



# **Peterborough City Council**

## **Affordable Warmth Strategy**

**2021 - 2025**

**October 2020**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The purpose and scope of this document

The council produces strategies that set the housing priorities for Peterborough, and what we are going to do to address them. On 12 April 2017 the Council formally adopted the Peterborough Housing Strategy 2016-21. This strategy sets out our priorities, commitments and programme for a wide range of housing matters, including rural issues.

We have identified four key priorities for the Peterborough housing agenda:

- **How we will support substantial and sustainable growth in Peterborough**
- **How we will increase the supply of homes which people can afford**
- **How we will improve housing conditions in Peterborough to support health and wellbeing**
- **How we will ensure that a range of supported and specialist accommodation is available in Peterborough**

Improving the housing condition is important because we know that living in a cold, damp home can have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages. Peterborough City Council through this Affordable Warmth Strategy and its key partnerships intend to fulfil this ambition by raising living standards across the City through improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. This aim coincides with the national fuel poverty strategy, [Cutting the cost of keeping warm – a fuel poverty strategy for England](#), which sets out targets to improve energy efficiency in housing whilst outlining a collaborative approach between local authorities, health providers and non-statutory organisations to reducing fuel poverty.

### 1.2 Health & Wellbeing Strategy

The National Housing Federation states that poor housing conditions increase the risk of severe ill-health or disability by up to 25% during childhood and early adulthood. Housing conditions that adversely affect health, include; indoor dampness; pollutants associated with respiratory problems; features that lead to physical injury. Household overcrowding is associated with an increased risk in the spread of infection, and indoor cold is associated with excess winter deaths and cardiovascular problems. The combination of factors associated with poor housing and economic stresses has been identified as having an adverse effect on mental health.

Preventing cold related illness is an objective of [Peterborough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) which seeks to:

- **See a decrease in the ratio of excess winter deaths to average non-winter deaths**
- **See a reduction in unintentional injuries in the home in the under 15 year olds,**
- **See a reduction in delayed discharge from hospital related to housing issues**

The [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) stated in Peterborough, the 3 year rate of excess winter deaths (which may be related to winter infections, cold homes, and becoming cold outside the home) remained similar to the England average in Peterborough in 2010 -2013. It is estimated that poor housing conditions are responsible for over 651 harmful events requiring medical treatment every year in Peterborough. The estimated cost to the local NHS of treating these is £2.2M annually. The rate of family homelessness is worse than the England average. Therefore Peterborough City Council must ensure residents can thrive in healthy and sustainable communities by maximising health improvements through action on housing.

### **1.3 NICE Recommendations on Excess Winter Deaths and the Health Risks Associated With Cold Homes**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has issued guidance on preventing Excess Winter Deaths and the actions contained in this strategy will ensure that this guidance is followed by the Council and its partners to assist vulnerable households and relieve pressure on health and social services.

1. Develop a strategy
2. Ensure there is a single point-of-contact health and housing referral service for people living in cold homes
3. Provide tailored solutions via the single point-of-contact health and housing referral service for people living in cold homes
4. Identify people at risk of health from living in a cold home
5. Make every contact count by assessing the heating needs of people who use primary health and home care services
6. Non-health and social care workers who visit people at home should assess their heating needs
7. Discharge vulnerable people from health or social care settings to a warm home
8. Train health and social care practitioners to help people whose homes may be too cold
9. Train housing professionals and faith and voluntary sector workers to help people whose homes may be too cold for their health and wellbeing
10. Train heating engineers, meter installers and those providing building insulation to help vulnerable people at home
11. Raise awareness among practitioners and the public about how to keep warm at home
12. Ensure buildings meet ventilation and other building and trading standards

#### **1.3 NICE recognises the following groups as being particularly vulnerable to cold living conditions:**

- People with cardio-vascular conditions
- People with respiratory conditions (In particular COPD and childhood asthma)
- Those suffering from mental health conditions
- People with disabilities
- Older people (age 65 and over)
- Households with young children (new born to school age)

- Pregnant women
- Low income households

Vulnerable people who are not in full time employment will often stay at home for longer periods and some may require a higher than average indoor temperature, leading to higher fuel bills.

- 1.4 This Affordable Warmth Strategy provides a five year framework over which we will aim to reduce fuel poverty and help residents of Peterborough to live in a warm, healthy and energy efficient home. The plan sets out the actions we will take to achieve this ambition. The Strategy has three main objectives:

**Increasing Energy Efficiency**

- By providing schemes to increase the energy efficiency of domestic housing
- By providing energy efficiency advice to residents across Peterborough

**Reducing Fuel Poverty**

- By targeting fuel poor households with assistance
- By maximising the income of households in fuel poverty
- By reducing household fuel bills

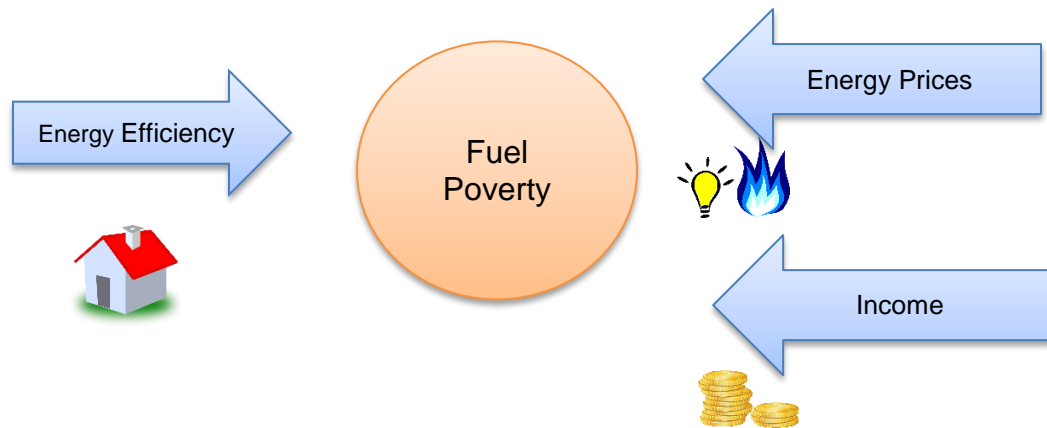
**Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth**

