

Tackling Fuel Poverty and Improving Home Energy Together

Incorporating the Council's Fuel Poverty and Home Energy Conservation Act Action (HECA) Action Plans

Produced by Housing Standards and Improvement on behalf of the Council.
Updated 6 July 2023

Overview

This report highlights the progress made in Walsall to tackle:

- Fuel poverty
- Excess winter deaths
- Residential carbon emissions
- Poor physical and mental health resulting from cold and damp homes

The report also contains an Action Plan to help tackle the issues listed above.

The report has been developed with the support of a range of agencies and partners who are seeking to end fuel poverty.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator rather than the old Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Under the LILEE indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- they are living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below and
- when they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line

There are 3 important elements in determining whether a household is fuel poor:

- household income
- household energy requirements
- fuel prices

The West Midlands Region has the highest regional rate of fuel poverty (18.5%). Walsall has the 9th highest rate of all English Local authorities (19.7%). This is based on 2021 data released in April 2023. Both the rate of fuel poverty in Walsall has worsened as has its position when ranked against other councils (in 2020 Walsall was 10th with a rate of 19.5%).

In terms of reporting and data it should be noted that rates of fuel poverty may not be immediately comparable in historic terms as data is awaited to be amended by government for previous reporting periods.

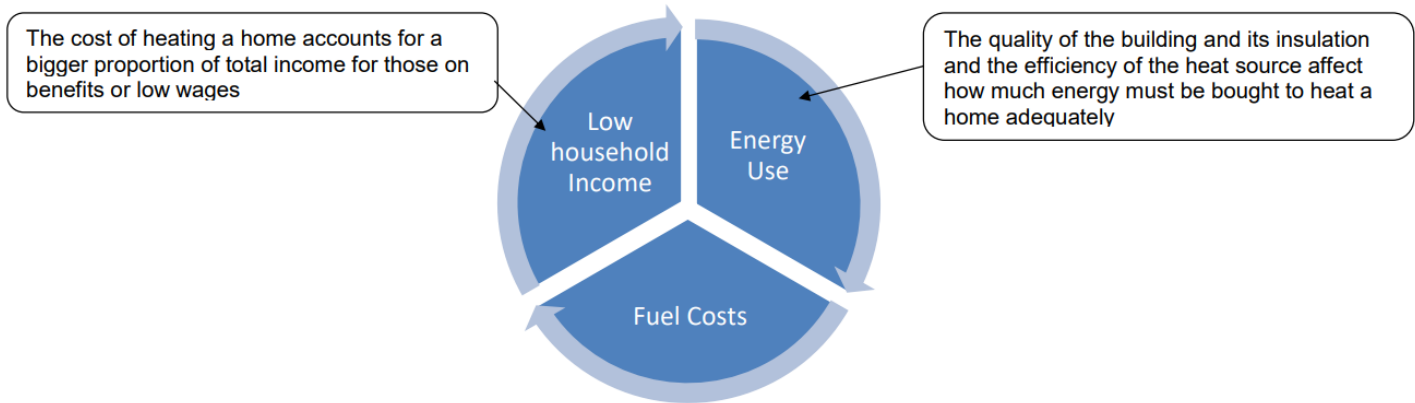
Previous definition

The previous definition used by the Government for fuel poverty was Low Income High Cost (LIHC) as the need to spend more than 10% of household income to achieve adequate levels of warmth in the home and meet their other energy needs. Adequate warmth is defined as 21°C to 23°C in the main living areas and 18°C in other areas. 'Affordable warmth' was also often regarded as the reverse of fuel poverty, i.e. it describes the situation in which households do not need to spend more than 10% of

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income to achieve adequate warmth. However, the affordability of running appliances is also an important consideration. This is because appliances account for a growing proportion of households' energy budgets and because low income households tend to use older and more inefficient appliances. Three key factors contribute to fuel poverty:



Other factors that contribute to fuel poverty are:

- Appliance use – households use more appliances than they did 20 years ago. Low-income families are more likely to use older, less efficient appliances that have higher running costs
- Under occupation – when people on low incomes live in properties that are bigger than they need, for example, an older person who lives alone in a house that was once a family home they can be heating more space than they need to.

Impacts of Fuel Poverty

Fuel Poverty effects more than the cost of resident's fuel bills. The effects can spiral to include the: Deterioration of the Home Fixing damage can be costly and stressful for example tackling; • Condensation • Dampness • Mould • Dust Mites

The Council and NEA have developed handy guide for residents to provide advice on condensation and damp in the home. It has simple checklists and tips on reducing condensation – highlighting the benefits of insulation, heating and ventilation. The leaflet can be viewed on-line at:

http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/housing/keeping_a_home/housing_standards_and_improvement.htm

Damage to health

Fuel poverty often also impacts on health by increasing illnesses and making some illnesses worse. Ill health can cause stress and impact on other parts of resident's life such as jobs, education and social life. For example,

- Cold related illnesses • Respiratory illnesses • Allergies • Increased risk of heart attacks and strokes

Tackling Fuel Poverty

The Council continues with partners to tackle fuel poverty through:

Empowering

We will collectively empower residents to be more efficient through sign posting and communications.

We will promote home energy efficiency measures and maximise household income by providing information on available subsidies, grants and benefits.

Additionally, we will advocate behavioural change measures to reduce energy use and increase potential savings. The work includes helping residents:

- Lower their fuel bills through:
 - o Collective fuel switching
 - o More efficient heating and more effective insulation
 - o Education in use of heating and timer / thermostatic controls
 - o Promoting renewable micro-energy production
- Improve their home insulation
 - o Seeking grants / loans to help reduce the cost
- Improve the efficiency of their heating
 - o Seeking grants / loans to help reduce the cost
- Reduce cost of appliance use
 - o Education and advice on appliance types
- Maximise their household income through advice and support to ensure they secure all relevant benefits / grants.

