

One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan 2020-2030

Short progress report Financial year 2024-2025

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Executive Summary

This yearly report aims to summarise action on fuel poverty in Bristol, and to assess progress on delivering the One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan, which was created in April 2022. The report assesses progress toward five crucial fuel poverty goals set out in the Action Plan:

1. Affordable, efficient housing
2. Affordable low-carbon heating
3. An inclusive smart energy system
4. Specialist cold homes advice services and referral pathway
5. Aligning with broader work to counter poverty in the city

The report provides a useful yearly resource on progress on fuel poverty in Bristol. We compare the situation in Bristol to the national picture of fuel poverty in Great Britain, and trends in both areas over time.

Key findings

- Nationally, there has been very slow progress on fuel poverty in England, with a 0.4% decrease in 2024 and a predicted rise in 2025. Energy debt is also rising, with British customers owing a total of £4.15 billion, and >1 million customers without any repayment plan in place.
- In Bristol, fuel poverty decreased by 3.5% in 2024–25 from the previous year, influenced by reductions in energy prices and improvements in housing energy efficiency. Fuel poverty in Bristol is lower than the national average. However, there has been no meaningful reduction in the proportion of residents who say they are worried about keeping their home warm in winter.
- Fuel poverty remains highest in areas of the city with older housing stock, and in the most deprived neighbourhoods most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Resource constraints, and the technical complexity of retrofitting the least efficient properties, continue to present challenges.
- Significant progress has been made in Bristol to secure funding to meet the One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan objectives. Substantial funding gains have been made for improving the energy efficiency of the city's housing stock, and for expanding advice services for residents.
- Training and referral pathways have also strengthened, although challenges remain in ensuring consistent long-term funding and integrating data across multiple partner organisations.

- The lack of comprehensive data on low carbon heating installations in Bristol limits the ability to accurately assess progress, identify gaps, and target support.
- Access to smart energy technologies and flexibility services remains unequal, particularly among low-income and digitally excluded households.
- Some progress has been made integrating energy support with wider anti-poverty and community wellbeing initiatives. Strengthening partnerships and improved data sharing continue to be vital.

The development of a place-based approach to retrofit demonstrates the city's commitment to tackling both the immediate and structural drivers of fuel poverty. The reconvened No Cold Homes steering group offers an opportunity to reestablish citywide oversight, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and ensure accountability for delivering the One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan. By building on current initiatives and maintaining focus on equitable, sustainable housing improvements, Bristol can continue to reduce fuel poverty and move closer to its goal of ensuring that every resident lives in a warm, healthy, and affordable home.

Introduction

The Bristol Fuel Poverty Action Plan was developed by the No Cold Homes steering group and signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board in April 2022. The plan recommended that the No Cold Homes steering group produce an annual report for the Health and Wellbeing Board, collating data and progress updates against identified actions.

A short progress report was last produced in June 2024 to provide a summary for April 2023-March 2024. As of June 2024, the steering group has been paused due to lack of dedicated funding to coordinate the group and monitor activities.

In this progress report, we first set out the national context, with data on fuel poverty in England as a whole. Next, we give an update on fuel poverty data for Bristol for the financial year 2024-25. Then, we assess progress on Bristol's One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan, according to five key goals: Affordable, energy efficient housing; Affordable low-carbon heating; An inclusive smart energy system; Specialist cold homes advice services and referral pathway; and Aligning with broader work to counter poverty in the city.

Information for this report was gathered from a combination of programme monitoring data, partner organisation reports, and national and local datasets. Progress updates were compiled through reporting from delivery partners and stakeholders, including Bristol City Council, the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), and Bristol City Leap. Where data were incomplete or unavailable, estimates and contextual analysis were used to provide an indicative assessment of progress. We include updates on key policies impacting fuel poverty in Bristol and how they impact progress towards objectives.

This progress report covers April 2024-March 2025. As the steering group has not met since June 2024, the report may not capture all the work that has taken place across the city since, but aims to provide a snapshot of fuel poverty related activities. In some cases, due to data availability, we may report slightly different time periods.

Table 1: Steering group participants

Organisation / Council Department	May-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24
BCC Public Health	1	1	1	1	1
BCC Housing teams	2	2	3	0	2
BCC Employment and Skills	0	0	1	0	1
BCC Community Development	0	0	1	0	0
BCC Decarbonisation / City Leap / Vattenfall	1	3	3	3	2
Bristol advice organisations	7	4	6	4	3
Researchers	1	1	1	0	0
Health / health partnership	3	2	2	2	1
Regional bodies	2	0	1	1	1
Other	1	0	0	0	1
Total	18	13	19	11	12

