Committee on Fuel Poverty

Minutes of Committee on Fuel Poverty (CFP): virtual Microsoft TEAMS Meeting, Thursday 16 April 2020

1.   The Chair and all members of the Committee were present: David Blakemore (Chair), Liz Bisset, Paul Massara, Jenny Saunders, Anu Singh, and Lawrence Slade. Invited guests included Deloitte Researchers and BEIS officials: Deputy Director, Warm Homes Team, Energy Efficiency and Local, and Fuel Poverty Strategy team.
The BEIS Sponsor and CFP Secretariat were also present.

Minutes of last meeting and actions

2.   The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020 were approved and published on the CFP web page.

3.   The majority of actions from the last meeting have been completed, and remaining actions are being progressed.

Members' Interests

4.   No potential conflicts of interest specific to the meeting's agenda were declared.

Deloitte Research recommendations

5.   Deloitte research team presented their methodology, findings and recommendations arising from their 3 month research on the CFP's commissioned study into *Better Use of Data and Advanced Statistics/Machine Learning in Delivering Benefits to Fuel Poor*.

6.   The researchers selected case studies in four countries (UK, USA, Portugal and Switzerland) that best matched the UK in terms of similarities of policy relevance, data protection, use of automated/AI systems and the availability of data and information on public policy. Specifically, the research looked to identify examples of best practice in overcoming barriers to implementing machine learning in targeting and delivering benefits to the fuel poor.

7.   The researchers shared, for the Committee's consideration, key findings and recommendations detailing the challenges and how these have been mitigated.

8.   The research team also presented possible benefits of using machine learning to support the fuel poor, from better targeting thus reducing search costs and time, to the wider benefits for future policy design.

9.   The Committee thanked Deloitte for their work and would consider the report findings, and following publication, will aim to share thoughts more widely with stakeholders.

BEIS update on fuel poverty programmes and policy

10.   BEIS updated on current activity around existing fuel poverty programmes and consideration of future plans in light of the current focus on the response to COVID-19, and continuity and pandemic plans.

CFP 2020 Annual Report

11.   Members discussed the outline and timeline for the Annual Report and agreed Actions, to take this forward, for planned publication in summer this year.

CFP Forward Look

12.   Members agreed areas for prioritisation over the next six months, including continued advice to officials on the proposed Home Upgrade Grant, the updated Fuel Poverty Strategy, Private Rented Sector regulations, and other emerging policies.

CFP Stakeholder Engagement

13.   CFP will continue to reach out to stakeholders including Citizens Advice, the Committee on Climate Change and other key players. CFP will also seek to engage and extend their reach to other stakeholders such as in the health sector, industry and academia influencing and sharing their research and recommendations.

AOB

14.   Chair requested Members' feedback on ways of working in the light of Covid-19, and in particular this first virtual meeting of the Committee.

15.   Forthcoming CFP Meetings scheduled are:

- Thursday 11 June 2020
- Thursday 20 August 2020
- Thursday 15 October 2020
- Monday 16 November 2020
- Thursday 10 December 2020