- By improving household heating without increasing carbon emissions where possible
- Through crisis intervention for vulnerable people in cold homes, including heating installation and repairs
- With help to prevent people falling into fuel poverty

**2. BACKGROUND & NATIONAL CONTEXT**

- 2.1 A fuel-poor household cannot afford to keep the home adequately warm at a reasonable cost. This is defined by the government using the low income high cost (LIHC) indicator. This means that a household is fuel poor if their fuel costs are above average to be able to heat their home to an adequate standard and if they were to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the poverty line. The World Health Organisation defines an adequate standard of warmth to be 21 degrees C in the living room and 18 degrees C in all other rooms.

- 2.2 The main drivers of fuel poverty are therefore the energy efficiency of the property (affecting the amount of energy required to heat the home, household income and the cost of energy.



- 2.3 The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the Government’s standard for home energy rating. SAP ratings provide a simple but reliable indicator of the efficiency of energy use for space and water heating in new and existing dwellings. SAP ratings are expressed on a scale of 1 (poor) to 100 (excellent). The UK average currently stands at 55. It is these SAP ratings that are used to determine the banding on Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) ranging from Band A – highest energy efficiency rating and Band G, the lowest.
- 2.4 The government has prioritised the reduction of fuel poverty and in 2015 launched their new Fuel Poverty Strategy for England. The Government are required by law to tackle fuel poverty by making the coldest, leakiest homes in England more energy efficient. The Strategy outlines the challenges and actions for the next 15 years to tackle fuel poverty and get help to those who need it most. The new legally binding target came into force in December 2014 and requires a minimum standard of energy efficiency (Band C) for as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable by 2030.
- 2.5 In 2018 further progress was made towards the fuel poverty target and interim milestones in England.

Fuel Poverty Target	2010 Progress	2017 Progress	2018 Progress
<b>BAND E or above by 2020</b>	81.1%	92.2%	92.6%
<b>BAND D or above by 2025</b>	32.7%	65.9%	69.4%
<b>BAND C or above by 2030</b>	1.5%	10.00%	12.4%

- 2.6 Legislation from April 2020 prescribes that EPC ratings in the private rented sector must now be E or above, if the owner wishes to continue to rent properties out. Peterborough City Council was part of a Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) pilot study for the introduction and impact on Local Authorities of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations in the private rented sector in 2019.
- 2.7 A fundamental component of the Care Act is the 'suitability of accommodation' in meeting the at home care and support needs of older and vulnerable people. The Act and the accompanying regulations and guidance outline how housing can support a more integrated approach. Of particular note:
- A general duty to promote wellbeing makes reference to suitable accommodation
  - Housing is not just the 'bricks and mortar', also includes housing related support or services
  - Housing must be considered as part of an assessment process that may prevent, reduce or delay an adult social care need
  - Information and advice should reflect housing options, as part of a universal service offer
  - Care and support delivered in an integrated way with cooperation with partner bodies, including housing
- 2.8 The Public Health Outcomes Framework “Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Improving Outcomes and Supporting Transparency” (Dept of Health, 2013) sets out desired outcome for public health and how they will be measured. Many of the measurements have links to housing including falls and injuries in over 65s, Fuel Poverty and Excess Winter Deaths.
- 2.8 The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all 326 local authorities in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation within that LA’s area. This covers measures to improve properties in the owner-occupier, private rented sector, and social rented sector. The Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) uses data submitted through Local Authority’s HECA returns to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery. Since 2015 Peterborough City Council has submitted a bi-annual progress report,

### **3 LOCAL CONTEXT**

- 3.1 Peterborough is a city with huge ambitions. The vision for the city is:

*“To create a Peterborough residents are proud to live, work and grow up in and where services give value for money and deliver what local people need.*

3.2 The priority outcomes in the Council’s Corporate Strategy 2019 – 2021 are:

- **Pride in our communities and environment**
  - We want safe, friendly and healthy neighbourhoods with open spaces, roads, pavements and cycle paths that are well maintained and free from litter and mess:
- **First rate futures for our children, young people - and quality support for our adults and elderly**
  - We want to improve opportunities for education and training and to help people to do more for themselves, for each other and for their communities:
- **Better jobs, good homes and better opportunities for all**
  - We will grow our city in a sustainable and fair way to create job opportunities and address poverty. As we grow, we will invest in the quality and availability of housing

3.3 Alongside this, in July 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency committing to reduce its own carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030 and to support the city of Peterborough to do the same. Carbon emissions arising from stationary sources, including homes, are responsible for a significant proportion of local emissions and as such any action taken to improve energy efficiency directly supports this work.

3.4 The latest statistics published in 2020 (based on 2018 data)

Local Authority	Region	No of households	No of households in Fuel Poverty	Proportion of households in Fuel Poverty
Peterborough	East of England	79,276	7,547	9.5%

The highest 10 Local Super Output areas for Fuel Poverty in Peterborough are:

Lower Super Output Area	Lower Super Output Area Description	No of households	Ward	No of households in Fuel Poverty	Proportion of households in Fuel Poverty
E01015601	Millfield	548	Central	141	25.7%
E01015604	Millfield	542	Central	138	25.5%
E01015603	New England	814	Central	155	19.0%
E01015692	West Town	503	West	95	18.9%
E01015600	Millfield	591	Central	107	18.1%
E01015652	New England/Millfield	639	Park	110	17.2%
E01015665	West Town	609	Ravensthorpe	104	17.1%
E01015632	New England	783	North	125	16.0%
E01015602	Eastfield/Millfield	952	Central	144	15.1%
E01015616	Fengate/Eastfield	696	East	105	15.1%