During 2023/24 and 2024/25 concerted activity will take place to assist residents living in the low super output areas (LSOAs) with the highest fuel poverty in the borough.

Tips to reduce fuel bills and stay healthy

The council promotes the use of the government endorsed energy advice website:
<https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/>

National Grid Warm Homes Scheme (2018 to 2023)

The Council was very successful in a range of bid to the Warm Homes Fund, which supported providing gas central heating to homes that previously had no gas supply and were reliant on either electric heating or bottled gas or oil fired heating appliances. The households supported have all been in fuel poverty and the works have helped them achieve affordable warmth in their homes. The schemes included the following:

Round 1 (2018) and Round 2 (2019)

200 fuel switches (120 private and 80 Accord) The bids were submitted in partnership with Accord and E-ON with match funding contributions from Accord and the Council and the project includes additional funding for gas infrastructure work where required. The total project cost was £841,940 with grant from Warm Homes Fund of £486,940. Round 2 involved improving 138 park homes at four Park Home sites through securing £376,000 of Warm Homes Funding. The total project cost estimated at £457,000.

Round 3 (2021, 2022 and 2023)

The Council secured additional funds to support a scheme for Midland Heart and for owner occupiers. The approved grant is £243K with a total estimated project cost of £434K. The scheme is supporting 100 homes.

Local Energy Advice Partnership (2018 onwards)

A Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) is offering free advice to help residents irrespective of tenure to save money and keep their homes warm. A LEAP Home Energy Advisor carries out a home visit or telephone assessment due to Covid restrictions. This can include:

- Helping to check the resident is on the cheapest energy tariff
- Installing free simple energy savings measures such as low energy light bulbs and draught proofing
- Providing day to day energy efficiency hints
- Arranging a free telephone service to deal with energy debt and any other money problems
- Referral £650,000 has been invested or saved (for residents) related to the above project at over 780 homes in the borough.

ECO3 and ECO Flex3 (2018 onwards)

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. The Council actively supports those organisations / installers who are able to secure ECO funding from energy companies to improve / upgrade resident's energy efficiency and insulation in their homes. Since its inception the council has had a published and regularly updated ECO-flex statement of intent. This document seeks to encourage installers to direct assistance to the LSOAs with the highest fuel poverty levels.

As at March 2022 2,103 households have been supported through ECO Flex3 in Walsall. The investment is expected to be in the region of £3.15M from private companies (including energy companies) based on an estimated average cost of £1,500 per property improved with ECO flex measure(s).

ECO4 and ECO Flex4 (summer 2022 onwards)

The council published in June 2022 a new Statement of Intent in line with guidance on this latest round of funding to ensure that the maximum support is available for local residents whilst adhering to the requirements of the scheme. This was updated again in February 2023 in line with new OFGEM guidance and can be viewed at:

[ECO Link](#).

The OFGEM requirements for this iteration need councils to undertake significantly more reporting and administration and therefore an agreed fee of 2% of the capital cost (with minimum fee of £100) has been set by the council for cases in 2023.

ECO 4 and ECO Flex 4

The Environment All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and the Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency APPG in 2023 set out a number of issues they believed were holding back delivery of ECO4 nationally, including:

- The requirement to raise a property's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) score by two bands requires greater investment per property, meaning that fewer properties can be supported.
- Difficulties in identifying properties that can meet the requirement of improving the EPC score by two bands.
- Greater administrative costs for installers, due to tighter regulations (known as PAS 2035).
- Delays to the introduction of ECO4 resulting in loss of industry confidence in the scheme

Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS)

This government funded competitive grant project was launched during 2020. The LADS project has key criteria as follows:

- the dwelling must have an EPC of D or below
- the household must have a combined income of less than £30,000
- the average grant award to a private property should be no more than £10,000
- the average grant award to a social rented property should be no more than £5,000 with the social landlord providing a minimum of 33% of funding.

LADS 1b –Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) £2.058M

This assisted 170 homes with various energy saving measures (47 external wall insulation (EWI) and 123 solar Photo Voltaic (PV) panels).

LADS 2 –Midland Energy Hub (MEH) via Nottingham City £2.43M

Nottingham City (in their role as Midlands Energy Hub (MEH) are delivering LADS on behalf of BEIS). This helped 257 dwellings with a split between EWI (69) and solar pv (164) and loft (29) and cavity insulation (2) - figures do not sum as a range of homes had multiple measures.

LADS 3 – External Funded:

Works similar to LADS 1b and LADS 2 this scheme is continuing until 30 September 2023.

BEIS £5.33M

The scheme is due to assist 474 homes with various energy saving measures.

Midland Energy Hub (MEH) £1.18M

This scheme is due to assist 118 homes with various energy saving measures.

Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) External Funded

This government fund secured by the council is to upgrade homes in the borough with retrofit insulation and energy works.

HUG 1 MEH £290k

This project is due to end May 2023 to assist 19 households.

HUG 1 – External Funded: BEIS £1.25M

This project is due to end May 2023 to assist 208 households.

Social Housing Decarbonisation Project (SHD)

Wave 1- Bid Approved Feb 2022

£7.9M BEIS grant specifically to assist Watmos housing association funding for External Wall Insulation (EWI) and double glazing in 858 homes. The council is the Accountable Body for the grant as social housing providers must bid via their local council. This is the fourth largest allocation nationally – the larger allocations are principally for combined authority / regional areas. The works are due to complete in June 2023.

Wave 2 Summer 2022

The council offered support to housing associations to bid for funds.

