

**Home Energy  
Conservation Authority**  
Annual Progress Report  
2023/24



Nicole Lappin  
Chairperson



Grainia Long  
Chief Executive

As the Strategic Housing Authority for Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive delivers a number of statutory functions in collaboration with Housing Associations, voluntary and community sector partners. One of these statutory functions is Northern Ireland's Home Energy Conservation Authority under the terms of the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995). This requires the Housing Executive to prepare an annual report setting out the practical and cost-effective energy conservation measures (which includes information, advice and education, promotion, making grants and carrying out works), and subsequent greenhouse gas reduction across all the Northern Ireland housing sector.

Throughout the last year, energy prices have continued to impact households with the ongoing 'Cost of Living' crisis and conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East impacting our continued dependency on imported fossil fuels. Based on data from the Utility Regulator between June and December 2023, Northern Ireland energy prices remained above the EU median but below our counterparts in Ireland.

With the Housing Executive's continued focus on providing sustainable housing, during 2023/24 we commenced a pilot of 6 new build houses constructed to Passive House standard with the objective to significantly reduce household energy bills and carbon emissions. This is an important milestone with our ambition to work with the Housing Associations in delivering more new build social housing for Northern Ireland.

This year also seen the commencement of the 300 Low Carbon Programme which is a whole house retrofit programme focused on alleviating energy costs for householders through improved energy efficiency measures, low carbon heating with renewable technology and energy advice to influence behaviour, all resulting in reduced energy demand and lower carbon emissions. Our ambition here is to use this 300-unit programme to inform our future decarbonisation plans by influencing policy decisions both as Northern Ireland's Strategic Housing Authority and largest social landlord to provide sustainable homes in line with our climate targets.

During 2023/24, the Housing Executive, in conjunction with the Department for Communities, invested a record £43.6m (with an additional £3.5m of EU funding) on energy efficiency measures through a wide range of planned programmes, including enhancing

thermal efficiency, window and heating replacement schemes in our own homes and through Private Sector grant schemes. The housing association sector provided a further £6.2m of investment through a range of energy efficiency measures, including heating, improved insulation and renewable technologies. The NI Sustainable Energy Programme invested an additional £7.4m in energy efficiency and heating programmes across the private and public sector housing.

When we factor in the Social Housing Development Programme (including private finance) and maintenance across our landlord stock, over £500m was invested into the Northern Ireland economy, drawing on resources from the Department for Communities and the housing association sector alongside our own resources.

Collaboration and partnership across the housing and community sectors has delivered positive change for householders. We would like to thank our colleagues from across central and local government, the energy supply sector, leading energy charities and social enterprises, who all support our HECA stakeholder panel, which has continued to meet regularly throughout the year.

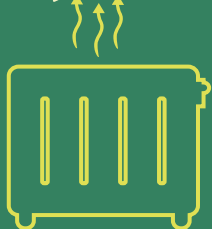
As Northern Ireland's Strategic Housing Authority and a public landlord at scale, we are committed to our vision that everyone should live in affordable, sustainable and decent homes, appropriate to their needs, in a safe and climate-resilient place.

Nicole Lappin  
Chairperson

Grainia Long  
Chief Executive



3,861



Heating  
and boiler  
conversions

**£21.7m**

invested in **Housing  
Executive** homes  
(completions)



1,906

Double glazing  
installations

**£4.5m**

invested in **Housing  
Executive** homes  
(completions)



Affordable Warmth  
Scheme

**£14.4m**

of expenditure for 2,746 sector  
private sector homes (funded by  
DfC and managed by the Housing  
Executive)



Boiler  
Replacement  
Scheme

**£139k**

funded for the installation of  
new energy efficient boilers in  
private sector homes



NI Sustainable Energy  
Programme (NISEP)

**£7.4m**

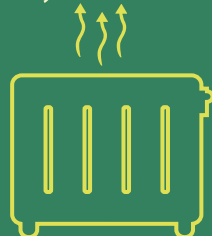
on energy efficient schemes to help  
public and private householders  
implement energy saving measures to  
their homes



**4m** Litres of  
home heating oil  
ordered

Housing Executive continues to  
delivery monthly oil deliveries  
within manageable budgets

1,750+



Boiler upgrades

**£6.2m**

invested in **Housing  
Association** homes in  
the installation of energy  
efficiency measures

2023/24  
Investment

# Strategic Context

The **Northern Ireland Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022** sets targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to reach net zero by 2050. This Act sets a range of requirements including to provide for a system of carbon budgeting; to provide for reporting and statements against those targets and budgets; to confer power to impose climate change reporting duties on public bodies; to provide for reports and advice from the Committee on Climate Change; and for connected purposes.

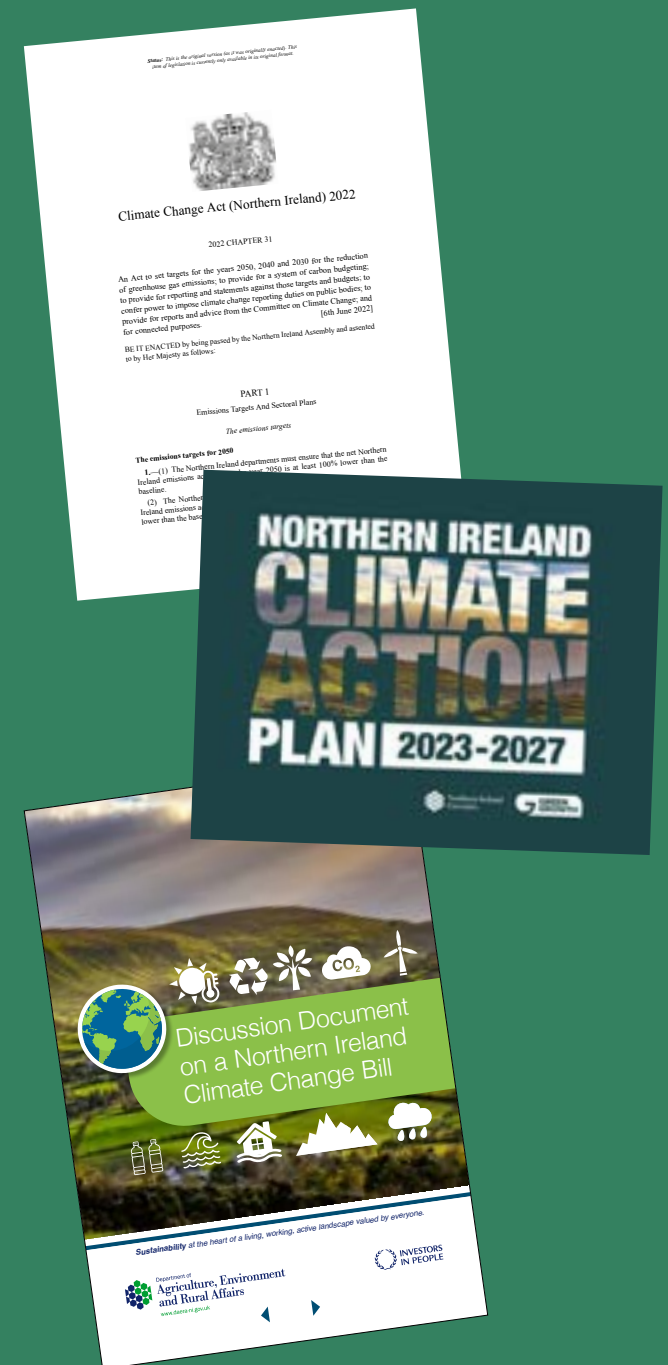
During this last year the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has engaged with government departments and Arms Length Bodies on the scoping of a future **Northern Ireland Climate Action Plan (CAP)** to quantify the impact of policies and proposals within the CAP on projected levels of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions produced in Northern Ireland (NI), and to provide quantifiable outcomes on a sector-by-sector basis, with emissions savings attributed, wherever possible, to the relevant policy or policy proposals within each sector, against the first carbon budget. DAERA has also focused the future carbon reporting requirements for public bodies, with reports due from 2025.

