# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme**  |
| **DATE**  | **22 December 2021** |
| **BY** | **Minister for Climate Change**  |

Today, I have opened the [public consultation on the next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme](https://gov.wales/proposals-next-iteration-warm-homes-programme) and the role it can play to tackle fuel poverty and work towards achieving net zero by 2050. Since its launch in 2009/10, more than 67,100 lower income households have benefitted from energy efficiency improvements, saving an estimated average of approximately £300 on their energy bills and reducing carbon emissions.

In October, I was proud to publish our Net Zero Wales Plan for Carbon Budget 2 (2021-2025). This showed, ahead of COP26, how Wales is ready to play its part in tackling the climate emergency and act as a globally responsible nation. As the pandemic continues to blight our lives and exacerbate many of the inequalities we see across society, it is even more important we take the opportunities to respond to these challenges in a way which makes Wales a stronger, greener and fairer nation.

The very first policy in our Net Zero Wales Plan is focussed on a just transition. This means that we both recognise and manage the risk of disproportionately disadvantaging the most vulnerable in society, and the impact this can have on Welsh citizens, businesses and workers. As we develop our next Warm Homes programme, it means us thinking carefully about how the costs of transitioning to a lower carbon future in our homes do not fall on the shoulders of those on the lowest incomes – our work has to tackle both fuel poverty and the climate emergency.

This is a difficult balance to strike. Our homes, which are responsible for 10% of all carbon emissions in Wales, play a vital role in our lives. During the pandemic more of us have been spending more time in the house, whether for work, childcare, or safety and security reasons, consuming more energy for heating and lighting. We know from the latest estimates that 155,000 households in Wales are in fuel poverty, with a further 145,000 households at risk of joining them. We are working to update these estimates, given the latest energy price spikes, increase in the energy price cap and cut in universal credit which will have so unwelcome for families already hard-hit by low incomes and rising prices.

The Welsh Government continues to lobby and influence the UK Government to use the powers which sit in Westminster to address these pressures. Closer to home, we have taken steps to put emergency funding in place for this winter, alongside our work through the existing Warm Homes Programme, the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, Optimised Retrofit Programme and tighter building regulations to improve the thermal and energy efficiency of homes in Wales.

Despite this, we believe we can and must do more to hasten the pace of change. In this decade of action, we must act now to reduce the energy needed to keep our homes warm in winter and cool in summer. We must reduce our reliance on burning fossil fuels and make the transition to cleaner, lower carbon energy sources. Too many households in Wales have to choose whether to eat or to heat, and this is a choice the Welsh Government considers no-one should have to make in our modern society.

We have an opportunity to address these twin challenges and so we are consulting on the next iteration of our Warm Homes Programme and the role it can play, not only in our efforts to tackle fuel poverty, but as we work towards achieving net zero by 2050. We want to hear the views and the voices from every corner of Wales about what support is needed for households over the next five to ten years, how it should be delivered and who it should be focussed on. The consultation starts 22 December 2021 and will run for full twelve weeks from the start of the Senedd term, to 1 April 2022. To inform how we best deal with these challenges, it seeks views on a range of broad areas including the proposed scope, eligibility, delivery options, skills and green growth.

The Welsh Government cannot meet these challenges alone. By working together and taking a collective approach, we can deliver the changes needed for a brighter, sustainable and just future for the generations that follow.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do that.