Household Support Fund (2021/23, 2022/23 and 2023/24)

In 2021/22 a total of £225,000 was delivered to address gas boiler issues in owner occupied properties where elderly disabled residents were living and to support families with disabled children. A similar project of £274,000 was completed in 2022/23 and expanded to assist those households who are caring for a Walsall adopted child, fostered child or similar. Further funding of £500,00 is sought for 2023/24 to continue the scheme.

Gas Safety Charity Hardship Fund £21k – provided by Foundation Independent Living Trust

An initial £11,000 was delivered between October 2021 to September 2022 for 40 interventions to address gas safety, gas leak or CO poisoning for repairs, servicing, testing and replacements. The council has secured a further £10,000 from October 2022 to end of September 2023.

Council Health Through Warmth (HTW) Project

During 2022/23 and 2023/24 this budget is principally being used to fund design work in preparation for ECO4 and ECO Flex 4 projects to maximise the opportunities for residents to access this funding stream. In addition the fund will continue where possible to provide a 'safety net' for vulnerable owner occupiers with dangerous or condemned heating systems. The fund will also be used to undertake energy monitoring work linked to future Energy Redress funding bids.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

In March 2023 £25,000 was awarded to assist with the cost of the detailed energy monitoring of the SHDF Watmos project. This is providing valuable information on use of energy and heating levels within flats before and after the works have been completed.

A bid was also approved for the management and delivery of £175,000 of additional UKSPF for 2023/24 and 2024/25 which proposes support for targeted help to residents on topics such as energy saving, bill reduction, carbon saving and support of the voluntary sector in the same areas.

Reducing the cost of energy bills

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The way residents pay for their gas and electricity can impact on the cost. For example;

- If you buy your gas and electricity from the same supplier this may cost less
- Paying monthly by direct debit can be cheaper than paying a quarterly bill
- Incentives and discounts can also apply for going paperless
- Pre-payment meters can be expensive

The council publishes a range of ways residents can seek to reduce their energy bills including such things as via collective switching schemes. The council has promoted schemes such as <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/bigswitch>.

From the start of the scheme in 2014, Walsall residents have made 3,444 switches of suppliers with a total estimated saving of £413,045 per annum, or an average £120 per switch per annum. During 2022/23 the UK energy market was such that energy switching in the main wasn't viable for residents and as such was not directly promoted. A new auction was held in June 2023 and the results will be advertised on the council website to enable households to consider switching.

Delivering the Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme

The government energy rebate scheme which is now closed was delivered by the council in 2022 and provided a total of £16.3M of funding direct to over 104,300 households.

Energy Monitors loan scheme and Smart meter

The Council previously helped residents keep an eye on how much energy they use through an energy monitor loan scheme. The meters provided by NEA and British Gas were easy to use and are simply clipped on to an electricity cable near to the residents meter and will give an immediate reading and show how much power appliances use. Many national energy suppliers are well on the way with their roll out of smart meters to help residents keep an eye on their energy costs. The Council is a Smart energy GB in Communities partner with NEA and has trained champions to deliver information to residents on smart meters, particularly those in the over 65 age group.

Safe Heating

The Council has worked jointly with West Midlands Fire Service for many years to target help at vulnerable residents to ensure that they are safe when heating their homes through:

- Promoting Free Home Safety Checks including joint marketing campaigns linked to collective fuel switching –
 - o Don't overload your sockets this Christmas
 - o New Year's resolution - Test your smoke alarm and get a free home safety check
 - o Put your cigarette out.
- Providing free Carbon Monoxide Detectors – possible due to previous grant funding from Public Health England. During 2018/19 we targeted support at vulnerable households (principally those disabled and over the age of 70) with the opportunity for a free gas safety check on their boiler and other gas appliances. This continued into from 2019 to 31 March 2023.

New Regulations came into force in October 2022 related to the serious matter of smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detection in Social Housing Providers (Providers)

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stock. The Housing Standards service will continue to monitor performance of social providers in this area.

Reducing Electricity Use

The following websites have a wealth of information to help residents including:
<https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/simple-savings>
<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy/>

- Turn off the lights you don't need or aren't using.
- Don't leave electrical items on standby.
- You can save around £30 a year on your electricity bills by using a Standby Saver.
- Use energy saving light bulbs.
- Ensure all electrical appliances are turned off at the plug when not in use.
- Some items can still use energy when plugged in even if the appliance has been turned off. By turning your appliances off at the source you can save up to £55 a year on your electricity bill.

Buying new electrical products

When you come to replace an appliance, check the energy efficiency rating. Over the life of a washing machine or fridge-freezer, buying energy efficient 'A+' or 'A++' or A+++ rated model could save you its purchase price in reduced energy bills. Price comparison websites can be useful to source information when considering a new purchase. Also the national consumer charity Which (www.which.co.uk) offers lots of useful advice and tips on choosing products.

Improving Home Energy Together

i) LOCAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES

Our current performance

On fuel poverty – Using the national Low Income High Cost definition and for 2019 onwards the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE)

Table1. Percentage of households in Fuel Poverty

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019§	2020§	2021§	2022§
Walsall	13.1%	16.2%	14.3%	11.7%	13.2%	14.4%	13.7%	11.8%	19.4%	19.5%	19.7%	No data available
West Midlands	13.8%	15.2%	13.9%	11.8%	13.5%	13.7%	12.6%	11.4%	17.5%	17.8%	18.5%	19.2%
England	10.9%	10.4%	10.4%	10.6%	11.0%	11.1%	10.9%	15.0%	13.4%	13.2%	13.1%	13.4%

Table 2. Number of households in Fuel Poverty.