3.5 There are many factors why achieving affordable warmth in Peterborough is difficult. These include:

- A large number of difficult to insulate homes, such as pre – 1919 terraced housing. These have solid walls, requiring external or internal wall insulation, costing many times the price of standard cavity wall insulation.
- Peterborough contains some of the most economically deprived areas in the Country. Since a large proportion of residents in these areas will be on a low income, a large proportion will also be in fuel poverty. Some of these are also inner city areas with many older properties that are expensive to insulate.
- Peterborough has a large proportion of private rented homes that have traditionally had a lower average energy efficiency than other tenures. There are many causes of this, however the presence of low income households, disengagement of some landlords and short term tenancies, meaning that residents have less of a stake in the future of the property, have meant that take up of energy efficiency improvements in private rented accommodation has traditionally been lower than in other tenures, even where grants for improvements have been available.
- Peterborough has many residents who are vulnerable due to age or ill health and who are at risk of having their health problems exacerbated by living in cold, damp conditions. (Ref 1.3 above for the groups NICE has identified as being particularly vulnerable to cold living conditions)
- Peterborough has a number of homes that are not connected to a gas main, the vast majority of which have electricity as their main heating fuel. Whilst some will be in rural areas there are some in the urban area, many of which have obsolete heating systems such as storage heaters and panel heaters which are comparatively expensive to use and difficult to control, meaning that residents are more likely to have difficulty heating their home.
- Many residents on a low income prefer to use pre-payment meters as a means of budgeting for their fuel. However, households using these meters are often denied access to the cheapest tariffs and face punitive charges for having them removed.
- Many households in Peterborough experience a combination of the above factors, meaning that achieving affordable warmth can be particularly difficult and require more than one intervention.

## 4. PROGRESS SO FAR



### 4.1

#### **Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP)**

Peterborough City Council was one of the first pilot local authorities in January 2017 for this fuel poverty outreach service delivered in partnership with Agilty Eco. This award winning service is now in over 100 Local Authorities across the country. The scheme is funded by the Warm Homes Discount Industry Initiative and is therefore at no cost to the Local Authority or residents. The Partnership is managed by the Housing Programmes Team within Adult Social Care's Home Service Delivery Team.

Self-referrals can be made or consent can be given to a wide network of referral organisations operating in the city including Age UK, Citizens Advice, local providers of social housing, the Council’s Customer Service Centre, Adult Social Care Early Help and GP surgeries.

Once the referral is received, a member of Agility Eco’s highly trained energy advisor team will contact the client to discuss their situation. Tailored advice and support is offered based on the clients’ needs, including any onwards referrals or a referral for a follow-up home visit when convenient.

**IncomeMax**

LEAP will identify and refer the client for further support where required. This includes referrals for income, benefits and debt advice from IncomeMax, a social enterprise company who specialise in money and debt advice, bill management and the maximisation of income. Assistance is also given with applying for the Warm Home Discount and the UK Power Networks Priority Services Register (if eligible).

A summary of the energy advice discussed with the advisor and a reminder of any onward referrals made is sent to the client and if identified during the energy assessment call, LEAPs advisors can refer on for a free follow-up home visit from one of their home energy advisors. In Peterborough, the advisors are provided through Green Energy Switch, (GES) a profit for purpose company, with any profits going to their parent charity Peterborough Environmental City Trust (PECT). GES energy advisors can install free simple energy saving measures into the home, such as LED lightbulbs, draught excluders to doors and windows, chimney balloons, radiator reflectors and TV standby plugs. Advisors will also identify and refer for any heating or insulation requirements and also refer onto the Fire Service and/or the Council if they identify a fire safety issues or hazards in the home.

<b>Period</b>	<b>01/06/2018 – 31/05/2019</b>	<b>01/06/2019 – 30/09/2019</b>
<b>No. of Referrals</b>	1,411	388
<b>No. of Home Visits</b>	970	376
<b>No. of Easy Measure Installed</b>	7,711	3,281
<b>Amount of additional Income Identified</b>	£624,436	£129,208
<b>Total of savings &amp; new income identified</b>	£1,583,999.32	£518,585.20

#### 4.2 **Energy Company Obligation (ECO) – Flexible Eligibility**

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy efficiency measures. The majority of ECO is targeted on those in or at risk of fuel poverty, under the Affordable Warmth obligation. In addition, energy suppliers will also be able to achieve up to 10% of their Affordable Warmth obligation by installing energy saving measures in households declared as eligible by Local Authorities. This “Flexible Eligibility” allows Local Authorities to make declarations determining that certain households meet the eligibility criteria for a measure under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO.

There are two main categories of private tenure household that Government intends to be eligible through Flexible Eligibility:

- **Fuel poor households under the low income, high cost (LIHC) definition**, especially those that are not in receipt of ECO eligible benefits and the estimated 20% of fuel poor households that are not in receipt of any benefits; and
- **Low income households that are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home (LIVC)**. It also contains guidance on how Flexible Eligibility can be used for Solid Wall Insulation projects, in relation to “in-fill” properties.

Peterborough City Council published its [Statement of Intent](#) in March 2018 (updated March 2019) which sets out the criteria Peterborough City Council intends to use to target households under Flexible Eligibility, in line with the Government guidance.

Eligibility for LEAP aligns very well with the Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) guidance on Flexible Eligibility. Therefore we aligned the criteria and process for Flexible Eligibility with the LEAP service. LEAP serves a dual purpose in relation to Flexible Eligibility:

- LEAP acts as the Council’s primary means of identifying homes that would benefit from energy efficiency measures funded through ECO Flexible Eligibility
- Information collected from residents through the LEAP process is our primary means of gaining evidence that households qualify under the eligibility criteria thus enabling us to produce declarations of eligibility

#### 4.3 **Other services offered by LEAP**

In addition to the main fuel poverty outreach service there are several other offers to assist low income and vulnerable resident to save money on energy bills and improve the energy efficiency of their home.