In line with its ongoing Energy Strategy Action Plan the Department for the Economy released a consultation into Offshore Renewable Energy installations with further consultations planned for 2024-25, including a call for evidence for developing biomethane production within Northern Ireland.

Despite the many fiscal challenges, Northern Ireland is progressing with strategies and policies to deliver ambitious net zero by 2050 targets, whilst ensuring no one is left behind.

The Housing Executive is Northern Ireland's **Home Energy Conservation Authority** under the terms of the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995). This requires the Housing Executive to prepare an annual report setting out the practical and cost-effective energy conservation, and subsequent greenhouse gas reduction across all the Northern Ireland housing sector.

*This report is covering activities and data related to the financial year from April 2023 – March 2024. Previous reports covered a calendar year, with the most recent one covering 2023, but which included data mainly for 2022/23.*







## Sustainable Development Strategy & Action Plan (2022-2027) Progress Update

In 2022 the Housing Executive launched its Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan which sets out the strategic approach to balancing the provision of quality, affordable housing and improving on our social and environmental impact. The strategy is guided by current policy and is built on the principles of sustainable development. It provides a framework for tackling environmental and social challenges over the next five years, including responding to the climate emergency.

The Strategy's Vision aligns with the corporate Vision that:

*'Everyone is able to live in an affordable, sustainable and decent home, appropriate to their needs, in a safe and climate-resilient place.'*

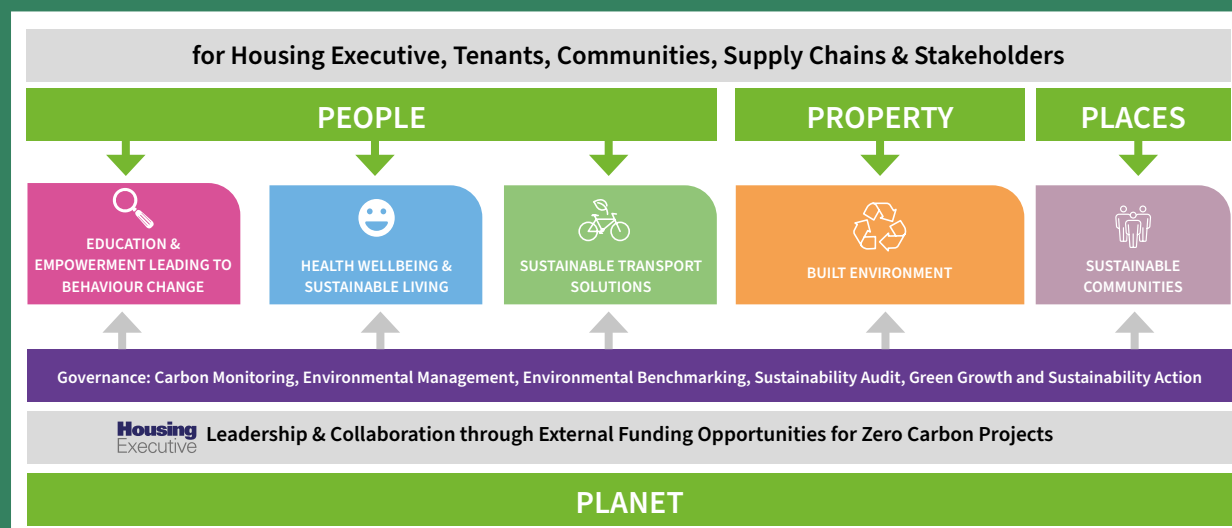
The long-term goal of the Strategy is to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 right across all of our activities. To help achieve this, a number of shorter-term targets have been set, and by the end of March 2024, we have already achieved target b, and are on target for all others:

- Housing (NIHE Landlord) Target: 25,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> Emission reduction up to 2025/26 (6%)
- Corporate Target (NIHE Business Activities): 25% Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> Emission reduction by 2030/31;
- Housing (NIHE Landlord) Target: 89,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> Emission reduction up to 2030/31 (23%);
- Housing (NIHE Landlord) Target: Retrofit housing to upgrade energy efficiency to an average of SAP Band C by 2030

The Strategy and Action Plan are structured around our four corporate themes of People, Places, Property and Planet and five pillars that align with our role as both a Landlord and the Strategic Housing Authority:

- Education & Empowerment leading to Behaviour Change
- Improved Health and Wellbeing through Sustainable Living
- Sustainable Transport Solutions
- Built Environment
- Sustainable Communities

The graphic below demonstrates these interconnections:



# Summary of Progress Against the Plan

The Action Plan for the period 2022-2027 is underway across all five of the above five pillars and some of the highlights include:

## **Education & Empowerment**

- 1,919 staff have undertaken Carbon Literacy Training to date (mixture of facilitated sessions and e-learning package);
- The new Home Energy Savings Tool launched November 2023 by the NI Energy Advice Service had 1,510 users to the end of March 2024.

## **Improved Health & Wellbeing**

- More than the annual target of 7,000 trees have been planted during 2022/23 and 2023/24, with circa 21,000 trees planted across both years.

## **Sustainable Transport Solutions**

- Direct Labour Organisation have started a pilot of 10 electric vehicles in their fleet, alongside another pilot using Hydrated Vegetable Oil (HVO).
- Collaborating with local Councils on pilot EV charging points across 100+ sites in Northern Ireland.

## **Built Environment**

- Pilot low carbon new build project for 6 homes underway in November 2023, with completion due September 2024.
- 300-unit low carbon retrofit programme commenced in January 2024, with completion due March 2025.

## **Sustainable Communities**

- Application for Peace Plus funding for 4 geothermal demonstrator sites across NI/ROI (two in NI) submitted to EU funding body.
- £200k budget allocated for social enterprise grants in 2023-24.
- Oil Saving Network has facilitated ordering of over 4 million litres of home heating oil during 2023/24.

## **Governance**

- Organisational Climate Adaptation Plan is underway.

*Improving domestic  
energy efficiency*

## **Home energy**



*Reducing  
fuel poverty*

## **Fuel poverty**



*Living sustainably,  
saving the  
environment*

## **Environment**



*To have a  
more equal society*

## **Equality**



# **How to save energy**

**Measurable outcomes - baseline, actions and progress**



## **Advice**

*Improved access to advice,  
improved connectivity with  
residential customers*



## **Reduce**

*Implement energy  
efficient schemes  
within social and  
private housing sectors*



## **Protect**

*Increase electricity  
consumption from  
renewable resources,  
research and install  
innovative measures*



## **Measure**

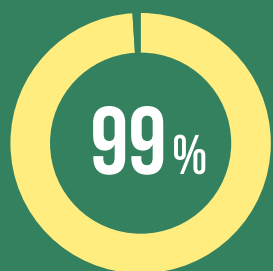
*Energy mix,  
reduce oil  
dependency,  
gas to the west*





# **Improving domestic energy efficiency**

## Measuring progress across all dwellings



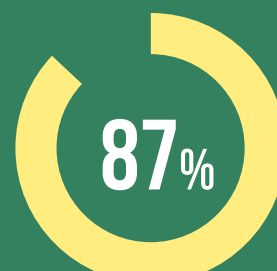
have central heating



use home  
heating oil



have loft insulation



have full  
double glazing

## SAP ratings

The Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (HCS) is the primary data source for assessing progress of energy efficiency across the NI residential sector. HCS site surveys were undertaken across Northern Ireland during 2023/24, however findings are not yet available.

