Are You Living Through Fuel Poverty?

Struggling To Pay Your Bills · https://energyadvicehelpline.org/support-centre/are-you-living-through-fuel-poverty/

Fuel Poverty is a term used to describe a situation where households struggle to afford adequate heating. They find it hard to pay for heating and energy services and maintain a comfortable and healthy living environment.

In 2023, there were approximately 13.0 per cent of households, 3.17 million, living in fuel poverty in England under the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency metric, which is more or less unchanged from the 13.1 per cent recorded in 2022.

The average fuel poverty gap for England in 2023 was estimated at £417, a rise of 20 per cent since the prior year which saw it £348.

What is Fuel Poverty?

According to the UK Government, a household is considered to be living in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain an acceptable level of warmth (typically defined as the temperature required for health and comfort) in the home.

What is the Average Fuel Poverty Gap?

This is the reduction in fuel costs needed for a household to not be in fuel poverty.

Key Factors that Contribute to Fuel Poverty

Household Income: Low income is a significant factor contributing to fuel poverty. Households with limited financial resources may struggle to afford the high energy costs, especially with the constant rise of energy bills and incomes remaining stagnant.

Energy Prices: Drastic hikes in energy prices, including electricity, gas, and heating fuels, will severely impact the affordability of energy for households. Vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled, or low-income families will feel the impact of these increases.

Energy Efficiency of Housing: The energy efficiency of a property plays a crucial role in determining heating costs. Poorly insulated homes with inadequate heating systems may require

energy consumption to maintain a comfortable temperature, leading to increased energy bills and fuel poverty. Energy efficiency can be improved by introducing renewable energy upgrades such as; a solar system that harnesses the power of the sun, heat pumps to replace conventional fossil fuel heating methods, and insulation to prevent heat escaping the home.

Health and Vulnerability: Individuals with health conditions, disabilities, or specific vulnerabilities may have higher heating requirements to maintain their well-being, placing additional strain on household budgets. Respiratory conditions, cardiovascular diseases, and mental health issues can all be worsened by fuel poverty.

Government Policies and Support: The availability of government policies, grants, and support schemes aimed at improving the energy efficiency of properties, reducing overall energy bills, and alleviating fuel poverty can influence the prevalence and severity of it in the UK.

What Are the Signs of Living Through Fuel Poverty?

There are several signs you can look out for if you are concerned that you or someone close is living through fuel poverty:

- Avoiding the use of the home's heating system during cold spells.
- Wearing multiple layers of clothing inside during the winter months.
- Ignoring bills.
- Becoming stressed and constantly talking about the rising cost of energy bills.

Preventing Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty can happen to anyone without even trying, but there are ways to prevent it from happening or becoming worse:

- Improve Energy Efficiency
- Accessing Financial Support
- Manage Energy Costs
- Seek Advice and Assitance
- Stay Informed and Educated - the energy landscape is constantly evolving, and keeping up with energy updates in the news is a great way of understanding your energy use, how to save money, and how to prevent yourself from falling into fuel poverty.

It is predicted that in 2024, fuel poverty will see a decrease to 12.7 per cent and the average fuel poverty gap will decrease by 8 per cent to £385.