

Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
BEIS
1 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0ET



5th February 2021

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on your appointment as Energy Minister.

The pandemic has exacerbated fuel poverty, with reduced incomes for many, and people having to spend more time in homes that are often too expensive to heat.

But we welcome some of the positive steps the Government has taken to end the long-term problem of fuel poverty.

In particular, we welcome the extension of the Warm Home Discount scheme which will help to keep many households warm and well.

We have also been pleased to see restated commitments to an extension of the Energy Company Obligation and the Green Home Grant, and to the manifesto commitment for a Home Upgrade Grant Scheme.

A missing part of the puzzle is a fully functioning Fuel Poverty Strategy. BEIS consulted on a new draft strategy in 2019, but we still await a response to the consultation, or publication of a new strategy. This had led progress to stagnate.

And in other areas, urgent action is needed now to prevent people falling into fuel poverty in the midst of a global pandemic.

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

Yet 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. Indeed data from Citizens Advice are very troubling in this respect.ⁱⁱ

While there is currently no cure for Covid-19, cold homes are entirely preventable and we would urge the government to take urgent action to support households at risk of – and already in – fuel poverty.

This could include reversing Ofgem's controversial price cap increase.ⁱⁱⁱ

It could include maintaining the Universal Credit uplift.

It could also include 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 these issues and would like to extend an invitation for you to speak at a forthcoming Coalition meeting in 2021.

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, Stonewater Housing Association, 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 <http://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/2021-information/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/ofgem-announces-hike-in-fuel-bills-for-millions/>