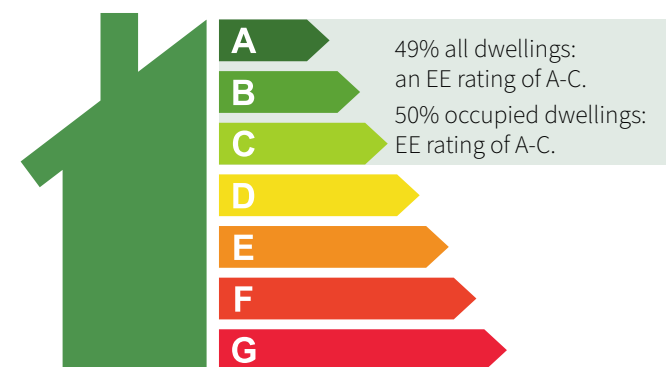
The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the Government's standard method of rating the energy efficiency of a dwelling. The overall SAP rating for Northern Ireland in 2016 was 65.83, using the latest SAP model.<sup>4</sup> Social housing had the highest SAP Mean rating (72.63) and vacant dwellings had the lowest SAP rating (51.78). During the 5-year period from 2011 to 2016 there was total investment of £300m in the provision of energy efficiency measures, which contributed significantly to achieving higher SAP ratings.<sup>5</sup>

During 2023/24, the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero released a consultation to present the UK government's new Home Energy Model, which is a calculation methodology designed to assess the energy performance of our homes. The Home Energy Model will replace the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) in Great Britain in 2025. Like SAP, the Home Energy Model will underpin a large number of government policies, making it of critical importance to the delivery of both our housing and climate objectives. Energy Performance of Building Regulations are devolved in Northern Ireland.

<sup>4</sup> The SAP model was modified between 2011 and 2016 in order to improve the accuracy of energy efficiency ratings.

<sup>5</sup> 2016 Northern Ireland Housing Executive HCS.

## The Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) uses an A-G banding system



64%

Households with children were most likely to live in dwellings in EER bands A-C



38%

of older households had an EE rating of A-C

### EE rating of A-C



79%

Social housing



45%

Owner occupied

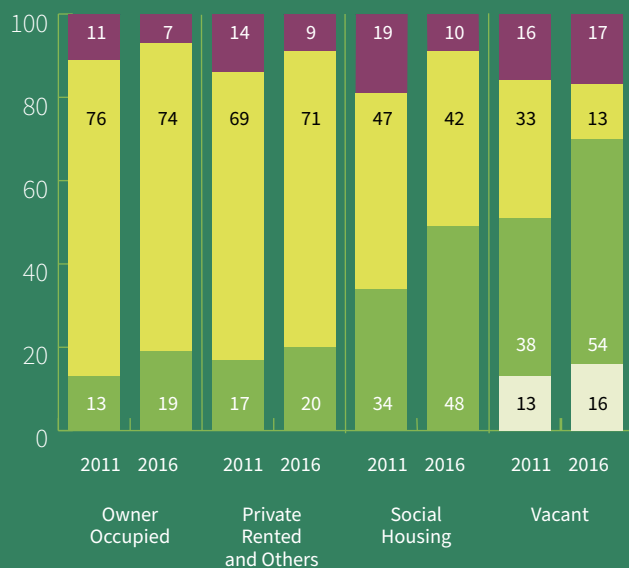
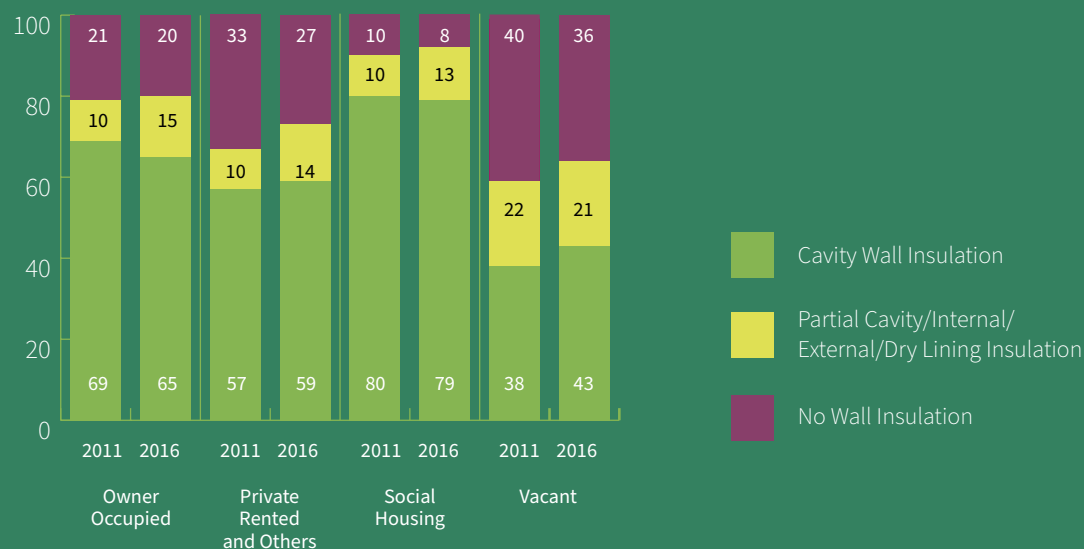


43%

Private rented and others

## Home Insulation

According to the 2016 HCS, the proportion of housing stock with full cavity wall insulation is 65%; this figure has remained static since the findings of 2011 HCS. As the 2016 HCS noted, 'this was expected, as there hasn't been the same level of investment in cavity wall insulation as there has been in loft insulation, double glazing or the replacement of solid fuel heating.'



## Domestic Heating

At present, Northern Ireland has the highest level of dependency on high-carbon fossil-fuel across the UK - with 68% of households dependent upon home heating oil. With the significant hike in energy costs in recent years posing a risk to the vulnerable, the Housing Executive is not only focused on the immediate energy costs but the sustainable solutions which will insulate householders from the volatility of the world energy market.

The Housing Executive is currently delivering the 300 Low Carbon Programme to provide medium to long term solutions which can inform Northern Ireland housing in its role as the Strategic Housing Authority and NI's largest housing landlord. The Housing Executive believes future low carbon heating should be based on affordability for the customers, sustainability of supply and be carbon free.

