

## Briefing Note

It is estimated by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) that 11,043 households in Herefordshire were classed as fuel poor. This note presents a brief geographical analysis of fuel poverty across Herefordshire.

### Background

A household is considered to be fuel poor if it meets the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator. Under the LIHC indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

The LIHC captures the fact that fuel poverty is distinct from general poverty: not all poor households are *fuel* poor, and some households would not normally be considered *poor* but could be pushed into fuel poverty if they have high energy costs. Fuel poverty is therefore an overlapping problem of households having a low income and facing high energy costs.

Please note estimates of fuel poverty at LSOA should be treated with caution. Due to very small sample sizes, estimates should only be used to look at general trends and identify areas of particularly high or low fuel poverty.

### Fuel poverty in Herefordshire

In 2016 (the latest available data), approximately 11,043 households in Herefordshire were considered to be 'fuel poor'. This equates to approximately 13.5% of all households in the district, which is above the rate for England of 11.1%. Herefordshire, as a large rural county, faces exceptional challenges in relation to the age and type of housing, the availability of mains gas, and the population profile.

Fuel poverty data has also been published at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA\*) level. Of the 116 LSOAs in Herefordshire, 71% (83) have a fuel poverty level above the national rate for England.

In Herefordshire, localities are used for statistical purposes and of the LSOA's with the highest level of fuel poverty >20% are located in Golden Valley, Mortimer and Kington.

## Keep Herefordshire Warm

Fuel Poverty has been flagged as a priority measure by the Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. In the last set of figures that was released by the Government, Herefordshire was defined as having the third worst percentage of people living in fuel poverty in the country.

**Keep Herefordshire Warm** is a partnership between Herefordshire Council and Marches Energy Agency. Run by a charity, **Keep Herefordshire Warm** provides a freephone advice line and is available to all residents of Herefordshire offering the following:

### Free & Impartial Energy Advice on:

- Keeping Warm at Home
- Energy Bills, Tariffs & Suppliers
- Heating & Hot Water
- Insulation & Heating Grants \*
- Health related grants \*
- Support during Power Cuts

\*subject to eligibility and availability of funding

**Emergency Funding**  
is now available for low  
income households in  
a 'no heat' situation  
due to broken gas  
central heating  
systems

### Energy Efficiency Grants:

- Grants for cavity wall and loft insulation – 'for all' (no qualifying criteria) – this funding will end shortly
- Grant support for heating replacements
- First time central heating – grant support to install central heating for the first time
- **Households qualify** if they are:
- In receipt of means tested benefits
- On low income and have limited savings and
  - have an energy inefficient home or high energy costs or
  - are vulnerable in some way (including over 60s, young children, illness or disability)
- Those not qualifying will be advised on alternatives where appropriate (e.g. trust fund applications).

### Priority Services Register and Warm Homes Discount

- People using electricity for medical equipment or for their heating are particularly vulnerable in the event of a power cut. Sign up for the Western Power Distribution Priority Services Register through Keep Herefordshire Warm for priority assistance and support.
- Many people don't know they are eligible for £140 off their energy bills. Many schemes are now open but operate on 'first come first served basis. We can help residents to apply