National context

Headline figures

- In 2024, it was estimated that 11.0% of households (2.73 million) in England were living in fuel poverty. This is a slight reduction from 11.4% (2.80 million households) in 2023; but fuel poverty is predicted to rise slightly to 11.2% in 2025.
- There has been an increase in the number of low-income households living in energy efficient properties. In 2024, 59.5% of low-income households were living in a property rated band C or above compared to 58.0% in 2023.
- In 2024, 36.3% of households were required to spend more than 10% of their income (after housing costs) on energy bills.
- The average fuel poverty gap in 2024 (the reduction in fuel costs needed for a household to not be in fuel poverty) was estimated at £407, down by 4% from 2023.¹

Energy efficiency installations increased in the year to December 2024. Around 120,900 homes were upgraded across all schemes, an increase of 38% compared with 2023. 420,600 individual energy efficiency measures were installed, up 27% from 2023. 80% of all measures installed were delivered through the Energy Company Obligation Scheme (ECO).

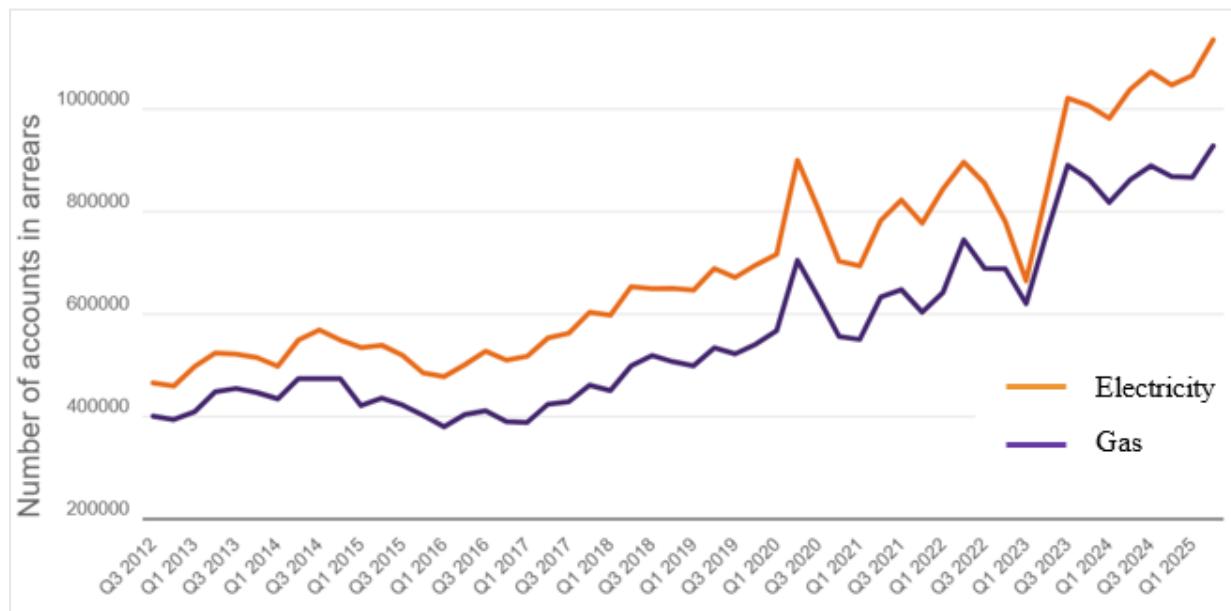
In June 2024, the Energy Price Guarantee introduced in October 2022 to limit increases in energy bills ended. Prior to its close, typical dual fuel energy bills were brought down to £2,500 a year. From April 2024 to March 2025, average combined fuel bills were estimated to be £1,854 per year.

Inflation fell temporarily to 2.0% in May 2024, reaching the Bank of England's target for the first time since July 2021. However, the cumulative increase in prices were felt by households, particularly those who were struggling with costs prior to the cost-of-living crisis. In April 2024, 72% of adults in Great Britain reported an increase in their cost of living compared to the previous month, citing increases in food bills and energy bills as the key influences.

The number of households in energy debt has risen in 2024-25 with £4.15 billion in energy debt and arrears in the first quarter of 2025, compared with £3.61 billion at the same point in 2024. A proportion of this debt is unmanaged with 1,064,184 electricity customers and 864,961 gas customers owing money without repayment plans in place (Figure 1).

¹All data here is from DESNZ (2025) Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics in England, 2025 (2024 data). Statistics are based on data collected in the English Housing Survey. Statistics for 2024 are based on fieldwork carried out between April 2022 and March 2024 (with a mid-point of 1st April 2023).

Figure 1: Number of accounts in arrears where there is no repayment plan in place



Citizens Advice reported that half of the people they help are in a negative budget, even after receiving support, meaning they are building up debt each month as their essential expenditure exceeds their income. This is up from just over one third in 2019. Those most likely to be in a negative budget include racially minoritised groups, the self-employed, private renters and mortgage holders.