The Housing Executive's indicative planning assumption of a future Decarbonised Heating Pathway could be based on: New Build housing (heat pumps in the medium/long term and potentially bio methane in the short on the gas network) Off the Gas Grid: Medium term transition to heat pumps, dependent on

improved retrofitting. On the Gas Grid: Housing on the natural gas grid to potentially transition to use of gas boilers which can be future proofed for bio methane in the short term and potentially green hydrogen in the long term, dependent on economic assessment. Electrification of heating is also a clear option for retrofit on the gas grid. Regardless of the heating type, improved retrofitting should promote a fabric first approach. Low-carbon heat networks: The Housing Executive supports the development of Low-carbon heat networks, particularly in urban and new build scenarios. It is often said there are 'no silver bullets...' and therefore we believe 'a rich tapestry of options to deliver heat' is a sensible approach. For the Housing Executive role as landlord, future improvements is based on a revitalised funding model and sustainable rents.

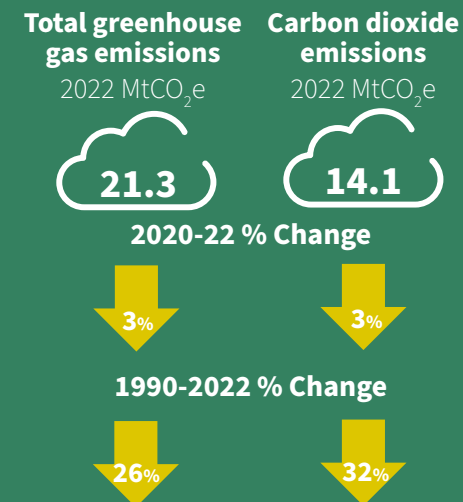
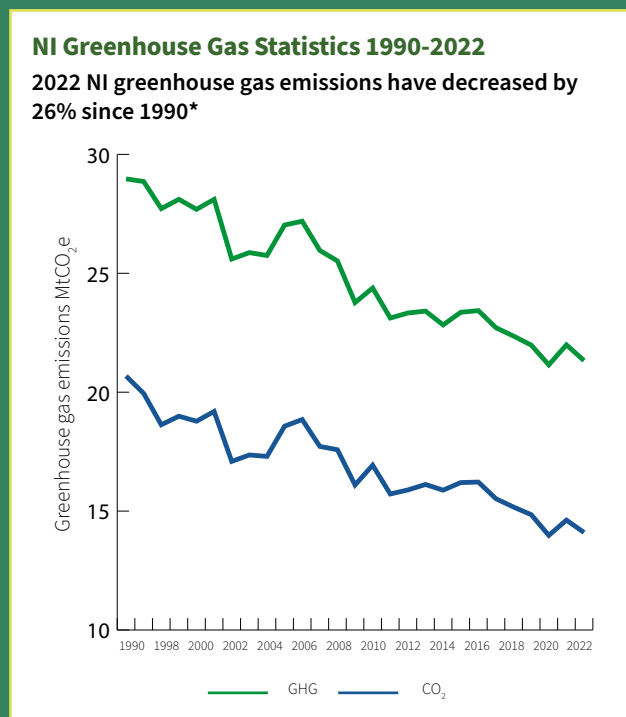


## DAERA - Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2022 statistical bulletin

This annual statistical bulletin, (released on 18th June 2024), provides headline figures on greenhouse gas emissions for Northern Ireland both by source sector and end-user for the years 1990 to 2022.

In 2022, Northern Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions were estimated to be 21.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e). This net figure of 21.3 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e, in 2022, represents a decrease of 3% compared with 2021.

- The largest sectors in terms of emissions in 2022 were agriculture (29%), domestic transport (18%) and buildings and product uses (15%). Most sectors showed a decreasing trend since the base year.
- The largest decreases, in terms of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, were in the buildings and product uses sector, electricity supply, industry and waste management. These were driven by the energy sector fuel switching from coal to natural gas, a move replicated within the residential sector and the introduction of methane capture and oxidation systems in landfill management.
- Within the residential sector improving energy efficiency to reduce energy demand and decarbonising heat is critical to decrease emissions further.



### Agriculture was the largest emitting sector of NI greenhouse gas emissions in 2022

29%

Agriculture

18%

Domestic Transport

14%

Electricity Supply

15%

Buildings and product uses

10%

Industry

10%

Land use

4%

Waste

0%

Other

## NI Energy Advice Service

As the Home Energy Conservation Authority (HECA) for Northern Ireland, part of the Housing Executive's Development Strategy is to deliver its statutory responsibilities and to promote energy efficiency and advice to all NI households. Launched in 2020, the NI Energy Advice Service (NIEAS) is Northern Ireland's only one-stop-shop for information on energy efficiency, grant availability, cost savings and renewables.

Empowering NI households with relevant up-to-date energy efficiency and cost savings, advice is provided on a range of topics including reducing fuel bills, energy grants - such as the Affordable Warmth Scheme, help with damp & condensation, insulation, managing home heating, reducing home energy use, switching energy providers, renewable energy, negotiated cost saving from an Oil Savings Network and offering financial advice on fuel bills. This guidance offers vital help via energy cost saving information to vulnerable householders, older people, and those on low incomes. With help to over **19,000** customers in 2023/24, the NIEAS team annually signposts almost 50% of their calls to available energy grants.

- Affordable Warmth Scheme is managed by the Housing Executive, with an entry point triaged through the NI Energy Advice Service. This grant is aimed at those in fuel poverty in the private housing sector with a household income of less than £23,000.
- Utility Regulator's Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme grant allows for higher income criteria, also, with a whole house approach to retrofit.

Energy Advisors provide high quality written and telephone advice, which engages customers and is actionable. This advice helps customers to save money on energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

You can **'Get in Touch'** online now to get bespoke energy advice. Customers can complete the eForm at Housing Executive - NI Energy Advice Service or call us via Freephone: 0800 111 4455.

## NI Oil Savings Network

The Housing Executive continued to provide negotiated oil savings through 2023/2024, as energy costs and the Cost-of-Living crisis became a consistent risk to the vulnerable in our community.

With a growing active membership, and now offering oil savings across all NI postcodes, winter 2023/24 saw oil orders steadily increase beyond those of 2022. The Oil Savings Network is an integral part of the NI Energy Advice Service, with members receiving weekly energy advice. Order requests include information on grant availability, energy efficiency advice, energy cost savings and reducing carbon emissions.

Our key objective is tackling fuel poverty. We encourage customers to buy smaller amounts to make regular use of the weekly savings. Ordering 200 to 300 litres with the discount code can greatly reduce the one-off cost for a larger oil fill, creating manageable payments.

The team offers NI-wide oil prices (per litre) through a daily oil Pricing Index, which gauges the costs across major suppliers. This allows for price predictions, showing trends and spikes, which helps to interpret a volatile market. This is a plus for members and helps the team to negotiate weekly savings with registered suppliers. Customers are directed to make use of the Consumer Council NI weekly Heating Oil Price Checker, which also gauges a NI-wide weekly average cost of oil. Prices are published on a Thursday to their website.

**Become a member now:**

**Send your first name, postcode and mobile number to:**  
[oilsavings@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:oilsavings@nihe.gov.uk)

**Text: 07507 301 980 or**

**Freephone: 0800 111 4455.**

Between April 2023—March 2024, the service delivered:



15,012  
oil requests



£19.56  
average 200l savings



£406,041  
total savings



£2,712,317  
membership spend

4,013,450  
total litres negotiated



## National Energy Action (NEA)

NEA is a charity working to end fuel poverty across the UK. Supported by Housing Executive funding, it also provides essential energy efficiency training and awareness outreach in Northern Ireland to householders and community groups. It raises public awareness through an extensive range of activities, including accredited training courses which cover fuel poverty, fuel debt, affordable warmth and delivering practical energy advice.

