	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)
		2	Produce and disseminate a bi-annual Affordable warmth bulletin as a formal communication between agencies to raise awareness of available support for people living in fuel poverty or cold homes	September 2017 Bi-annual edition	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)
Monitor for opportunities to attract further support for people living in cold homes	Evidence of success at securing funding and other relevant support for people living in cold homes from external agencies	3	We will work with the 'external funding team' and partners to identify available funding to tackle fuel poverty	On-going Review annually	Affordable Warmth Lead/Single Point of Contact (AWSPC) Halton External funding team

Key Aim 4: Provide support for people who are at risk of fuel poverty or living in a cold home

Objectives	Targets/ outcomes	No	Actions	Time-scales	Lead agency
<p>Establish a 'single point of contact' (AWSPC) or equivalent in Halton coordinate an 'Affordable warmth network' for cold home referrals.</p> <p>The AWSPC will receive referral from frontline staff, assess needs and identify appropriate support for each referral, monitor progress and obtain feedback.</p>	Halton Affordable warmth 'single-point-of-contact' (AWSPC) established	1	Determine the Single-point-of-contact model for Halton	December 2016	Halton Affordable warmth steering group
		2	Obtain resources/funding for the Single Point of Contact	March 2017	Halton Affordable warmth steering group
		3	Establish the Halton Affordable Warmth single-point-of-contact	March 2017	Halton Affordable warmth steering group
		4	Develop clear local pathways to enable frontline practitioners to refer people to the Single-point-of contact	June 2017	Affordable warmth single-point-of contact
		5	Provide training for frontline professionals, voluntary organisations and community groups on how to refer people to the Single Point of Contact	June 2018	Affordable warmth Lead/ single-point-of contact

Ensure that help and support is provided to those households most in need	The proportion of households in fuel poverty decreases at a greater rate in our most deprived neighbourhood compared with areas less deprived	6	Establish a prioritisation mechanism to target households most at risk of fuel poverty Identify most appropriate targeting methods e.g. by client group and /or by geographical area, house condition, house type, so that resources are directed effectively.	June 2017 Review fuel poverty data annually	Affordable warmth Lead/single-point-of contact
Ensure effective data sharing between partner agencies to facilitate support for vulnerable people/households	Data sharing between agencies in the process of making referrals is legal and effective	7	Work with partner agencies to agree on an acceptable data sharing process which respects clients' confidentiality and complies with individual organisation's data policy.	September 2017	Affordable warmth Lead/single-point-of contact
Winter Checklist: Produce a 'winter checklist' for agencies to share with their clients	Organisations working with people who are vulnerable to the cold have a 'winter checklist' to share with their clients to help them prepare for, and safe during the winter	8	Produce and disseminate a winter checklist' for all relevant organisations	September 2017	Affordable warmth Lead/single point of contact
Housing					
Facilitate the Improvement of the housing stock, across all	Reduction in the number of dwellings in Halton with SAP ratings of Band D	9	Establish a mechanism to regularly update the existing Energy Performance database as improvements are made to dwellings overtime.	September 2017	Affordable warmth Lead/ Housing providers and

sectors, so none fall within the High Cost category.	and E in favour of Band C				agencies
		10	Work with the Private Landlords' Forum to engage private landlords		Affordable warmth Lead/single-point-of contact
		11	Work with local letting agents to Increase awareness of Affordable warmth, legal SAP rating for dwellings and schemes available for home improvement		Affordable warmth Lead/single-point-of contact
		12	Enforce improvements to tackle cold hazard through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)		HBC Environmental health
		13	Explore funding sources for hard to treat properties, e.g., those with solid walls		Affordable warmth Lead/single point of contact
Make home owners aware of the AWSPC for any available support					
Ensure that changes to buildings are carried out to comply as a minimum with the legal requirements under building regulations.	All changes to buildings in Halton are carried out to comply as a minimum with the legal requirements under building regulations	14	Provide information for building inspectors to raise awareness of fuel poverty and living in cold homes	September 2017	Affordable warmth Lead/single point of contact