	Household Numbers in Fuel Poverty										
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019§	2020§	2021§
Walsall	13,686	16,626	15,427	12,776	14,458	16,154	15,404	13,510	22,299	22,682	22,608

§ Note that these figures relate to LILEE definition of fuel poverty.

Comment:

Walsall was ranked 59th (in 2016 it was ranked 22nd) highest of all English local authority areas in terms of fuel poverty using 2018 data. Using LILEE data as at 2021 (most recent data available) Walsall is now 9th (in 2020 it was 10th and in 2019 it was 11th) highest of all English local authority areas for fuel poverty.

Walsall remains in the top 3% of fuel poor councils in England. Source:* [Sub-regional fuel poverty data 2023 \(2021 data\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2023-2021-data) Next data release expected 28 April 2024.

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Table 3 Walsall Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in top 1% of Fuel Poor in England (2021 data)

LSOA Name	LSOA Name	Number of households	Number of households in fuel poverty	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)	National Rank in LSOA (1 is worst 33,755 is best)
E01010342	Walsall 034D	532	311	58.5	8
E01010343	Walsall 034E	475	232	48.8	63
E01010269	Walsall 026A	551	269	48.8	64
E01010341	Walsall 034C	483	210	43.5	164
E01010268	Walsall 021B	580	245	42.2	190
E01010344	Walsall 034F	598	245	41.0	234
E01010364	Walsall 031B	482	194	40.2	251
E01010327	Walsall 029B	594	228	38.4	320
	Total	4,295	1,934	45.0	

Based on 2021 data Walsall has 8 LSOAs in the worst 1% for fuel poverty in England.

Previous years had

- Based on 2020 data 6 LSOAs in the highest 1% of all English LSOAs for fuel poverty.
- Based on 2019 data 13 LSOAs in the highest 1% of all English LSOAs for fuel poverty.

Based on 2021 data Walsall 034D (58.5%) is the 8th worst of all LSOAs in England. The previous highest LSOA (based on 2020 data) was Walsall 013D with a rate of 38% which was ranked 131 worst LSOA for fuel poverty in England. Based on 2019 data the worst LSOA was Walsall 026A with fuel poverty at 37.6%

Table 4 Walsall Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in top 5% of Fuel Poor in England (2020 data)

LSOA Code	LSOA Name	Number of households	Number of households in fuel poverty	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
E01010342	Walsall 034D	532	311	58.5
E01010343	Walsall 034E	475	232	48.8
E01010269	Walsall 026A	551	269	48.8
E01010341	Walsall 034C	483	210	43.5
E01010268	Walsall 021B	580	245	42.2
E01010344	Walsall 034F	598	245	41.0
E01010364	Walsall 031B	482	194	40.2
E01010327	Walsall 029B	594	228	38.4
E01010367	Walsall 031E	640	235	36.7
E01010366	Walsall 031D	639	234	36.6
E01033897	Walsall 030G	498	168	33.7
E01010375	Walsall 018E	749	252	33.6
E01010263	Walsall 033B	546	183	33.5
E01010286	Walsall 006C	654	218	33.3
E01033896	Walsall 030F	673	222	33.0
E01010282	Walsall 012A	517	169	32.7
E01010372	Walsall 030D	618	202	32.7
E01010338	Walsall 037C	548	176	32.1
E01010313	Walsall 038C	555	175	31.5
E01010340	Walsall 034B	603	189	31.3
E01010336	Walsall 034A	515	158	30.7
E01010365	Walsall 031C	685	209	30.5
E01010265	Walsall 033D	709	216	30.5

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E01010272	Walsall 017B	709	216	30.5
E01010283	Walsall 013D	690	210	30.4
E01010374	Walsall 018D	927	277	29.9
E01010335	Walsall 037A	610	177	29.0
E01010316	Walsall 036D	641	185	28.9
E01010362	Walsall 026C	626	178	28.4
E01033894	Walsall 013F	620	173	27.9
E01032888	Walsall 018F	1,042	289	27.7
E01010277	Walsall 013B	673	186	27.6
E01010288	Walsall 012C	638	176	27.6
E01010370	Walsall 030B	891	243	27.3
E01010289	Walsall 012D	731	198	27.1
E01010310	Walsall 038A	783	210	26.8
E01010305	Walsall 002C	533	142	26.6
E01010312	Walsall 038B	713	189	26.5
	Total	24,271	7,989	32.9%

Based on 2021 data there are 38 LSOA's in the highest 5% of fuel poor in England.

Previous results

Based on 2020 data there were 40 LSOAs in the top 5% of worst LSOAs in England for Fuel Poverty. This compares to 39 for 2019 data.

Our original HECA Ambitions:

We will work to ensure that by 2020

- No LSOA's in the borough are in the highest 1% of fuel poor in England – Not yet achieved – currently 8 at this level
- Less than 10% (less than 17) of the borough's LSOA's are in the highest 5% of fuel poor in England. Not yet achieved
- We will reduce the borough fuel poverty by 10% on the 2010 levels (22.6%) by 2020 – Achieved

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Tackling High Fuel Bills

The Council has since 2014 promoted fuel switching and especially the benefits of collective switching. The West Midlands unit costs are 0.66% higher than the UK average for electricity and 1.20% higher for gas for the UK rates (data released December 2022). Data source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/annual-domestic-energy-price-statistics>

