

Bury Council



Bury Action for Warmth

An Affordable Warmth Strategy for Bury 2011 – 2016

Summary of Achievements

Introduction

In order to monitor the progress of the Bury Council Affordable Warmth Strategy, an action plan was developed which enabled key stakeholders and agencies to work towards delivering affordable warmth to the residents of Bury.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the current picture in Bury and to provide a summary of the achievements made during the period this Strategy was in place. The Action Plan has been reviewed annually to reflect the development and progress of the Steering Group; with tasks closed once completed and new ones created. However in March 2016 the Affordable Warmth Strategy was replaced by a new Fuel Poverty Action Plan that is aligned with the Fuel Poverty Strategy for England that was published in March 2015.

We thank all Steering Group members (past and present), referrers and partners for their commitment over the course of the strategy to date and look forward to continued support and success with the new Fuel Poverty Action Plan launched in April 2016.

For further information on the Affordable Warmth Strategy, Action Plan or Fuel Poverty Action Plan please contact:

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Current Picture in Bury

Over the period of the last Affordable Warmth Strategy and Action Plan, coordinated action from a wide range of agencies and organizations has generated a strong partnership, which has been vital in delivering the aims and meeting the targets contained in the Strategy to tackle fuel poverty. Partners include (but are not limited to):

- Bury Council
- Six Town Housing
- Age UK Bury
- Bury Citizens Advice Bureau

Fuel Poverty Definition (also known as the Low Income High Costs Indicator):

A household is said to be in fuel poverty if it:

- Has an income below the poverty line (including if meeting its required energy bill would push it below the poverty line); and
- Has higher than typical energy costs.

It is important to ensure that fuel poverty is measured using notional energy bills rather than actual spending to ensure that residents who under heat their homes / self disconnect are taken into account and do not slip through the net for assistance. This indicator allows us to monitor how many fuel poor households there are but also how badly affected each fuel poor household is by evaluating the fuel poverty gap, this is a measure of how much more a fuel poor householder needs to spend to keep warm compared to typical households. Ensuring that effort is focused on assisting the most vulnerable, those suffering from the worst levels of fuel poverty.

The table below shows the levels of fuel poverty across Greater Manchester and how Bury compares to the other Local Authority areasⁱ.

Local Authority	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of Fuel Poor Households	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
Manchester	209159	31195	14.9
Rochdale	89398	10104	11.3
Bolton	118791	13111	11
Oldham	91643	9806	10.7
Bury	79749	8047	10.1
Trafford	96468	9666	10
Salford	105758	10497	9.9
Tameside	96976	9507	9.8
Stockport	124601	11442	9.2
Wigan	139218	12709	9.1
North West	3073362	334752	10.9

The key drivers behind fuel poverty are:

- **The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore, the energy required to heat and power the home)** The majority of properties in Bury are in the private sector with a high proportion of older properties that are typically hard to treat in terms of improving their energy efficiency. The average Energy Performance Certificate rating is Band E for private sector properties.ⁱⁱ
- **The cost of energy** Ofgem estimates that the average annual dual fuel bill over the next 12 months will be £1,292. Average gas and electricity bills are estimated to be £706 and £603 respectively.ⁱⁱⁱ Prepayment meters are used for debt collection purposes by Energy Companies, typically however these customers pay 22% more than the cheapest direct debit tariff. The number of households on these meters has doubled from 7% in 1996 to 14% in 2014.^{iv}
- **Household income** The table below shows Fuel Poverty levels by Ward area.^v It is no coincidence that the highest proportions of fuel poor are in the most deprived areas of Bury such as Bury East and Moorside where residents are on the lowest incomes.

WARD	Estimated number of households	Estimated number of Fuel Poor Households	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
East Ward	6129	919	15
Moorside Ward	4709	649	13.8
Sedgley Ward	4265	540	12.7
Holyrood Ward	4590	515	11.2
Redvales Ward	2868	318	11.1
Besses Ward	4067	440	10.8
Radcliffe East Ward	5959	620	10.4
Radcliffe West Ward	5070	493	9.7
Church Ward	4716	435	9.2
Elton Ward	5272	475	9
St. Mary's Ward	5328	482	9
Pilkington Park Ward	3304	288	8.7
Ramsbottom Ward	5870	479	8.2
Unsworth Ward	5088	417	8.2
Radcliffe North Ward	3921	313	8
Tottington Ward	4726	373	7.9
North Manor Ward	3195	249	7.8
N/A	672	42	6.3
Total	79749	8047	10.1

Private Rented Sector Landlord Obligations

From 2018, it will not be legal to let out a private rented property – unless it meets the minimum energy-efficiency standard EPC rating “E”. Alternatively, the property may still be let provided it has benefitted from the maximum package of measures available under national grants. This is one particular work area that the work that Urban Renewal does can have an impact upon.