##### 4.3.1 **Emergency Central Heating Offer (ECHO)**

ECHO is a scheme that offers emergency assistance to fuel poor or vulnerable households to repair or replace broken or condemned boilers. ECHO is provided alongside LEAP and is funded

by five energy companies through the Warm Home Discount Industry Initiative Scheme.



4.3.2

### **Home Energy Appliance Replacement (HEART)**

HEART works mainly with charities that support fuel poor and vulnerable households and is again linked to the LEAP service. These charities can help qualifying households to replace old and inefficient appliances (typically appliances will be at least eight years old). Charities offering the HEART service are responsible for confirming the eligibility of beneficiaries and ensuring they have an appliance that qualifies for replacement. In some circumstances, charities can also refer households where there is no existing appliance to be replaced.



4.3.3

### **Warm Homes Fund**

Peterborough City Council is a prominent member of Warmer Homes, a consortium of ten Local Authorities which were successful in securing £4.85 million from the Warm Homes Fund (WHF) to install first time central heating in around 1500 homes over a three year period. The Warm Homes Fund is a £150 million national scheme to help people with high heating costs. It has been provided by the National Grid and administered by its not-for-profit partner, Affordable Warmth Solutions.

The aims of the fund are to reduce bills, increase comfort in non-gas households, and improve health outcomes for residents. A LEAP Home visit will identify properties that do not have gas central heating. LEAP will arrange for a gas connection (if the property does not already have one) and after that for the installation of the new central heating system. Surveys may be required in advance of both the gas connection and installing the central heating system. The property must be no more than 23 meters from an existing gas supply.

Under this Warm Homes Fund, first time central heating installations and connection to the gas network was completed at 76 accommodation units at St Michael's Gate which is utilised by the Council as temporary accommodation. This project was fully funded through the Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (for the gas connection of the entire estate), ECO, the Warms Homes Fund and a contribution from St Michael's Gate owners. The lofts were insulated in almost all the properties (a couple were not feasible). The walls are of single-skin solid wall construction and the accommodation had highly inefficient electric panel heaters. This has led to a huge improvement in the living conditions of residents using that accommodation and a significant decrease in the number of complaints the Council receives regarding it being highly energy inefficient and expensive to heat.

#### 4.4 Energy Performance Certificates

Housing Officers in the Housing Programmes Team and the PES Housing Enforcement Team have the delegated statutory responsibility from Trading Standards of enforcing non-compliance of the requirement to have an Energy Performance Certificate. An EPC is required whenever a property in the social or private sector is let to a new tenant. If a request for an EPC is made and cannot be provided within 7 days of request, a fixed penalty notice of £200 could be issued. This also applies if EPCs have not been registered or been issued by an accredited energy assessor.

Period	No. of FPNs issued for not having EPC Certificate
01/04/2019 – 31/03/2020	27
01/04/2020 – 30/09/2020	21

#### 4.5 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, as amended (most recently by the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2019) introduced a minimum energy efficiency standard for the private rented sector.

- Since 01 April 2018, landlords of relevant domestic private rented properties must not grant a tenancy to new or existing tenants if their property has an EPC rating of F or G (as shown on a valid EPC for the property)
- Since April 2020, landlords must not continue letting a relevant domestic property which is already let if that property has an EPC rating F or G (as shown on a valid EPC for the property). Landlords were encouraged to take action to ensure that their properties reached EPC E by the deadline of 01 April 2020. Where a property is sub-standard, landlords must normally make energy efficiency improvements which raise the EPC rate to minimum E before they let the property. Landlords may claim an exemption in certain circumstances.

The Landlords are subject to the cost cap, whereby they will never be required to spend more than £3,500 (including VAT) on energy efficiency improvements. If they cannot improve the property to EPC E for £3,500 or less, they should make all the improvements which can be made up to that amount, then register an 'all improvements made' exemption (See below)

There are 3 ways to fund the improvements to the property:

- Third party funding to cover the full cost of improving the property to EPC E. The landlord does not have to invest their own funding.
- Combination of third-party funding and self-funding up to the value of the cost cap. Third party funding is available but it is less than £3,500, and is not enough to improve the

property to EPC E

- If third party funding is not available the landlord will need to use their own funding (up to the cost cap) to improve their property. If the property can be improved for less than £3,500, the landlord will have met his obligation. If it would cost more than £3,500 to improve the property to E, they should install all recommended measures that can be installed within that amount, then register an exemption (see below)

Exemptions include

- If the property is still below EPC E after improvements have been made up to the cost cap (£3,500 incl VAT), or there are none that can be made.
- No improvement can be made because the cost of installing even the cheapest recommended measure would exceed £3,500 (including VAT).
- The only relevant improvements for the property are:
  - cavity wall insulation
  - external wall insulation
  - or internal wall insulation (for external walls)

and

the landlord has obtained written expert advice showing that these measures would negatively impact the fabric or structure of the property (or the building of which it is part).

- The relevant improvements for the property need consent from another party, such as a tenant, superior landlord, mortgagee, freeholder or planning department, and despite best efforts that consent cannot be obtained, or is given subject to conditions the landlord could not reasonably comply with.
- That making energy efficiency improvements to the property would devalue it by more than 5%. In order to register this exemption the landlord will need a report from an independent surveyor.

All the above exemptions last 5 years. After that it will expire and the landlord must try again to improve the property's EPC rating to E

- If the person has recently become a landlord under certain circumstances they will not be expected to take immediate action to improve your property to EPC E. The landlord may claim a 6 months exemption from the date they became a landlord. This exemption lasts 6 months from the date they became the landlord.

Local Authorities are legally required to enforce the Regulations which came into force on 1 April 2018. The Council was approached by the Peterborough Environmental City Trust (PECT) to support a bid to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in order to take part in a pilot project to provide an insight into the challenges confronting Local Authorities enforcing the Regulations and identify best practice and potential for a national template guidance toolkit for Local Authorities. The Private Rented Sector Enforcement & Compliance Study involved both Peterborough & Cambridge City Councils, both of which have a higher than East of England average of private rental housing.