Overall, while the latest fuel poverty rates in England showed a very slight improvement, with fewer households affected and a modest reduction in the fuel poverty gap, many households continue to face significant financial pressures. Persistently high energy costs have left households vulnerable, especially those already struggling with the ongoing effects of the cost-of-living crisis. The lasting impact of cumulative price rises, and growing energy debt indicates that financial hardship remains widespread.

The next section looks at fuel poverty in the city of Bristol in 2024-25.

A note on measuring fuel poverty

The Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator definition is used throughout this report. Using this measure, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- They are living in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of band D or below, and
- After spending the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line¹.

The three factors which determine whether a household is fuel poor are: household energy efficiency rating; fuel prices; household income.

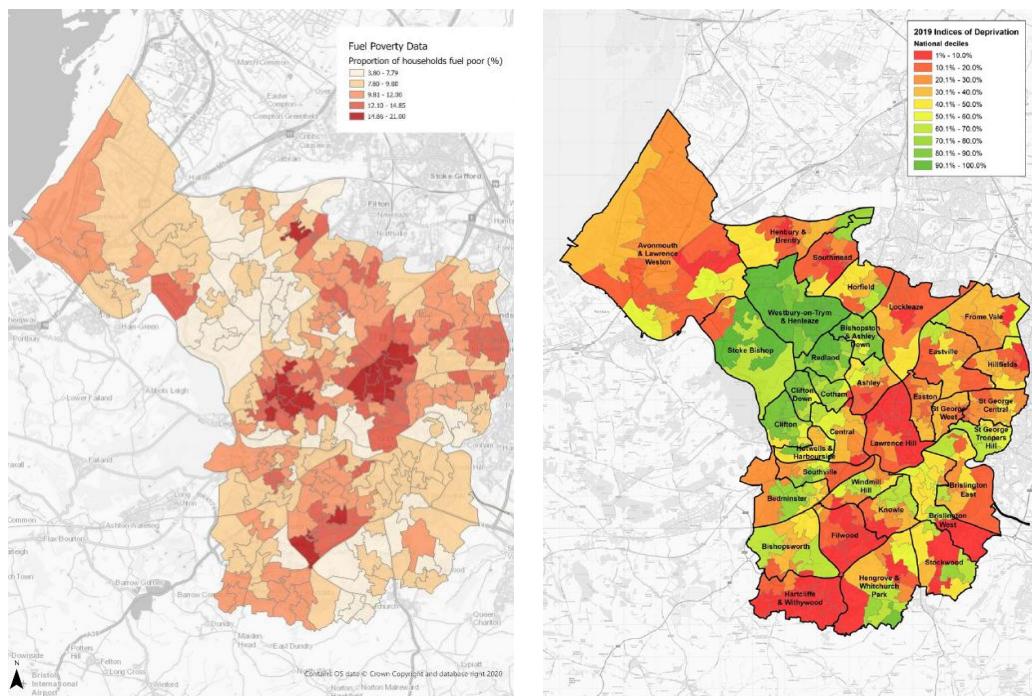
Update on fuel poverty in Bristol

Headline figures

Fuel poverty decreased in Bristol in 2024, influenced by reductions in energy prices and increases in the number of homes with EPC ratings A-C, according to figures from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).² 10.3% (approximately 20,950 households) of all households in Bristol are fuel poor. This represents a decrease from the previous year where 13.8% households were estimated to be living in fuel poverty and is lower than the national average (11.4%). Bristol's Quality of Life survey revealed that in 2024, 30% of residents were extremely or moderately worried about keeping their home warm during the winter, rising to 40% in the most deprived areas. This is similar to the previous year (31%).

Fuel poverty remains high in Clifton, Cotham and Redland which have a large student population, and older properties likely to have a low energy efficiency rating. Other areas with high levels of fuel poverty include neighbourhoods in Easton, Lawrence Hill, Knowle, Filwood, Eastville, Southmead and Ashley. These areas demonstrate substantial overlap between fuel poverty and Bristol's most deprived neighbourhoods (Figure 2).

