

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP
Rt Hon Stephen Flynn MP
Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey MP
Rt Hon Liz Saville Roberts MP
Caroline Lucas MP

And relevant spokespeople on energy issues

10 APRIL 2024

SOCIAL WORKERS REPORT CHILDREN LIVING IN DANGEROUS CONDITIONS

Dear party leaders in Westminster,

New [research](#) among members of the Social Workers Union has found that two-thirds (61%) of children's social workers have witnessed young people living in conditions with excessive levels of mould.

At a wider level, the study found that almost three quarters of adult, child and mental health social workers (71%) saw the people they support not using their heating to save money over the winter.

This had led to more than half (55%) saying that many of the people social workers support are living in cold damp homes.

A quarter (24%) claimed that the people they work with who have a disability or health condition can't afford to run medical equipment while 15% reported seeing disabled people who they support unable to charge their mobility devices due to the high cost of energy.

It is clear from the findings that for many of the most vulnerable in society, the cost of living crisis is not over. [Energy bills](#) (and other essentials) are still costing much more than in 2021, standing charges increased this month and energy debt is at record levels - meanwhile energy firms [make billions](#) in profit.

Vulnerable adults and children living in cold, damp, mouldy homes is a national scandal. But the crisis is getting worse.

The [health impacts](#) of so many people living in cold damp homes puts a strain on the NHS while children and young people living in the damp and the cold cannot thrive and develop.

Living in such conditions is adversity, plain and simple and we need to see drastic action being taken to fix Britain's cold homes crisis.

We need to see a much faster roll out of programmes to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and reforms to the energy market to bring down the cost of household bills,

including a social tariff for the most vulnerable and a scale up of renewable energy to bring down the cost of electricity and increase energy security.

But the reality is that there will also need to be a structured programme of financial support to help people through next winter. Politicians are mistaken if they feel that the level of support currently on offer is enough - or will be enough.

Given [figures from the Social Workers Union](#) also found that two-fifths (40%) of social workers have raised concerns about cases where they don't believe appropriate action was taken in the last 18 months, the next Government must also ensure that the high quality public services needed to deal with the fall out from the cost of living crisis are fully funded.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our concerns. The data above applies to England, Scotland and Wales.

Yours sincerely,

John McGowan, General Secretary, Social Workers Union
Dr Cath Lowther, General Secretary, Association of Educational Psychologists
Dr Ruth Allen, Chief Executive, British Association of Social Workers

Supported by

Simon Francis, Coordinator, End Fuel Poverty Coalition
Fiona Waters, Spokesperson, Warm This Winter campaign
Juliet Phillips, UK Energy Programme Lead, E3G
Claire Larkin, Director, Parents For Future Scotland
Doug Parr, Policy Director, Greenpeace UK
Will Walker, UK Policy Lead, Ashden
Matt Copeland, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, National Energy Action
Maria Carvalho, Climate Campaign Lead, Medact
Anna Roguski, Senior Campaigner (Climate & Energy), Friends of the Earth
Hannah Berry, Operations Lead, Fuel Poverty Action
Ben Twomey, Chief Executive, Generation Rent