

Eat or Heat? – Let's share the warmth!



Can you help a family choose to HEAT their home as well as EATING?

FSW's foodbanks do an amazing job in supporting families who are struggling with food bills. However, they also know that fuel bills are a real worry for many families. During this second lockdown these are likely to increase significantly, as people spend more time at home. Should a family have to choose between heating or eating? No, but many families have to choose where to spend their money! The article below give more information about fuel poverty.

If you would like to help and are in receipt of a winter fuel payment and feel able to donate this, it will help families who aren't eligible for this support. We will be extremely grateful – and so will they!

Donations can be made on our website: <https://www.familysupportwork.org/single-donation/>

Please leave a message after your donation to let us know that this is a winter fuel gift or by sending a cheque, payable to Family Support Work, to our office at Garton House, 22 Stanford Avenue, Brighton BN1 6AA.

Thank you for your help - let's share the warmth!

What is fuel poverty?

Staying warm in our homes is a must this winter. However, rising energy costs, low incomes and energy-inefficient homes mean that many people have to choose whether to heat their home, feed their children or pay their rent because they can't afford to do all of them!

This winter, one in seven UK households will suffer from fuel poverty, unable to afford to heat their homes to keep warm and healthy. Often, it's those with least money who have no choice but to live in homes which are difficult and expensive to heat. This is a national injustice!

The impacts: Every year around 10,000 people die as a result of living in a cold home.

Cold homes cause or make worse a range of serious health conditions, such as heart attacks, strokes, bronchitis, and asthma. Fuel poverty also impacts on mental health and is a known risk factor for suicide.

Children who are without a warm, quiet place to do their homework can fall behind at school. Lack of hot water can lead to poor personal care, which might result in bullying and social isolation. Sometimes they spend hours alone in bed to keep warm.

The impact on society is significant, too. Health services spend 1.3bn each year in England, treating illness caused by cold homes. Twenty per cent of UK's carbon emissions are from poorly insulated houses.

The solutions

Fuel poverty is not inevitable. It's possible to use the same systems that created the problem to build a society where everyone gets to live in a warm home. Providing financial support to help struggling households improve the heating and insulation of their properties would make their homes easier and cheaper to heat, as well as reduce carbon emissions.

Vulnerable people can be helped to navigate the complex energy market, where they are often unfairly disadvantaged by policies and practices. Welfare systems can be redesigned to help release more people from the grip of poverty.

NEA, Action for warm Homes, October 2020