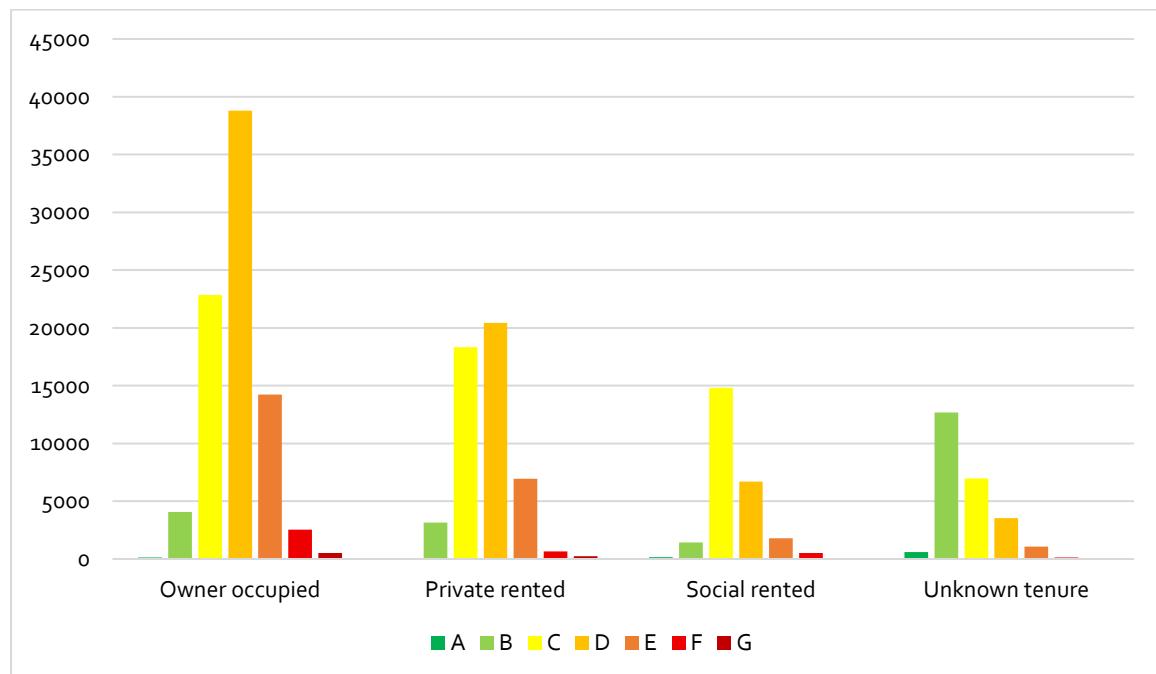
Figure 2: Percentage of fuel poor households in Bristol, by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) (left-hand panel), showing overlap with 2019 Index of Deprivation (right-hand panel)



² Using the LIEE indicator, a household cannot be fuel poor if the property's energy efficiency rating is A-C.

In 2025, the majority of homes in Bristol have Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of D (37.87%) and C (34.34%), broadly reflecting average housing stock in England. A much smaller percentage (12.12%) are rated 'efficient' at A or B. Meanwhile a fairly large proportion (15.67%) are rated E, F or G. In Bristol, this represents a modest improvement compared to 2024 when 16.34% of properties were rated as E, F or G. The majority of EPC rated E, F and G homes in Bristol are owner occupied. Nearly half (46%) of all owner occupied homes are rated D, with 41% of private rented homes also falling within this band (Figure 3)³.

Figure 3: Number of Bristol homes by EPC rating and tenure⁴



The next section describes progress towards the targets in the One City Fuel Poverty Plan organised under the five themes within the plan: Affordable, energy efficient housing; Affordable low-carbon heating; An inclusive smart energy system; Specialist cold homes advice services and referral pathway; and Aligning with broader work to counter poverty in the city.

³ EPC data available at <https://epc.opendatacommunities.org/domestic/search>

⁴ Unknown has been used in cases where the tenure has not been recorded and for new dwellings where the tenure is not defined.

Progress on One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan 2024-25

Progress has been made towards all five themes of the Plan. For each theme, we summarise general progress updates from relevant projects and organisations. In addition, some themes specify primary performance indicators, which were defined when the Plan was first developed by the No Cold Homes steering group in 2020 and revised in 2022. We discuss progress towards these primary performance indicators, where they exist, although this is sometimes limited by data availability. In other themes, no primary performance indicators are specified.

1. Affordable, energy efficient housing

Oversight: Homes and Communities Board

Progress updates

- Bristol City Council has engaged private landlords through landlord licensing schemes and Minimum Energy Efficiency (MEES) regulation enforcement. In 2024-25, 120 private rented properties were improved from EPC band F/E to E-and-above.
- During this period, the council assisted 13 owner occupiers and private landlords with applying for Energy Loans to enable energy efficiency improvements.
- A new **Local Plan** for Bristol is under review. Once it comes into force, new homes will be required to be net carbon in use (EPC band B or A). In addition, the Future Homes Standard, due to be published in autumn 2025, will require the majority of new homes in England to have solar panels and heat pumps from 2027.
- **Affordable housing delivery:** there were 555 starts on site of affordable homes in Bristol in 2024-25, 285 of which were council homes and 270 were registered providers and other third-party providers. 702 affordable homes are forecast for 2025-26.
- Researchers at the University of Bristol delivered a **pilot project** exploring a place-based approach to green skills. The research focused on Lawrence Weston where Ambition Lawrence Weston are looking to provide green skill opportunities for local residents.
- As part of **Mission Net Zero**, community climate investment plans are being developed for Easton and Lawrence Hill, Knowle West and Southmead in

collaboration with community development groups and local residents. The plans include a focus on building and utilising local skills and capabilities to develop the local supply chain.⁵

- **The Green Register** in collaboration with researchers from the University of Bath and WeCanMake is piloting a place-focused approach to retrofit and green skills. They have developed training based upon the Green Register's Level 2 accredited retrofit training programme with a focus on the type of properties found in Knowle West. The pilot will provide a template for other neighbourhoods to create their own training courses.
- **Green Construction Training Grants** of up to £1,000 have been made available through Retrofit West for plumbers, electricians, roofers and general builders. Courses on offer cover heat pumps, solar PV, insulation and ventilation.

