



Cold Weather Resilience Plan

Welsh Government Warm Homes Programme

Introduction

This is a briefing for our member housing associations on the [Cold Weather Resilience Plan](#) developed by the Welsh government and published 2nd December 2021. The plan aims to set out how the government will work with key partners to safeguard vulnerable and low income households during periods of cold weather. It highlights that cold weather has a significant outcome on health and well-being and the Welsh government affirms its commitment to improving the lives of people in Wales and significantly reducing the negative outcomes resulting from living in a cold home.

The plan sets out some reactive measures to help when people are in a crisis and looks further ahead by setting out preventive measures that homeowners, private rented landlords and registered social landlords should all look to implement. It sets out three main objectives which link closely to the policy goals in the [Tackling Fuel Poverty Plan 2021-2035](#):

1. To provide advice and support to vulnerable and lower income households to support householders to better prepare for cold weather.
2. To help low income households maintain/improve the energy and thermal efficiency of their homes.
3. To work with partners to better coordinate advice and support services to vulnerable and lower income households to reduce the risk of avoidable ill health resulting from living in a cold home.



Key areas of interest are;

UK Government schemes

Warm Homes Discount

Energy Suppliers can offer a [Warm Homes Discount](#) to qualifying households. This is a discount of £140 off electricity bills. The payment is a one off discount applied to electricity bills between October and March. This discount can be applied to the gas bill instead if the supplier provides both gas and electricity to the household.

Cold Weather Payments

[Cold Weather Payments](#) are available to households in receipt of certain benefits. This UK Government scheme provides help to individuals on benefits who are the most vulnerable to the cold: such as:

- Older people in receipt of Pension Credit
- Disabled adults, families with disabled children or families with a child under 5 who are in receipt of Universal Credit or one of the following legacy benefits:
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related employment and support allowance
 - Income support

These payments become payable if the average temperature in an area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees celsius or below for seven consecutive days. The amount payable is £25 for each seven days period of very cold weather occurring during the scheme period of 1 November to 31 March.

Winter Fuel Payment

[The Winter Fuel Payment](#) assists with the cost of domestic energy during winter. People born on or before 1954 (aged 65 and over) may be eligible for payments valued between £100-£300. This payment is usually made automatically for eligible beneficiaries who are entitled to State Pensions or another benefit (excluding Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit, Universal Credit)

Welsh Government Schemes

Winter Fuel Support Scheme

From the 13th December eligible people in Wales may be able to claim a one-off £100 payment through the [Winter Fuel Support Scheme](#) from their local authority to provide support towards paying their winter fuel bills. Information on how to apply can be found via Local Authority webpages.



Discretionary Assistance Fund

The [Welsh government Discretionary Assistance Fund](#) (DAF) makes Emergency Assistant Payments (EAPs) as a non payable grant to help with essential costs for people in crisis situations and in need of immediate financial support. This payment can help people experiencing financial hardship meet their food, gas, electricity needs as well as assisting with boiler repairs and oil and liquid purchases.

Since 2018, the DAF has further been expanded to support people unable to cover the cost of a call out fee for a gas safe engineer and minor repair.

The Welsh government is currently working with Energy Savings Trust, Citizens Advice Cymru, NEA and NEC Software solutions. Emergency Assistance payments of up to £120 can be authorised subject to meeting certain eligibility criteria, to meet the cost of the repair.

Advice Service

The Welsh Government plans to work closely with third sector partners and related agencies to support income maximisation and promote the provision of these services. Housing associations and their community development teams have a critical role to play in alerting tenants to these schemes and helping them apply for the provisions that the Welsh government makes available.

Maintenance and Repairs

Registered Social Landlords must encourage tenants to report maintenance issues, and all maintenance issues affecting thermal efficiency must be prioritised.

Hospital to a Healthier Home

This is a service which is delivered by Care and Repair Cymru and funded by the Welsh Government since January 2019. The [Hospital to Healthier Home](#) service aims to facilitate safer and quicker discharges from hospital for vulnerable older patients of whom may benefit from home adaptations and implementing solutions rapidly.

Next Steps

The Cold Weather Resilience Plan highlights the Welsh government's commitment to working with third sector parties such as housing associations for the shared common goal of promoting better health and well-being during periods of cold weather. At CHC we are dedicated to briefing you on the Welsh government's latest plans to tackle fuel poverty and updating you on the support available to fuel poor tenants.



Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on the Warm Homes Programme

The Equality and Social Justice Committee is undertaking a [short inquiry](#) into fuel poverty and the Welsh Government's Warm Homes Programme.

Information is being requested on, for example, the lessons learned from the Programme, the next iteration of the Programme, and how it can be better aligned with decarbonisation. If you have any thoughts on the Programme, included on Nest and/or Arbed, please contact bethan-proctor@chcymru.org.uk

For more information or to discuss this area please contact Bethan Proctor, Policy and External Affairs Manager at Bethan-Proctor@chcymru.org.uk