Income					
Maximise income through benefits uptake and maximisation programmes and back to work support programmes	Increased number of Halton residents are in receipt of financial support they are eligible for.	15	Provide benefit maximisation advice and support for people at risk of fuel poverty	On-going	Affordable warmth Lead/single point of contact
		16	Train staff who provide benefits advice, the basics of affordable warmth, health impacts and the links between benefits and energy grants	June 2018	
Affordable Fuel		17	Increase awareness of schemes to help households access better energy tariffs such as 'Collective switch'	On-going	AWSPC
To facilitate access to best value fuel for households in Halton, especially vulnerable households	All households have access to best value fuel tariffs, thus reducing their heating bills Increasing number of households in Halton participate in schemes such as the 'collective switch'.	18	Negotiate better energy deals with energy suppliers on behalf of Halton residents through schemes like Collective switch Actively promote these fuel cost saving schemes among people in Halton Assist households to access the most cost-effective energy tariffs	On-going	Affordable warmth Lead/single point of contact, Energy project plus Citizens advisory bureaux

Key Aim 5: Ensure the health and social care sector takes full account of the issue of fuel poverty when supporting clients

Objective	Target/Outcome		Action	Time-scale	Lead agency
Ensure that patients are discharged into warm homes to protect their health and well-being	All patients are assessed for risk of fuel poverty on admission to hospital and discharged into warm homes	1	<p>Assess patients on hospital admission on whether they are likely to be vulnerable to the cold and if action is needed to make their home warm enough for them to return to</p> <p>Ensure that the home is warm enough to return to following a planned discharge.</p> <p>Ensure that any heating issues are resolved in a timely manner, so as not to delay discharge from hospital</p>	June 2018	Affordable warmth lead/Hospital discharge services
Ensure that fuel poverty and cold homes form part of any assessment of vulnerable patients/clients when presenting to health and social care facilities.	Health and social care staff are proactive on identifying patients who may be living in cold homes	2	Facilitate the inclusion of fuel poverty assessment into standard assessment procedures across the Health and Social care sector.	June 2018	Affordable warmth lead/single point of contact

Appendix 2: Tackling Fuel Poverty and Living in Cold Homes across the Life Course

This section is intended to demonstrate how the action plan outlined in Appendix 1 can be interpreted through the life course –from pregnancy to old age.

Preconception and pregnancy				
Objective	Targets/ outcomes	Actions	Lead Agency	Key Partners
Increase awareness of the harm that living in a cold home pose to pregnant women. (prevention)	Pregnant women understand that living in a cold home is dangerous for their health, and consequently, the health of their unborn baby, Less pregnant women living in fuel poverty	Develop a local education campaign to increase the awareness of the harm that living in a cold home pose to the health of pregnant women	Affordable warmth Single Point of Contact (AWSPC)	Midwifery GPs
		Ensure that GPs and midwives provide advice about the harm of living in a cold home to pregnant women	AWSPC	Midwifery/ GPs
		Ensure that pregnant women are aware of what help is available and how to access it		
Ensure that pregnant women at risk of fuel poverty or living in cold homes are	All pregnant women living in cold homes or at risk of fuel poverty are identified and referred to the AWSPC	Promote the fuel poverty checklist among midwives and GPs to identify pregnant women who are at risk of fuel poverty or	Midwifery GPs	AWSPC