Primary performance indicators

Funding secured from government, ECO and/or other existing grant funding schemes.

Bristol City Council (in consortium with Bath and North East Somerset Council and North Somerset Council) has been allocated £13,458,463 through the Warm Homes: Local Grant for the improvement of privately owned (including private rented) homes. Bristol City Council has also been awarded Social Housing Fund (SHDF) Wave 3 funding as part of a consortium led by the West of England Combined Authority.

Bristol City Council continues to identify and support fuel poor households to access energy efficiency improvements through its **ECO4 and Great British Insulation Scheme Flexible Eligibility criteria**.

Additional capital funding secured for installation of measures benefitting fuel poor homes (£20 million over lifetime of action plan).

SHDF funding will be combined with Bristol City Council match funding under a **Neighbourhood Warm Homes retrofit programme**, totalling £25 million. The programme is delivered by Bristol City Leap and will run from April 2025 to March 2028. Up to 1,000 council owned and owner-occupied homes in the BS10 and BS11 areas (Henbury, Brentry,

⁵ Mission Net Zero is a partnership with Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership, Bristol and Bath Regional Capital, Bristol City Leap, Bristol Energy Network, Centre for Sustainable Energy, Living Places, National Grid Electricity Distribution, West of England Combined Authority and BANES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils

Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston) will be improved under the scheme. Top-up funding is available through the Warm Homes Local Grant for owner occupiers.

Number of measures installed against modelled target to meet EPC band C and above by 2030 to value £217 million, improving approximately 22,300 fuel poor homes.

For the period April 2024 to March 2025, the number of households receiving energy efficiency improvements was:

- Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) funding - 77 homes.
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) - 59 homes including 26 houses and 33 flats.

Data was not available for the number of installations carried out under ECO or the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS). This lack of data is crucial, because nationally 80% of installations were carried out under ECO, therefore the number of installations for Bristol is probably much higher than the figures above.

Data for the number of ECO Flex installations is not yet available. However, 127 applications were processed and approved during this period.

Planned maintenance and upgrades of council owned homes went ahead in addition to SHDF works but data was not available on the total number of council owned properties improved during 2024-25.

Improvement in the number of fuel poor homes in EPC bands F&G (2022); EPC bands E to D (2025); EPC band C and above (2030).

Table 2 shows the overall number of homes in Bristol in each EPC band comparing financial year 2023-24 with financial year 2024-25.

Table 2: Number of homes in Bristol by EPC band

	2024		2025	
EPC band A	682	0.40%	898	0.49%
EPC band B	19,598	11.45%	21,319	11.63%
EPC band C	57,240	33.46%	62,974	34.34%
EPC band D	65,612	38.35%	69,453	37.87%
EPC band E	23,382	13.67%	24,045	13.11%
EPC band F	3,731	2.18%	3,817	2.08%
EPC band G	848	0.50%	877	0.48%
Total	171,093	100.00%	183,383	100.00%

The overall number of homes in each band has increased in 2025. The data includes new dwellings and some properties may have been assessed for the first time. The modest decrease in the proportion of F and G properties points to the challenges of retrofitting these homes with most energy efficiency schemes not required to prioritise the worst performing properties. It indicates the significant potential for improving band E and band D properties to band C, resulting in a decrease in fuel poverty rates across the city.

Summary – progress on Affordable, Energy Efficient Housing

Bristol City Council and its partners have continued to make progress in improving the energy efficiency of the city's housing stock. Over the reporting period, more than £13.4 million was secured through the Warm Homes: Local Grant and additional Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 3 investment. Combined with council match funding, this will deliver a £25 million Neighbourhood Warm Homes retrofit programme from April 2025 to March 2028, targeting up to 1,000 homes in areas of high need.

During 2024-25, at least 136 homes in Bristol benefitted from energy efficiency measures under the HUG and SHDF schemes. The proportion of Bristol homes achieving EPC band C or above has increased slightly, reflecting incremental gains in energy performance. In the

private rented sector, 120 properties were improved from EPC bands F/E to E or above through targeted engagement and enforcement activity.

Progress has also been achieved in the delivery of new affordable, energy efficient homes, with 555 starts on site in 2024–25, alongside initiatives to strengthen local green skills and supply chain capacity through partnerships with community organisations and university-led projects.

However, ongoing data limitations, resource constraints, and the technical complexity of retrofitting the least efficient properties continue to present challenges. While the overall direction of progress is positive, further acceleration in delivery and improved data coordination will be required to achieve the city's 2030 target for all homes to reach EPC band C or above.

