

BOLD Climate Action on Energy Poverty

August 2024



Introduction

We are particularly concerned with the significant level of energy poverty amongst many older people as well as other vulnerable groups including lone parents, people on low incomes, Travellers, those in rental accommodation and people with disabilities. Energy poverty results from high energy prices, low levels of state welfare payments and living in poorly insulated homes. The latter is due to insufficient access to timely, effective and affordable retrofitting. 60% of Irish homes with low energy ratings are the homes of older people.

This results in:

- Unacceptable discomfort due to lack of a warm home
- High levels of anxiety in trying to meet energy bills
- Poor health outcomes including respiratory problems and premature deaths.

What We Want from Government

1. To assess all climate policy in terms of fairness, justice and equality and ensure that those most disadvantaged are prioritised for support.
2. To adopt an integrated approach across government departments to tackle energy poverty; this is necessary in order to tackle the many causes including low income, high prices, poor housing and inaccessible retrofitting schemes.
3. To ensure that everyone experiencing inequality including older people live in warm, safe and affordable homes.
4. To address the issue of inadequate income for all groups and thus allow them escape from energy poverty.
5. To ensure fair and appropriate retrofitting schemes are accessible to home-owners and renters of different income levels.
6. To urgently progress the retrofitting of all local authority housing.

7. To introduce a programme which will ensure private tenants are provided with warm, safe and secure housing.
8. To support and resource community groups to play a key role in retrofitting in local areas and put in place and resource local community energy advisors, in all local authority areas.
9. To address the serious health impacts of inadequately heated and damp homes on all vulnerable groups including older people by renewing and extending the Warmth and Wellbeing Scheme.
10. To prioritise the achievement of renewable energy targets in all sectors and also ending the use of fossil fuels, as soon as is practicable, for home heating purposes.

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