

Warm This Winter

Warm This Winter | Briefing for MPs

September 2022

Summary

Warm This Winter is a new national campaign coalition supported by leading anti-poverty and environmental organisations. Warm This Winter is calling on the UK government to provide more emergency support for people struggling with energy bills this winter and a coherent plan to move the UK away from volatile fossil fuels, through a national rollout of home insulation and affordable renewables.

Skyrocketing energy bills are impacting people and businesses around the country, with millions more households predicted to struggle with heating their homes this winter. In order to support people across the UK in the immediate and long term, we are calling for:

1. **Emergency support now:** Provide a new package of financial support to people who, without additional urgent action, will be on the front-line of poverty this winter.
2. **Help to upgrade homes:** Launch a properly-funded programme of home upgrades and insulation across the UK to bring down bills and prevent energy waste.
3. **Cheap energy:** More than triple the amount of renewable energy in the UK by 2030, including wind and solar generated in harmony with nature, so that we can permanently lower bills.
4. **Free us from oil and gas:** Stop opening up new oil and gas fields so that we can escape our dependence on volatile fossil fuels.

1. Emergency support now

Energy bills have continued to soar since Ofgem's price cap was raised by 54% in April 2022, with their most recent announcement signalling an increase to [£3,549 per year](#) from 1 October. Meanwhile, inflation has [soared](#) to a 30 year high and the UK is facing the biggest [fall](#) in living standards since records began. For many low-income households, energy bills were already unaffordable, but now millions more are being plunged into fuel poverty. Previously announced government support is based on an outdated estimate of energy prices this winter and needs to be revised in light of escalating gas prices.

We are calling on the UK Government to provide **direct emergency financial support for everyone, but particularly those in low-income households**, to mitigate the energy price cap rise, and ensure the welfare system is robust and responsive enough to deal with future price shocks. And separately, **the UK Government should commit in law to the development of a [new social tariff](#) for next winter, through an amendment to the Energy Bill**. The social tariff would [better target energy need](#) than cash payments, and therefore should be additional to the price cap, current protections, and the benefits uprating, and be funded out of general taxation.

2. Help to upgrade homes

The UK has some of the most leaky, energy inefficient homes: almost [19 million](#) UK homes are ranked in the bottom rungs for energy efficiency, with EPC ratings of band D or worse. [Analysis](#) has shown that average savings from moving homes from EPC standard D to C would be around £170 per year on energy bills.

We are calling on the UK Government to **provide an urgent investment of [£3.6bn in home insulation measures](#) this Parliament, to kick-start a national insulation programme** for every home - starting with those hardest-hit by the crisis. Furthermore, the Government should **amend the Energy Bill** to ensure delivery of EPC band C for social housing and privately rented premises by 2028, EPC band B for non-domestic premises by 2030 and EPC band C for the homes of those in fuel poverty by 2030.

3. Cheap energy

The gas crisis and war in Ukraine have sent global fossil fuel prices [soaring](#), whilst domestic renewable energy prices are at an all time low. Homegrown renewable energy like solar, onshore and offshore wind energy are now more than [nine times cheaper](#) than gas. In 2020, the UK government made the welcome decision to allow new onshore wind and solar projects to get going again via the Contracts for Difference auctions. Yet a number of serious barriers still remain, which will delay the UK in getting the clean power it needs to end reliance on gas and cut energy costs as quickly as possible. These include a virtual ban on new onshore wind projects in England, a lack of targets or strategy for onshore wind and solar, and barriers to strategic siting of offshore wind in harmony with nature.

We are calling on the UK Government to **more than triple the amount of wind and solar by 2030, ensuring it is located in harmony with nature**, and a commitment **in law to a 95% zero carbon power sector by 2030**. Additionally, planning blocks to onshore wind projects in England should be replaced with a proportionate system which prioritises local involvement, local ownership and protecting nature, and the duty of the energy regulator should be amended to support the delivery of net zero.

4. Free us from oil and gas

As global gas markets soar, people and businesses across the country are being directly impacted by the UK's reliance on expensive gas. At the same time, the investment allowance in the Energy Profits Levy (windfall tax) and other tax loopholes are depriving the UK economy of vital income.

We are calling on the UK government to **stop opening up new oil and gas fields**, including new licensing rounds, and **stop subsidising new drilling with public money**. North Sea gas won't lower our energy bills: the gas doesn't belong to the UK, it belongs to companies who sell it at the highest price they can get. The UK government should instead put its efforts into building a cheaper and more secure energy supply.

To request a meeting with our policy experts or to learn more about Warm This Winter, please contact: Sophie O'Connell - soconnell@green-alliance.org.uk

Warm This Winter is a new campaign uniting poverty and environmental charities, working with: End Fuel Poverty Coalition, The Climate Coalition, CPRE The countryside charity, Save the Children, WWF UK, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, Oxfam GB, Fuel Poverty Action, Fair Energy Campaign, Possible, Ashden, New Economics Foundation, Uplift, Northern Housing Consortium, Women's Institutes, Hope Valley Climate Action, Client Earth, Chartered Institute of Housing, Greenpeace UK, Global Action Plan, Green Alliance, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 350.org, New Economy Organisers, 38 Degrees, Climate Cymru, Campaign Collective, Action with Communities in Rural England.