

Affordable Warmth for Everyone

Barnsley's Charter for Affordable Warmth 2022

Vision

A Barnsley where everyone lives in a warm, healthy, energy efficient home

Many households in Barnsley face challenges in heating their home, particularly over the winter months. With rising and potentially unstable energy prices, many more households live in homes that have poor energy efficiency levels which cannot be kept warm at a reasonable cost. Fuel poverty can mean making stark choices between energy and other essentials or falling into debt. For some, the result is living in a cold home, which can have significant impacts on residents' health and wellbeing.

Strategic fit

Our Affordable Warmth Charter supports the Government's strategy "Sustainable Warmth: Protecting Vulnerable Households in England" Feb 2021. This strategy sets out the Government's commitment to tackling fuel poverty and helping the most vulnerable by increasing the energy efficiency of homes, reducing the cost of bills, contributing to low carbon targets, and supporting households in the transition to low carbon heating.

This document aligns with Barnsley 2030 ambitions and supports strategies such as the Housing Strategy, Private Sector Housing strategy, Sustainable Energy Action Plan, and the Collaborative Cold Weather Plan 2021-22.

Collective priorities

1. Energy efficient homes

Partner organisations are committed to energy efficient homes.

Energy efficient homes bring a range of benefits:

- **Health and wellbeing:** households living in more efficient, warmer homes are less vulnerable to cold and damp related ill health and falling into fuel poverty,
- **Environmental:** increased efficiency can lower greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change,
- **Economic:** accessing energy efficiency supply chain can lower individual utility bills and improving energy efficiency of housing on a large scale can boost the green economy, creating local jobs and training opportunities.

Residents on a low income, older people, those with health conditions and young families are most vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty and cold homes. Households that cannot afford to spend money on fuel to keep their homes warm are more vulnerable to cold and damp related illnesses.

Insulation and heating improvements are the most effective way to improve home energy efficiency and achieve affordable warmth.

Building on our commitments:

- Seek out and maximise long term funding opportunities for the delivery of home insulation measures for fuel poor households.
- Develop partnership pathways for Affordable Warmth to enable relevant frontline services to refer for energy efficiency support.
- Delivery of Affordable Warmth programme for private sector housing, including funded boilers and first-time heating, and in the longer term to decarbonise heating whilst ensuring affordable warmth.
- Implement the private sector housing action plan to improve housing conditions and energy efficiency.
- Scale up of retrofit of private and social housing over the next 10 years to raise EPC levels to C and above.
- Implement the private sector landlord accreditation scheme. Take a proactive approach to helping tenants to maintain house heating to adequate level.

2. Affordable Energy

Partner organisations are committed to schemes that ensure affordable energy for all households.

Energy affordability is affected by household income, fuel prices and home energy efficiency. Low disposable income is a key cause of fuel poverty in Barnsley and many households are not accessing the benefits they are entitled to. These income related factors affect a household's ability to affordably heat and make their home warm and healthy to live in.

Building on our commitments:

- All new Council housing to be built to the Barnsley Low Carbon Standard to ensure all new homes are wholly affordable.
- Targeted support for the most vulnerable households, based on up-to-date data and insights.
- Provision of a Warm Homes team to support households to improve the energy efficiency of their properties across tenure, including signposting to funding opportunities and other organisations for relevant advice and support to maximise income;

- Introduce a training and awareness scheme for social housing tenants in receipt of whole house retrofit measures to ensure that they can maximise the efficiencies of the new low carbon technology;
- Investigate opportunities to introduce low carbon heat networks to provide affordable energy to new and existing householders on a geographic basis.

3. Employment, Education & skills

Partner organisations are committed to promoting and delivering best practice education and workforce skills development.

Straightforward advice and education are effective ways to help households gain knowledge and skills to save and better manage their home energy.

Raising awareness of the help available, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised groups can make a big difference to help access support for making homes warmer and healthier.