Domestic Electricity Prices		
Region	Overall: Unit cost (Pence per kWh)	Overall: Bill (Pounds)
Merseyside & North Wales	38.81	£ 1,296
Eastern	37.27	£ 1,234
South Scotland	37.1	£ 1,224
South Wales	37.1	£ 1,239
South East	36.89	£ 1,248
West Midlands	36.75	£ 1,225
North Scotland	36.74	£ 1,215
Southern	36.74	£ 1,221
South West	36.55	£ 1,234
United Kingdom	36.51	£ 1,219
North West	36.38	£ 1,212
Yorkshire	36.2	£ 1,208
East Midlands	36.17	£ 1,198
London	36.05	£ 1,222
North East	35.69	£ 1,179
Northern Ireland	30.53	£ 1,054

Domestic Gas prices		
Region	Average variable unit price (£/kWh)	Average fixed cost (£/year)
London	9.33	£ 1,144
Southern	9.27	£ 1,111
Merseyside & North Wales	9.24	£ 1,107
West Midlands	9.24	£ 1,097
South Scotland	9.19	£ 1,116
South West	9.19	£ 1,099
Eastern	9.15	£ 1,098
North West	9.13	£ 1,088
Great Britain	9.13	£ 1,097
North Scotland	9.12	£ 1,111
Yorkshire	9.09	£ 1,090
East Midlands	8.98	£ 1,079
South East	8.94	£ 1,068
North East	8.85	£ 1,074
South Wales	8.66	£ 1,100

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On Excess Winter Deaths

Excess winter deaths are measured using an index (EWM). As an example, an EWM index of 20 shows that there were 20% more deaths in winter period (December to March) compared with the non-winter period.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Walsall	14.0	15.2	24.1	17.0	20.8	22.2	23.7	16.0	22.8	25.8	20.7	31.4	18.0	10.0*	-0.6*	**
West Midlands	17.8	16.0	24.2	17.9	18.8	14.0	20.8	14.3	24.7	15.2	20.2	29.0	13.5	19.7	0.2	8.1
England	15.0	15.5	23.4	16.7	16.5	15.6	19.6	11.1	27.0	14.6	21.1	29.6	14.6	17.1	1.2	7.3

*This data excludes Covid 19 deaths

** Data still awaited

It is noted that since 2010/11 excess winter deaths in Walsall have been at a higher rate than the West Midlands and England except for 2016/17 and 2019/20 and again in 2020/21.

Data Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/excesswintermortalityinenglandandwalesreferencecetables>

Next data release expected December 2023.

Action:

We will work with partners to reduce excess winter deaths and promote information to help residents and carers to help tackle this key issue. One way is seeking to target help at the most vulnerable age groups including those aged 80 years of age or older.

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**Action On Carbon emissions:
CO2 emission (kt CO2) from Domestic Use – Estimates**

The residential sector consists of emissions from fuel combustion for heating and cooking, garden machinery, and fluorinated gases released from aerosols and metered dose inhalers.

It is estimated to have been responsible for around 17% of carbon dioxide emissions in the UK in 2022. The main source of emissions from this sector is the use of natural gas for heating and cooking. It should be noted that since these figures are estimates of emissions by source, emissions related to residential electricity use – including electricity use for heating – are attributed to power stations and are therefore included in the energy supply sector rather than the residential sector. Between 2022 and 2021 territorial carbon dioxide emissions from the residential sector fell 16.5% (11.1 Mt), the third largest fall since the start of the series in 1990.

Nationally and in Walsall there was an increase (6% and 4.2% respectively) in residential emissions between 2020 and 2021, with the colder temperatures in 2021 likely to be the main factor, resulting in more energy being used to heat homes. The average temperature across the year was 0.4 degrees Celsius lower in 2021 than in 2020.

More recent provisional data suggests that Nationally there was a decrease in carbon dioxide emissions from dwellings between 2021 and 2022 was affected by the warmer weather in 2022, resulting in less energy being used to heat homes. It may have also been affected by higher energy prices, particularly in the final quarter of the year. The daily average temperature in 2022 was 0.9 degrees Celsius higher than the 30-year long-term mean (1991 – 2022) and 0.8 degrees higher than in 2021. If temperatures for both 2021 and 2022 had followed long-term trends then there would have still been a 6.8% (4.7 Mt) decrease. Residential emissions fluctuate owing to year-on-year variation in weather conditions

Data source: [2022 UK greenhouse gas emissions: provisional figures - statistical release \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141222/2022-UK-greenhouse-gas-emissions-provisional-figures-statistical-release.pdf)

Year	Walsall	% change on previous	West Midlands	% change on previous	England	% change on previous
2005	609	NA	2,287	NA	126,250	NA
2006	611	0.4	2,292	0.2	126,028	-0.2
2007	588	-3.8	2,218	-3.3	121,998	-3.2
2008	586	-0.4	2,222	0.2	122,107	0.1
2009	532	-9.1	2,002	-9.9	111,071	-9.0
2010	569	6.9	2,128	6.3	119,066	7.2
2011	500	-12.1	1,871	-12.0	104,136	-12.5
2012	534	6.7	2,006	7.2	111,852	7.4
2013	522	-2.3	1,956.2	-2.5	109,218	-2.4
2014	442	-15.3	1,643.3	-16.0	92,236	-15.5

2015	429	-2.9	1,594	-3.0	89,342	-3.1
2016	412	-4.1	1,527	-4.2	84,896	5.0
2017	387	-5.9	1,435	-6.0	79,749	-6.1
2018	375	-3.1	1,443	0.6	79,806	0.1
2019	362	-3.5	1,409	-2.4	77,628	-2.7
2020	354	-2.2	Data not available		Data not available	
2021	369	4.2+				
Total change from 2005		-39.4%		-38.4%		-38.5%

Data source: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

Next data release expected by April 2024

Original Target:

We will reduce CO2 emissions in the housing sector by 20% on 2009 (532 kt CO2) levels by 2020 i.e. to 426kt CO2. **This Target has already been met.**

Reducing Fuel Poverty

We will reduce fuel poverty as stated above by the following actions:

a) Specifically targeted promotion of all home energy initiatives that are available towards the LSOA's that are:

Priority 1 Areas: Target those 6 LSOAs in the English top 1% for Fuel Poverty. These are included in Appendix 1. The LSOA with the highest level of fuel poverty in borough is Walsall 013D with 38% has the highest rate of fuel poverty in the borough and is 131st worst of all English LSOAs.

