

# H&F 2030

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# FUEL POVERTY STRATEGY

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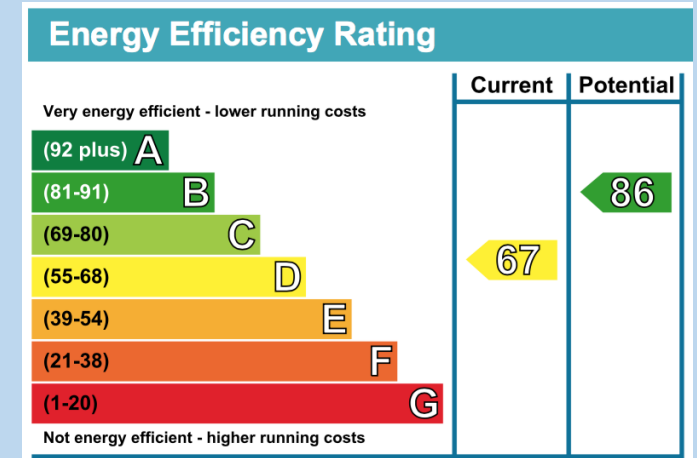
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# What is fuel poverty?

- **Someone is in fuel poverty if they are unable to afford to adequately heat their home.** This means people in fuel poverty are often unable to, or will struggle to, pay their energy bills.
- The government uses a metric called **Low Income Low Energy Efficiency** to define fuel poverty. A household is in 'defined' fuel poverty if:
  - They are living in a property with an **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of band D or below** (low energy efficiency)
  - When they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a **residual income below the official poverty line** (low income) <sup>1</sup>
- When fuel poverty escalates to the point of emergency, this is called **fuel crisis**. A person is in fuel crisis if they are unable to pay for energy now, or will be unable to pay within 48 hours.

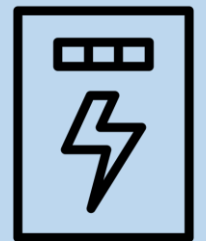
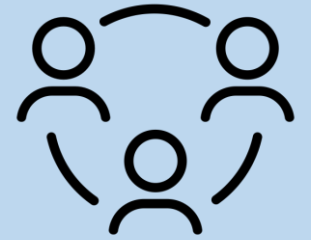


*This is an example of what you might see on your Energy Performance Certificate. **The Energy Efficiency rating is based on the costs to heat your home – the higher the rating, the cheaper it is expected to be to run your home**, with A being the highest rating. Every rented property in England is expected to have a valid EPC, and you can ask your landlord or managing agent for sight of this.*

# What causes fuel poverty?

Fuel poverty is caused by three main factors:

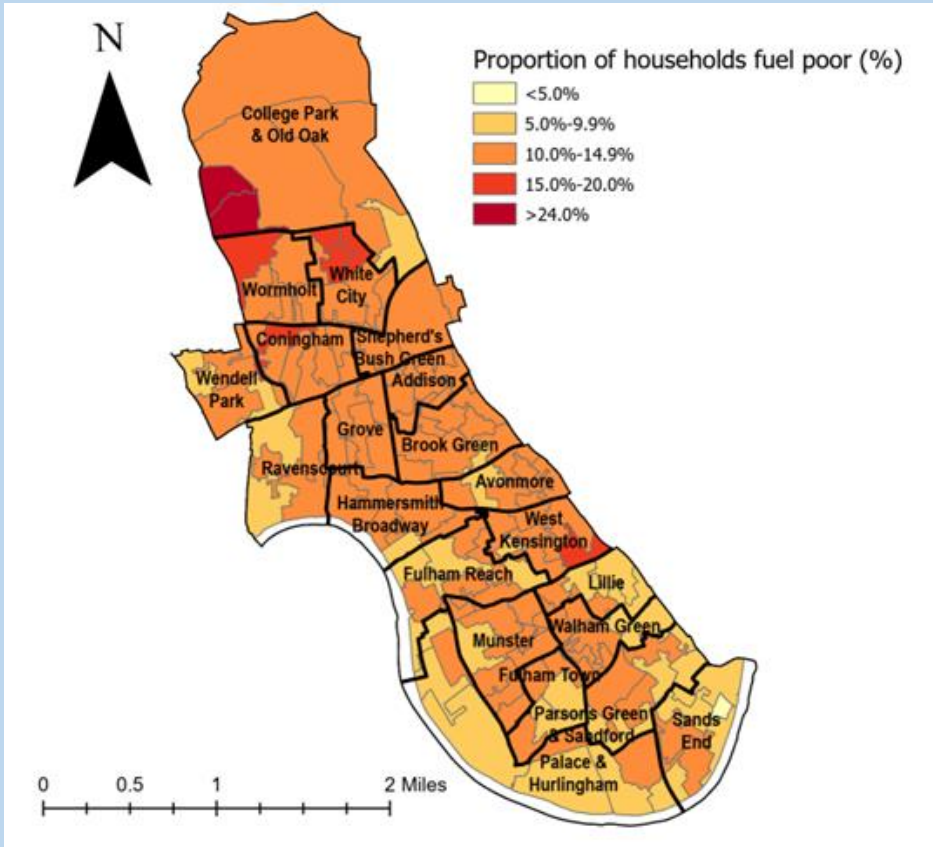
- **Household income** – a household with low-income may have serious competing financial pressures. For example, needing to choose between heating and eating. Many opt to forego heating their home.
- **Household energy requirements** – if the property is energy inefficient, more energy is required to heat the property. Some households may have illnesses or disabilities that rely on energy intensive machinery, e.g. dialysis machines.
- **Fuel prices** – household energy bills are likely to be double the 2020 levels in winter 2023/24 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.