identified and referred to the AWSPC (Early identification)		are living in a cold home		
		Ensure that all women identified as being at risk of fuel poverty or living in a cold home are referred to the AW SPC	Midwives/GPs	AWSPC
Ensure pregnant women identified as living in a cold home are supported through the single point of contact to identify available help. (Intervention)	All pregnant women referred are supported by the SPC to explore possible support	Pregnant women referred to the AWSPC are assessed to identify most appropriate source of help, referred and followed up to establish the outcome of intervention.	AWSPC	All partners
Early years (age 0-5)				
Objective	Targets/ outcomes	Actions	Lead Agency	Key Partners
Raise awareness of the harms of living in a cold home among parents of babies and toddlers (prevention)	All parents of children aged 0-5 are aware of the harm associated with living in a cold home especially for their babies and toddlers Fuel poverty awareness messages included in parenting programmes across the borough.	Develop and disseminate an information resource for new parents which includes key messages around healthy homes including appropriate indoor temperature	AWSPC	Sure start Children centres
		Identify all available local parenting programmes and	AWSPC	Sure start Children

		ensure they include messages of the harms cold homes may have upon young Children.		centres
Ensure the early identification and support of children who may be living in a cold home (Early intervention)	All families with children under 5 living in a cold home are identified and referred to the AWSPC	<p>Ensure key clinical and non-clinical early years staff are trained on fuel poverty</p> <p>Ensure key clinical and non-clinical early years staff identify families of children living in a cold home by using the fuel poverty checklist</p> <p>Ensure families are referred to the AW SPC</p>	AWSPC	Sure start Children centres
Ensure families with babies and toddlers identified as living in cold homes can access effective support (Intervention)	Less families with children under 5 yrs. living in a cold home	All families with children under 5 who are living in a cold home to be supported by the SPC to address the reasons for fuel poverty	AWSPC	
School age children (age 5 to 18yrs)				
Objective	Targets/ outcomes	Actions	Lead Agency	Key Partners
Increase awareness of the harm that cold homes pose to school age	All families with school age children are aware of the harms associated with living in a cold home for school aged children,	Develop a coordinated fuel poverty awareness campaign aimed at schools, young people and their parents	AWSPC	Schools Colleges education welfare

children (prevention)	<p>especially those with disabilities and long standing health conditions</p> <p>All organisations working with school age children are aware of the risk associated with fuel poverty</p>			officers, health visitors, children's social workers
Ensure the early identification and support of school age children living in a cold home (identification)	<p>All families of school age children living in a cold home are identified and referred to the SPC.</p> <p>Every family with a vulnerable child./young adult to be assessed for risk of fuel poverty</p>	<p>Ensure frontline staff working with school age children is trained to identify children and young people living in a cold home using the fuel poverty checklist.</p> <p>Ensure the implementation of this training. To include staff who work with Vulnerable young people including children with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure that families of children and young people living in a cold home are referred to the SPC</p>	AWSPC	
Ensure that families of school age children living in cold homes are supported to address the problem	Less households with school aged children living in a cold home	All families with school-aged children who are living in a cold home to be supported by the SPC to address the reasons for fuel poverty	AWSPC	

(Intervention)				
Adults (19yrs and over)				
Objective	Targets/ outcomes	Actions	Lead Agency	Key Partners
Increase awareness of the harm that cold homes pose to people especially adults with long term health conditions and disabilities (prevention)	<p>All adults especially those with long term health conditions and disability, and their careers, are aware of the health risks associated with living in a cold home</p> <p>All frontline staff working with adults, especially those with disability and long term health issues are aware of the risks associated with living in a cold home</p>	Develop a coordinated fuel poverty awareness campaign aimed at adults, and frontline professionals working with adults	AWSPC	All partners
Ensure that adults living in fuel poverty and cold homes are identified and referred to the AWSPC	All adults identified as living in a cold home are referred to the SPC for support.	<p>Ensure frontline staff working with vulnerable adults are trained to identify those living in a cold home using the fuel poverty checklist.</p> <p>Facilitate the implementation of this training. To include staff who work with Vulnerable adults, including adults with long term health conditions and disabilities.</p>	AWSPC	All partners working with vulnerable adults

		Ensure that adults living in a cold home / at risk of fuel poverty are referred to the SPC		
Ensure that adults in fuel poverty are able to access relevant support to address fuel poverty	Less number of adults living in fuel poverty.	AWSPC to develop and monitor access points and methods to ensure all adults can access support	AWSPC	All partners

Appendix 3: National Policies

There is a wide range of health, environmental and social policies that support action on fuel poverty and cold homes in the UK. This section summarises those most relevant to local authorities, health and wellbeing boards, and public health and primary care teams.