Priority 2 Areas: Additional 30 LSOA's in top 5% of fuel poor in England shown in Appendix 1

Priority 3 Areas: Other LSOA's that have a fuel poverty rate higher than that for the West Midlands of 17.8%. These are all shown in Appendix 2 attached and form the basis of those geographic areas for targeted support such as Warm Homes Fund.

b) Continue the borough wide initiatives (subject to funding) which improve the energy efficiency of homes in the borough and help reduce fuel poverty. Ensure focus on hard to treat dwellings in the borough including those outside Priority 1 and 2 areas.

c) Work with our partners (including energy companies, Registered Social Landlords, NHS Walsall,) to target any discretionary assistance (capital investment, advice and support) to areas identified in a) above. This work to include seeking external funding /advice to help residents of these properties.

e) Continue when possible and viable collective fuel switching promotion and related schemes to enable residents to benefit from the potential to reduce their home energy costs. Due to the increase in the energy cap in spring 2022 the collective fuel switch auction was not undertaken.

Energy Consumption in Domestic sector

The tables below show estimates of domestic energy consumption for 2005, 2015 and 2020. In each year gas is the significant form of domestic energy consumed. Figures are in thousands of tonnes of oil equivalent (ktoe)

2005 data

Area	Coal:	Petroleum:	Manufactured fuel	Gas:	Electricity:	Bioenergy and wastes:	All fuels:
England	305	299.9	1,709.70	30,557.20	8,707.50	341.6	41,920.90
West Midlands	8.6	14.2	184.4	3,243.90	886.9	22.3	4,360.30
Walsall	0.1	0.3	0.6	167.4	39.4	0.6	208.4

2015 data.

Area	Coal:	Petroleum:	Manufactured fuel	Gas:	Electricity:	Bioenergy and wastes:	All fuels:
England	270.3	1,380.30	224.1	23,000.40	7,909.00	440.1	33,224.20
West Midlands	7.6	148.9	10.2	2,405.80	811.6	28.7	3,412.80
Walsall	0.1	0.6	0.2	121.3	37.3	0.8	160.4

2020 (latest available figures).

Area	Coal:	Petroleum:	Manufactured fuel	Gas:	Electricity:	Bioenergy and wastes:	All fuels:
England	229	1,408.60	232.2	24,605.50	8,019.80	632.8	35,128.00
West Midlands	6.5	152.1	11.4	2,613.20	817	41.2	3,641.40
Walsall	0.1	0.6	0.3	130.7	36.9	1.1	169.6

Analysis shows that Walsall had in each year a higher reliance on gas (80%, 76% and 77% of all fuel usage) than the West Midlands overall (74%, 70% and 72%) or England (73%, 69% and 70%) in total.

Data source: [Total final energy consumption at regional and local authority level: 2005 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/total-final-energy-consumption-at-regional-and-local-authority-level-2005-to-2020) Data next updated September 2023.

Report in accordance with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

First published October 2012 (Updated July 2013, January and July 2015, February 2017, November 2018, July 2019, Feb 2020, June 2020, July 2021, July 2022) – July 2023

Energy Company Obligations (ECO and ECO Flex)

It is noted that the Council and their partners have been able to secure significantly higher rates of ECO (and ECO Flex) for the borough than other local council's and the West Midlands Rate. Since 3 July 2018 the Council has published its ECO Flex Statement of Intent online. The latest version related to ECO 4 is available at: [Energy efficiency funding and advice | Walsall Council](#)

	Percentage with ECO Measures as at:										
	31/12/13	30/9/14	31/12/15	31/9/16	31/12/16	31/3/18	31/03/20	31/12/20	31/12/21	31/12/22	31/03/23
Walsall	4.27	5.68	12.14	12.27	12.8	17.8	21.8	24.1	27.02	27.97	28.39
Wolverhampton	4.08	5.71	10.03	9.43	9.7	12.8	14.6	16.2	19.46	20.63	20.84
Sandwell	4.11	5.59	10.69	9.98	10.3	14.3	18.3	21.6	25.59	26.84	27.07
Dudley	2.86	3.79	7.94	7.08	7.20	9.90	12.40	14.30	16.58	17.76	18.3
West Midlands (Met county)	3.08	6.10	11.51	10.51	10.7	14.9	18.40	21.2	24.89	26.15	26.43
England	1.99	2.87	6.18	5.75	5.8	8.2	9.8	10.8	12.22	12.76	12.82

Data Source: [Household Energy Efficiency Statistics, headline release June 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Table 3.4 Published 22/06/23

Next version due 22/07/23

Report in accordance with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

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Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme

The Domestic RHI supported the installation of renewable and low-carbon-heating by individual households. The scheme opened in April 2014. RHI Payments are made over a 7 year period and, in most cases, will be estimated using values from the dwelling's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The scheme was extended by a year and applications could continue to be made until 31 March 2022. Eligible technologies on the Domestic RHI scheme include air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, biomass boilers, biomass stoves with integrated boilers and solar thermal panels. All systems must be certified and installed under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) or an equivalent scheme in order to qualify for payments.

The table below shows the number of installations assisted via Domestic RHI funding in the West Midlands including Walsall for the period April 2014 to March 2023 inclusive.