2. Affordable, low carbon heating

Oversight: Environmental Sustainability Board

Progress updates

- CHEESE (Cold Homes Energy Efficiency Service Experts) provided 184 thermal imaging surveys over the 2024-25 heating season. Feedback sought from customers confirmed that many would be taking action (either DIY projects or larger scale retrofit) as a result of the survey.
- A detailed assessment of the housing stock in Southmead, Easton and Lawrence Hill and Knowle West has been undertaken as part of Mission Net Zero's place-based approach to retrofit. This work has been complemented by [research in Knowle West](#) undertaken by the University of Bath in collaboration with WeCanMake and Knowle West Media Centre to further understand how to transform the existing social housing stock.
- Bristol City Leap has secured £750,000 of [Heat Network Energy Efficiency Scheme Funding](#) to continue the extension of Bristol's heat network.
- As of July 2025, the equivalent of 11,500 homes are being supplied by the heat network. 11 buildings were connected in 2024.
- CSE has responded to the UK government and Ofgem's [consultation on the regulation of heat networks](#). Proposed regulations aim to give heat network customers the same protections as electricity and gas customers enforced by Ofgem. CSE broadly supports the proposals while highlighting the need for transparency on costs and carbon savings for customers, fair pricing and reliability of supply.

Summary – progress on affordable, low-carbon heating

Progress has been made in expanding low carbon heating solutions and preparing homes for retrofit. Work delivered through CHEESE, Mission Net Zero, University of Bath, and WeCanMake has improved understanding of retrofit needs in key neighbourhoods.

Bristol City Leap secured £750,000 from the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme, supporting the continued growth of Bristol's heat network, which now supplies the equivalent of 11,500 homes. CSE also contributed to national consultation on heat network regulation, advocating for fair pricing and stronger consumer protection.

A key barrier remains the lack of comprehensive data on low carbon heating installations across Bristol. This limits the ability to accurately assess progress, identify gaps, and target support where it is most needed. Continued improvement in data collection, monitoring, and coordination with installation partners will be essential to inform future planning and accelerate the city's transition to affordable, low carbon heating.

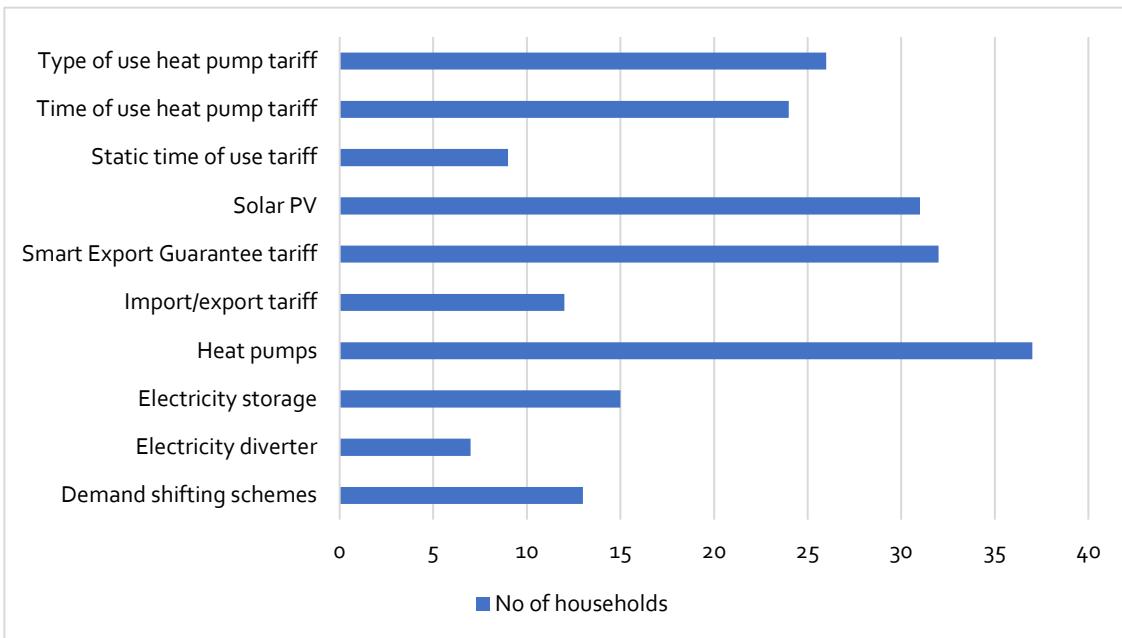
3. An inclusive smart energy system

Oversight: Environmental Sustainability Board

Progress updates

- CSE continues to develop its **Smart Energy Action Plans** – a tailored advice process offering advice on appropriate smart energy products, tariffs and low carbon technologies. In 2024-25, CSE provided this service to 75 households in Bristol who had received HUG funding to enable them to make best use of their newly installed technologies. Figure 4 shows the number of households who received each category of advice under this project.