The study aimed to identify, scope and test pathways for the rollout of the minimum energy efficiency standards with the intention to learn lessons on the removal of barriers to enable compliance with the standards that could then be shared nationally.

The pilot has helped raise the awareness of MEES with residents, landlords and letting agents. The range of communication has helped prepare the landlords for when enforcement does come in, and the 'grace' period to the 1 April 2021 being provided by the City Council. An event organised by BEIS and held in Peterborough was a sell-out. The awareness raising campaign has encouraged landlords to get ahead of the enforcement and implements the regulations. It has prompted a large range of questions, which due to the briefing and pilots, has allowed enforcement officers to answer succinctly. Housing Enforcement and Green Energy Switch have also been promoting the MEES requirements to the tenants through leaflets during LEAP visits and asking them to check with their landlords that they are aware of the MEES regulations.

As part of that pilot study approximately 250 emails/letters explaining the MEES Regulations and the Landlord responsibilities were sent to Landlords of private rented properties in the Selective Licensing area of the city where the EPC rating was showing as an F or G. In addition 988 properties outside the Selective Licensing area had an EPC rating of F or G. 241 were confirmed as privately rented and 621 were owner occupied

Activity	Private Rented Properties Selective Licensing Area with EPC F or G	Private Rented Properties Outside Selective Licensing Area with EPC F or G
MEES Communication Sent Jan/Feb 2020	250	241
No of Properties improved to EPC of E and above as at 30/09/2020	54	25

#### 4.6 Repairs Assistance through the Council's Capital Programme

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) (Order 2002 gives local authorities the power to provide assistance for the purpose of improving living conditions in the local authority area. In order to do that local authorities must have an adopted and published policy for the provision of assistance. The Council's Housing Renewals Policy is that adopted Policy.

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health & Safety Rating System [HHSRS] assessment process incorporates a full inspection of the residential premises to identify any deficiencies. The inspecting officer will judge whether the deficiencies mean that there are any hazards that are significantly worse than the average for residential premises of that age and type. The inspecting officer then assesses the likelihood of an occurrence that could cause harm over the next twelve months and the severity of the outcomes from such an occurrence. If a high risk is determined the hazard is defined as a Category 1 hazard which places a statutory

duty on the local authority to reduce that hazard to an acceptable level.

29 hazards are looked at, the most common occurrence being Excess Cold. All inspecting officers are accredited in this inspection regime.

Repairs Assistance is awarded to vulnerable home owners who are on low incomes and the household includes people living with a chronic or severe health difficulty/illness/frailty or disability. Vulnerable households with older people or pre-school children can also be eligible. Repairs Assistance is a discretionary grant and is provided subject to funding availability. It is necessary to prioritise cases which will take into consideration the following factors:

- The severity of the hazard(s) identified under the HHSRS Assessment and the risk to health posed by those hazards
- Chronic or severe illness and disability - including respiratory condition, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart conditions, asthma, poor mobility
- The age of the applicant
- Lack of/inefficient boiler and central heating systems and thermally inefficient homes
- People who are in-patients at an NHS hospital and in need of works or repair or adaptation enabling them to be safely discharged into their home
- Clients living alone

The aim of targeted Repairs Assistance is to improve resident's health and wellbeing, reduce longer term demand on health and social care services and facilitate the discharge from hospital or intermediate care. The Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency deliver Repairs Assistance to vulnerable households as well as Disabled Facility Grants to the elderly and disabled adults and children who require adaptations to enable them to live independently. All work undertaken by the Agency are carried out at least to the standards required by building regulations, in particular with respect to ventilation.

Caseworkers carry out means tests for these grants and as part of that Casework, carry out referrals into Leap and welfare benefit entitlement checks to ensure income is maximised, and benefits are claimed which can open the door to further assistance.

Referrals are also made to Disability Peterborough, the Disability Advice Service based in Peterborough who also carry out benefit entitlement checks specifically for householders with a disability.

Foundations is the governing body of Home Improvement Agencies and there Independent Living Trust work in partnership with The Gas Safe Charity on an annual project aimed at improving gas safety in the homes of older, disabled and vulnerable people in cases of hardship and urgency. The project pays for preventive measures which reduce the risks of death, injury and illness caused by dangerous gas work and appliances and promotes gas safety awareness across the UK. This hardship fund provides practical gas safety interventions, such as the replacement, repair and servicing of dangerous, faulty or inefficient gas appliances and installations that put the safety of vulnerable people at risk in their own homes



The use of the Council's Capital Programme has reduced in recent years as the LEAP partnership has grown enabling resident to access external funding through ECO, ECO Flexible Eligibility and other successful funding bids.

Financial Year	No. Repairs Assistance Awards (Incl Park Home External Wall Insulation)	No. Repairs Assistance Heating Grants	Amount Spent
2017/2018	37	56	£764,632
2018/2019	27	28	£388,338
2019/2020	18	18	£281,070

#### 4.7 External Wall Insulation Programmes

Historically, Peterborough City Council has been active in delivering energy efficiency measures to hard to treat solid walled properties. In 2014/2015 Green Deal Communities Funding delivered external wall insulation to 365 solid walled properties in the centre of the city.

The Council's Capital Programme for Repairs Assistance has funded an external wall insulation programme on the city's Park Home sites for several years. Park homes are generally occupied by vulnerable, elderly and low, fixed income households at risk of fuel poverty.

Financial Year	No of Park Homes Insulated	Amount Spent inc Associated Work
2015/2016	23	£237,750
2016/2017	24	£313,270
2017/2018	21	£219,413
2018/2019	12	£143,798

#### 4.8 Care & Repair Handyperson Scheme

The Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency also runs a Handyperson service, designed to assist elderly and disabled people to continue living independently. It delivers small scale, small value work that predominantly reduce the risks of falls. The service funds the labour costs of delivering this work, the material costs are chargeable to the client. Many requests include boiler and heating system repairs. Both Care & Repair and Age UK can also provide emergency heaters for vulnerable residents until a heating contractor can attend.

The scheme is open to vulnerable people aged 65 years of age or over and/or disabled and the client is not living with an able bodied person of working age, unless they are a full time carer. The service is also open to single parents of disabled children or very vulnerable residents. Handyperson contractors have also received training to enable them to identify the risks associated with cold homes and LEAP referrals can be made following their initial intervention.

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020 to 30/09/2020
No. of Handy Person Cases	2,033	1,812	586

#### 4.9 Falls Prevention – Say Stronger for Longer

The Home Service Delivery Team developed a falls prevention initiative, Stay Stronger for Longer, in conjunction with Public Health and the Peterborough multi agency Falls Working Group. The initiative includes a leaflet which highlights that six out of ten falls happen in the home or garden.

The Stay Stronger for Longer leaflet includes:

- A checklist to consider if the resident is at risk from falls - including if the resident is struggling with maintenance jobs around the house, if clutter has built up at home over the years and whether the resident is not always that warm at home
- How to reduce the risks from falls in the home – including eyesight changes, multiple medications, alcohol consumption and bone strength
- Falls proofing the home – heating, lighting, living areas, kitchen/bathroom, garden with a direct referral link into the Home Service Delivery Team
- Stay strong, Stay Steady – including 6 strength & balance exercises
- Stay safe out and about
- Avoiding slips and trips
- Getting up from a fall
- If a resident falls and cannot get up – including planning ahead and how to get help

The leaflet provides a checklist for residents which includes:

- Make a GP appointment to review my medication (if it hasn't been done for 12 months) or to talk about dizziness or unsteadiness and make an eye-test appointment
- Put a torch by the bed, keep landing/hall lights on at night
- Remove/tape down frayed carpet, replace worn-out slippers and clear clutter, especially in passageways, bedroom and round doorways.
- Reorganise kitchen cupboards to avoid reaching up so often
- Make a fall plan, cushions and blankets in key locations.
- Buy non-slip mats for the bathroom.
- Think: is my home warm enough? If not, request a LEAP home visit
- Find a qualified electrician if I need to change lighting. Plus a local approved handyman

for odd jobs such as changing bulbs and fitting rails etc.

In addition to this initiative, the Home Service Delivery Team offers minor aids and adaptations for low value (under £1,000) items and Technology Enabled Care items such as fall sensors.

#### **4.10 Public Health's Annual Stay Well Campaign**

Representatives from Peterborough City Council are members of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Stay Well Steering Group. The annual winter campaign includes the distribution of circa 20,000 Stay Well packs across both regions ensuring they reach the most vulnerable communities through the Stay well partners and other external organisations. Last year £50,000 was allocated to Peterborough for the Stay Well grants for heating costs to vulnerable residents in crisis which was administered by Peterborough Citizens Advice. All details of Peterborough's LEAP offer is included in these packs.

Key messages and advice on how to avoid the health risks of living in a cold home and information about what these health risks are as outlined in Public Health England's Cold Weather are also distributed as part of this campaign.

## **5. PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD**

Although significant progress has been made in recent years the main objectives of this strategy continue to be:

- **Increasing Energy Efficiency**
  - By providing schemes to increase the energy efficiency of domestic housing
  - By providing energy efficiency advice to residents across Peterborough
- **Reducing Fuel Poverty**
  - By targeting fuel poor households with assistance
  - By maximising the income of households in fuel poverty
  - By reducing household fuel bills
- **Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth**
  - By improving household heating without increasing carbon emissions where possible
  - Through crisis intervention for vulnerable people in cold homes, including heating installation and repairs
  - With help to prevent people falling into fuel poverty

The Action Plan accompanying this Strategy sets out how we are going to achieve these

objectives in the coming years.

#### 5.1 **The Home Service Delivery Team**

Peterborough City Council is uniquely placed to meet the guidelines published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) on preventing mental and physical health problems as well as deaths from cold homes. The formation of the Home Service Delivery (HSD) Team brought together Reablement, Therapy Services, the Care & Repair Home Improvement Agency and the Housing Programmes Team into one service within Adult Social Care. The Adult Early Help Team, the “Front Door” to social care, has also recently joined the service. The emphasis and focus of the team is on prevention and early intervention in order to reduce or eliminate costly domiciliary care packages.

The focus of the HSD Team is to:

- keep people living independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, therefore reducing or delaying their need for long term care

This is achieved by:

- supporting people to recover from illness or injury,
- helping people to relearn lost skills and abilities,
- utilising both technology enable care and, if necessary, adaptations
- prevent, as far as possible, admission into hospital, due to falls or medical conditions exacerbated by living in a cold, damp and unhealthy environment
- ensure that if they do need to go into hospital, they are discharged without delay into a warm, healthy, safe and accessible

The HSD Team are the single point of contact health and housing referral service based in social care for people living in cold homes. Social care and health practitioners, and other support organisations such as Age UK, the Care Network, the Fire & Rescue Service, Citizen’s Advice and local social housing providers have the ability to easily refer their vulnerable clients who are living in a cold home into the Team or into LEAP direct. This may be because of a medical condition, such as heart disease; a disability that stops them moving around to keep warm, or makes them more likely to develop chest infections. It may be personal circumstances, such as being unable to afford to keep warm enough. The HSD Team, working in partnership with health and social care colleagues, external organisations and the voluntary sector can provide tailored solutions, utilising various funding streams and advice services, to identify and help people living in cold homes.

#### 5.2 **Peterborough’s Primary Care Networks (PCNs) & Integrated Neighbourhoods**

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are a key part of the NHS Long Term Plan. The networks have expanded neighbourhood teams which will comprise a range of staff, led by GPs, including pharmacists, district nurses, matrons, community geriatricians, dementia workers and Allied Health Professionals such as physiotherapists and podiatrists/chiropractors, joined by social care and the voluntary sector. All general practices are aligned to a PCN, covering approximately 30,000-50,000 patients with proactive and co-ordinated services being developed locally, in response to the needs of the patients they serve. The focus of these services is on prevention and personalised care.