Health Impacts

Living in a cold damp home can have a profound impact upon a person's health, leading to mobility problems, common mental disorders, respiratory conditions, cardiovascular incidents and even premature death. Prolonged cold in the home can be more compromising for those with existing conditions and for young children and older people, whose bodies often have a decreased capacity for thermal regulation in response to low temperatures. The table below shows the direct relationship between room temperatures and effects on health.

	Effects On Health
21°C	Recommended room temperature for vulnerable groups
Below 16°C	Risk of respiratory infections
Below 12°C	Increased blood pressure, risks of stroke and heart attack
Below 9°C	Core body temperature drops and increased cardiovascular problems occur if exposure lasts for more than two hours
5°C	Significant risk of hypothermia

Excess Winter Deaths - the ONS standard method defines the winter period as December to March, and compares the number of deaths that occurred in this winter period with the average number of deaths occurring in the preceding August to November and the following April to July. This produces the number of excess winter deaths. The number of extra deaths in winter over the latest 3 years is 270 in Bury.

Tackling fuel poverty can not only save lives but it can restore greater independence to individuals and enable them to Self Care reducing the burden on over subscribed services. There can be significant costs to the NHS for cold related illness e.g. repeat GP visits, A&E admissions due to stroke, heart attack, respiratory and falls. Extra bed days repeat admissions etc. Between 2009 and 2011 in Bury there were 5658 A&E admissions for cold related health conditions. The total cost to the health service for A&E admissions attributable to cold related illness, based on the Department of Health reference costs for this time period is £11,247,990.

According to the Kings Fund and Local Government Association, "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".

Summary of Achievements of the Bury Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011 - 2016

This Strategy was previously developed and set out through 4 key aims, how, as an affordable warmth partnership, we aimed to tackle fuel poverty and assist Bury residents to achieve affordable warmth:

- Raise awareness of fuel poverty & affordable warmth.
- Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock.
- Help people access financial assistance to reduce fuel poverty.
- Improve health & wellbeing through affordable warmth

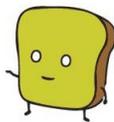
The Vision was to work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of all Bury residents by making homes energy efficient and affordable to heat. Throughout the period of this Strategy the following outcomes were achieved:

Warm Front – This national energy efficiency scheme was launched in 2000, the scheme ran for over 10 years closing in March 2013 with approximately 10,000 households assisted in Bury who were provided with insulation and heating measures. £11 million investment was brought in to deliver this and 14,500 Tonnes of CO₂ saved as a result. Urban Renewal worked hard to ensure the scheme was promoted across the borough with referrals made into the scheme working in partnership with Eaga and Carrilion who delivered the scheme.

Kill the Chill – This was a successful winter warmth campaign that aimed to ensure that Bury residents stay warm and well within their home. 2500 packs were distributed to residents containing information on staying warm and well. They were distributed at events and locations across the borough. A PCT Flu vaccination letter was sent to residents over the age of 70 promoting the service available. As a result of this tailored advice provision was delivered to 434 residents over the phone with 295 referred on to other services e.g. insulation installs and benefits checks.



TOASTY BURY



Toasty Bury 2011/2013 - This retrofit scheme was delivered over a 2 year period, with 800 insulation installs completed. There was a different approach to targeting with street by street roll out ensuring it was a success. This attracted £220,000 investment, energy bill savings of £86,000 and saving 18,000 Tonnes of CO₂.

Bury Healthy Homes Scheme 2011/2013 - Two applications were made to the Department of Health over a 2 year period for funding totalling £120,500 enabling the assistance of 1300 Bury residents receive winter warmth packs and the install of small scale energy efficiency measures. Packs included thermal clothing, cold alarms and thermometer guides, electricity monitors etc. Measures installed included radiator reflector panels and draught proofing etc.



bills.

Collective Switching Campaigns 2013/2014 - 2 auctions were held in 2013 which resulted in 379 householders switching energy provider or tariff. Resident fuel bill savings totalled £46,000. This amounts to a 9% reduction on household fuel

Little Bill Commencement 2014 - In 2011 the Greater Manchester Combined Authority stated their support for a Green Deal Framework for Greater Manchester to be delivered from April 2014. Bury in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Energy Advice Service were involved in the procurement process of 3 delivery

partners for this. Delivery commenced in 2014 with Keepmoat allocated to Bury to undertake installations under this framework marketed as 'Little Bill' to Bury residents. In 2014 Greater Manchester received £6.1m of funding from DECC to deliver Green Deal Communities; this was delivered under the Little Bill framework. Keepmoat also has access to funding from Energy Companies which allows for further heating installations. The table below shows the measures installed in 2014/2015 which attracted £280,000 investment from DECC and Energy Companies, resident saving £45,000 annually off Energy Bills and saved 196 tonnes of CO₂.

Measure Installed 2014 / 2015	Total
Boilers	89
Heating Controls	29
Cavity wall insulation	56
Loft Insulation	7
Internal Wall Insulation	4
Room in roof insulation	9
Underfloor insulation	7
External Wall Insulation	15
Total	216



National Energy Action Warm Homes Campaign Award 2016 - Urban Renewal and Six Town Housing made a joint funding bid to NEA for a one of grant of £300 which has enabled the Council to host a Fuel Poverty Awareness Day which allowed for consultation on the draft version of this document and encourage greater partnership working.

Fuel Poverty Fund 2015/2017 – Public Health provided funding in January 2015 to Urban Renewal to assist residents with the installation of energy efficiency measures, where there is a shortfall in the funding provided by Energy Companies. Customers are normally required to pay this shortfall which can be as much as £2000, this is completely unachievable for the fuel poor. It has also allowed the Urban Renewal to fully fund boiler replacements where vulnerable fuel poor residents are not eligible for Energy Company assistance. Through this scheme we have been able to assist 189 vulnerable fuel poor residents with the installation of energy efficiency measures via Keepmoat and Eon.

The table on the following page shows the breakdown of measures installed, as a result of the funding received.

Financial Year / Quarter Period	Measure	Number of measures installed	Energy Bill Savings Generated	CO2 Savings (tonnes) as a result	
2014 / 2015 Q4	Cavity Wall Insulation	1	£145	0.6	
	Boilers	6	£1,830	7.92	
		7	£1,975	8.52	Sub Total
2015 / 2016	Cavity wall insulation	2	£290	1.2	
	External Wall Insulation	2	£520	2.2	
	Boilers	103	£31,415	135.96	
	Loft Insulation	1	£145	0.62	
		108	£32,370	139.98	Sub Total
2016 / 2017	Boilers	74	£22,570	97.68	
		74	£22,570	97.68	Sub Total
Grand Total		189	£56,915	246.18	

Advice Provision 2011/2017 – Energy efficiency advice has been provided to over 1354 residents with 1515 referrals made for energy efficiency measures such as insulation and central heating; and or advice such as debt advice, benefits checks and fire safety checks. The closure of Greater Manchester Energy Advice Service meant that Urban Renewal had to take a greater role in providing energy efficiency advice to Bury residents and ensuring referrals were made. Urban Renewal is also now working directly with the scheme delivery partners.

Future of Fuel Poverty Work in Bury

Fuel Poverty Strategy for England & Fuel Poverty Awareness Day

The current Affordable Warmth Strategy and Action Plan for Bury expired in March 2016 and with the launch the new Fuel Poverty Strategy for England being published in March 2015, we decided to review these and create a new Fuel Poverty Action Plan for Bury to run from April 2016.

Therefore we submitted a bid to National Energy Action for a Warm Homes Campaign Award grant fund of £300 which was successful and as a result of this award we were able to hold a consultation and awareness raising event to encourage existing and new stakeholders to get involved, to ensure they take ownership of relevant work areas where they can make a difference. The event was held on the morning of the 27th January at the Elizabethan Suite at Bury Town Hall.



Presentations were delivered from Urban Renewal (Private Sector Housing), Six Town Housing (ALMO) and Public Health. It was a celebration of the work we have undertaken to date, to raise the profile of the work we do, but there was a strong emphasis that there is a significant challenge yet to be met, as highlighted by the new Fuel Poverty Strategy for England and DECC's published statistics for the Bury Borough. We invited Elected Members and other influential / key decision makers across internal and external organisations e.g. Public Health, Age UK Bury, Bury CAB etc. The main aims of the event were to:

- Raise awareness of fuel poverty
- Raise the profile of the work we do in tackling fuel poverty
- Ensure key stakeholders are aware of the role they can play in reducing fuel poverty and its associated impacts.
- Ensure that stakeholders contribute to the development of the proposed Action Plan and take ownership of it
- Identify the barriers and significant challenges each organisation faces in tackling fuel poverty in view of resource constraints affecting frontline services and organisations. Find solutions to these barriers.

We wanted to ensure that as a result of this event that Stakeholders are fully engaged and committed to tackling fuel poverty. That fuel poverty is included within their relevant workstreams and strategies.

As a result of the event a Fuel Poverty Action Plan for 2016/17 has been produced with key stakeholders engaged on specific actions. Additionally new partnerships or work areas have been identified and will be developed to tackle fuel poverty in Bury. This Action Plan will be reviewed annually.

Key challenges to delivering this work:

- Resource implications – funding, staffing
- Change in priorities corporately
- Meeting demands and expectations
- Collaborative working

Key opportunities for the team, the department and council:

- Further opportunities and different ways of working to lever additional funding, make best use of resources and manage budgets
- Further partnership and collaborative development and leadership – building on existing and developing new
- Delivering outcomes for the community in line with the Departmental and Council vision
- Provision of an efficient, effective, value for money and resilient service

Vision

To cut bills and increase comfort and well-being in the coldest low income homes

This vision is shared across the whole of Government, health services, energy suppliers, charities and community groups. It is recognised that a shared ambition is more likely to be fulfilled.

Principles

The 3 main principles adopted by DECC and therefore by the Council that underpin decisions on the action to take to achieve the targets set are:

Prioritisation of the most severely fuel poor - The new definition should allow us to distinguish between fuel poor households on the basis of the severity of the problem they face. Those with the highest fuel poverty gap face the highest costs of maintaining an adequate level of warmth in the home.

Supporting the fuel poor with cost-effective policies - Adopting a cost effective approach ensuring value for money and the best returns for all investments made in tackling fuel poverty. This is particularly important due to the resources constraints affecting local organisations and services.

Reflecting vulnerability in policy decisions - Some fuel poor households are more at risk from the impacts of living in a cold home than others even though they may not be the most severely fuel poor. Residents needs should be met for those that are the most vulnerable e.g. elderly (aged over 65) or young (aged under 5) and those with a long-term health condition or disability.

Objectives

The 4 Objectives outlined below have been established from 8 key outcomes adopted by DECC which will be used to design and deliver future schemes to help fulfil the Vision.

Improve Energy Efficiency Standards in Housing – In the majority by the continued delivery of energy efficiency retrofit schemes, promoting national and local sources of funding to Bury residents. Encouraging registered providers to improve their standards and encouraging best practice in new builds. Working towards achieving the targets set to improve the EPC rating of Bury properties and lowering carbon emissions.

Enabling People to Afford to Heat their Home - We will be supporting residents to lower their energy bills by the use of Ofgem approved online comparison switching sites, providing bespoke advice to residents and promoting national and local sources of financial assistance to maximise incomes.

Improved Health & Wellbeing and Increased Comfort - We will be supporting and empowering Bury residents to take control of their own lives and achieve their goals – encouraging self care. However also recognising that the most vulnerable may need additional support or assistance to lift them to a level where they can become more self reliant.

Improved Evidence Base, Understanding & Improved Targeting – We will aim to improve the data we hold with regards to the energy efficiency of the housing stock ensuring it is up to date. This will ensure that resources are targeted effectively. It will also allow for the development of future schemes showing evidence of need and enabling enhanced funding bids.

The Action Plan may evolve over time up to the target date of 2030 along with the relative importance of these objectives which may vary due to changes in national policy and local services adapting to change.

References

ⁱ Sub regional statistics from 2013(updates 28th May 2015) :<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2013-sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-low-income-high-costs-indicator>

ⁱⁱ *Building Research Establishment (bre)2013*

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/gas/retail-market/monitoring-data-and-statistics/understanding-energy-prices-great-britain/supply-market-indicator>

^{iv} CMA, Energy market investigation Summary of provisional findings report, 2015, Page 22 https://assets.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk/media/559ad883e5274a155c00001b/EMI_PFs_Summary.pdf

^v Sub regional statistics from 2013(updates 28th May 2015) :<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2013-sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-low-income-high-costs-indicator>