



Current Membership of the Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Coalition

Access to Benefits
Advice NI
Age NI
Age Sector Platform
Anglewise
Army Families Federation
Atlantic Philanthropies
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Community Resource
Ballygowan & District Community Association
Barnardos
Belfast City Council
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Belfast Telegraph
Bryson Charitable Group
Care for the Family
Care NI
Causeway Rural & Urban Network
Chartered Institute of Housing in Northern Ireland
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Christians Against Poverty
Church Action on Poverty (NI)
Church of Ireland
Churches' Community Work Alliance (NI)
Citizens Advice Bureau
Coleraine Borough Council
Confederation of Community Groups
Consumer Council
Contact a Family Northern Ireland
COSTA Rural Support Network
Culmore Area Forum
Disability Action
Drumgallon Area Community Association
EAGA
East Belfast Mission
East Down Rural Community Network
EMBRACE NI
Engage with Age
Friends of the Earth
Fuel Watch NI
H & A Mechanical Services Ltd.
Helm Housing
Housing Rights Service
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Institute of Directors in Northern Ireland
Institute of Public Health
Landlords Association for Northern Ireland
Long Term Conditions Alliance
Mullaghmore & Castlevew Community Association
Macmillan Cancer Support
Mutual Energy
National Energy Action
Newry and Mourne District Council
North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
Northern Investing Health Partnership
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Northern Ireland Rural Development Council
Northern Ireland Youth Forum
NUS-USI
Oaklee Housing Association
Oil Price NI
Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership
Rathlin Development & Community Association
Rural Communities Network
Salvation Army
Save the Children
Skainos Project
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Solmatix
Strabane & District Community Network
Sustainable Northern Ireland
The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference
The Methodist Church in Ireland
The NI Region of the University of the Third Age
The Presbyterian Church in Ireland
The Ulster Farmers' Union
The Workspace Group
University of Ulster Student's Union
Waterwise
WWF

If you want to add your name to the Coalition you can do so via:

E-mail: info@fuelpovertycoalition.org.uk

Website: www.fuelpovertycoalition.org.uk

You can follow the work of the Coalition via:



Fuel Poverty Coalition NI



fuelpovertyni



Election Manifesto

NI Assembly Election May 2011

The Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Coalition

The Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Coalition was launched on 1 November 2010 in response to the increasing levels of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. The Coalition's aim is to drive forward the fuel poverty agenda in Northern Ireland.

Currently, the Coalition has a membership base of over 80 organisations from across Northern Ireland representing businesses, environmental groups, trade unions, the health sector, local councils, consumer groups, housing associations, rural support networks, the voluntary sector, student unions, young persons groups, older persons groups and faith groups.

Fuel poverty in Northern Ireland

The latest Housing Conditions Survey showed that in 2009, 44 per cent¹ of households (302,000) in Northern Ireland were in fuel poverty. This is one of the highest rates in Northern Europe and is three times as high as the level in England and nearly double the rate in both Scotland and Wales. It is now estimated that with rising fuel prices, the recent cold winters and the current economic climate, fuel poverty levels in Northern Ireland have risen above 50 per cent.

Research shows the impacts of fuel poverty can damage quality of life and health as well as impose wider costs on the community, as the likelihood of ill health is increased by living in a cold home.

Northern Ireland consumers also face higher energy bills than elsewhere in the UK - spending £348² more per year on average. The majority of households in Northern Ireland use heating oil to heat their homes (68 per cent overall and 82 per cent in rural areas³). Heating oil prices remain volatile and the price of a 900 litre fill has fluctuated by £152 (or 37 per cent)⁴ since the winter cold snap in October 2010.

Current Northern Ireland Executive Fuel Poverty Strategy

In March 2011, the Department for Social Development launched a new fuel poverty strategy for Northern Ireland. The Strategy commits itself to a society where fuel poverty is eradicated and everyone can live in a home which is free of cold and damp, but provides no targets or roadmaps on how this will be achieved.

Fuel Poverty Election Pledge

The next Assembly term is crucial to ensure a successful and sustainable response to the fuel poverty crisis that Northern Ireland is experiencing. It is essential that fuel poverty is comprehensively tackled in the short to medium term before energy becomes simply unaffordable for the vast majority of households in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Fuel Poverty Coalition is calling on all Election Candidates to support;

- **The development of a detailed and costed action-plan setting out how and when fuel poverty will be eradicated in Northern Ireland; and**
- **The provision of support to all fuel poor households to stay warm until fuel poverty is eradicated.**

In addition, the Coalition has suggested the following practical actions that the new Executive should undertake;

- Establishing a Cross Departmental Ministerial Fuel Poverty Task Force with a duty to eradicate fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. In the new Executive all Government Ministers should commit to incorporating action on fuel poverty into the Programme for Government and their Department's strategic plans.
- Examine whether regulation of the oil industry could provide consumers with the necessary confidence that they are paying a fair price for oil and provide fuel poor households with the support and safeguards that natural gas and electricity consumers currently have.
- Implement a national insulation retrofitting programme to improve the energy efficiency levels of all households in fuel poverty.
- Develop and encourage Energy Brokering Schemes, and implement a system of Social Tariffs to help make the energy bills of all low income households more affordable.
- Make sure that people eligible for existing benefits claim them; and
- Extend the Winter Fuel Payment to other vulnerable groups to include children and young people and those with long term health conditions.

¹ Housing Conditions Survey 2009. Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 2010.

² Family Expenditure Survey, 2010.

³ House Conditions Survey 2009. Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 2010.

⁴ Consumer Council, Oil Price Watch.