NEA deliver **Fuel Poverty and Health Certified Training** programmes which examine the causes and impacts of fuel poverty with a focus on health issues and solutions. It aims to help delegates identify those likely to be at risk from fuel poverty and to signpost them towards appropriate assistance.

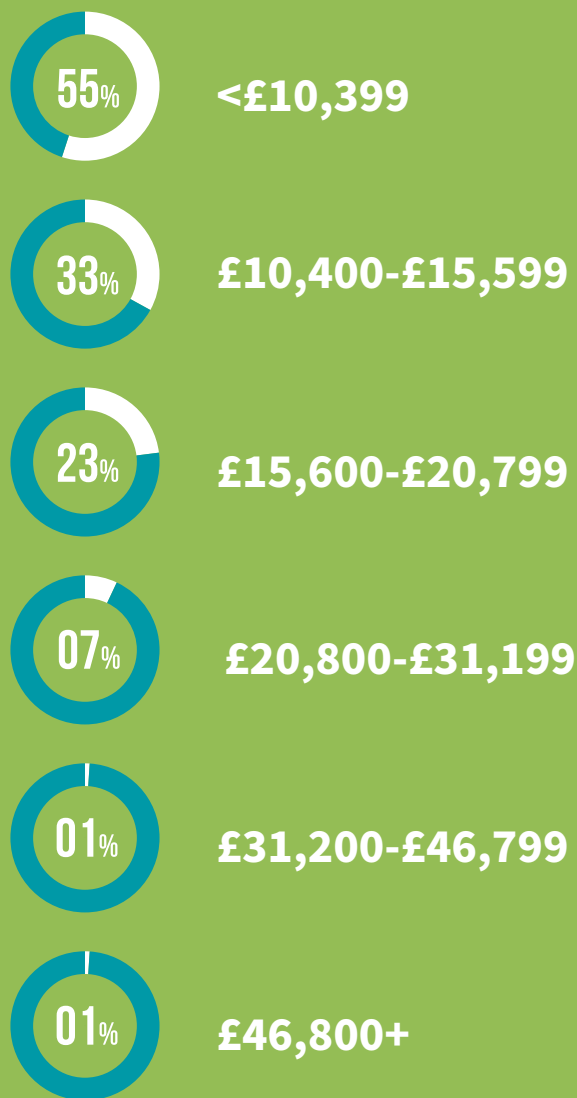
Webinars are delivered live by expert tutors to small groups to ensure a good level of interaction and support for learners. The webinars are designed for anyone wanting to learn more about fuel poverty, its causes and links with physical and mental wellbeing.



**Reducing  
fuel poverty**

## % In Fuel Poverty

(10% definition) against gross income



Source: HCS 2016

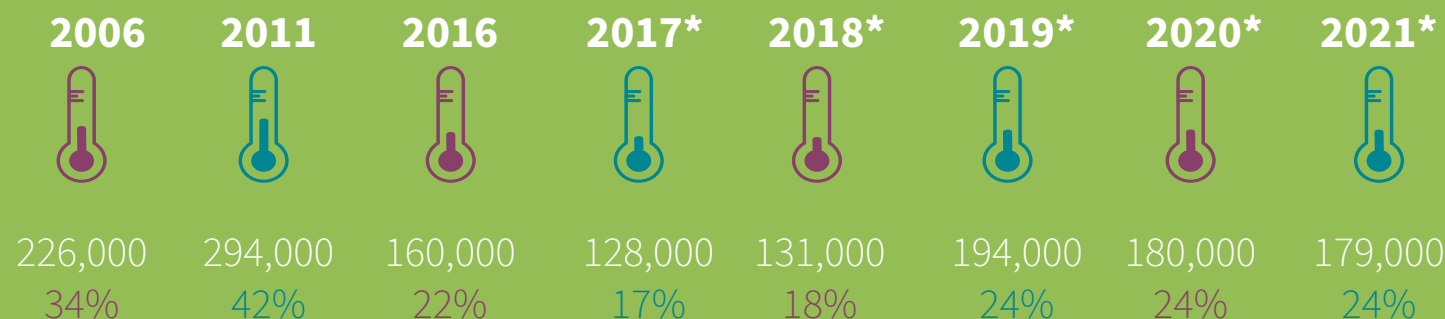
## Fuel Poverty Data

In 2016, the Northern Ireland House Condition Survey (NIHCS) estimated that there were 160,000 households in fuel poverty, representing 22% of all households in Northern Ireland<sup>6</sup>. Fuel poverty was estimated to increase to 180,000 fuel poor households (24%) in 2020, decreasing slightly in 2021 to 179,000 households (24%). Both estimates were calculated by modelling changes between 2016 and 2020, and changes between 2016 and 2021, to fuel prices, household incomes, and the installation of energy efficiency measures in the stock.<sup>7</sup>

Following the surge in wholesale energy prices in 2021, the cost of heating the home in Northern Ireland has substantially increased. Alongside this, the cost of living has been increasing, with UK inflation rates reaching 11.1% in October 2022, a 41-year high<sup>8</sup>. To mitigate the effect of increasing energy and living costs, action was taken by the UK Government to provide support to all households in the form of: a unit rate discount on the price of gas and electricity (through the Energy Price Guarantee), energy rebates (through the Energy Bills Support Scheme, and the Alternative Fuels Payment), as well as targeted

support to low income and vulnerable households (through the Cost of Living Payment, Disability Cost of Living Payment, and Pensioner Cost of Living Payment)<sup>9</sup>. Due to the requirement for updated estimates on the levels of fuel poverty as a result of the cost of living crisis, the Housing Executive commissioned the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to investigate the impact of the increase in fuel prices in 2022 on fuel poverty and provide an estimate of the alleviation provided to households through the Government support packages. Fuel poverty has been calculated using the 2021 uplifted baseline components (as detailed in the “Estimates of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland in 2020 and 2021” report), and projecting changes to fuel prices and income, through the fuel price rises in October 2022 and Government support packages provided in 2022-23; no further uplift of household incomes or energy efficiency measures has been attempted, and therefore the fuel poverty estimates should not be regarded as 2022 estimates, instead they are 2021 estimates of fuel poverty where the impact of the October 2022 fuel prices has been explored through this investigative analysis.

## Households in Fuel Poverty (10% definition)\* Estimated figures from 2016 HCS model



<sup>6</sup> House Condition Survey Main Report 2016

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/getattachment/3c5adc00-3a7b-41b7-b172-a9a801937788/Estimates-fuel-poverty-Northern-Ireland-2020-2021.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9428/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living>

\*<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/HCS-2016-Additional-Reports/Estimates-of-fuel-poverty-in-Northern-Ireland-in-2.aspx>  
Impact of 2022 fuel prices on fuel poverty in Northern Ireland



Table 1. Estimates of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland, 2021, including the impact of the October 2022 fuel prices and Government support schemes

Fuel poor households (full income definition)	2016 (base position from NIHCS)	2021 (modelled estimates)	2021 with 2022 prices & support (modelled)
Number of households	160,000	179,000	197,000
% of households	22	24	27

Base: all households, Northern Ireland 2016

Table 2 shows the impact of the range of government interventions on the 2021 fuel poverty estimate with 2022 fuel prices

**Proportion of fuel poor households, 2021 with 2022 fuel prices and support**

	In fuel poverty (%)
2021 fuel poverty estimate	24
2021 estimate with 2022 fuel prices <b>without</b> Energy Price Guarantee	76
2021 estimate with 2022 fuel prices <b>and</b> Energy Price Guarantee (EPG)	50
<b>2021 estimate with 2022 fuel prices, EPG and additional support</b>	<b>27</b>

Base: all households, Northern Ireland 2016

# Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Building for the future

Our first housing scheme in 25 years showcases the future of energy efficiency in the social housing sector. The six semi-detached homes in Sunningdale Gardens, North Belfast are being built using Modern Methods of Construction and ultra-low energy building techniques to Passive House standard. Delivered by construction company GEDA the homes will be built and completed to a standard beyond that of current building regulations in Northern Ireland.