Health Policies

Health and Social Care Act 2012

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires the Secretary of State for Health to reduce health inequalities – the avoidable and unfair differences in health between people in different social circumstances, in partnership with other parts of the health system such as clinical commissioning groups (CCG).⁵

Public Health Outcomes Framework

The Public Health Outcomes Framework for England 2013–2016, identifies reducing fuel poverty as one of its key indicators to address the wider determinants of health. Reducing illness and cold-related deaths from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases are also identified as indicators against which the public health system should deliver improvements. The outcomes reflect a focus not only on how long people live (Life Expectancy), but on how well they live at all stages of life (Healthy Life Expectancy).^{6,7}

NHS Outcomes Framework and Social Care Outcomes Framework

The Public Health Outcomes Framework is also linked with the outcomes frameworks for the NHS and social care. Many indicators relating to fuel poverty and cold homes are shared across the three frameworks with the aim to facilitate a holistic approach to improving health across the entire health system.

⁵ Health and Social Care Act 2012, Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted> (Accessed: 3 March 2016).

⁶ DoH, (2013), Public Health Outcomes Framework 2013 to 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263658/2901502_PHOF_Improving_Outcomes005FPT1A_v1_1.pdf, Last accessed 22/12/2015

⁷ UKHF-HP (2014), FUEL POVERTY: HOW TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH ACTION ON AFFORDABLE WARMTH, A guide to delivering action on fuel poverty for public health professionals, health and wellbeing boards, and local authorities in England, http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/UKHF-HP_fuel%20poverty_report.pdf

The Cold Weather Plan for England

The Cold Weather Plan for England is produced annually. It aims to “prevent avoidable harm to health, by alerting people to the negative health effects of cold weather, and enabling them to prepare and respond appropriately.”⁸

Making every contact count

The NHS's 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC)^{9,10} is relevant to fuel poverty and cold homes, The MECC initiative is based on the understanding that all organisations responsible for health, wellbeing, care and safety have the opportunity to impact on people’s mental and physical health and wellbeing. Health practitioners can use their time with patients to find out whether they are able to keep warm in their homes, understand how this is affecting their health and wellbeing, and provide treatment, support and referral, where appropriate. It represents a proactive approach to prevention of ill health and lays a greater emphasis on addressing the wider determinants of health, such as education, housing or social environment.

Policies targeting Fuel poverty

Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000

The first Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act was produced in 2000. It set a fuel poverty target and places duty on government to have a fuel poverty strategy to meet the target. In 2014, the Act was amended with the Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014.¹¹ This set of regulations, which became law on 5 December 2014 set a new fuel poverty target for England.¹²

Fuel poverty strategy

The UK’s fuel poverty strategy was launched in 2001 following the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 and set as its interim target “to eliminate fuel poverty in England among vulnerable households by 2010.” the latest version was published in

⁸ PHE 2015, Cold Weather Plan for England 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468160/CWP_2015.pdf

⁹ NHS England, An Implementation Guide and Toolkit for Making Every Contact Count : <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/mecc-guid-booklet.pdf>

¹⁰ NHS England, Making Every Contact Count: Briefing for the Voluntary and Community Sector, http://learning.wm.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/voluntary_and_third_sector_briefing.pdf

¹¹ UKHF-HP (2014), Fuel Poverty: How to improve health and wellbeing through action on Affordable warmth, A guide to delivering action on fuel poverty for public health professionals, health and wellbeing boards, and local authorities in England, http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/UKHF-HP_fuel%20poverty_report.pdf

