

# Using the Fuel Poverty Calculator

January 2026

This document consists of:

- 1) A brief introduction of fuel poverty
- 2) How to access and use the Fuel Poverty Calculator

The Fuel Poverty Calculator was developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy.

## Definitions of fuel poverty in the four nations of the UK

England uses the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) definition of fuel poverty. This replaced the LIHC definition in 2021.

Under the LILEE definition, households are considered fuel poor if they have a Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) of band D or below **and** were they to spend the required amount on fuel to heat their home adequately\* they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line (**Low Income**).

\* Required fuel costs are those calculated by a domestic energy assessment and based on the amount of fuel required to maintain an 'adequate level of warmth'.

In Scotland, a household is defined as living in fuel poverty if (a) the fuel costs necessary for the home in which members of the household live are more than 10% of the household's adjusted (i.e. after housing costs) net income, and (b) after deducting such fuel costs, benefits received for a care need or disability (if any) and the household's childcare costs (if any), the household's remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living for members of the household.

Wales and Northern Ireland use the 10% definition of fuel poverty. Under this definition, households are considered fuel poor if they have to spend more than 10% of their income\* on maintaining an adequate level of warmth or if their fuel cost divided by their income is greater than 0.1.

\* Income is net income after tax and NI deductions, includes income from benefits and takes account of council tax payments.

## What is the fuel poverty calculator?

The Fuel Poverty Calculator is a free Microsoft Excel tool that allows users to input occupancy information, income, housing costs and energy bill details to estimate fuel poverty status.

It includes, for each of England and Scotland separately:

- A main calculation tab 'FPCalculationForm' for directly calculating fuel poverty status for individual households.
- A database tab 'CommunityFuelPovertyDatabase' which can be easily populated from data entered in the 'FPCalculationForm' tab.
- A printable questionnaire form for collecting data through face-to-face interviews, during home visits, etc.
- Full instructions on the data required to calculate fuel poverty.

The calculations that the fuel poverty calculator makes are based on the UK government's 'Fuel Poverty Methodology Handbook' [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuel-poverty-statistics-methodology-handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuel-poverty-statistics-methodology-handbook) for England, and for Scotland on the methodology described in <https://fuelpovertypanel.scot/blog/definition-of-fuel-poverty-explained/>.

### **Data and information required**

You may need to enable macros for the tool to have full functionality. For a guide on doing this see [Enable or disable macros in Microsoft 365 files - Microsoft Support](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/enable-or-disable-macros-in-microsoft-365-files).

To use the Fuel Poverty Calculator to assess a particular household's fuel poverty status, you will need:

- Total household net income:
  - Income after tax and NI contributions and after council tax
  - Income from benefits
- Number of adults, pensioners and children (including their age brackets) who live permanently in the household.
- Housing costs (rent and mortgage payments).
- Annual energy costs (ideally calculated from an energy assessment).
- EPC rating of property (for England only).

Macros and buttons in the tool allow records to be saved and stored in the database tab and cleared for new details to be added

### **Caveats and limitations**

- For England, for an official definition of fuel poverty, the annual fuel costs used must be calculated by a energy assessment using BREDEM based calculations.
- For Scotland, annual fuel costs must be calculated as described in section 3 of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Act 2019.
- Actual fuel costs will only provide an indication of fuel poverty status.

Given that many low income households under-heat their homes, households calculated to be found to be fuel poor using actual fuel costs, are likely to also be *officially* in fuel poverty.

National average fuel cost and income thresholds are calculated using the latest available data. Updates will be made to the tool when more recent data is available.

For Scotland, thresholds for an acceptable standard of living are based on outputs from the online Minimum Income Calculator ([www.minimumincome.org.uk](http://www.minimumincome.org.uk)) or factors derived from these outputs for less common household types.

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