Figure 4:
Number of Bristol HUG grant recipients receiving smart energy advice by topic



- CSE has launched the **web-based Energy Choices Tool**. The tool provides independent advice on smart energy options tailored to individual needs and preferences. The tool has been developed with input from advice organisations and community energy groups, industry experts and consumers. It is freely available and can be used by members of the public as a self-serve tool or by advisors assisting vulnerable customers to navigate their smart energy options.
- In 2024-25, CSE conducted detailed **research for National Grid** into the ability of low-income households to access demand flexibility services. The research found that households in wealthier areas are more likely to benefit from incentives linked to flexibility and a more targeted approach needs to be taken to support low-income households to engage with flexibility services.

Summary – progress on an inclusive smart energy system

Progress has been made in ensuring that all households, including low income and vulnerable residents, can benefit from smart energy technologies. CSE supported Bristol households receiving HUG funding through tailored Smart Energy Action Plans, helping residents make best use of new low carbon technologies and tariffs, and launched the Energy Choices Tool to give personalised, web-based advice on smart energy options.

A key barrier remains the unequal access to smart energy technologies and flexibility services, particularly among low-income and digitally excluded households. There is also a need to address the issue of **broken smart meters** – around 36 million GB households have a smart meter, but around 4 million of these don't work. Continued focus on inclusive engagement, digital support, and collaboration with community partners will be essential to ensure all residents can benefit from the transition to a smart, low carbon energy system.

4. Specialist cold homes advice services and referral pathway

Oversight: Health and Wellbeing Board

Progress updates

- In 2024-25, 3,185 Bristol residents received advice from WHAM either over the phone or at events with financial impacts totalling £602,139 (Table 3).
- 312 households received in-depth advice and support from a WHAM caseworker, 94 of which reported an improvement in their health and wellbeing on case closure.
- A survey of 189 WHAM clients who had received support in the past two years found that 83% were warmer or more comfortable in their homes after receiving WHAM heating advice.
- 986 Bristol City Council tenants received advice and support from the Tenants Energy Advice (TEA) project, with financial impacts totalling £238,551 (Table 3).
- Bristol Energy Network (BEN) engaged 2,289 people in energy advice and information as part of the Energy Help Desk initiative across 111 events in the year to December 2024.
- CSE ran five Energy Essentials training sessions in 2024-25. The training is designed to raise awareness of the signs of fuel poverty and the health impacts of cold homes. Attendees included frontline staff from Citizen's Advice, We Care Home Improvements, North Bristol Advice Centre and St Werburgh's Community Centre.
- BEN ran Energy Champion workshops in November 2024 and February 2025, reaching 45 individuals.
- Bristol City Council received two six-month extensions of the Household Support Fund in 2024-25 totalling £8,079,930. CSE administered a portion of these grants – to the value of £907,000 – to assist fuel poor households struggling with energy costs.
- A damp and mould checklist has been developed by the Bristol One City Damp and Mould Working Group. The checklist aims to support health professionals with identifying concerns relating to damp and mould or fuel poverty and includes referral routes for patients across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

Primary performance indicators

Single point of contact service commissioned beyond 2023 and service expanded to meet needs.

Warmer Homes Advice and Money (WHAM) is a multi-agency advice partnership offering advice on energy, money, benefits and home repairs. The service has expanded to cover Bristol, North Somerset and Bath and Northeast Somerset (BANES), and has secured funding until March 2026 from:

- Wales and West Utilities - £997,900 from January 2024, covering BANES, Bristol and North Somerset and including 10 payments to partner organisations.
- Energy Redress - £277,779 from September 2023 covering Bristol and North Somerset including six partner payments.
- Bristol Public health fund - £30,000 from September 2025 covering Bristol.
- British Gas Warm Home Initiatives Industry fund - £90,000 from October 2025 covering BANES, Bristol and North Somerset.

Additional £2.3 million revenue funding secured for services supporting fuel poor households over lifetime of action plan.

In addition to the WHAM funding above, CSE's Tenants Energy Advice (TEA) was awarded a two year contract from Bristol City Council until December 2026, with funding totalling £325,000. CSE's advice line received funding of £184,000 from WECA in August 2024 ending in March 2026. Additional funding has been provided by Bristol City Leap provided totalling £60,000 for three years ending in March 2027.

