

Fuel Poverty Strategy

2023 – 2030

Hammersmith and Fulham Council



Joint strategy between the Climate Unit and Public Health

Foreword

Hammersmith & Fulham Council is dedicated to tackling fuel poverty and ensuring every resident can stay warm and healthy. We know how difficult this has become during the cost-of-living crisis. To help our residents, we were the first local authority to offer universal free school breakfasts, so no child goes hungry. We abolished home care charges for Older People and Disabled People and have frozen or cut service charges across the council in real terms. In 2022-2023 alone we secured £10 million worth of Cost-of-Living support by being ruthlessly financially efficient.

But we aren't going to stop there. That's why this H&F Fuel Poverty Strategy outlines a plan to engage with all fuel poor homes and slash fuel poverty rates across the borough by 2030.

What is Fuel Poverty?

The Government define a household as being in fuel poverty if they are:

- Living in a home with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of D and below, and
- Will be pushed under the poverty line by paying their energy bills.

Generally speaking, a household is in fuel poverty if its tenants struggle to pay their energy bills and keep their home heated to a comfortable level. In Hammersmith & Fulham about 11.3% of residents are in fuel poverty, compared to 13.4% across all of England. The council have set a target to reduce this to less than 5% of residents in each ward across the borough by 2030.

Why do we need to act?

We believe every resident should have the ability to stay warm and healthy without the fear of putting themselves into poverty. Cold homes can pose many health risks to residents including an increased chance of developing heart and lung related diseases. Poorly heated homes can also have a negative impact on residents' mental health and leave them feeling isolated. These issues often have the biggest impact on the most vulnerable in our community.

At Hammersmith & Fulham Council, two of our core values are being a compassionate council and building shared prosperity for all. To live up to these values and ensure the good health of every H&F resident, it is vital we tackle fuel poverty.

What are the Council going to do?

Our Fuel Poverty Strategy outlines four key objectives we want to achieve by 2030.

- 1. Reduce bills for residents** by improving the energy efficiency of H&F housing.
- 2. Improve how we identify fuel poor residents** to maximise the levels of support we offer.
- 3. Develop services that help fuel poor residents** through the council and other organisations.
- 4. Empower residents to access services** and spread awareness of the help available.

To achieve these objectives, we're identifying residents who are most in need and ensuring they have a pathway out of fuel poverty. In October 2023, we'll be launching our Winter Ready Homes scheme to help residents improve the energy efficiency of their homes. We're also working with partners at the National Energy Foundation and Groundworks to ensure all residents have access to the help they're entitled to.

1. Strategy on a page

What do we need to do?

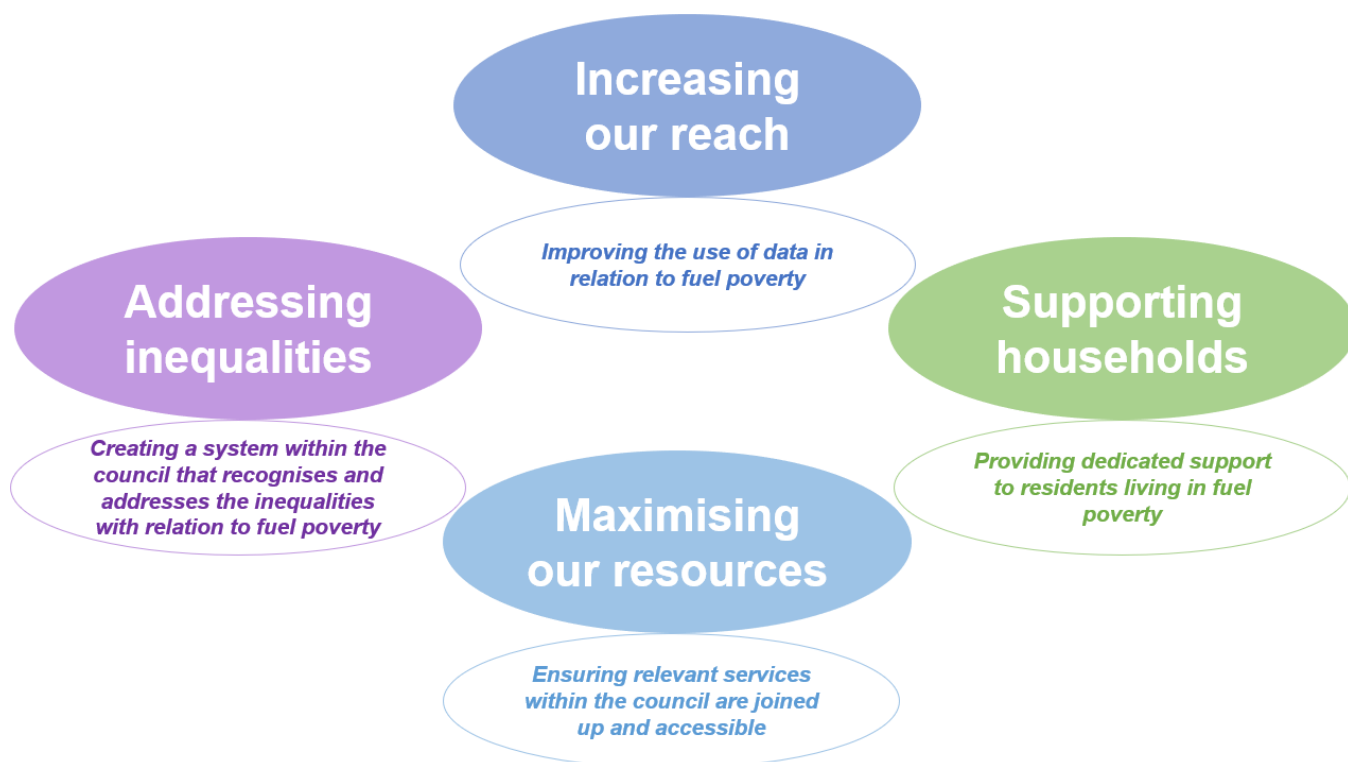
Objective 1: To reduce bills for residents by improving the energy efficiency of the H&F housing stock, reducing carbon emissions from housing, and improving air quality.

Objective 2: To improve the process for identifying fuel poor residents and provide targeted support in the short and long term.

Objective 3: To develop, improve and maximise existing services that support fuel poor residents within the council and through other organisations including the voluntary and community sector.

Objective 4: To empower residents to be aware of support that is available and how they can

How will we do it?



Context

In 2019, Hammersmith and Fulham Council announced a **climate and ecological emergency**, shortly followed by the Climate and Ecology strategy, setting out the pathway to 2030. Since this strategy was published:

- The **Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis** have severely impacted residents of the borough, with job losses, increasing bills and rising prices of essentials like food.
- **Inflation peaked at over 11%** in October 2022, with research showing that underlying inflation for local prices in London has consistently been found to track 1.5 percentage points higher than the national figure.
- **Energy prices have risen threefold since 2020**, causing inflated energy bills across the country, and prompting the introduction of the Energy Price Guarantee (EPG) to protect individuals from the full extent of the crisis.

2. The future of fuel poverty in H&F

2030 Vision

In 2030, all residents will be able to heat their homes comfortably and affordably, and in cases where they cannot, support is in place and available via the Council. Support from the Council is well known and provides critical support to residents in challenging times. H&F is committed to ending fuel poverty in the borough.

