



Committee on Fuel Poverty

Minutes of Committee on Fuel Poverty (CFP) Meeting, 24 July 2019

Committee Members: David Blakemore (Chair), Jenny Saunders, Liz Bisset, Paul Massara and Lawrence Slade. Apologies from Anu Singh. Invited guests included CEO Ofgem, Dermot Nolan and Ofgem Director for Conduct and Enforcement, Anthony Pygram.

The BEIS Sponsor and Secretariat were present, as well as BEIS analysts and officials from the Fuel Poverty Strategy team.

Minutes of last meeting and actions

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2019 were approved and subsequently [published](#) on the CFP web pages.
2. The majority of actions from the last meeting had been completed, and remaining actions are being progressed.

Members' Interests

3. No potential conflicts of interest specific to the meeting's agenda were declared.
4. Jenny Saunders' role with the Energy Research Centre (ERC) ended as of 23 July 2019.

Ofgem's Vulnerability Strategy and approach to fuel poverty

5. Dermot Nolan and Anthony Pygram of Ofgem gave an update on Ofgem's duties relating to fuel poverty, in particular:
 - Ofgem have launched a consultation on their Consumer Vulnerability Strategy 2025, building on Ofgem's 2013 Strategy. Since launch of the 2013 strategy Ofgem has increasingly focussed on vulnerability and reported progress on improving consumer outcomes; market transparency, and tougher enforcement and compliance action on suppliers to support their vulnerable customers.
 - The Consumer Vulnerability Strategy 2025 outlines five key areas, with associated outcomes: Improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data; Supporting those struggling with their bills; Driving significant improvements in customer service for vulnerable groups; Encouraging positive and inclusive innovation; and Working with partners to tackle issues that cut across multiple sectors.

- Ofgem indicated that they would welcome the Committee's input to the consultation.
- Ofgem, in partnership with the BEIS, have also launched a consultation on Future Energy Retail Markets Design and again stated that they would welcome the Committee's views.
- Ofgem noted the challenges that can be encountered when looking to provide support for the vulnerable fuel poor.

Future Research projects

6. The Committee decided to develop proposals for a research project around '**Better use of data and AI in delivering benefits to fuel poor**'. The intention of this would be to investigate how AI tools can help improve use of data in identifying and targeting the fuel poor for assistance.

Challenge Fund

7. Update from BEIS on potential timeline for confirmation of the Ministerial team at BEIS.
8. The Committee decided to share details with new Ministers of their Challenge Fund proposal and CFP's recommendation for a national landlord licensing scheme to assist enforcement of MEES regulations.

CFP's Annual Report: Priority Areas, Timing, Structure

9. The Committee discussed potential timing of their next annual report and agreed to go ahead with an interim report in Autumn 2019. This would include their response to BEIS's [consultation](#) on the Fuel Poverty Strategy which was published on Gov.UK on 22 July.

Required action on recent reports

10. The Committee discussed current consultations and planned to respond to:
 - Ofgem's [Draft Consumer Vulnerability Strategy 2025](#)
 - [ECO3: Improving Consumer Protection](#) with TrustMark
 - [Fuel Poverty Strategy](#) for England Consultation
 - BEIS and Ofgem [Flexible and Responsive Energy Retail Markets](#)
11. The Committee welcomed the views of the BEIS Select Committee and agreed with its recommendations which aligned with the recommendations of the CFP.
12. The Committee discussed and welcomed the Committee on Climate Change 2019 Annual Report to Parliament and are keen to work more closely aligning fuel poverty with the decarbonisation agenda.

Fuel Poverty Analysis – models in development

13. BEIS analysts presented various models in development concerning fuel poverty.
14. CFP will meet with analysts at a later date to consider the assumptions made and how they may affect sensitivity.

Updates

15. Members gave updates on their stakeholder engagements and correspondence.

CFP Forward Look

16. Members discussed future meetings with key stakeholders.
17. CFP Members will be attending and presenting at the NEA Conference in September.

Future Meetings

18. Meetings currently scheduled for 2019 are:
 - 26 September
 - 13 November