

Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA



23rd June 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Urgent action is needed now to prevent tens of thousands of needless deaths which could overwhelm the country this coming winter.

Evidenceⁱ from Public Health England shows that **fuel poverty puts households more at risk from the worst effects of Covid-19.**

However, policy to end fuel poverty has been frozen for three years.

Should a second wave of Covid-19 hit during cold weather, the impact could be catastrophic for individuals and our health services.

Energy use is rising as people stay at home more, incomes are being squeezed and improvements in energy efficiency of housing are on hold.

This means the numbers in fuel poverty are set to soar.

While there is currently no cure for Covid-19, cold homes are entirely preventable and four clear actions must be taken to save lives and help address the financial impact of the current crisis:

- Rapid roll-out of large-scale energy efficiency programmes which would also deliver a green economic stimulus that is shovel ready (e.g. retrofitting of people's homes and improved heating systems). The Government must confirm their manifesto pledge to invest £9.2 billion in building energy efficiency and bring forward £2.8 billion to invest in the next two years which can support 42,500 jobs across the country and help a million households save an average of £270 on their energy bills.ⁱⁱ 150,000 jobs could be supported to 2030.
- Urgent delivery of government promises on tackling fuel poverty, such as extension of Warm Home Discount, introduction of the promised Home Upgrade Grants and social housing decarbonisation programme.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Immediate steps to improve energy standards in the private rented sector, alongside improved security and affordability for private tenants.

- Fuel Poverty Debt Relief (not deferral) to ensure fewer people will have to choose between heating and eating.

The End Fuel Poverty Coalition campaigns to influence government and other bodies to take action to end fuel poverty and thereby improve people's health and quality of life as well as seeking to reduce the cost of living, create jobs and negate carbon emissions in the process. It is a broad coalition of over 20 anti-poverty, environmental, health and housing campaigners, charities, local authorities, trade unions and consumer organisations.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further or to hear your views on this vital issue.

We have copied this letter to Rt. Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng MP and will publish it on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Francis,
Co-ordinator, on behalf of the Fuel Poverty Coalition*

* Members of the Coalition include: ACRE, Advice 4 Renters, AgeUK, ALEO, BLF, Brighton & Hove City Council, CfPT, Church Poverty Action, CIEH, CPAG, CSE, Disability Rights, E3G, EBICO, Energy Saving Trust, Friends of the Earth, Fuel Poverty Action, Generation Rent, Greenpeace, Hackney Foodbank, LAMPAG, LB Camden, LB Lewisham, Macmillan, Mayor of London, National Pensioners Convention, National Union of Students, NCB, NEA, NfWI, Oxford Council, Redcar & Cleveland Council, Sheffield Council, STEP, UNISON.

i [PHE, 2014](#). Warm homes enable immune systems to better fight off viruses, improve the likelihood of people with viruses only suffering 'mild' symptoms and help improve the recovery process. See: Baker, Ambrose et. al. <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/ppp-online/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/stuck-home-cold-covid-19-fuel-poor.pdf>

ii <https://www.theeig.co.uk/news/starstarnew-reportstarstar-rebuilding-for-resilience-energy-efficiency-s-offer-for-a-net-zero-compatible-stimulus-and-recovery/>

iii More information: <https://www.nea.org.uk/protect-warm-home-discount/>