The aim of the scheme is for the Housing Executive to:

- deliver a New Build Pilot that consists of social housing units constructed to Passive House standard, by utilising modern methods of construction and ultra-low energy building techniques, whilst including the incorporation of passive building systems;
- help address new international/ national targets regarding the reduction in carbon emissions/ greenhouse gases and constructed to an EPC A standard beyond that of the current Building Regulations of Northern Ireland.

It is hoped that this pilot will realise the benefits of ultra-low energy building methods including:

- Improved energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions;
- Lower heating bills/ savings from reduced fuel costs thereby helping to reduce the risk of fuel poverty;
- The attainment of comfortable and healthy indoor environments for occupants;
- The provision of wider societal benefits from the likes of improved health and well-being for occupants.

The properties will include:

- External walls constructed using aerated blockwork, as a rapid build technique or onsite MMC, with 225mm EPS external wall insulation with a rendered finish.
- Dual pitched trussed roof construction with concrete interlocking roof tiles with solar PV on timber battens and a polypropylene roofing membrane, with a cold roof build up consisting of 600mm mineral fibre insulation.
- Ground floor build-up of sand/ cement screed on suspended concrete slab on 300mm EPS insulation.
- Triple glazed, Passive House standard doors and windows are incorporated along with specialist materials to act as thermal breaks at junctions such as at the entrance canopies, sills and thresholds to all properties.
- Combined whole house heating and ventilating system which has an air source heat pump, with integrated mechanical ventilation heat recovery unit (MVHR) and hot water cylinder.

It is anticipated that the houses will be completed and occupied by September 2024.



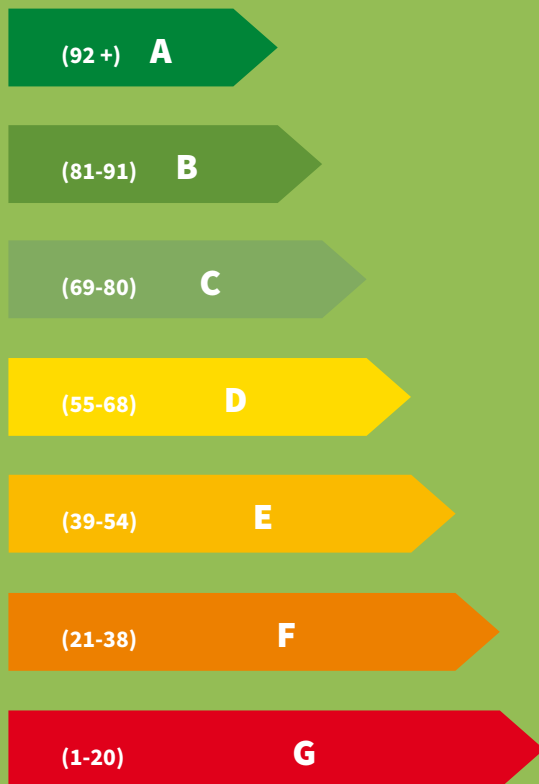


## Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI)

As part of Phases 1 and 2 of the SBRI project, a range of home-based sensors were installed in a small number of Housing Executive homes. Energy monitoring data including room temperature, hot water temperature, surface temperatures of central heating pipework or water tanks, humidity and heating fuel use, has been monitored. Suppliers developed their analysis and communication of this data, including the ability to provide advice hints to tenants' Smart Phones on energy budgeting and damp risk reduction.

Phase 3 of the project got underway during 2023/24 whereby suppliers developed their products and consumer App further. This project supports the Housing Executives efforts in reducing and reporting on carbon emissions, whilst providing information that can help with prioritising and evaluating innovative low carbon systems before future investment. Knowing 'what works' in terms of physical or behavioural interventions has value for the Housing Executive, and providing information for tenants helps them to manage their energy consumption themselves, to keep heat available and homes dry.

Plans are underway to extend phase 3 during 2024-25 and at its conclusion the Housing Executive will evaluate the systems effectiveness, and if applicable, consider a range of procurement and investment options to roll these monitoring and advice systems out to a larger number of dwellings.



## Grants for Owners and Private Rented Tenants

### Affordable Warmth Scheme

The Affordable Warmth Scheme is designed to help reduce the effects of fuel poverty in the private sector, offering a range of measures for households with a gross annual income of less than £23,000. It is a central element in the NI Executive's Fuel Poverty Strategy.

During 2023/24 the Department for Communities changed the delivery model for the Affordable Warmth Scheme. The scheme's original targeting and referral partnership arrangements with Local Councils came to an end. Since 1 September 2023 enquiries for the Affordable Warmth Scheme are triaged by the Housing Executive's NI Energy Advice Service. Customers may also avail of other energy advice or apply to other suitable grants before making an Affordable Warmth application.

Between 1 April 2023 and 31 August 2023, the Housing Executive received 1,072 referrals from Councils and between 1 September 2023 and 31 March 2024 it had 2,400 direct applications. Over the financial year 2,675 approvals were issued with a total value of £14.4m.

During the year 2,746 homes completed work, encompassing 4,930 efficiency measures. The energy efficiency measures provided included loft and cavity wall insulation, ventilation, draught-proofing, heating, window replacement and solid wall insulation, which will help reduce fuel costs for householders.

The Affordable Warmth Scheme's business case was due to end in March 2024. However, it has been extended for a further two years until March 2026. By then it is anticipated that a business case for a new fuel poverty and energy efficiency scheme will be in place.



340

boiler installations



£139k

expenditure via the Boiler Replacement Scheme

### Boiler Replacement Scheme

The Boiler Replacement Scheme was closed to new enquiries in September 2023 due to pressures on the confirmed budget allocation (where eligible, households may now apply to the Affordable Warmth Scheme). During 2023/2024 there were 340 new high efficiency boilers installed by owner occupiers, with a total spend of £139k.

Since its launch in 2012 the scheme impacted positively across Northern Ireland, both environmentally and economically. During its time the Housing Executive addressed 104,750 enquiries, supplied 88,827 applications and issued 49,057 approvals for grant-aid. Over 43,000 central heating boilers, which were over 15 years old, were replaced with a high efficiency 'A' rated condensing type boiler and circa £22m was invested in the economy.