Residents will understand the benefits of energy efficiency, both from a personal perspective through bill reductions and a warmer home, and from a societal perspective, through reduced energy use and thus reduced emissions. Residents are conscious of their energy use, and make sure to turn off lights, maximise boiler efficiency and use efficient appliances and heat sources. Residents can make use of reduced bills to heat their homes more in really cold times, improving both comfort and mental health.



There is a reduction in rates of cold-related illnesses in the borough, in particular the rate of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions is now low. Generally, residents feel comfortable and warm in their homes and their home situation does not exacerbate existing conditions, such as arthritis. Residents are confident in the warmth of their home and are happy to have visitors, reducing social exclusion. Having security over their energy bills means that residents' mental health is positively affected.

Residents are actively seeking ways to make sure their home is 'green', investigating options to move away from gas heating. The Council are supportive and encouraging of residents in decarbonising their homes, and support and funding is provided for those that do not have the financial means to make improvements.

Overall, energy bills are no longer a primary concern in terms of household expenses, and residents know how to seek support in cases where they are struggling.

The next year in H&F

The publication of this Fuel Poverty Strategy is an indication of the drive to make change, and the need to take action in light of the energy price and cost of living crises. In the next year, we plan to:

1. Run an **H&F small energy efficiency measures scheme** that will empower residents to improve their own energy efficiency and achieve bill savings on their own terms.
2. **Increase the presence of fuel poverty support in the borough** by running energy advice and support sessions, coordinating with the Cost-of-Living team to provide holistic support to residents.
3. Work with external groups to **seek funding** to support community-based projects supporting residents in become more fuel secure.
4. **Expand promotion of available funding** to support retrofit and energy efficiency works.
5. Launch the **fuel poverty dataset** and begin to use this for targeting.
6. **Reach all homes** through leafletting and other broad campaigns.

3. Background

a. What is fuel poverty?

A household is said to be in fuel poverty when residents cannot afford to heat their home to a reasonable level. This means that they are unable to, or will struggle to, pay their fuel bills. **In 2022, the energy price crisis has exacerbated fuel poverty, with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reporting that 4.7million people are behind on their bills.**

When fuel poverty escalates to the point of emergency, this is called **fuel crisis**. Generally, fuel crisis is exclusive to those who pre-pay for energy, as if they do not have the funds to top up then they will be left in the cold and dark. Someone is defined as in fuel crisis if they are unable to pay for energy now or will be unable to pay within 48 hours. Fuel poverty and fuel crisis are not mutually exclusive; someone with an EPC C or above could be in fuel crisis, however they would not be defined as in fuel poverty, whilst someone else could be experiencing long term issues with energy bills and be in fuel poverty, but not have reached the point of fuel crisis.

Households are defined by Government to be in fuel poverty under the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) metric if¹:

- They are living in a property with an **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of band D or below** (low energy efficiency), and
- When they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a **residual income below the official poverty line** (low income)

The latter part of the definition can show the difference between a household's income and the income they need to be no longer considered fuel poor. This is known as the fuel poverty gap. In light of the current energy price crisis, it is worth noting that **the LILEE fuel poverty definition will omit many households living in a property with EPC C or higher nevertheless struggling to pay energy bills.**

b. What causes fuel poverty?

Fuel poverty can be caused by 3 main factors:

1. Household income - a household with low-income may have serious competing financial pressures. For example, needing to choose between heating and eating. Many opt to forego heating their home.
2. Household energy requirements - if the property is energy inefficient, more energy is required to heat the property. Some households may have illnesses or disabilities that rely on an energy intensive routine.
3. Fuel prices – household energy bills are likely to be nearly double 2020 levels in winter 2023/24¹ due to the recent spike in gas and electricity prices. Fuel prices can have a significant impact on fuel poverty by increasing the unit cost of the energy required.

The recent spike in energy prices means that it's likely fuel poverty will have increased significantly this year due to factor 3, although statistics reflecting this are yet to be published by Government due to a time lag in the data publication.

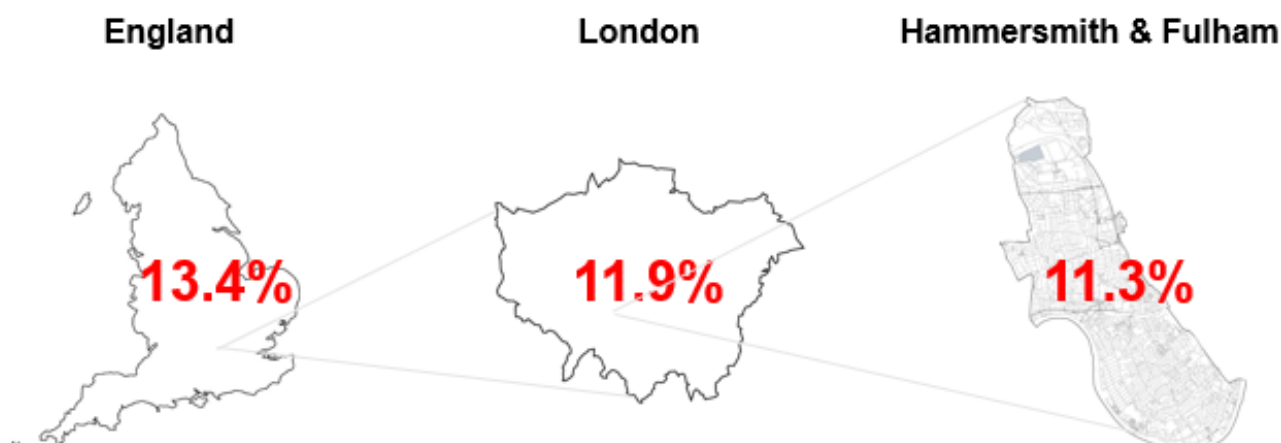
c. What is the impact of fuel poverty?

¹ [Martin Lewis: What the energy price cap change means for you](#)

Cold, underheated homes pose many risks to residents, in particular to both physical and mental health, and are associated with excess winter deaths – this is defined as ‘the increase in mortality during winter months (December to March) compared with non-winter months (the preceding August to November and the following April to July)². **There is a strong relationship between cold temperatures and cardio-vascular and respiratory diseases; with each 1C drop in temperature below 5C, GP consultations for respiratory illness in older people increase by 19%, and hospital admissions for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), commonly linked with fuel poverty, are four times more likely to happen over winter.**³ Studies have also found that countries with more energy efficient housing have lower excess winter deaths, and that they are almost three times higher in the coldest quarter of housing than in the warmest quarter.⁴

As well as long-term health conditions, cold housing also increases the level of minor illnesses such as colds and flu and exacerbates existing conditions such as arthritis and rheumatism. Additionally, cold homes can have a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing, with **a quarter of adolescents living in cold housing at risk of multiple mental health issues**, compared to 5% of adolescents who have always lived in warm housing. Residents of cold homes also report an impact on social activities, for example they may not want to invite friends over because the house is cold or only a small part is heated, which also has a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing by leading to social isolation.⁵

d. What do current rates of fuel poverty look like?



In 2022, it was estimated that 13.4% of households in England are fuel poor under the LILEE definition, equating to approximately 3.3 million homes. The average fuel poverty gap across England was estimated at £338 per household. Over the same period, the average fuel poverty rate in London was 11.9%, with an average fuel poverty gap of £223 per household.⁶ **In H&F specifically⁷, 11.3% of households were estimated to be fuel poor in 2021** under the LILEE definition, which equates to 9,738 households within the Borough.

² Excess winter mortality in England and Wales: 2020 to 2021 (provisional) and 2019 to 2020 (final) [Excess winter mortality in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

³ National Energy Action, Under One Roof: [NEA-Under-One-Roof-FULL-REPORT-FINAL-Feb-19-1.pdf](https://www.nea.org.uk)

⁴ The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty: [the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty.pdf \(instituteofhealthequity.org\)](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org)

⁵ NICE guidance on cold homes: [Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes \(nice.org.uk\)](https://www.nice.org.uk)

⁶ The latest ONS data on fuel poverty at LA level is for 2021 and does not take into account the increases in energy prices since 2021 (ref: [Annual fuel poverty statistic report: 2023 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)) Fuel poverty statistics are based on data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) which is modelled with data from other sources. Note in 2020/21 there were issues due to the pandemic in sample size covering London.

⁷ The total number of households in H&F used as part of this dataset is 85,897. Where it was possible the new wards boundaries have been used. To carry out some parts of this analysis data has been recalculated to fit the new ward boundaries.

The near tripling in energy prices since 2020 will have led to significant increases in fuel poverty rates, even using the LILEE definition that excludes any household living in a property rated EPC C or higher. Higher rates of inflation in London could lead to a disproportionate impact on the capital and thus H&F, with research showing that underlying inflation for local prices in London has consistently been found to track 1.5 percentage points higher than the national figure.⁸ Indeed, **the ONS's data on poverty from 2021 shows that 23.3% of H&F residents are living in poverty, significantly higher than the fuel poverty rate in the borough (11.3%) and higher than the average poverty rate across England (20.1%).**⁹

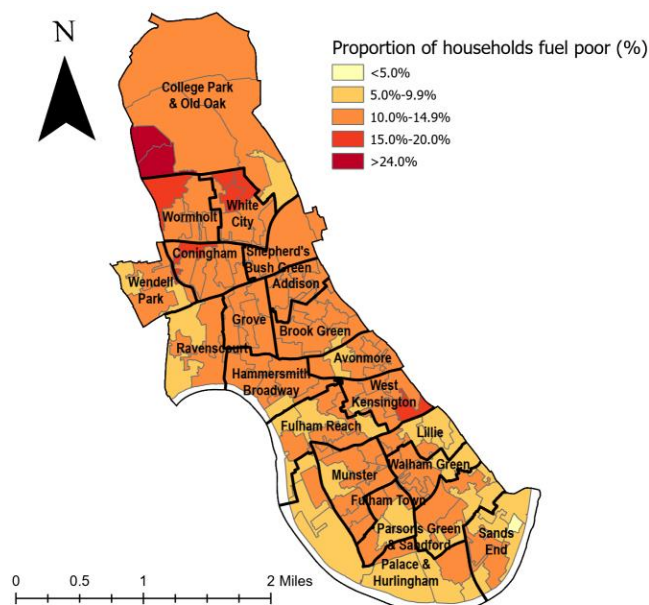


Figure 1 - Fuel poverty rates mapped by LSOA, including ward boundaries

Looking at the geographical distribution of fuel poverty using 2021 data (Figure 1), fuel poverty rates are higher in the more deprived wards in the north of H&F, with College Park and Old Oak having the highest overall fuel poverty rate at 15.6%; notably higher than the average rates both nationally (13.4%) and in London (11.9%).

e. How can this be addressed?

As mentioned earlier, there are three key causes of fuel poverty: household income, the energy demand of the property, and energy prices. Whilst the council does not have control over how energy prices are set, this still means that there some clear methodologies to reduce fuel poverty, in particular:

- **Maximising household income** – this includes ensuring residents are accessing all benefits and financial support they are eligible for, as well as supporting people into work where this is possible.
- **Improving energy efficiency** – this means retrofitting housing to ensure that residential buildings are efficient, reducing energy demand and thus both reducing bills for residents and reducing energy waste and carbon emissions related to heating and powering a home.

H&F's fuel poverty strategy will seek to use both of these methodologies to ensure a reduction in the rates of fuel poverty across the borough by 2030. The objectives set will reflect the key pathways out of fuel poverty and the action plan will set a clear strategy for achieving these.

More detailed analysis and information of fuel poverty can be found in Annex 1.

⁸ Research by City Hall: [Research shows Londoners are worst affected by soaring inflation | London City Hall](#)

⁹ ONS data on health conditions and poverty: [Estimating the number of people with cardiovascular or respiratory conditions living in poverty, England - Office for National Statistics](#)

4. Policy context

a. Summary of current support services

There are different ways to address fuel poverty, both directly and indirectly. Most of the national policy in this area is focused on improving energy efficiency and energy performance, targeting funding to homes on the lowest incomes. Government efforts to improve energy performance are split into regulation, setting rules for individuals on the energy performance and other standards they must reach, and grant funding, providing government money to support the improvement of energy efficiency. Since the recent spike in energy prices, H&F has been dedicated to alleviating fuel poverty in the borough and has sought to tackle this issue through the establishment of its Cost-of-Living crisis team, the Green Doctors scheme, and by seeking additional funding through streams like energy bill support. In addition to securing funding from national government, the council also continues to work closely with public institutions including the National Energy Foundation to secure the best outcomes for its residents.

Historically, H&F has sought central government funding to support investment in energy efficiency within the borough. H&F has previously been involved in all phases of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme, the first phase of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG), and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund demonstrator project. Additionally, the council has recently promoted the Greater London Authority's Warmer Homes scheme, a version of the HUG and LAD schemes. All of these schemes have delivered measures to residents to support them making their homes warmer and cheaper to heat. H&F intends to continue tapping into government support where available.

A summary of the broader types of fuel poverty support is detailed in Figure 2. Further details of these support services can be found in Annex 2.