¹² Gov.UK, (2015), Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a fuel poverty strategy for England https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408644/cutting_the_cost_of_keeping_warm.pdf

2015, setting a target, 'to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030'.¹³

NICE guideline on Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes

This guideline was published in 2015 by the National Institute for Health and Healthcare excellence (NICE)¹⁴. It is aimed at commissioners, managers and health, social care and voluntary sector practitioners who deal with vulnerable people who may have health problems caused, or exacerbated, by living in a cold home. It will also be of interest to clinicians and others involved with at-risk groups, housing and energy suppliers. The guideline makes recommendations on how to reduce the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home. The aim is to help:

- Reduce preventable excess winter death rates.
- Improve health and wellbeing among vulnerable groups.
- Reduce pressure on health and social care services.
- Reduce 'fuel poverty' and the risk of fuel debt or being disconnected from gas and electricity supplies
- Improve the energy efficiency of homes.
- Improving the temperature in homes, by improving energy efficiency, may also help reduce unnecessary fuel consumption.

Environmental policy

The Climate Change Act 2008

The Climate Change Act 2008 sets out UK policy to reduce carbon emissions, including its commitment to reduce CO2 by at least 80% in 2050 from a 1990 baseline. Tackling fuel poverty and cold homes contributes to the UK's legally binding carbon budgets by reducing carbon emissions from the current housing stock as well as reduced demand on the NHS, and supporting climate change adaptation planning.¹⁵

Policy Targeting Household Energy

¹³ Gov.UK, (2015), Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a fuel poverty strategy for England

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408644/cutting_the_cost_of_keeping_warm.pdf

¹⁴ NICE 2015, Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes, <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/chapter/About-this-guideline>

¹⁵ UKHF-HP (2014), FUEL POVERTY: HOW TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH ACTION ON AFFORDABLE WARMTH, A guide to delivering action on fuel poverty for public health professionals, health and wellbeing boards, and local authorities in England, http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/UKHF-HP_fuel%20poverty_report.pdf

Energy efficiency policy and programmes aimed at those in fuel poverty

The Energy Act 2011 includes provision for improving energy efficiency through the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation. The Energy Company Obligation and the Warm Home Discount Scheme provides direct energy bill support for many Low Income High Costs households and many Low Income Low Costs households. This means that the policy both contributes to our fuel poverty objectives and also helps to address broader affordability concerns.¹⁶

The scheme aims to achieve £30–£35 savings on household bills, on average, in 2014 and they are part of a wider package of changes to reduce the cost of household bills by £50 a year on average.

The Energy Act 2013

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/266867/Energy_Bill_Summary_Policy_Brief_RA.pdf

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) requires the largest domestic energy suppliers to fund energy efficiency improvements in the homes of certain consumers. To meet their obligation, participating energy companies promote and subsidise the cost of installing improvements to make homes warmer, healthier and more energy efficient.

Homeowners or people living in privately rented accommodation, and who are in receipt of certain benefits and/or tax-credits are eligible for help under this scheme. Support may include boiler repairs or replacements and a range of insulation improvements.

Household energy savings policy

Collective Switch Scheme

Collective switching is when a large group of people get together and use their collective buying power to negotiate a better deal from energy suppliers. The more people who are involved in a switch, the bigger the buying power and the better the deal they are likely to get. The aim of the Collective Switch programme is to reduce energy bills. Collective switching is safe and easy, saves

¹⁶ Gov.UK, (2015), Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a fuel poverty strategy for England
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408644/cutting_the_cost_of_keeping_warm.pdf

time and saves money. In Merseyside's 6 Collective Switch sessions, local residents have saved in total over £1,000,000 at an average of £206 per year on their energy bills.¹⁷

Social and housing policy

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

The Housing Act 2004 includes provision for the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System – a tool for local authority inspection and assessment of risks arising from hazards in residential properties – which came into effect in 2006. Excess cold is included in its list of category 1 hazards.