1,126

loft insulation



2,393

heating



957

windows



321

cavity wall insulation



132

draught-proofing measures

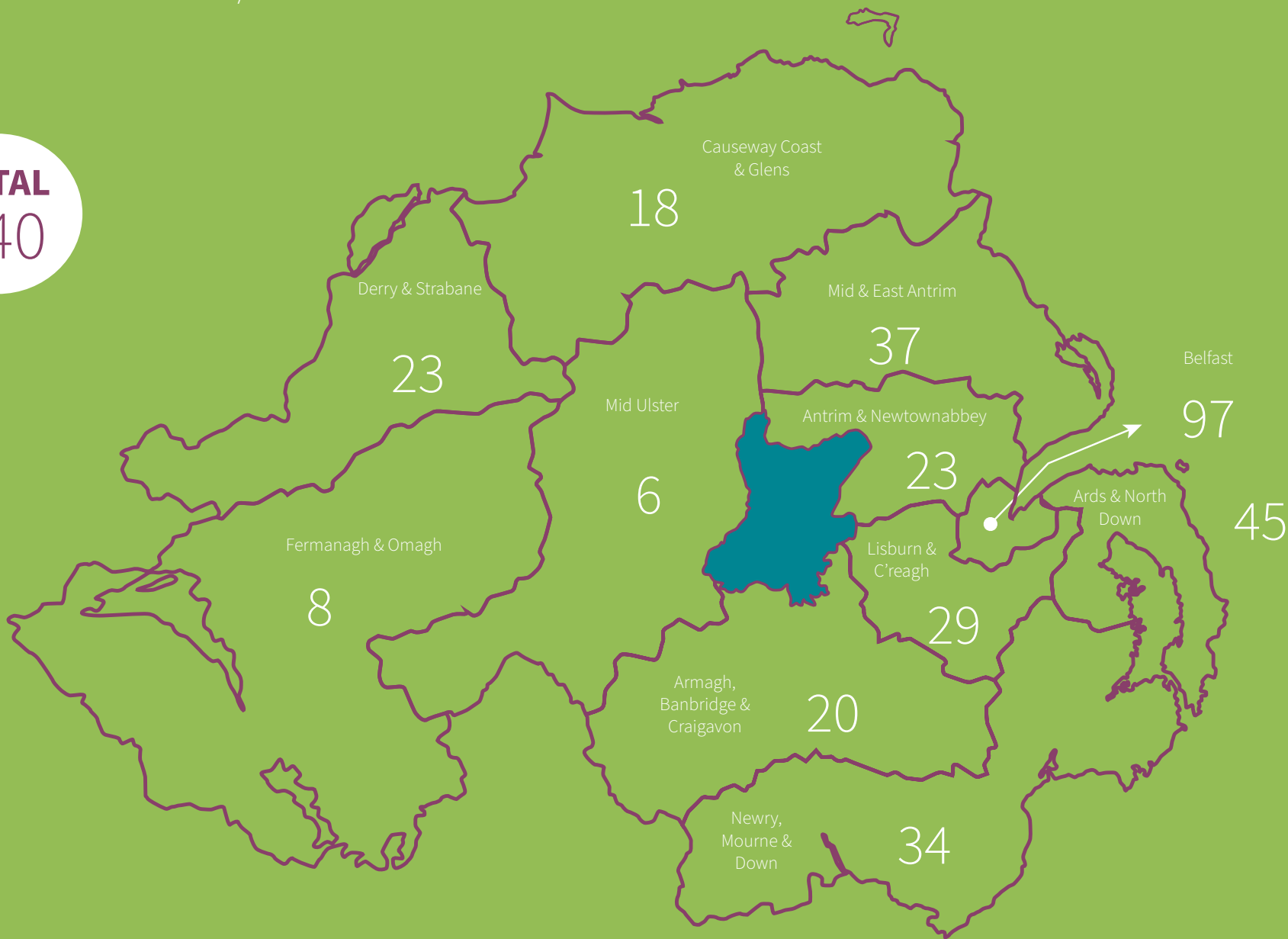


1

solid wall insulation

Number of boilers installed by Council Area within the  
Boiler Replacement Scheme 2023/24

**TOTAL**  
340





### Energy Efficiency refurbishment across the Housing Association movement

During 2023/24, the Housing Association movement invested over **£6.2m** installing the energy efficiency measures including:

1,750+

high efficiency boilers



750

loft insulation and draught proofing measures



### NI Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP)

The Energy Saving Trust acts as the programme administrator for the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) on behalf of Northern Ireland's Utility Regulator. They manage schemes that are delivered by a range of organisations across NI, to reduce energy and carbon by installing energy efficient measures.

The NISEP fund comes from a levy on electricity bills paid by both domestic and commercial customers throughout

Northern Ireland and 80% of funding is ring-fenced for vulnerable customers. The programme provides energy efficiency measures to homeowners, private tenants and housing association properties across Northern Ireland through prescribed eligibility criteria based on gross annual income.

NISEP, which runs on a year-on-year financial basis, has been successful in targeting homes with no heating or inefficient heating systems in addition to installing energy saving measures in homes such as loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, smart heating controls and draught proofing measures.

Energy Saving Trust administered £7.4 million of funding in energy efficiency domestic schemes during 2023/24 which included domestic Air Source Heat Pumps and solid wall insulation, delivered as part of a whole house solution package.

### Domestic measures installed under NISEP during 2023/24:



1,498

loft insulation measures



1,138

wall insulation measures (CWI/SWI)



897

heating systems  
\* including 15 heat pumps  
\*23/24 figures included are pre-audited and may be subject to change.



4,452

\*The benefit of the programme also included the removal of 4,452 tons\* of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 1,214 tons\* of annual carbon.

### Housing Executive Energy Efficiency measures within Planned Maintenance Works

In 2023/24, the Housing Executive invested approximately £29 million in energy efficiency measures within its planned maintenance programme across its own housing stock.



£4.5m on 1,906  
double glazing installations  
(providing A-rated double glazed units)



£21.7m on 3,861

heating conversions (energy efficient boilers) which includes zoning where practical and 270mm loft insulation

£2.8m

to complete the ERDF large scale retrofit programme



## Housing Executive 300 Low Carbon Retrofit Programme



During 2023-24, the Housing Executive commenced its 300 Low Carbon Programme (LCP) to provide an evidence base and key learning points to ensure the Housing Executive will provide decarbonised retrofitted solutions for the Landlord and Private Sector Investment business areas. This will align with the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

The 300 LCP follows a 'whole house approach' to achieve the desired outcome of reducing carbon emissions, reducing householder bills and providing healthier homes through the combination of the following interventions:

- Improved energy efficiency measures through retrofitting.
- Low carbon heating options, principally air source heat pumps, with an option for hybrids.
- Improved 'time of use' electricity tariff options.
- Improved householder education to effect behaviour change.
- Renewable energy for power generation and electric storage.

For many of our contractors this will be the first work of this type at scale. This programme offers the opportunity for contractors and their supply chain to skill up in readiness for similar work to be carried out to all suitable NIHE housing stock and the wider NI housing stock.

This evidence-based programme over 2 years will inform the proposed Landlord Decarbonised Heating Policy by 2026 in order to commence delivery of decarbonised retrofit at scale by 2026/27 and evidence for our Private Grants Team who deliver the Affordable Warmth Grants for the Department of Communities.





### **Social Housing Development Programme**

The Social Housing Development Programme delivered 1,403 completed homes in 2023/24 (against a target of 1,400). 88% of these completions (1,241) were newly constructed units.

Providing support to housing associations to deliver higher standards in energy efficiency for new social homes is viewed by DfC and the Housing Executive as a vital way of mitigating the effects of climate change, reducing fuel poverty and improving health. In July 2023 DfC introduced a new Energy Efficiency Innovation Pilots approach, under which housing associations can avail of additional funding to support Energy Efficiency betterment compared to current Building regulations.