Area	Air source heat pump	Ground source heat pump	Biomass systems	Solar thermal	Total number of accredited installations
Birmingham	63	10	#	^	96
Coventry	55	#	#	12	71
Dudley	22	#	#	12	36
Sandwell	^	0	0	#	13
Solihull	48	8	9	14	79
Walsall	23	#	#	6	33
Wolverhampton	^	#	#	6	16
West Midlands (Met County)	228	25	19	72	344

refers to values between 1 and 5 inclusive which have been suppressed to prevent disclosure.

^ refers to values greater than 5 which have been suppressed where only one other value within the group (region or country) was suppressed to prevent disclosure.

Data source: [RHI monthly deployment data: March 2023 \(Quarterly edition\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rhi-monthly-deployment-data-march-2023-quarterly-edition)

Cavity Wall Insulation (CWI)

A range of funding sources have helped residents secure subsidised or free cavity wall insulation (CWI) or loft insulation in the borough and the council continues to seek help in this for residents.

At the end of 2022, the government estimated that 14.8 million properties in Great Britain had cavity wall insulation (71% of properties with a cavity wall – this means 29% still lack this basic form of insulation) the rate for England being 69% with cavity fill. Between December 2020 and December 2021 58,100 properties in Great Britain had cavity fill via retrofit and for December 2021 to December 2022 a further 32,000 were cavity filled.

Data source: [Household Energy Efficiency Statistical Release \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Next data release expected end of March 2024.

Target: Encourage the take-up of funding to provide cavity wall insulation.

Domestic Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Installations

Feed in Tariff data.

The table below shows the comparative rates of cumulative installations per 10,000 households based on feed in tariff schemes. This scheme closed in March 2019 and no further updates will exist.

	Mar 2019
West Midlands	272
Walsall	178
Wolverhampton	159
Sandwell	166
Dudley	202

Date source: Updated January 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/sub-regional-feed-in-tariffs-confirmed-on-the-cfrstatistics>

Smart Export Guarantee

With the closure of the feed-in-tariff on 31 March 2019 the government has proposed a new system of contributing towards solar installations, the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) which was available from 1 January 2020. It is unclear even with the reduced unit cost of solar pv panels whether there will be significant growth in installations. There is also a lack of regional and or local authority data available on solar installations. National data produced by Ofgem shows 33,998 solar pv installations during 2021/22 with generation levels of 155,647 kwh.

We are continuing to seek funding options to assist with the installation of PV on homes in Priority Area 1 and 2 in particular and are seeking to use LADS 3 and HUGS where possible and ECO 4 (and ECO Flex 4).

Council support

Solar PV installations supported by the council through grant funding (all sources)

2022/23 and 2023/24	Dwellings where solar PV installed	Grant funding
Private owner occupier	123	LADS 1B
Midland Heart – social tenure	51	LADS 2
Private owner occupier	113	LADS 2
Private owner occupier	256 (38)	LADS 3
Private owner occupier	4	HUGS 1
Total	547	
As at 06/07/23 (numbers in brackets planned works)		

Using an average generation rate of 3,707 kwh:

- A single install is estimated to produce £1,362 of electricity (Using the current average unit cost of electricity for the West Midlands (36.75p kw))
- The total estimated generation of electricity is 2.03 MKwh.
- The total estimated value of energy produced is £745,014.

Loft Installation

The government indicates that lofts are defined as insulated if they have 125mm or more of insulation. Lofts with less than 125mm of insulation are defined as uninsulated as they would benefit most from top-up insulation. Since 2003, current building regulations recommend a depth of at least 270mm (mineral or glass wool) in the loft – use this as a starting point rather than a finishing line to see larger savings. In 1995, the recommended depth was 200mm. Prior to that it was less than 100mm.

At the end of 2022, the government estimated that 17.0 million properties in Great Britain had loft insulation (67% of properties with a loft) cavity wall – this means 34% still lack this basic form of insulation) the rate for England being 65% with loft insulation.

Data source: [Household Energy Efficiency Statistical Release \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
Next data release expected end of March 2024.

It is estimated that as at 2021 39% of dwellings had loft insulation to the 200mm or greater level.

Data source: [England housing insulation | Statista](#)

Sustainable Homes

Walsall Council has previously supported the development of a new timber frame housing manufacture project being delivered by Accord called “LoCaL Homes” through advice and £780K of investment’s Green Square Accord have now expanded their operation to a new much larger facility which is still located within Walsall. This purpose built factory based in Aldridge is 4 times larger than the original factory in Beechdale, and was launched on 25 October 2018 by Housing Minister Kit Malthouse. These units provide thermal efficiency levels equivalent to Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) Level 4. LoCaL Homes now has over 10 years of experience of designing and manufacturing off-site timber framed panels for construction. More information can be found at: - [Homepage | Local Homes](#)

EPCs all tenures

The Council has set a Corporate Target of reducing the Percentage of dwellings with newly registered Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) that are in the lowest bandings of F and G (most energy inefficient) to below 2.53% for 2019. This target had been achieved with a rate of 2.34 which related to 120 F and G rated dwellings. In more recent years there has been a 'skewing' of the F and G data as the council has continued to support retro-fit works to properties that previously had no EPC and EPCs have now been secured for 'before' works and these are invariably at the lower level i.e. F and G's. The data will continue to be monitored.

Data source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-energy-performance-of-buildings-certificates>

Data release 27/4/23

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021*	2022*	2023 Qtr1*
% that are F or G rated	8.66	7.25	5.81	5.25	3.88	4.93	4.97	5.19	3.8	3.83	2.53	2.34	4.6	2.7	2.1	1.1
	Dwelling number											120	266	133	179	16

*As a result of the new gas switch scheme and securing before EPCs on LADS 1B and 2 and 3 there has been an increase in F and G rated EPC's.