# What is the impact of fuel poverty?

- Fuel poverty has significant impacts on peoples' lives in many ways, but in particular, **fuel poverty can have very serious impacts on both physical and mental health.**
- Cold homes can increase the prevalence of minor illnesses such as cold and flu, and they can make pre-existing conditions such as asthma and arthritis worse.
- Additionally, colder temperatures and therefore living in a cold home is linked to chronic illnesses, in particular cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. For example, **hospital admissions for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) are four times more likely to happen over winter.**
- Cold homes can also have mental health impacts, with **a quarter of adolescents living in cold housing at risk of multiple mental health issues**, compared to 5% of adolescents in warm homes. Fuel poverty can lead to issues such as social exclusion that can contribute to worse mental health.<sup>2</sup>

# What does fuel poverty look like in H&F?

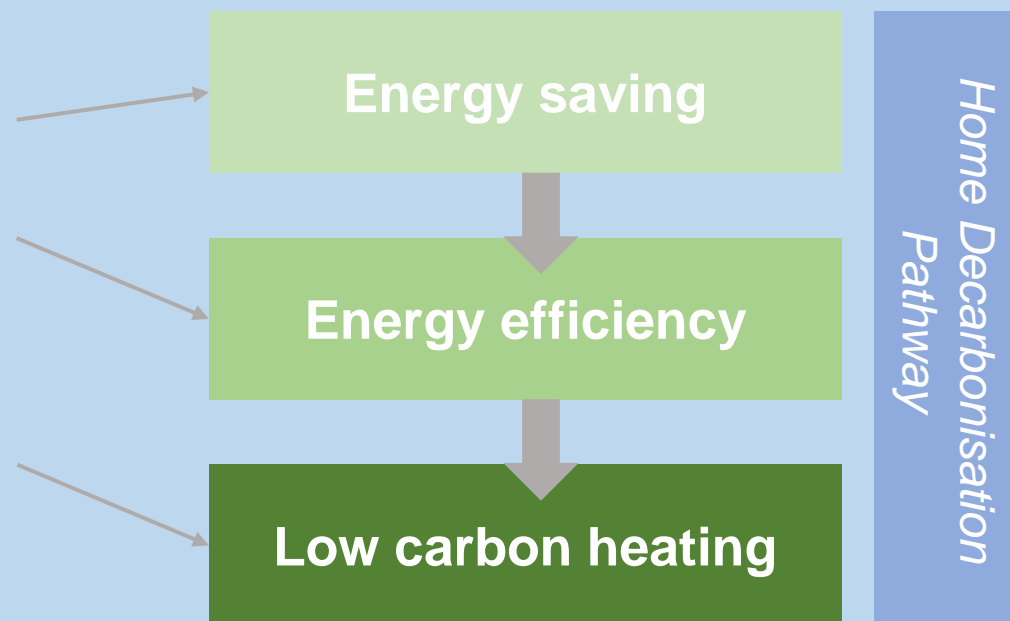
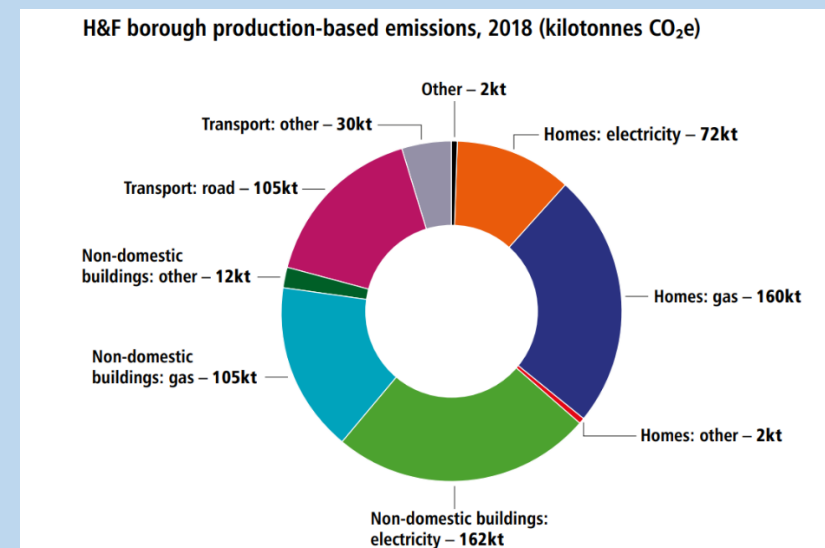


Mapping fuel poverty across the borough – this map details the fuel poverty rates and includes the ward boundaries

- In Hammersmith & Fulham, 11.3% of households are in fuel poverty under the government definition – this compares to 13.4% nationally, and 11.9% across London.<sup>3</sup>
- This data pre-dates the energy price crisis that is currently ongoing, so we would expect fuel poverty to have risen since this snapshot. **More recent data from the ONS shows that 23.3% of H&F residents are living in poverty**, compared to 20.1% across England.<sup>4</sup>
- Fuel poverty also varies hugely across the borough, with **fuel poverty rates reaching close to 1 in 5 households in the north of the borough**, whilst being closer to 1 in 20 in more affluent areas in the south of the borough.

# What does Net Zero mean for fuel poverty?

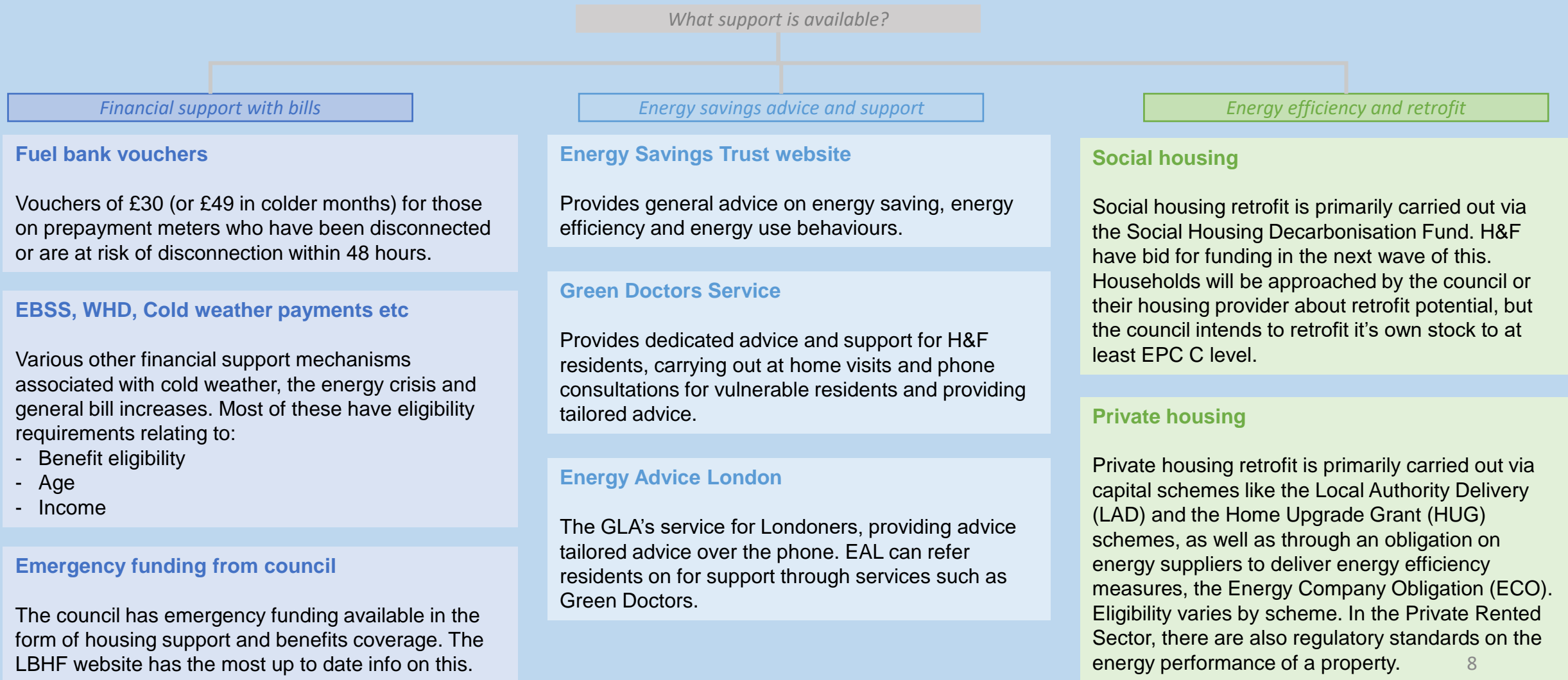
- **36% of the borough's emissions come from heating homes**, so in order for H&F to reach Net Zero, homes need to be decarbonised<sup>5</sup>
- There are different stages of decarbonising a home, all of which can contribute to reducing fuel poverty. Addressing fuel poverty means taking residents through this journey:
  - First, addressing **energy saving behaviours**, like switching off appliances when they're not in use
  - Secondly, addressing the **energy efficiency of the home**, making sure it's properly insulated and draught-proofed
  - Finally, addressing **the heating system** and making this more sustainable, for example switching a gas boiler for a low carbon solution such as a heat pump. **Low carbon heating systems work best in efficient properties, so it is important to address energy efficiency first.**





# What's happening already?

There are various pre-existing avenues to support nationally and in H&F, covering advice, financial support and energy efficiency.





# What do we want to achieve?

The Fuel Poverty strategy has set objectives for what we want to achieve by 2030:

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** within the council that support fuel poor residents

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

# Action plan – what are the council going to do to achieve the objectives?



**Improving data**



Improving the use of data in relation to fuel poverty

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**Supporting households**

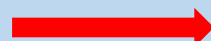


Providing dedicated support to residents living in fuel poverty

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**Linking up services**



Ensuring relevant services within the council are joined up and accessible

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**Addressing inequalities**



Creating a system within the council that recognises and addresses the inequalities with relation to fuel poverty

# Action plan – what are the council going to do to achieve the objectives?

## Increasing our reach

- 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 door knocking campaigns
- 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

## Maximising our resources

- 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

## Supporting households

- 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

## Addressing inequalities

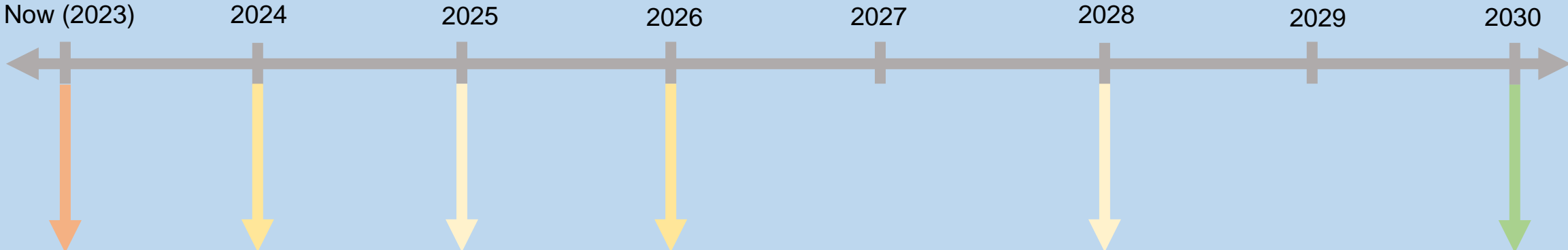
- a) Improve **enforcement of regulation protecting fuel poor tenants**, for example the PRS MEES regulations
- b) Support residents in **maximising their incomes** and ensuring all eligible benefits are claimed
- c) Ensure **protected characteristics** are taken into consideration
- d) Continue to apply for **central government funding** for energy efficiency works, including future phases of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

# Tracking progress

The council will monitor key areas over time to ensure that we remain on track with the strategy. This will cover:

- **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**

# So when will this happen?



**Current picture:**

- 9.5% of homes in fuel poverty, equating to over 8,000 homes
- Varying rates of fuel poverty across wards demonstrating inequalities across the borough

**2024 INTERIM TARGETS:**

- Reach all homes through leafletting and other broad campaigns
- Launch the fuel poverty dataset

**2025 ENABLING TARGET:**

*50% of homes in fuel poverty have been engaged through targeted communications.*

**2026 INTERIM TARGETS:**

- Less than 6,000 homes in fuel poverty under LILEE definition
- Rates of fuel poverty are below 10% in all wards of the borough

**2028 ENABLING TARGET:**

*All homes in fuel poverty have been engaged through targeted communications.*

**Future picture:**

- The number of homes in fuel poverty as defined by LILEE is drastically reduced
- Rates of fuel poverty are below 5% in all wards of the borough

# References

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