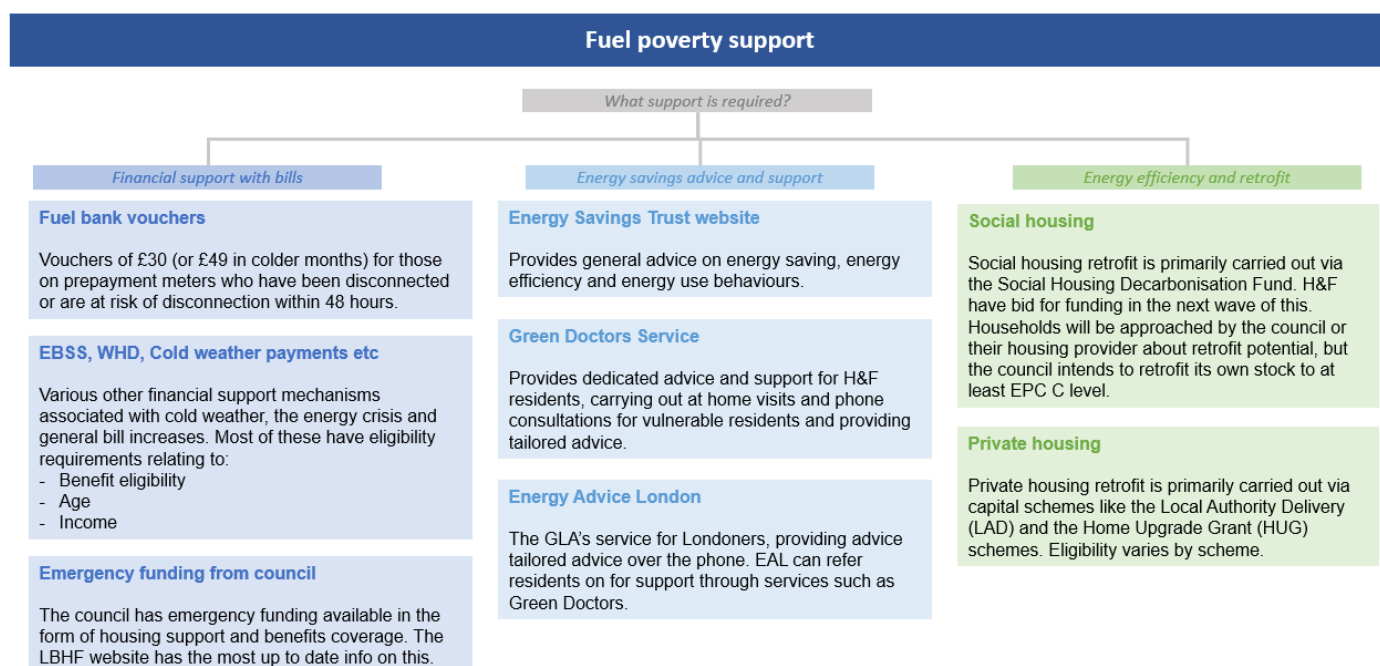


Figure 2 - Fuel poverty support services

b. Gaps in provision

Whilst there is some support in place, **government investment is significantly below what is needed to reach the targets it has set.** Data from the English Housing Survey estimates that the cost of getting all homes to C (where possible) is over £94bn. This cost does not include the additional support that might be required in the interim before energy efficiency can be installed,

such as additional bill support and a broader campaign for awareness. Meanwhile, the government’s Help for Household website states that so far, the government has only invested £12bn in energy efficiency related schemes. Additionally, the vast majority of the support available does not extend beyond immediate support during the current cost of living crisis. This means there is a lack of a forward look and long-term planning for energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. In terms of fuel poverty, all of the support currently available from the government is focused on homes below EPC C only. Whilst this aligns with the formal LILEE definition, this is a particular concern as there are likely to be people living in homes above this level that are still struggling given current energy prices and therefore represents a large gap in the government support available.

Local councils are in a difficult position as there is a significant funding gap to make up for. In particular, the support provided by the government is very short term in nature, which makes it difficult to effectively plan. Additionally, mirroring the situation nationally, there is an absence of support for those struggling with fuel poverty in homes with an EPC C or higher, where these groups may be seeing significant bill increases due to current energy prices. In H&F, greater awareness of the issues surrounding fuel poverty is needed, and the actions of this strategy will reflect efforts to scale this up. The council will work to secure funding across different energy efficiency schemes, as there are areas where the council can fully capitalised on support available. H&F are also working closely with public institutions including the National Energy Foundation to maximise the assistance it provides residents. The decision tree in Figure 3 demonstrates the gaps in the current provisions.

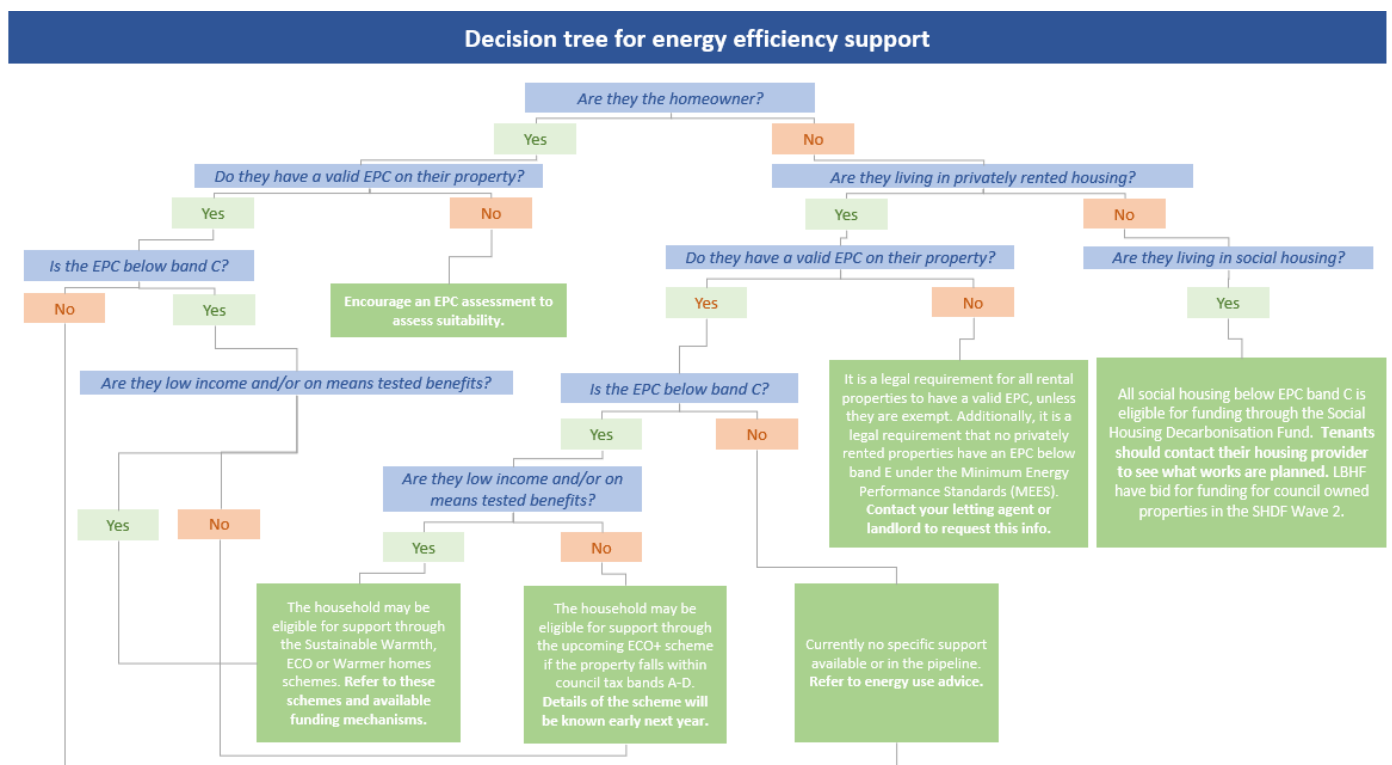


Figure 3 - Decision tree for energy efficiency support

5. Setting objectives

In the long-term, **the intention of this strategy is to reduce rates of fuel poverty in the borough so that everyone can afford to heat their homes appropriately.** Improving rates of fuel poverty will require significant effort on communicating the different avenues for support, working on identifying fuel poor homes, and working with the community to develop a better understanding of fuel poverty and the ways to reduce the impacts.

H&F has over 9,000 residents who are considered fuel poor by the LILEE definition, and potentially a much larger number are struggling with energy bills given current prices. Reducing the number of these and providing long term support to vulnerable residents is a key priority for the council to ensure a reduction in inequalities, as the fuel poor community correlates with those with protected characteristics, and to ensure stability in residents' finances.

With this outcome in mind, exploration of the needs of the council has led to the development of the following objectives:

Objective 1: To reduce bills for residents by improving the energy efficiency of the H&F housing stock, reducing carbon emissions from housing, and improving air quality

One of the most effective ways to reduce fuel poverty is to improve energy efficiency, improving the thermal performance of buildings and making them easier and cheaper to heat, and reducing energy demand. Improving energy efficiency includes things like installing insulation, installing low carbon heating systems, or improving energy use behaviours. H&F will encourage the uptake of energy efficiency schemes run by central government and will work to improve energy use advice and promote the services that offer this. Reducing energy demand has a direct impact on the environment, reducing carbon emissions associated with housing.

What are the concerns in this area?

- H&F's **housing stock is old and inefficient**, with around 90% of homes being solid walled and around a third built before 1900, and this means it is traditionally difficult to retrofit. There is a need for significant investment in the housing stock to ensure that overarching climate objectives can be met, such as Net Zero by 2030. Reducing the council's carbon emissions requires a reduction in emissions from council-owned properties, which currently make up 83% of total emissions.
- One of the key concerns in this area is **take up of measures**. Retrofit requires access to peoples' homes and can be invasive and disruptive. The nature of the home-by-home approach to most retrofit, designed as each home will have individual requirements, means that energy efficiency works on an opt-in basis by default. Ensuring understanding of energy efficiency measures and emphasising the benefits that they can bring across the borough and among residents is critical to the success of retrofit in H&F, to minimise resident refusal.
- Another key concern is **installer capacity**; there has been higher demand for energy efficiency measures and retrofit in recent years as government has rolled out several schemes providing funding for these works. However, this increased demand, combined with impacts on business from the Covid pandemic, has meant there has been a strain on the supply chain to actually deliver these works. H&F's retrofit strategy will address installer capacity and ways to address this within the borough.

Objective 2: To improve the process for identifying fuel poor residents and provide targeted support in the short and long term

One of the main challenges to addressing fuel poverty is identifying affected households. There is a significant time lag in the publication of data on fuel poverty, and this data relates to the formal LILEE definition, rather than the broader understanding of fuel poverty. EPC data can be used to help identify these homes, and H&F will investigate further data sources that could also be used. Additionally, there are pre-existing community networks and charities that the Council works with, who have direct contact with residents that H&F will tap into to help improve the targeting of support. We will strengthen our relationship with the voluntary and community sector to improve our reach. Given the current cost of living crisis there is a need for immediate support for vulnerable residents and improving the identification process will help target the available services to those who need them most. H&F will provide additional help to residents in the short-term, including additional advice services and financial support.

What are the concerns in this area?

- The **data available on fuel poverty is limited and tends to have a time lag of around 2 years**. This means that the current fuel poverty dataset produced by government does not account for the recent spike in energy prices and the impact this has had on tenants and homeowners.
- Additionally, this data does not provide the granular data needed to enable targeting of residents. There is a need for a better, more comprehensive set of data that covers the borough at a granular level to indicate where there may be higher rates of fuel poverty, in particular homes that may be difficult to reach through other routes.

Objective 3: To develop, improve and maximise existing services within the council that support fuel poor residents

There are numerous services within the council supporting fuel poor residents, however there is more that needs to be done to reach all those in need within the community. Currently, the key support available on fuel poverty is the Green Doctors, who provide free and impartial advice on energy use and energy efficiency. There are also various support services available through the community, such as Crosslight debt advice and AgeUK's energy bill advice. The H&F strategy to improve these services will include building on the work these charities do and ensuring that there is clear communication of what support is available.

What are the concerns in this area?

- There is a need to **ensure that fuel poverty and the impacts of this are being considered in all elements of H&F's service provision to residents**.
- This means ensuring there is link up between the different teams and voluntary and community organisations that support fuel poor residents in various capacities, such as the cost-of-living team, public health team and climate team. Ensuring link up will enable different teams to learn from each other and build a network of fuel poverty support.

Objective 4: To empower residents to be aware of support that is available and how they can take action independently

In order to meet our Net Zero goals and provide complete support during the cost-of-living crisis, H&F residents need to be able to access the available support, know what this looks like, and take independent action to improve their situation. This includes accessing support on energy efficiency

and carrying out works, taking advantage of debt and energy advice services and support mechanisms where appropriate and necessary, and to understand the benefits, including the links between fuel poverty and health and fuel poverty and climate change in particular. The Council needs to prioritise clear advertisement and communication of resources to enable visibility to residents, and thus empower them to take action on these areas.

What are the concerns in this area?

- Residents are not always clear on the **links between fuel poverty and health, and the key benefits that energy efficiency and retrofit works can provide them.** Demonstrating and communicating these benefits and ensuring that these communications have a wide reach will help ensure residents understand the need to take independent action. This will include providing clear advice on the LBHF website, working closely with comms and digital teams.
- **The systems in which residents have to navigate are complex and require support.** The Council will work to reduce the barriers to residents in accessing financial support on energy efficiency and related issues, including providing clear systems and support that they can access and joined up services across different Council areas.

6. Action plan

The strategy has outlined the need for significant action on fuel poverty within the borough. The council is looking at actions across the 4 key areas highlighted in the strategy on a page, and specific actions to address each of these areas are detailed below:

1. Increasing our reach

What do we want to do?

*We want to be able to **identify the residents most in need of support** and make sure we can get help to them. We want to do this in a targeted way, ensuring that households are prioritised, and we understand their needs. We want to make sure we have a **pathway to getting out of fuel poverty** that is based on evidence and data and is built with residents in mind.*

How will we do it?

- a) Build and maintain a fuel poverty dataset based on granular data from sources such as the EPC database
- b) Develop a set of metrics to help highlight co-vulnerabilities with fuel poverty and broaden the understanding of fuel poverty
- c) Use database to identify households and areas likely to be at risk of fuel poverty and target services to these areas, including leafletting and in-person energy advice
- d) Create a trajectory of local targets for reducing rates of fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency
- e) Carry out an assessment of the emissions from fuel poor households and develop a trajectory for reducing these by 2030

2. Maximising our resources

What do we want to do?

*We want to ensure that **efficiency** is built into all of our fuel poverty services. We want to make sure that teams across the Council know how to support residents struggling with their energy bills, particularly those working directly with residents on a daily basis. We want to make sure that fuel poverty support is **visible and accessible** through different channels within the Council.*

How will we do it?

- a) Ensure maximisation of resources by linking up relevant services for fuel poor residents, including a referral system to the Climate Unit from areas directly interacting with residents
- b) Provide training to members of the council to ensure staff are aware of the ways to support fuel poor residents, particularly those working directly with vulnerable residents
- c) Run fuel poverty surgeries within local communities, providing key information on the services and support available for the most vulnerable
- d) Work with the GLA to adopt a cross-London approach to campaigning for better energy efficiency

3. Supporting households

What do we want to do?

We want to **empower residents** to take energy efficiency into their own hands, providing support in understanding the different measures and the available funding sources. We want to **support the set-up of community energy services** and make sure these are accessible to all residents. We want residents to **understand the risks of fuel poverty** and make sure they understand how they can access support.

How will we do it?

- a) Encourage residents to check they have an up-to-date EPC on their property
- b) Improve awareness of energy efficiency schemes through communications and better information on the H&F website and provide residents with energy saving advice and support through services such as Green Doctors
- c) Investigate the provision of community energy services such as solar networks and communal heat pumps, and seek co-funding through local businesses looking to improve sustainability
- d) Carry out a campaign to raise awareness of fuel poverty and improve understanding of the impacts, including highlighting the support available across health, cost of living and housing

4. Addressing inequalities

What do we want to do?

We want to ensure that residents who are already subject to vulnerabilities are not stretched further than others with energy bills. We want to make sure that **all services are equally accessible** across different groups in society, and that these are linked into pre-existing networks in communities. We want to **maximise the use of government funding** to drive forward energy efficiency work that will support in reducing inequalities across the borough.

How will we do it?

- a) Improve enforcement of regulation protecting fuel poor tenants, for example the PRS MEES regulations
- b) Support residents in maximising their incomes and ensuring all eligible benefits are claimed
- c) Ensure protected characteristics are taken into consideration
- d) Continue to apply for central government funding for energy efficiency works, including future phases of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
- e) Work with leads of related strategies, in particular the food and financial inclusion strategies, to ensure inequalities are addressed across the board

a. What will this look like in practise?



A comprehensive **fuel poverty dataset** that will allow us to identify residents in need and track progress against targets.

A **long-term trajectory** of how we will remove fuel poverty from Hammersmith & Fulham, and the impact that this will have on emissions.

Training on fuel poverty for frontline staff and contractors interacting with residents, to ensure that services are properly linked up.



A **referral system** that will allow colleagues in the Council to direct residents to fuel poverty support through the Climate team and beyond.

In person energy advice sessions and fuel poverty surgeries to support residents in managing their household energy bills and accessing funding for



An **engagement campaign** highlighting the impacts of fuel poverty and the support available using various engagement methods including physical materials like leaflets, webinars, and social media.

Making residents aware of landlords' obligations to improve energy efficiency and improving our presence to support them in acting on this.

Take a **holistic approach** to addressing fuel poverty that considers the interlinks with other types of poverty and ensure this is built into ways of working.



b. When will this happen?



In the next year

There are key actions happening in the next year, in particular:

1. **Expand promotion of available government funding** to support retrofit and energy efficiency works.
2. Run an **H&F small energy efficiency measures scheme** that will empower residents to improve their own energy efficiency and achieve bill savings on their own terms.
3. **Increase the presence of fuel poverty support in the borough** by running energy advice and support sessions, coordinating with the Cost-of-Living team to provide holistic support to residents.
4. Work with external groups to **seek funding** to support community-based projects supporting residents in become more fuel secure.
5. Launch the **fuel poverty dataset** and begin to use this for targeting.
6. **Reach all homes** through leafletting and other broad campaigns.

In the next three years

In the next three years, we will reach our 2025 enabling targets and 2026 targets. By this point we will have:

- **Engaged 50% of fuel poor homes** through targeted communications, including in-person advice sessions and home visits. This will be making use of the fuel poverty dataset, which will have multiple uses within the next 3 years.
- **Rates of fuel poverty will be below 10% in all wards** of the borough, reducing some of the current inequalities.

In the long term

By 2030, we will have:

- **Engaged all homes** in fuel poverty through targeted communications, including in-person advice sessions and home visits.
- **Rates of fuel poverty will be below 5% in all wards** of the borough, reducing some of the current inequalities.
- **The number of homes in fuel poverty is drastically reduced** as the support available has been widely communicated and residents are accessing help on both income maximisation and energy efficiency.

c. Links with other strategic areas

The strategy is aligned with the Climate and Ecology strategy, which sets out plans until 2030.

The below table details how each of these actions will work to achieve the objectives set out in section 5.

Objective	Key actions to meet objective
To reduce bills for residents by improving the energy efficiency of the H&F housing stock, reducing carbon emissions from housing and improving air quality	2d, 1e, 3c, 4d, 1d
To improve the process for identifying fuel poor residents and provide targeted support in the short and long term	1a, 1b, 1c
To develop, improve and maximise existing services within the council that support fuel poor residents	2a, 2b, 2c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4e
To empower residents to be aware of support that is available and how they can take action independently	3a, 3b, 3d

Achieving these objectives will require collaboration across teams within the Council, and some of the actions link in with other strategies. The table below demonstrates the collaboration that will be undertaken to ensure effective delivery of the action plan.

Action area	Sub-action	Strategic link	Departmental link
1	a	N/A	Business Intelligence, Public Health
1	b	N/A	Business Intelligence, Public Health
1	c	N/A	Business Intelligence, Public Health
1	d	N/A	Business Intelligence, Public Health
1	e	N/A	Business Intelligence, Public Health
2	a	Financial Inclusion, Food	Cost of Living
2	b	N/A	N/A
2	c	N/A	Cost of Living
2	d	N/A	Greater London Authority (GLA, External)
3	a	Retrofit	Asset Management
3	b	Retrofit	Asset Management
3	c	N/A	N/A
3	d	N/A	Communications and Engagement
4	a	Retrofit	Private Housing, Asset Management
4	b	Financial Inclusion	Economy, Cost of Living
4	c	Equalities	Equalities
4	d	Retrofit	Asset Management
4	e	All	Economy, Cost of Living

7. Measurement

In order to ensure that this strategy is a success, the objectives will need to be assessed against different metrics. There are several defined measures of fuel poverty that can be tracked to look at progress, however these tend to ignore the broader definition of fuel poverty and therefore may miss key areas of progress. This means a suite of metrics is needed to ensure that progress can be tracked holistically, and to ensure that residents are not excluded from support and guidance due to not falling under the strict definition of fuel poverty. Thus, there are some key areas we will want to be able to monitor over time:

- Homes moving out of fuel poverty
- Homes changing EPC bands through energy efficiency and retrofit measures
- People seeking support through services such as Green Doctors
- How many homes have been **reached** by the council through outreach campaigns and other engagement*
- How many homes have been **engaged** by the council through outreach campaigns and other engagement*

* It is important to note the difference between these two areas. When we talk about **reaching** residents, this is through broad engagement that captures multiple groups. We would not expect this to be in depth engagement, and we would not necessarily expect responses or further engagement from residents who have been reached. When we talk about **engaging** residents, this is through targeted engagement seeking to reach specific groups of people. This will capture engagement with groups that are traditionally hard to reach through broader campaigns, for example those that are digitally excluded. Here we would expect the Council to have specific interaction with these residents, yielding a response and potentially action. This means this engagement is traditionally more resource and time intensive. Examples of this are provided in Figure 4.

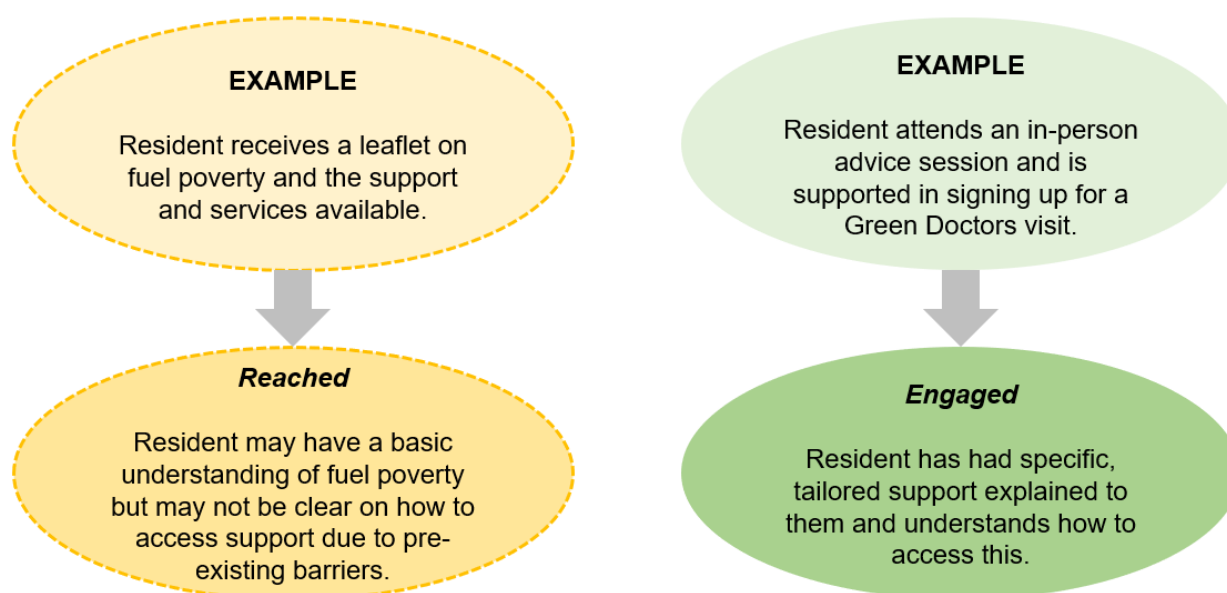


Figure 4 - Examples of reaching vs engaging.