The HSD Team will continue to build on the progress made so far in aligning itself with the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. HSD Team members will continue to promote and raise awareness of the preventative services it offers to support people to relearn lost skills, maintain independence and tackle the issues of living in a cold home and being unable to afford to heat it adequately. By continuing to be part of these Teams will allow the effective identification of people at risk as well as the opportunity to make every contact count by advising health and social care practitioners on how to refer into HSD Team.

### 5.3 **GP Referrals**

The Home Service Delivery Team has been working with the three Peterborough PCN accelerators and their Integrated Neighbourhood Managers. All three have identified falls as one of their priorities. All GPs working in practices across Peterborough now have the ability to send a direct referral into the HSD Team via ASC Early Help during the GP consultation with a patient or directly after. A referral “pink button” has been added onto Systemone, the database used by all GP practices. The ability to add details whether the referral is for reablement, therapy services, Handyperson services, to address house condition or fuel poverty is also available. Direct access to Systemone for relevant HSD Team members is also being introduced. Working with the PCNs in this way will mean that we are able to identify clients earlier so that we can assist them earlier, therefore enabling them to remain independent for longer.

### 5.4 **Social Prescribing**

Sometimes a patient will seek help from their GP about a non-medical issue. This can include things like loneliness or difficulty cooking and caring for oneself. In those cases, a Social Prescribing Link Worker, based within the PCN may be able to help. This person will meet with the patient to identify what they need. They will then put them in touch with the right services. Social prescribing can include volunteering, walks through nature or joining community groups. The HSD Team managers meet periodically with the Social Prescribers across the Primary Care Networks to discuss potential referrals, advise on services available and the referral route and to feedback on the outcome of referred cases.

### 5.5 **Hospital Discharge**

The HSD Team now have established partnership working with the Hospital Transfer of Care Team, the Care Network, who are based in the hospital and support people out of hospital and the Red Cross who provide the Hospital at Home service.

Many people being discharged from hospital are referred through for up to 6 weeks of Reablement and all front line Reablement staff have been trained on LEAP referrals and the wider services available to ensure residents are discharged into a safe and warm environment or any issues are picked up as a matter of urgency when they are returned home.

Every effort is made to ensure that all the practitioners involved in the discharge ensure the home is warm enough. This could include simple measures such as turning on the heating before discharge, providing advice on the ill effects of cold on health, or providing advice on how to use the heating system. If needed, the client can be referred into the HSD Team if the heating system needs replacing or the property needs insulating, or to prevent or address fuel debt which may

accrue during someone's stay in health or social care accommodation.

In recent years extra Disabled Facility Grant Allocation within the Better Care Fund has been available to enable local authorities to introduce more flexible and responsive ways to help reduce pressures on health and social care. The Council's Housing Renewal Policy introduced a discretionary grant to support speedy transfers of care from hospital, reduce admission and readmission to hospital and to reduce the cost of domiciliary care packages by improving house condition (including addressing fuel poverty and Excess Cold). The discretionary grant is up to £6,000 and can be used alongside installing technology enabled care and providing adaptations.

#### 5.6 **Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings**

The Housing Programmes Manager is now a member of the NHS Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) for Peterborough – City 1 & 2. This MDT brings together health and care staff who are members of different organisations and professions (e.g. GPs, social workers, district nurses, community physiotherapist, mental health workers), that work together to make decisions regarding the treatment of individual patients and service users within a specified area. The Housing Programmes Manager picks up and progresses all housing issues emanating from the meetings, including securing suitable housing and housing condition which assists vulnerable residents living in cold homes who are repeatedly being admitted to hospital due to falls and recurring respiratory illness.

#### 5.7 **LEAP & ECO Flexible Eligibility**

LEAP will continue to be the main fuel poverty outreach service for the Council.

- 5.7.1 A referral into LEAP can trigger a host of additional services described in Section 4 above. LEAP services will continue to be advertised on the Council's website, through Facebook Campaigns and on Insite throughout the year. Green Energy Switch also promote the service widely and Housing Programmes staff attend appropriate internal Team Meetings to advise staff on the services and referral routes into the scheme. HSD Team Managers promote the Scheme to a wide range of partner organisations – such as the Older People's Partnership Board, the Carer's Board and the Disability Forum.

It is expected that approximately 1,200 referrals will be made per annum (dependent on funding availability)

- 5.7.2 The Council will continue to review and, if necessary, update its Statement of Intent which describes the criteria the Council intends to use to target households under Flexible Eligibility for ECO funding for energy efficiency measures.

#### 5.8 **Green Home Grant**

A £2 billion Green Homes Grant Scheme announced by the Chancellor on 8 July 2020 to help fund energy efficient upgrades to households across England. There are two main element to

this scheme

- 5.8.1 The Green Homes Grants in England are available to both owner-occupiers and landlords. They will fund up to two-thirds of the cost of installing eligible energy efficiency measures through a voucher scheme, up to a maximum of £5000 per property. This is to be delivered via companies that are registered through the Trustmark or Microgeneration Certification Scheme. Grants will become available at the end of September and will be available for works completed by 31 March 2021.

Residents may be able to receive a higher level of subsidy if they are a homeowner and either they or a member of their household receives one of the qualifying means-tested benefits, covering 100% of the cost of the improvements. The maximum value of this voucher is £10,000. Landlords cannot apply for the low-income part of the scheme. The government has created an easy to use tool on the Simple Energy Advice website to establish what home owners/landlords can do to their property with some indicative costs

- 5.8.2 £500 million has been earmarked specifically for delivery through a Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme. Under this competition, Local Authorities across England can bid for funding to improve the energy efficiency of low income, fuel poor households in their local area.

Peterborough City Council, as part of the Warmer Homes Consortium have submitted a bid for Round 1 of Local Authority Delivery element of this funding (a total of £200 million) and were notified on the 1 October 2020 that bid was successful within our existing Warmer Homes scheme. The grant funding awarded is £3,100,500.00 to target 300 homes overall (predominantly owner occupied and privately rented) with a mixture of primary insulation or low carbon heating measures and secondary measures such as double glazing and smart heating controls.

Funding has to be spent by 31 March 2021 and we are already working on plans to target and approach suitable households (EPC rating of E, F and G and a gross household income of less than £30,000).

The LEAP scheme has strong referral networks and brand awareness in place and so it is the intention to promote this LAD project alongside LEAP as an extension to the trusted 'Warmer Homes' offer. The consortium members have together identified many thousands of properties with an EPC rating of E, F or G in target areas of deprivation and the figure of 300 represents a small fraction of the number of households that could be helped. This reflects the very tight timescale of the LAD project, together with the anticipated difficulties of working over the winter in a Covid-19 pandemic. Consortium members are keen to ensure success and build on this initial project to secure further funding in future Green Homes Grant rounds. Round 2 is expected to total £300 million of funding overall.

## 5.9 **Landmark Data**

Because of recent Government relaxations local authorities now have access to Landmark data which is the register of lodged Energy Performance Certificates. As at March 2020, 74,490 EPCs

have been lodged for Peterborough UA.

An initial search of the data where the tenure is present revealed:

Tenure	EPC Rating E	EPC Rating F & G
Owner Occupiers	4,326	939
Private Rented	2,249	334
Social Rent	219	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,794</b>	<b>1,300</b>

More work is currently being carried out on this data in order to actively target the properties that would benefit from appropriate funding streams, including both elements of the Green Homes Grant. Properties that are owner occupied or privately rented, have an EPC rating of E to G and have the recommended measure of external wall insulation, are being particularly targeted for the LAD element of the Green Homes Grant.

#### **5.10 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Energy Efficiency Standard**

The data obtained through the MEES Pilot Study described in Section 4.5 above will be used for direct targeting of F & G privately rented properties and potential funding assistance through the Warm Homes Fund and the Green Homes Grant.

The PES Housing Enforcement Team now have the powers and a policy in place for potential enforcement of the MEES regulations from April 2021 onwards, although properties currently being inspected in the Selective licensing area may be subject to earlier enforcement if appropriate funding opportunities are not taken up.



## 6. Affordable Warmth Strategy – Action Plan

No	Action	Priority	KPI	Responsibility	Delivery
1.	To develop further the Home Service Delivery Team to become the single point of referral for health and social care professionals, internal departmental colleagues and other external statutory and voluntary agencies	Increasing Energy Efficiency  Reducing Fuel Poverty		Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing  Housing Programmes Manager	Ongoing throughout the Strategy
2.	To carry out appropriate housing energy advice and support activities on how to achieve affordable warmth through lifestyles changes, accessing cheaper energy tariffs, and taking advantage of government and energy company grants to improve the energy efficiency of people's homes.	Increasing Energy Efficiency  Reducing Fuel Poverty  Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth	Achieve 1,200 referrals into LEAP per year (subject to funding availability)	Home Service Delivery Team – Housing Programmes  LEAP – Agility Eco and Green Energy Switch	Ongoing throughout the Strategy
3.	To develop further collaborative working with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, Multi-Disciplinary Teams and GP Practices to raise awareness of the health impact of living in cold homes	Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth		Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing  Housing Programmes Manager	Ongoing throughout the Strategy
4.	To identify homes where an excess cold hazard exists and to take appropriate action to reduce the hazard. This may include the use of external grant funding or enforcement action in the	Increasing Energy Efficiency  Reducing Fuel Poverty  Improving	Cat 1 hazards for Excess Cold dealt with  100% spend of the Capital Programme for Repairs	Home Service Delivery Team – Housing Programmes Care & Repair  Prevention & Enforcement –	Ongoing throughout the Strategy but Repairs Assistance dependent on funding availability

	case of privately-rented accommodation and internal and external financial assistance for vulnerable owner-occupiers	Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth	Assistance  No of Improvement Notices served	Housing Enforcement	
5.	To work with the Peterborough Falls Working group to continue to develop multi agency working and identifying projects that prevent people falling across all vulnerable groups and promote the Stronger for Longer campaign and strength and balance exercise	Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth		Home Service Delivery Team	Ongoing throughout the Strategy
6.	To review and implement the Council's Statement of Intent on delivering ECO Flexible Eligibility to reach as many vulnerable households as possible	Increasing Energy Efficiency  Reducing Fuel Poverty  Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth		Home Services Delivery Team – Housing Programmes	Ongoing throughout the Strategy
7.	To continue to utilise discretionary funding to expediate the discharge from hospital, of vulnerable residents into a warm and safe home environment		100% of Discretionary Grant to Support ASC budget spent	Home Services Delivery Team – Housing Programmes Reablement Team Adult Early Help	Ongoing throughout the Strategy but dependent on funding availability
8.	Identify external sources of funding that could be accessed to support affordable warmth work e.g. Green Homes Grant LAD Round 2	Increasing Energy Efficiency  Reducing Fuel Poverty		Home Services Delivery Team – Housing Programmes	Ongoing throughout the Strategy but dependent on opportunities for external funding bids

		Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth			
9.	To continue to refer into the Warm Homes Consortium properties that are off gas and are energy inefficient for first time central heating	Increasing Energy Efficiency Reducing Fuel Poverty Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth		Home Service Delivery Team – Housing Programmes  Prevention & Enforcement – Housing Enforcement	Referrals until the end of the Project May 2021
10.	To enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector utilising Landmark EPC data to effectively target activity	Increasing Energy Efficiency Reducing Fuel Poverty Improving Health and Wellbeing through Increasing Affordable Warmth	No. of F & G rented properties taken to EPC E and above  No of FPNs issued for not having an EPC	Prevention & Enforcement – Housing Enforcement  Home Service Delivery Team – Housing Programmes	Ongoing throughout the Strategy