Table 3: Financial impacts for WHAM and TEA projects for FY 2024-25

Financial impact	WHAM	TEA	Total
Income maximisation (debt clearance, benefit claims, grants, switching tariffs, bill discounts)	£168,798	£112,497	£281,295
Installation of small energy saving measures and home improvements	£9,289	£2,079	£11,368
Installation of large energy saving measures	£156,896	-	£156,896
Heating improvements	£71,117	-	£71,118
Food and fuel vouchers	£188,390	£112,831	£301,221
Behavioural change	£7,648	£11,144	£18,792
Total	£602,139	£238,551	£840,690

Summary – progress on advice services and referral pathway

The WHAM partnership has expanded, securing over £1.3 million in funding to continue services until March 2026. Additional funding has been secured for the TEA project, funded until December 2026 (£325,000), and the CSE advice line, supported by WECA (£184,000) and Bristol City Leap (£60,000) through to 2027. Meanwhile the Bristol Energy Network reached over 2,200 residents through community events.

Training and referral pathways have also strengthened, with frontline Energy Essentials sessions delivered by CSE and a new damp and mould checklist developed to help health professionals identify and refer vulnerable households.

While services continue to expand, challenges remain in ensuring consistent long-term funding and integrating data across multiple partner organisations. Continued coordination and investment will be essential to sustain delivery, improve data sharing, and ensure all residents in fuel poverty are effectively reached and supported.

5. Aligning with broader work to counter poverty in the city

Oversight: Health and Wellbeing Board

Progress updates

- CSE staff and volunteers attended 51 outreach events in Bristol in 2024-25 including regular drop-in sessions at food banks in Lawrence Weston, Henbury and Hotwells. 442 people were reached in total through these activities.
- In 2024-25, CSE staff were active in networks and groups working collaboratively to tackle poverty and the cost-of-living crisis in Bristol and the wider area including ACFA advice sector network; Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire VCSE Alliance, Bristol Advice Partnership and Bristol One City cost of living coordination group.
- **Welcoming Spaces** continued to operate in winter 2024-25 providing a warm space for residents struggling with heating costs, as well as offering additional support. In 2025, the network has expanded from 38 to 165 spaces across the city with many providing money and benefit advice, mental health support, access to computers and Wi-Fi and community activities.
- **Climate and Disability research** led by Dr Emma Geen in partnership with CSE explored the needs of Disabled people around energy advice, retrofit and employment and skills. As part of this project, a report has been produced on improving retrofit for Disabled people with key recommendations alongside a home retrofit guide and checklist for Disabled people and their caregivers. The documents are available in Easy Read and BSL versions.

Summary – progress on aligning with broader work to counter poverty

Progress has been made in integrating energy support with wider anti-poverty and community wellbeing initiatives. CSE reached 442 residents through 51 outreach events in 2024-25, including drop-in sessions at local food banks. The Welcoming Spaces network expanded from 38 to 165 venues, offering warm spaces alongside financial, digital, and wellbeing support.

Research led by Dr Emma Geen with CSE explored the links between climate, disability, and poverty, producing accessible retrofit guidance for Disabled people and caregivers, available in Easy Read and BSL formats.

While collaboration between community partners remains strong, continued coordination and resourcing are needed to embed energy advice and support within wider anti-poverty strategies. Strengthening partnerships in Bristol's advice sector alongside improved data sharing, will be vital to ensure all residents - particularly those who are most vulnerable - can access inclusive and effective support.

Conclusions

Fuel poverty in Bristol has declined in 2024–25, as the result of lower energy prices and improvements in housing energy efficiency, and is now lower than the national average. Fuel poverty remains concentrated in areas with older housing stock and higher deprivation, underlining the continued need for targeted interventions.

Significant progress has been made in securing investment for energy efficiency and retrofit programmes, supporting low-income households, and expanding advice and support services such as WHAM. The development of a place-based approach to retrofit demonstrates the city's commitment to tackling both the immediate and structural drivers of fuel poverty.

However, challenges persist. Nationally, ongoing cost-of-living pressures, rising energy debt, and uneven progress in improving the least efficient homes highlight the importance of maintaining coordinated action and sufficient funding. The planned reconvening of the No Cold Homes steering group offers an opportunity to reestablish citywide oversight, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and ensure accountability for delivering the One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan.

By building on current initiatives and maintaining focus on equitable, sustainable housing improvements, Bristol can continue to reduce fuel poverty and move closer to its goal of ensuring that every resident lives in a warm, healthy, and affordable home.

Future of the No Cold Homes steering group

The No Cold Homes steering group previously received grant funding from Bristol City Council for a project management role to coordinate monitoring of activities, but this funding ended in June 2024. Steering group meetings have therefore been paused.

CSE has made available funding to resume the steering group until June 2026, at which point additional funding will be required to continue this work. The reconvened steering group will be responsible for establishing short term, actionable goals linked to the Fuel Poverty Action Plan. Members will promote fuel poverty related activities within their own organisations and be responsible for collecting data to feed into annual progress reports.

In order to strengthen awareness of fuel poverty and cold homes and links to health outcomes, it is hoped that the steering group will attract a broader membership, including professionals working within health and social care. Future meetings will be organised around key themes publicised in advance, allowing those who have particular interests or specialisms to attend without committing to longer term membership.

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