

Scotland faces a deep and persistent fuel poverty crisis.

Over 800,000 households are trapped in cold, damp homes, with rising energy debt, unaffordable bills and increasing pressure on frontline support services, damaging health, wellbeing and life chances across Scotland.

As the country prepares for the 2026 Holyrood elections, **the End Fuel Poverty Coalition supports Energy Action Scotland's calls for a bold, joined-up programme** that delivers warm homes, fair energy pricing and long-term security for Scotland.

While there is much the Scottish Government can achieve, delivering a reduction in Scotland's fuel poverty levels also relies on decisions made at Westminster. UK-wide reforms to pricing, standing charges, electricity markets and consumer protection are essential to long-term affordability. Working through intergovernmental channels, **the next Scottish Government must lobby vigorously to ensure Scotland's needs are reflected in UK energy policy.**

1. Support: Make energy affordable and embed fuel poverty in decision-making

Fuel poverty in Scotland continues to be driven by high energy costs, low disposable income, poor energy efficiency and the higher energy needs of many vulnerable households.

Therefore, Scotland must prioritise targeted, sustained support for households facing high bills, rising debt and disproportionate energy needs. **Fuel poverty must be embedded as a required consideration across all Scottish Government strategies** in climate, health, housing and social security.

But Scottish Ministers cannot deliver affordability alone. UK pricing policy still determines the structure of Scottish bills, including standing charges, wholesale price exposure and marginal pricing.

The next Scottish Government should push far harder for UK-level energy pricing reform so that Scottish households see lower, fairer bills without relying on continuous crisis support.

The publication of the Scottish social tariff trial modelling provides a clear evidence base for an energy cost reduction scheme for low-income and vulnerable households. It shows that a well-designed tariff could reduce fuel poverty, but also demonstrates the limits of income-based criteria alone.

Any future Scotland-wide or UK-wide social tariff must be designed around actual energy need, the characteristics of the home and the heating regime required to maintain health and wellbeing.

To protect households most at risk, **Scottish Ministers should introduce a £20 million annual fuel poverty crisis fund** to support access to warmth and secure debt write-off from energy suppliers.

2. Sectoral Pressure: Support Scotland's frontline organisations

Advice services, foodbanks, housing associations and community groups are seeing rising costs and static funding in the face of surging demand due to debt, self-disconnection and affordability pressure.

To protect these vital services, **the next Scottish Government must provide multi-year funding agreements for organisations to deliver** and to help ensure support for workforce capacity.

Through direct engagement, and by influencing Ofgem and UK Ministers, **the Scottish Government must ensure suppliers provide rapid and accessible routes for advice organisations to help resolve customer issues.**

3. Retrofit and core national infrastructure

Scotland's homes remain among the coldest and least efficient in Europe, and improving Scotland's housing stock is essential to protect health and wellbeing, reduce avoidable pressure on frontline services and cut the excess winter morbidity associated with cold, damp homes.

Retrofitting must be treated as a national infrastructure priority, not seen as an optional environmental add-on. Where funds arise from the Warm Homes Plan, the Scottish Government should exceed per capita spending, reflecting the higher rates of fuel poverty in Scotland compared to England.

The next Scottish Government should accelerate area-based, multi-year retrofit programmes, invest in community retrofit advisers and training, and ensure all public funds for retrofit are fully spent where they are needed most, with a clear focus on households in or at risk of fuel poverty.

With many of the cheapest tariffs now available only to customers with smart meters, **Scottish Ministers must work with UK bodies to ensure the smart meter roll out doesn't leave anyone behind** and that discriminatory tariffs do not become commonplace. This includes putting pressure on energy firms and Ofgem to fix the RTS-meter switch off and ensure all customers adversely affected by the change are compensated.

Scotland's long-term energy security cannot rely on a declining North Sea. With only 14 percent of original gas reserves commercially viable, reducing heat loss from homes is one of the most effective ways to cut gas demand and protect households from global price volatility.

By 2027, the UK will not produce enough gas to meet current heating needs even if all new licences proceed. **This means Scottish Ministers must be bold in making the case for Scottish investment in insulation, clean heating systems and homegrown renewables.**