

Managing energy bills & heating your home

**Fuel poverty
advice and
support.**



What is Fuel Poverty?

Fuel Poverty can be described as being unable to afford to heat your home to an adequate temperature. For many, fuel poverty means choosing between buying food and heating their home.

Often, fuel poverty is linked to increased risk of debt, ill health and social isolation. It may also impact on a child's education if they are off sick more often or don't have anywhere warm to study at home.

It is estimated that around 13,500 households (22%) in East Lothian are living in fuel poverty with a Scottish national estimate of 619,000.

East Lothian Council

T: 01620 827 827 www.eastlothian.gov.uk



Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services if you require assistance on 01620 827199

We understand that Fuel Poverty can be particularly challenging if you live alone, are elderly, are living with a disability or health issue, on a low income, or just starting out in your first home.

This leaflet provides information on the help available to make sure you are warm in your own home and minimise the impact of energy bills on your other living expenses.

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East Lothian Energy Advice

The **East Lothian Energy Advice** service aims to help anyone struggling with their energy costs regardless of whether they own their home or are in rented or social housing. The service is delivered by **Changeworks** on behalf of East Lothian Council. The Affordable Warmth team has over 10 years' experience in delivering specialist energy advice services to householders across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Advisers can help you with:

- **Understanding bills, resolving errors, resolving debt**
- **Understanding tariffs, switching and how to access discounts from suppliers, and much more**
- **Understanding meter readings and how to get results from talking to suppliers**
- **Access to grants for debt-wiping or reducing, for installation of measures such as insulation or new heating systems**
- **How to use your heating and hot water systems to best effect**
- **How to save money on your energy**

You can make a self-referral to the service via their website at: **www.changeworks.org.uk** or by telephone on **0131 555 4010**

Our services such as Citizens Advice Bureau and East Lothian's Financial Inclusion Service also provide you with information on maximising your income and/or money advice.

Council & Housing Association Tenants

Schemes such as **Warm Home Discount Scheme** and **Winter Fuel Payments** can help towards reducing your bills.

East Lothian Energy Advice provide information on these schemes and offer support to help you review and manage your energy use and fuel costs.

Your Housing Officer can provide you with support.
They can be contacted on the following numbers:

East Lothian Council: 01620 827 827 www.eastlothian.gov.uk/housing

East Lothian Housing Association: 01620 825 032 www.elha.com

Places for People: 01772 667 002 www.placesforpeople.co.uk

Homes for Life: 01620 829 300 www.homesforlife.co.uk

Home-Owners

Home Energy Scotland (HES) aims to help Scottish residents create warmer homes, reduce their energy bills and lower their carbon footprint. HES can refer home-owners to Warmworks for grant funding and/or loans from the Scottish Government to make energy efficiency improvements such as:

- **wall insulation**
- **loft insulation**
- **draught-proofing**
- **central heating & renewables**

Improvements are offered depending on a survey of the property which is completed by an assessor, who will recommend if and what improvements are suitable for the property. All works are completed by an approved installer.

Funding is available, subject to eligibility, from the Scottish Government but please note this cannot be for works already completed or underway. For more expensive improvements, such as solid wall insulation, a contribution is required. Interest free loans are available through the **Energy Saving Trust**.

Private Tenants

If you are a private tenant and looking for support for fuel costs or would like to find out if your rented property could benefit from upgrades that can be funded through grants/loans to your landlord, you can contact **Home Energy Scotland** who can provide you with more information and support.

Landlords

Through a range of Scottish Government funding grants, **East Lothian Council** (ELC) is working with landlords in the private rented sector to improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

Improving energy efficiency has a range of benefits including: adding value, making properties more attractive to new tenants, reduction of potential problems such as damp and disrepair, and positively contributing to the health and wellbeing of your tenants. Improvement works can include installing external wall insulation on non-traditional properties or cavity wall insulation on mixed tenure blocks throughout the county.

Eligibility for improvements will involve looking at the construction/build of properties and whether the tenants and/or landlord is experiencing fuel poverty (spending more than 10% of income after housing costs on fuel bills). Depending on you and your tenant's circumstances you may be eligible for a full grant or partial grant with a minimum contribution.

Using the criteria below, if you think you are eligible or want to discuss your options, please contact **Home Energy Scotland**.

- **Do you own properties which are rented in the private sector?**
- **Are your properties in Council Tax Bands A–C?**
- **Do you have an EPC rating of D or lower?**
- **Are you and/or your tenants experiencing fuel poverty?**

Organisations providing support

Citizens Advice Scotland

Visit www.cas.org.uk or call **0800 028 1456**

East Lothian Energy Advice Service/ Changeworks

Visit www.changeworks.org.uk or call **0131 555 4010**

East Lothian Council Financial Inclusion

Email financialinclusion@eastlothian.gov.uk or call **01620 827 827**

Energy Saving Trust

Visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk or call **0808 808 2282**

Greener Scotland

www.netzeronation.scot

Home Energy Scotland

Visit www.homeenergyscotland.org or call **0808 808 2282**

Turn2us

www.turn2us.org.uk

To make a comment, suggestion or complaint about a council service, download a feedback form online at www.eastlothian.gov.uk/feedback or pick one up at your local office.