



*Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee*

# information

**NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013**

## **NFLA publishes reports on fuel poverty, energy efficiency and the Green Deal to emphasise the importance of energy demand management**

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) today publishes two detailed Policy Briefings (1) that considers one of the key energy issues affecting vulnerable communities – fuel poverty – and how it is being tackled and should be tackled. It particularly focuses on the positive role Local Authorities can bring to bear in promoting innovative strategies to assist those most affected by fuel poverty through more determined energy efficiency programmes.

The report also considers the UK Government's much trumpeted 'Green Deal' as the vehicle for promoting financial support for energy efficiency programmes and tackling fuel poverty.

The reports outline that fuel poverty is affecting around 4.5 million households in the UK and 220,000 households in the Republic of Ireland. However, the levels of fuel poverty are uneven with considerably higher percentages of the fuel poor in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales than in England (though numerically English levels of fuel poverty are highest at 3.2 million).

Some of the conclusions of the two reports include:

- Within the current period of deep public spending cuts and austerity, fuel poverty is as serious a problem as food poverty and must remain a major policy issue for central and local government to seek effective alleviation strategies.
- The reports have highlighted that the type of energy market that presently exists means all Governments – national or devolved – have limited latitude to reduce fuel bills.
- Financial support to alleviate fuel poverty remains an important policy instrument but more sophisticated approaches to target funds to those most affected by fuel poverty are required.
- Allocating funds from central government to local authorities to undertake this task is a much more effective strategy to incorporate issues such as rural and urban poverty, local climatic factors and so forth.
- Energy efficiency measures remain one of the most effective long-term solutions for alleviating fuel poverty. They also have the potential for increasing local employment at a time when skilled jobs are at a premium.
- The Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations (ECO) are an innovative way of implementing the energy efficiency programme that is needed to achieve carbon and fuel poverty objectives, but they will need a much larger cash injection to bring down the interest rate on green deal loans and to reduce the numbers of households in fuel poverty.
- Once the Green Deal scheme is up and running and delivering energy savings, the pressure on the UK Government to boost funding will grow.
- Local Authorities are beginning to sign up to the Energy Bill Revolution campaign. This is an idea whose time has come.

NFLA Chair, Councillor Mark Hackett said: "I welcome these two well researched reports that will help our member authorities understand more about the problems of fuel poverty and the benefits of energy efficiency. The time really has come for energy demand management to be given the resources and political will that they have sadly lacked for many years. Local authorities can and should play a leading role in policy delivery. By such programmes we help the most vulnerable in our society, create excellent jobs and reduce the pressure for knee-jerk supply side measures like new nuclear build. Rather, coupled with a wider renewable energy mix and community led microgeneration they provide the vital cog to a nuclear free sustainable energy policy."

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES**



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**Notes to editors:**

- (1) The two NFLA Policy Briefings – one on fuel poverty and energy efficiency in the UK and Ireland, and the other providing an early overview of the Green Deal and the Green Investment Bank – are attached with this briefing.

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