In order to achieve the objectives, set out in section 5, progress on all of these areas is required. Thinking about how these could be transferred to useful and measurable metrics requires consideration of the data requirements and thus the ease of monitoring. Additionally, the regularity of monitoring and the review points for this strategy need to be factored into the measurement plan.

Metrics

Based on the data available currently, and what the council will be able to collect, the proposed metrics to monitor progress against the fuel poverty strategy are presented in Table 3. These are split into 'Outcome' and 'Enabling' metrics. 'Outcome' metrics are those that demonstrate the desired outcome; in the case of this strategy, reducing fuel poverty. 'Enabling' metrics are those that contribute to achieving the desired outcome but do not demonstrate the outcome directly; for example, the number of people reached through leafletting doesn't tell us about any action that has been taken, but it tells us what the council has done to enable action where possible.

Table 1 - Proposed metrics to monitor fuel poverty strategy progress

Metric	Outcome / Enabling	Data owner
Total number of homes in fuel poverty	Outcome	Climate Unit
% in fuel poverty by ward	Outcome	Climate Unit
% of residents with cold-related health issues	Outcome	Climate Unit/Public Health
Number of low-income private homes (below EPC C) retrofitted through external schemes	Enabling	Asset Management
Homes reached through broad engagement, including leafletting	Enabling	Climate Unit
Homes engaged through targeted communications, including (but not limited to) in-person advice sessions, home visits and resident forums	Enabling	Climate Unit
Number of Green Doctor visits	Enabling	Groundwork (managed through Climate Unit)

Whilst reducing carbon emissions from buildings is also a desired outcome of this strategy, this will not be tracked directly in relation to this strategy. Emissions reductions primarily come from the installation of energy efficiency measures and retrofit works to improve properties, as well as switching to low carbon heating systems. In terms of fuel poverty, improvements to homes often don't lead to long term carbon savings as energy use behaviours also change accordingly, meaning households are able to appropriately heat their homes where they weren't previously. Progress of retrofit and related works, and thus the associated carbon savings, will be tracked through the council's upcoming retrofit strategy.

Timelines and review points

This strategy sets out H&F's intentions on addressing fuel poverty until 2030, when a review of the strategy will take place to assess what next steps are needed. In order to make sure the borough remains on track for targets set for 2030, reviews against the strategy and associated action plan will be carried out in 2024, 2025 and 2026. This will seek to assess the progress made so far and evaluate whether the original targets set continue to be realistic. This will also reflect the resource available to fuel poverty at the time of review. Interim targets for 2026 will also be set to provide a benchmark to compare against at the initial review stage. More broadly, progress will be reviewed annually by the Energy Efficiency Taskforce.

Targets

With a set of metrics in place and a plan for reviewing these set out, targets have been set for monitoring the progress of this strategy. These are designed to be ambitious but also realistic, recognising the many barriers to removing people from fuel poverty. In particular, these targets take into consideration the challenges associated with engaging residents on energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues, including:

- The complexity of energy issues and energy efficiency. The energy market itself is difficult to understand, and energy efficiency knowledge is complex and currently not well communicated. Many residents will require dedicated support in applying for energy efficiency schemes or for financial support, which is significantly more resource intensive than broader engagement campaigns run previously, such as leafletting. Linked to this, resourcing then becomes a challenge. This is discussed in more detail below.
- Understanding the data is a significant challenge in engaging fuel poor residents and is why improving data is a key part of this strategy. There is a need to develop a fuel poverty dataset that highlights where the need in the borough is for energy support, as this currently does not exist. Without this, the Council will be unable to effectively target fuel poor residents, and this may lead to a scattered approach that does not engage the right residents.
- Residents who are traditionally difficult to reach through broad engagement campaigns due to communication barriers, such as digital exclusion and English as a second language.

Table 4 sets out the targets for each metric, as well as the current starting point and the frequency of monitoring. Here, the frequency of monitoring is primarily dictated by the data availability.

Table 2 - Targets and interim targets for the fuel poverty strategy metrics

Metric	Current position	2026 interim target	2030 target	Frequency of monitoring
Total number of homes in fuel poverty	8,250	< 6,000	TBC	Annual
% in fuel poverty by ward	Highest ward currently has a rate of 15.8%	< 10%	< 5%	Annual
% of residents with a cardiovascular or respiratory health condition	8%	N/A – too short of a time period for significant health impact	< 5%	Annual
% of low income private ¹⁰ homes (below EPC C) retrofitted through external schemes ¹¹	N/A	50%	100%	Monthly
Homes reached through broad engagement, including leafletting	N/A	100% overall (2024)	N/A – all reached by interim	Monthly
Homes engaged through targeted communications, including (but not limited to) in-person advice sessions, home visits and resident forums	N/A	50% (2025)	100% (2028)	Monthly
Number of Green Doctor visits	TBC	TBC	TBC	Quarterly

Resourcing

In order to achieve these targets, in particular the enabling targets around outreach and engagement, it is likely additional resource will be required across the Council and partner organisations. The Council Climate Team will consider this and seek funding and approval through a business case for further resource and support dedicated to fuel poverty, where appropriate. This will likely include officers dedicated to both reaching and engaging residents on fuel poverty,

¹⁰ The targets reflect private homes only, as the Council's own housing stock is addressed in the Retrofit Strategy.

¹¹ These targets are dependent on the provision of central government funding and financing schemes to support residents in carrying out retrofit and energy efficiency works. In the absence of sufficient funding, the Council will work to provide resources and support to residents.

energy efficiency, and related issues. In addition, the Council will maximise the potential of outreach through services and external organisations that already engage people who are likely to be in fuel poverty.

Monitoring, evaluation, and accountability

Progress against these metrics will be monitored, and an assessment of overall progress made at the 2024, 2025 and 2026 review points. In order to hold this strategy to account for the proposals made, an Energy Efficiency Taskforce has been established, formed of key members of the council who are involved in energy efficiency and fuel poverty related work. This group will monitor and critique the progress made, ensuring actions are followed and action owners held to account.