% that are F or G rated	Year		
	2021	2022	Qtr 1 2023
Area			
England	3.1	2.6	2.2
West Midlands	3.9	2.9	2.0
Walsall	2.7	2.1	1.1

We will continue to ensure that landlords, agents and those selling or letting their homes are aware of their legal obligation to provide and make available Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs). We will take appropriate action against those who fail in this obligation.

We continue to promote to prospective tenants the importance of obtaining and considering EPCs before they decide on a property as it can have a major impact on their future wellbeing (health and energy costs). Our work will support the government aims of eliminating E, F and G EPC rated homes occupied by fuel poor households by 2025.

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Improving EPCs in the private rented sector.

From April 2018, as a result of the Energy Act 2011, all private rented dwellings should be at a minimum energy efficiency standard rating, EPC rating of “E” or have installed those improvements through subsidies available to pay for them, before granting a tenancy to new or existing tenants.

The Council commissioned a stock condition survey from BRE and the results (June 2019) indicate:

- Poorly heated / insulated private rented homes are a serious issue in a range of areas with over 10% of private rented dwellings having EPCs of F and G in 5 LSOAs and in one of these the rate is as high as 23%.
- There were a total of 681 private rented dwellings potentially being rented in breach of relevant legislation i.e. with EPCs of F or G.

Revenue grant funding was secured from government under a rogue landlord grant 2019/20 and from BEIS for 2020/21 to help tackle those landlords who either fail to obtain EPCs or seek to let their homes with F and G ratings under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). The work has continued into 2022 and 2023 and has in total has led to the following (up to 10 July 2023):

- Securing 158 EPC's for private rented dwellings that previously had no EPC at all. They now have an average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score of 62 which equates to a mid D rated EPC;
- Securing new EPCs for 207 previously F rated private rented dwellings. They now have an average SAP of 57 which equates to a D rated EPC;
- Securing new EPCs for 121 previously G rated private rented dwellings. They now have an average SAP of 55 which equates to a low rated D rated EPC;
- Securing 272 new EPCs for private rented dwellings where the EPC had expired and no valid one had been secured by the landlord. These properties now have an average SAP of 63 which equates to a mid D rated dwelling.

New breaches of the legislation continue to be found via a range of checks that the service undertakes including assessment of new housing benefit cases, use of national register and through general work with private rented tenants.

HMO EPCs

Since October 2014 the Council has required all applicants for Houses in Multiple Occupation licences to have EPC ratings of above E. We will work with landlords and their prospective tenants to:

- Highlight the benefits of energy efficiency works and
- Securing improvements to their homes / properties when external funding grants / loans etc. is available.
- Ensure that all new tenants are provided with EPC's by their landlord at the point of considering renting a property so that they understand the potential heating and energy costs of a property. Where the Council financially supports customers to access private rented accommodation it will only do so if the property has an EPC of D or better.

Minimum EPC level for social rented stock

The 2019 stock condition survey for Walsall (report by BRE) highlighted that 1% of social stock was estimated to have a hazard for excess cold. With the significant national evidential link between excess cold hazards and damp and mould growth hazards, we consider these rates to be similar for both hazards. In terms of stock, this equates to an estimated 385 social rented dwellings with a category 1 excess cold hazard (and possibly, same for damp and mould). In January 2023 the Council wrote to all social housing providers asking them to highlight any dwellings where excess cold and damp remained an issue.

The Council's published JSNA has more information about damp and mould in housing in Walsall: [Walsall JSNSA](#)

Local project initiative – Hillary School and local community.

During 2023 and 2024 the energy team are seeking to secure a range of complementary funding to support energy efficiency, carbon reduction and sustainable energy education for a local community. The project is focussed on Hillary Street School. To date a range of funds have been secured to help with this initiative:

- a) £50,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding
- b) £184,000 Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) project funding.

It is proposed to use the new sustainable education project being delivered to pupils free of charge by Achieve your Goals CIC to act as a catalyst to encouraging parents and carers to take-up energy advice and heating and insulation upgrades and where possible micro-energy generation. The advice provided is expected to help households access funds such as HUGS 2 and ECO 4 and ECO Flex 4. In addition, households will be supported to access the collective fuel switching scheme to see whether they can reduce their energy bills via switching supplier.

The scheme is also seeking to support school staff and volunteers become local energy champions and secure City and Guilds level 3 training in domestic energy awareness

TIME FRAME FOR DELIVERY AND NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERS

Walsall is a unitary authority and has developed strategic partnerships with NHS Walsall, Walsall Housing Group (Whg), Accord LoCal Homes, Watmos and Midland Heart and the GreenSquareAccord Group and other housing associations with dwellings in the borough. The council will continue to seek funding from other partners to help tackle excess cold, excess winter deaths, carbon emissions and related issues.

During winters 2014/15 to 2023/24 the council has secured funding from the Foundations Independent Living Trust to help part fund essential works to vulnerable residents homes and continues to seek ongoing funding to help tackle fuel poverty. We will again seek funding to assist under this project.

Abbreviations used in this Report

BEIS	Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy
CSC	Carbon Saving Communities
CSH	Code for sustainable homes
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DEBI	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DENZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
ECO	Energy Company Obligations
ECO Flex	Energy Company Obligations Flexibility scheme
EPC	Energy Performance Certificates
HUGS	Home Upgrade Grant
IMD	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
LADS	Local Authority Delivery Scheme
LSOA	Lower Super Output Areas
MEH	Midland Energy Hub – regional energy hub based in Nottingham
NEA	National Energy Action – National charity with aim of eradicating fuel poverty
SHDF	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund