



# WARM, SAFE AND HEALTHY AT HOME

## NATIONAL ENERGY ACTION'S MANIFESTO FOR HOMES 2024

**Everyone should be able to live in a warm, safe and healthy home. Despite recent falls in energy prices, this is denied to millions of people across the United Kingdom because of poor housing, low incomes and high energy bills.**

Record levels of energy debt crush household budgets, put up prices for all consumers and reduce economic activity. Millions of the poorest households use far more energy than they should have to, due to their homes being woefully energy inefficient. There are legal targets to end fuel poverty in England, Wales and Scotland, and similar emerging commitments in Northern Ireland for a new fuel poverty strategy. Delivering these legal duties would generate huge societal, economic and environmental benefits.

The action to deliver these targets is missing. This means too many households across the UK are:

### **Cold**

Households cannot afford to heat their homes to a reasonable standard of warmth and are living in cold, damp homes. Beyond the money needed to afford heating, people are not able to cook a hot meal or use hot water for washing.

### **Unsafe**

Households are routinely turning to unsafe practices to stay warm at home. These include using candles as the main source of lighting; using unsafe or unserviced heating appliances; or even burning furniture for warmth. This puts themselves and nearby neighbours at risk and puts pressure on our emergency services.

### **Unhealthy**

Households underheating their homes can be dangerous to their physical and mental health, or even fatal. People can't even afford to refrigerate their food or medicines. As well as human misery, this creates needless pressure on our already stretched health and social care services.

## OUR KEY PROPOSALS

### **Realise the full benefits of meeting the legal fuel poverty commitments**

There is a legal obligation for the UK government to ensure that all fuel poor households in England reach a minimum of EPC C by the end of 2030. Improving the energy efficiency of fuel poor homes cuts bills, reduces carbon output and improves lives. Early progress next parliament to improve the energy efficiency of fuel poor homes is essential if statutory fuel poverty and carbon targets are to be met. As well as building on and better targeting current programmes, this must include local delivery of energy efficiency measures, a national self-referral scheme and new standards for landlords to meet.

### **Provide vulnerable households with more support for unaffordable energy bills**

Households remain in crisis over energy bills. YouGov polling at the end of March, commissioned by National Energy Action, found that 34% of GB adults say they have found it difficult to afford paying their energy bills. With other organisations, National Energy Action is calling on all political parties to introduce a mandated energy social tariff, providing lower bills or deeper energy discounts for the most vulnerable households.

### **Address crushing levels of energy debt which is putting up prices and reducing economic activity**

Energy debt is now at record levels, totalling more than £3 billion across GB. Alongside debt charities, National Energy Action is calling for the new government to introduce a new 'help to repay' scheme to accelerate the repayment of energy debt to put extra money back into people's pockets and support local economies.