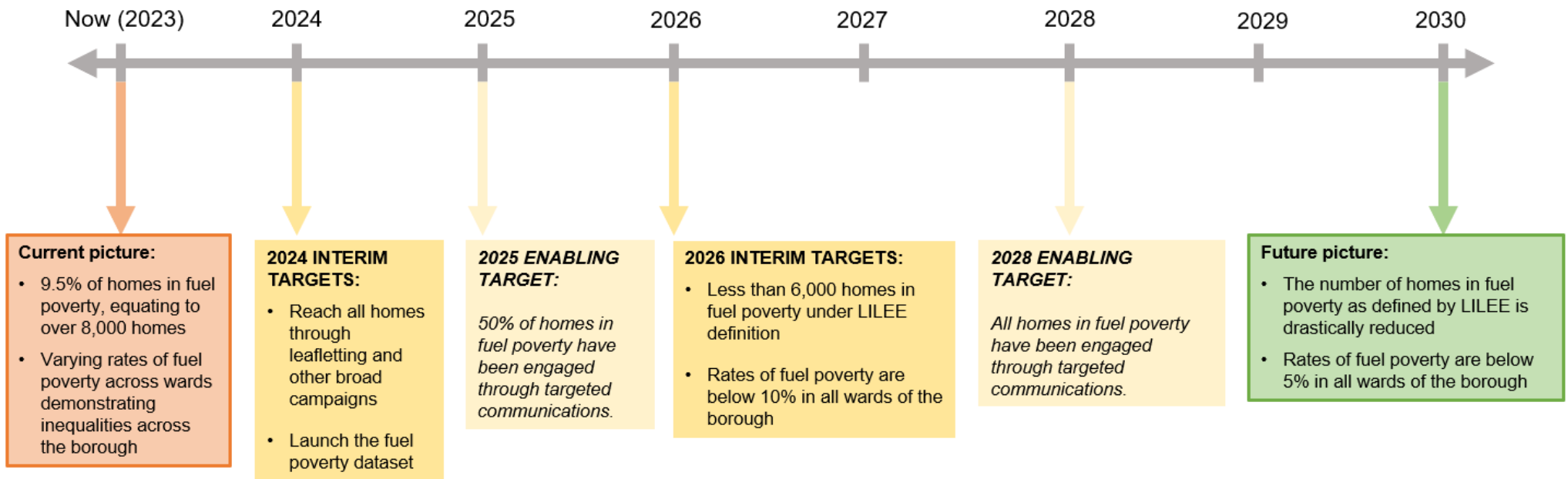


Figure 5 - The targets timeline; setting out the trajectory for achievement.

The targets timeline

Figure 5 sets out the targets over time, including interim targets and enabling targets. As discussed previously, the main and interim targets demonstrate the desired outcome, and the enabling targets facilitate this. The enabling targets here are focused on engagement and ensuring that all residents are aware of the support available through the Council. The main and interim targets are focused on the goals for reducing fuel poverty across the borough, in particular in reducing this in areas that currently experience very high levels of fuel poverty.

8. Developing the strategy

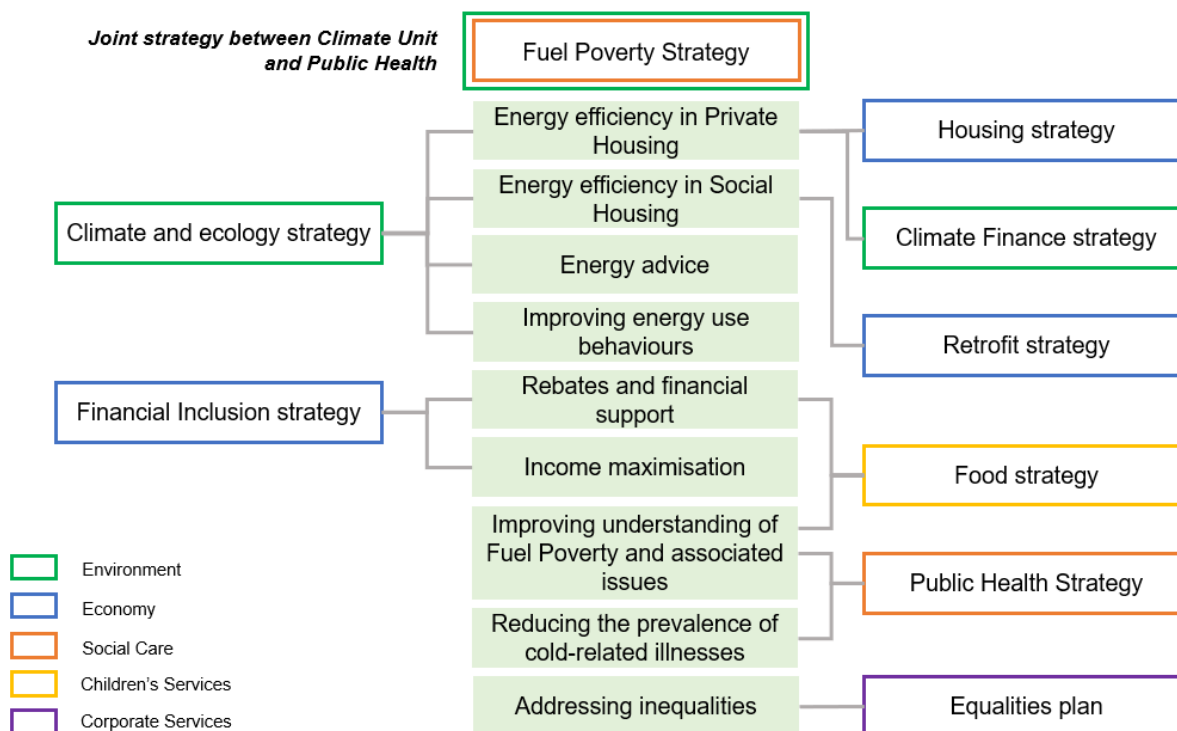
Hammersmith & Fulham's Fuel Poverty Strategy has been developed by the Climate Unit, in collaboration with the Public Health team. The strategy is aligned to the climate and ecological emergency called by the council in 2019, and the associated strategy to reach net zero by 2030. **H&F recognises that it will not be possible to reach net zero without addressing fuel poverty directly**, and this strategy seeks to outline how we will approach this issue and the actions we will take.

The strategy development has involved **consultation across the council**. In particular, views were sought from key teams working on areas of poverty and supporting vulnerable residents. An assessment of the needs of residents was sought through recent data on demand for services across various teams. This included consultation with¹²:

- Cost of Living
- Policy and Project Management Office (PMO)
- Asset Management
- Public Health
- Private Housing

As well as consultation with relevant teams, in developing the fuel poverty strategy, H&F sought to **link this to other relevant strategies**, ensuring that these can work together to deliver the overarching objectives. In particular, the following strategies were considered and aligned where necessary, and the links set out in Figure 6:

- Climate and Ecology strategy
- Equalities plan
- Food strategy
- Industrial strategy
- Retrofit strategy
- Financial Inclusion strategy



¹² This list is not exhaustive.

In order to ensure alignment, discussions were held with the leads of each strategy to identify areas of overlap and opportunities to link actions. The Fuel Poverty strategy has been presented at the Cost of Living working group, set up to support those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, and the Climate Strategy Implementation Group to ensure relevant stakeholders were aware of the ongoing and upcoming work. The action plan set on in section 8 reflects and recognises the collaborative working across the Council that has contributed to this strategy.

Additionally, views and evidence were sought externally to the council through our resident and business networks. This involved direct discussion with residents on their needs and concerns and views from charities based on their experience as service providers, to ensure real-world, lived experience is factored into the strategy. This engagement helped to ensure **the strategy was informed by a true understanding of the needs of residents**. The key avenues to this engagement were:

- Discussions with charities working directly with residents in H&F to understand where the areas of concern are in terms of the support needed
- Understanding resident concerns more broadly through engagement with Tenant and Resident Associations and schools

An assessment of the services the council provides currently and the support available from central government was carried out in developing the strategy, to evaluate the support currently available and identify gaps. This will enable the council to target actions and funding towards the areas and residents most in need of additional support. Outlines of the current national and local contexts are provided in sections 4 and 5 respectively.