



Committee on Fuel Poverty

Minutes of Committee on Fuel Poverty (CFP) meeting: 25 July 2022

Members Present:

Caroline Flint (Chair), Belinda Littleton (virtual), Liz Bisset, Anu Singh, Anthony Pygram and Gordon McGregor (virtual)

Invited guests in attendance were BEIS officials, as well as guests from Local Partnerships, Agility ECO, Energy Efficiency Association and Bid Connector.

Members interests

1. Caroline Flint has taken up a voluntary role as member of the [UK Commission on Covid Commemoration](#).

Minutes of Last Meeting

2. Minutes from the June meeting were agreed.

Stakeholder Engagement

3. Members noted that the official fuel poverty statistics for England are not fully reflective of those who are and will soon be unable to pay their energy bills due to high energy prices.

4. The Committee asked for further information on work that BEIS and other government departments are consider in respect of Cost of Living and in particular energy affordability.

Action 1: The Chair requested the Committee have a meeting with the BEIS Affordability Unit.

5. Members updated the Committee on meetings and events they had attended on behalf of the Committee. Discussion was had about influencing policy to ensure it helped those in fuel poverty.

6. The Chair encouraged members to be proactive in their engagement with the sector and there was conversation about who else the Committee should engage with.

Action 2: Secretariat and Chair to discuss organising future stakeholder meetings.

Action 3: Secretariat to co-ordinate invitations with Chair and Members.

Action Log

7. The Committee discussed and updated the action log.

Action 4: BEIS to discuss with Anu work around social prescribing.

Action 5. BEIS to update the CFP on work looking at short- and long-term priorities.

Action 6: Committee to write to the BEIS Permanent Secretary highlighting concerns around fuel poverty.

BEIS Policy Updates

8. BEIS Officials gave an update on policies including the Energy Company Obligation regulations, the Warm Home Discount eligibility checker, the Energy Security Strategy and work being done in preparation for a change in Prime Minister.

Action 7: Committee Members offered to trial the WHD eligibility checker once available.

9. Discussion was had about Ofgem's anticipated price cap announcement and work the government are doing to support people with bills this winter. The Committee were keen that any future schemes be targeted to help those in fuel poverty

Please see Action 5.

BEIS scheme delivery roundtable with BEIS Officials

10. BEIS updated the Committee on the delivery work underway and the impact for those in fuel poverty.

11. The Committee were keen to hear about what had been learnt from Local authority colleagues about delivery of current energy efficiency schemes and how they were engaging them to ensure distribution funding across England.

12. The Committee were keen to understand how multiple schemes could work in together.

Action 8: Teams to send over further information to Committee members including a map of delivery.

13. The Committee asked for an update on the Private Renter Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and emphasised the importance of these in lifting people out of fuel poverty. The importance of enforcement was also raised as key for any regulation that is introduced.

Action 9: Chair to write to new PM on behalf of the Committee on the importance of raising standards in the private rented sector and the importance of centring fuel poverty in energy efficiency actions.

Action 10: The Committee requested an updated organogram for BEIS.

Action 11: BEIS officials to send a note on what enforcement powers are currently available in the PRS.

14. Members expressed an interest in finance incentives to encourage the improvement of household energy efficiency.

Action 12: BEIS Officials to produce a note on green finance options.

Working with Local Authorities: Guest Speaker - Michael O'Doherty, Project Director for Housing, Local Partnerships

15. The Committee heard from Michael about the work Local Partnerships. Conversation was doing and how Local Authorities can effectively engage with BEIS schemes and the barriers for some in engaging.

Action 13: The Committee were keen to observe one of the Local Partnership stakeholder forums.

16. Discussion was had on Local Authority funding in this area and the need to build a supply chain with the right skills to enable future projects.

17. The Committee were keen to hear examples of Local Authorities who were doing this work well.

Action 14: The Committee would look to follow up with individual local authorities to hear their experience of delivery.

Working with Contractors and Installers: Guest Speakers - Kenneth Campbell, Chairman, Energy Efficiency Association; Gearóid Lane, Chief Executive Officer, AgilityEco & Rachel Cole, Commercial Director, BidConnecter

18. The Committee asked for views on the targeting of current schemes.

19. AgilityEco answered several questions on their recent work on progress towards the fuel poverty targets. They also highlighted that households can drift in and out of fuel poverty, with some falling just outside the current definition therefore not receiving support. They stressed the importance of certainty in long-term funding for projects to engage installers.

20. EEA raised concerns around the skills gap and the lack of budget set aside for training and upskilling the current and future workforce. They highlighted previous government schemes that had left installers out of pocket and agreed with Agility ECO about the need for certainty in future long-term funding.

21. BidConnecter spoke about how the complexities of Government schemes were alienating consumers. They also highlighted the rising acquisition and material costs.

Action 11: BidConnecter to send CFP further information on acquisition costs.

Action 12: EEA to send a note on their experience in the sector.

AOB

22. The Committee discussed plans for their research project.

23. The next meeting will be held on the 5th September 2022.