We will strive to develop a competent pro-active and local workforce to upgrade our existing homes making them more energy efficient. A whole house approach will be adopted by improving the fabric of the building first and then introducing renewable energy and heat sources, such as solar panels and heat pumps where suitable.

Building on our commitments:

- Work at a regional level to scale up ability to deliver retrofit of energy efficiency measures on a regional scale and enhancing local supply chain and contracts.
- Updating procurement processes to include social value and sustainability criteria.
- Working with construction companies to up-skill the workforce around residential retrofit and low carbon technologies to develop sustainable supply chains.
- Develop a pilot Sustainability Property Investment Fund via Goldthorpe Town Deals to enable businesses and industries to invest in retrofit and low carbon measures.
- Investigating opportunities for the delivery of Modern Methods of Construction at scale.

4. Partnership Working

Partner organisations are committed to collaborative working to tackle energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty and cold homes can only effectively be tackled by a range of service and organisations working together; this helps to maximise and make best use of the resources available and reach those in the greatest need.

It is important that national, regional, and local policy reflect our local issues to best support our work to improve home energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty.

Influencing the importance of tackling fuel poverty with local politicians, policy makers and funders is an ongoing priority. This includes the Affordable Warmth taskforce contributing to consultation processes, influencing emerging policy, as well as highlighting our local fuel poverty priorities. It is proposed that the Affordable Warmth taskforce will oversee and coordinate the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Charter.

Building on our commitments:

- Working alongside partners and developers to ensure high energy efficiency standards for new builds across our region, seeking to influence standards via a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- Working closely with partners to ensure those at most risk of rough sleeping in cold weather are supported to access advice, support, and accommodation.
- Create warm homes and fuel poverty networks with providers and Community & Voluntary Sector across the region.
- Improve data sharing, research and sharing best practice.

5. Low Carbon Commitments

Partner organisations are committed to schemes that contribute to affordable warmth, energy efficiency and low carbon targets and in the longer-term support low-income households in the transition to low-carbon heating, in line with Barnsley Zero 2045 targets.

As part of the commitment, organisations support affordable warmth by reducing energy demand and ensuring homes are thermally comfortable and energy efficient.

Building on our commitments:

- Working towards targets for sustainable housing across the borough, as outlined in the Sustainable Energy Action Plan, Housing Strategy, and emerging Climate Change Strategy.
- Retrofitting homes to significantly increase energy efficiency and provide a long term, right first-time solutions for fuel poverty which also reduces carbon and future proofs against rising fuel costs.
- Expand carbon literacy training for all key sectors.
- Continue to engage with members of the Positive Climate Partnership to promote cross-organisational working to tackle fuel poverty and affordable warmth issues linking with the Barnsley 2030 Board.

Signing up to collective priorities

If your organisation is working towards the vision and principles of the Charter, then contact us to sign-up to the Charter. Organisations who make this pledge will be awarded the Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter Mark to demonstrate their commitment and may also be invited to join the Affordable Warmth Charter group.

What to do next

- Complete the online Charter Registration Form, setting out what you will do to promote the principles and objectives of the Charter.
- Join Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter group. Here you can attend regular meetings where you can share information, learning and best practice with other partnership members
- Demonstrate you have contributed to the promotion of affordable warmth, display your Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter Mark.

Ways of achieving Affordable Warmth

Easy wins:

- Making an official statement of your commitment to the objective of helping homes to achieve affordable warmth.
- Working in partnership with other affordable warmth stakeholders as part of the Affordable Warmth Charter group.
- Looking at what your organisation can do to help achieve affordable warmth.
- Engage with your staff about their own experiences of affordable warmth and fuel poverty.

Making a Difference:

- Referring your service users for home energy advice and energy efficiency improvements; If you are responsible for housing; by making energy efficiency improvements to the housing to reduce fuel poverty.
- Encouraging your organisation's staff to undertake home energy and fuel poverty awareness training.
- Committing resources to help with the delivery of fuel poverty and home energy efficiency schemes.
- Helping to promote and publicise local home energy efficiency and income maximisation schemes by distributing and cascading information.