Decent Homes Standard 2000–2010

The Decent Homes Standard was launched by government in 2000 and updated in 2006 to reflect the Housing Act 2004. It is a standard for public housing in the United Kingdom. The NHS uses four broad criteria to assess housing conditions. A dwelling should:

- A - be above the legal minimum standard for housing (measured by the presence of category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System), and
- B - Be in a reasonable state of repair, and
- C - Have reasonably modern facilities (such as kitchens and bathrooms) and services, and
- D - Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).

The definition of standard D has been revised and it now requires a dwelling to have both:

- efficient heating; and
- Effective insulation.

Despite its closure in 2010, some local authorities have continued programmes.

Income measures

Two main government benefits are provided to tackle fuel poverty and improve affordable warmth. They are the Winter Fuel Payment and Cold Weather Payment.

¹⁷ Liverpool city region, Collective switching, <http://www.lcrenergyswitch.co.uk/what-is-collective-switching/>

Winter Fuel Payment

The Winter Fuel Payment, of between £100 and £300 tax-free, is an annual payment to help with heating costs. It is made to households with someone over Pension Credit age. A person under 80 years of age will normally receive £200, and £300 if they are 80 years or over.¹⁸

Cold Weather Payment

A Cold Weather Payment is made to people receiving certain benefits. It is paid if the temperature in a person's area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below for 7 consecutive days. A £25 payment is made for each seven-day period of very cold weather from 1 November until March.¹⁹

Energy tariff measures

The Warm Home Discount

Under this discount, Eligible customers receive a one-off payment of £140 on their winter electricity bills, usually paid between October and March. Participating energy suppliers will also offer the discount to a wider group of other low income and vulnerable customers, such as those with a disability or long-term illness, and families with young children on certain benefits,²⁰

Others

Priority Services Register²¹

The Priority Services Register requires suppliers and electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) but not Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) to keep registers of vulnerable customers. Under this scheme, companies have to provide specified non-financial services to customers who are: of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick, deaf, hearing impaired, blind or partially sighted. Suppliers must also make information about their obligations and how to join the register readily accessible on their website, and tell customers once a year about it. People on this register can obtain benefits, (depending on their supplier), such as: warnings and advice if their energy supply is going to be interrupted, Free annual gas safety checks, bills and letters in alternative formats, help with reading meters and relocation of meters for easier access.

¹⁸ Winter Fuel Payment, <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/overview>

¹⁹ Cold Weather Payment, <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/overview>

²⁰ Warm Home Discount Scheme, <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/what-youll-get>

²¹ Ofgem, 2014, Review of the Priority Services Register <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem-publications/88552/condocpsrreview-pdf> Accessed 18/08/2016

Appendix 4: Respondents to Survey

Name of department /or organisation	Type of organisation (Group)
Age UK Mid Mersey	Charity
Energy Projects Plus	Charity
Halton Carers Centre	Charity
Halton Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	Charity
Halton Senior Services	Charity
Sustainable Communities, Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside.	Charity
Protection and Prevention	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Brookvale & windmill Hill Children's Centres, Team around the Family	Halton Borough Council
Commissioning	Halton Borough Council
Environmental Health	Halton Borough Council
Halton BC	Halton Borough Council
Halton BC - Contact Centre	Halton Borough Council
Health Improvement Team	Halton Borough Council
Inclusion 0-25	Halton Borough Council
Intermediate and Urgent Care	Halton Borough Council
Public Health	Halton Borough Council
Sure Start to Later Life	Halton Borough Council
Trading Standards	Halton Borough Council
Welfare Rights Service	Halton Borough Council
Respiratory Team	Hospital Trust
Halton Housing Trust - Asset Management	Housing
Plus Dane - Asset Management	Housing
Plus Dane and SHAP	Housing
Riverside, Community Engagement, Affordable Warmth	Housing

Appendix 5: Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency of Dwellings

Poor housing is a significant contributor to poor health and fuel poverty. The most significant contributor to fuel poverty is poorly insulated and hard-to-heat homes. There is also a link between excess winter deaths and cold homes.

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the UK Government's methodology for calculating the energy performance of dwellings.^{22,23} The SAP rating is based on the energy costs associated with space heating, water heating, ventilation and lighting, less cost savings from energy generation technologies. It is adjusted for floor area so that it is independent of dwelling size for a given building type. A SAP rating of 100 implies zero net cost of energy use for heating, hot water and lighting.

The calculation is based on the energy balance taking into account a range of factors that contribute to energy efficiency:

- Materials used for construction of the dwelling
- Thermal insulation of the building fabric
- Air leakage ventilation characteristics of the dwelling, and ventilation equipment
- Efficiency and control of the heating system(s)
- Solar gains through openings of the dwelling
- The Fuel used to provide space and water heating, ventilation and lighting
- Energy for space cooling, if applicable
- Renewable energy technologies
- The calculation is independent of factors related to the individual characteristics of the household occupying the dwelling when the rating is calculated, for example:
 - Household size and composition;
 - Ownership and efficiency of particular domestic electrical appliances;
 - Individual heating patterns and temperatures.

The SAP rating is expressed on a scale of 1 to 100, the higher the number the lower the running costs. The higher the SAP rating of buildings, the less likelihood of the residents living in Fuel Poverty and the lower their level of Fuel Poverty.

²² DECC 2013, The Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings
http://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/SAP/2012/SAP-2012_9-92.pdf 20151016

²³ DECC (2012) The Energy Efficiency Strategy: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/65602/6927-energy-efficiency-strategy--the-energy-efficiency.pdf

Between 1996 and 2012 the average SAP rating for all homes increased from 45 (Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band E) to 59 (bottom of EPC band D) for England. The age of a building and the standard of insulation affect the energy efficacy of the dwelling. Housing association properties have the highest SAP rating due to more recent improvements and higher standards of insulation. . The biggest improvements have come in the private and local authority sectors. This improvement equates to a reduction in modelled energy use of about 25 per cent. This improvement has been achieved through improvements in the efficiency of heating systems, insulation including double glazing and efficient lighting.

The obvious increase in the rate of improvement of all homes since 2008 can be attributed to a number of policies started around this time. These include new buildings regulations requiring all new boilers to be A-rated, the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) and the introduction of Energy Performance Certificates.²⁴

The depth and likelihood of being Fuel poor increases markedly with lower SAP scores. In 2013, 31 per cent of households living in G rated properties were in Fuel Poverty, with an average Fuel Poverty gap of £1,274. This is compared to those living in properties with SAP ratings A-C where just two per cent were Fuel poor and an average Fuel Poverty gap of £370.

The Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014 set a Fuel Poverty target to ensure that as many Fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030. This included interim milestones, of as many Fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band E by 2020, and Band D by 2025.

²⁴ DECC 2015 , Energy Efficiency Statistical Summary 2015
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395007/stats_summary_2015.pdf, Accessed 20151016

Appendix 6: Existing Referral options for fuel poverty in Halton

Statutory sector

- Halton BC
- Welfare Rights Team
- Adult Social Care
- Halton Telehealth service
- The debt advice service
- Local authority team, LASP
- Local GP's
- Sure start to later life
- Financial inclusion team provide advice

Voluntary sector

- Wellbeing Enterprises
- care agencies
- Registered social landlords.
- Age UK
- energy suppliers for insulation checks and grants for free boiler, loft insulation etc.
- Citizens' advisory bureaux (CAB)
- Age UK
- VCA
- Local Solutions for fuel debt support
- Energy Saving Advice Service,
- Energy Providers,
- Energy Project PLUS