The Housing Executive is also aware that some housing associations are investigating small-scale pilot proposals for delivering new social homes to 'Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings' standards, and information from these pilots will be shared with DfC.



Choice Altona Drive





**Living sustainably  
- protecting the  
environment**

## Focus on Energy Efficiency activity undertaken by Local Councils and the Housing Association sector

Through the Community Planning process, many council areas have established sustainability focussed working groups which are undertaking pilot projects and sharing learnings and initiatives across partners. The statutory partners in Community Planning are:

Community Planning Statutory Partners:	
The Health and Social Care Trusts	Education Authority Northern Ireland
Public Health Agency	Police Service of Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Invest Northern Ireland	Tourism NI
Libraries NI	Sport NI
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	

Examples of some of the working groups and their activities are shown below:

### Belfast Local Area Energy Plan



**Belfast City Council** is preparing its Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), the first plan of its kind for Northern Ireland. The LAEP will chart an affordable pathway for Belfast to reach Net Zero by 2050 based on the unique features of the City. Based on a whole systems approach, the plan will provide a portfolio of priority projects that will decarbonise the city in the most efficient way whilst also bringing significant local benefits such as jobs, air quality improvements, energy savings and healthier homes. The plan will be used by the Belfast Net Zero Delivery Group as an evidence base to start building a pipeline of net zero investments across the city. These include a heat network, fabric upgrades, and the scaling up of solar PV.



## Derry City & Strabane District Council Sustainability, Climate & Energy Initiatives

Established in January 2024, the Derry & Strabane Sustainability and Climate Commission boasts a diverse membership of 24 organisations and over 35 individual members representing various sectors including government departments, communities, education, business and the Housing Executive. It is the second commission set up in Northern Ireland and members have received a number of sustainability and climate training and information sessions since its inception. The Council are enthused by the commitment from Commission members and the collective support for cross-sectoral climate action. The Commission established a number of working groups / clusters to deliver specific initiatives across the City & District, including a dedicated Health and Community Cluster. The Health & Community Cluster will drive forward community led projects which will ensure the Commission meets the UN Sustainable Development Goals while delivering climate justice to ensure resilience and a just transition for all in Derry and Strabane.

In the coming months the work of the commission will focus on development of the Derry & Strabane Sustainability & Climate Action Framework, Project Pipeline, Local Area Energy Plan and Green Finance & Investment Plan. In addition, further outputs from the Council led Innovate UK funded project – ‘Net Zero Derry Strabane - From Ambition to Action’, includes development of a climate data repository, climate screening tools, responsible procurement strategy and Council Mitigation Plan.

### Strabane Smart Energy Pilot

The Derry and Strabane's City and Growth Deal includes an investment of £15m for the Smart Derry Strabane programme. This programme seeks to place Derry and Strabane at the leading edge of urban innovation, supporting the development, deployment and commercialisation of smart specialisations and new technologies across various sectors and public service delivery. Through the

project, the city and district will become an experimental site that supports the pre-market testing and validation of new smart technologies in a secure and controlled environment enabling students, researchers, entrepreneurs and businesses to deploy products and services at scale and within a whole innovation ecosystem that includes a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, retail, academic and public sector bodies along with parks, greenways, and public realm. The proposed Smart Energy Pilot, valued at £2m, will be the focus of Derry and Strabane's Local Green Deal with a specific focus on Energy and Renewables. Work is ongoing with Ulster University to develop a specification for this pilot.

### Derry City & Strabane District Council – Energy Invest to Save Scheme

Council continues to work towards reducing their own carbon emissions by investing in energy efficiency and renewables across their buildings and estate. This includes analysis of the energy use and greenhouse gas emission baseline of Council to identify areas for reduction and development of the Council Climate Mitigation Plan. Projects to date include improved building management technology, lighting upgrades, installation of solar panels, and use of pool covers in leisure centres to reduce energy loss.

### Derry City & Strabane Council's First Passive House Building Completed

The Acorn Farm project has seen the construction of Council's first Passive House building. The Gate Lodge located in St Columb's Park has been accredited to Passive House standards including insulation, air tightness, triple-glazing, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, minimal space heating / cooling demand and installation of a heat pump. This is the first completed building within the wider Acorn Farm site due for completion in Autumn 2025 which will see development of a sustainable urban food growing and learning space.



I-CAN is a newly established working group set up through the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Planning Partnership Environmental Pillar. Its members include all designated statutory Community Planning partners along with other relevant public bodies and community and voluntary sector groups. I-CAN is working towards the development and implementation of a four-year delivery plan which focuses on priority areas identified including fleet, estate, public body reporting requirements, behavioural change and training interventions. Partners will collaborate to share good practice, resources and expertise to progress towards a Net Zero District in Fermanagh and Omagh.



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Fermanagh & Omagh - Integrated  
Climate Action Network: I-CAN

## Energy Efficiency activity within the Housing Association Sector

**Good housing design has a key role in meeting the aspiration of delivering sustainable communities and protecting our environment, stimulating economic growth, maximising wellbeing and achieving social inclusion. Local housing associations play a central role in the construction of high quality, energy efficient new homes throughout Northern Ireland.**



**Apex provides affordable, social and supported housing across Northern Ireland.**

The Apex Housing Sustainability Strategy 2023-2026 sets out Apex's intentions to advance sustainability throughout the housing association and in the communities, they build and support.

Key targets include:

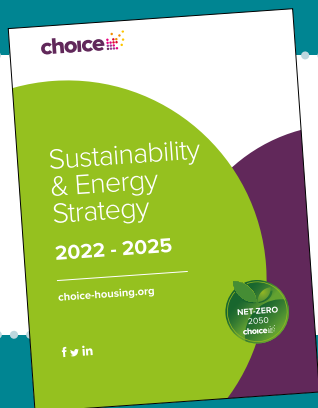
- All new homes to have a minimum EPC Rating of A from 2024
- Develop and implement a strategy to achieve a minimum EPC rating C across 90 % of existing homes
- Establish a net-zero working group, responsible for identifying targets to achieve net zero by 2050, with intermittent goals for 2030 and 2040.
- Develop links with other organisations to support decarbonisation of the sector.

**Key environmental highlights include:**

- 82% of homes EPC-C or above
- 1500 homes with PVC panels
- Nearly zero-energy buildings - pilot projects underway in Newtownabbey and Lisburn
- Ballymagowan Urban Park - 100 allotment users supported yearly by on-site horticulturalist







### Choice Housing Ireland Ltd

Choice is one of the largest independent housing associations in Northern Ireland providing high quality homes and care and support services to help meet the diverse needs of a wide range of customers, including older people, families, mature singles and people with complex needs. Choice recognises the impact their activities have on the environment and the financial impact of energy costs for tenants and have put various measures in place to ensure that the homes they provide are some of the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly in the country.

In 2023/24 Choice continued to undertake energy management, investment and tenant engagement initiatives to support the delivery of their Sustainability & Energy Strategy targets.

Key achievements in 2023/24 included:

- A reduction in scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions of over 1,000 tonnes (over 17.5%) when compared to our base year (2020/21).
- Delivery of ongoing financial savings for the Association and their tenants, through effective energy procurement and contract management.
- Management of energy consumption, taking opportunities to deliver savings.
- Ongoing use of innovative energy management platforms, including 'Energy Elephant' for invoice management, and SAVA to assist in identifying improvement measures for their stock.
- Management of a large solar PV portfolio, of around 400 systems, delivering significant financial and environmental savings. Direct and indirect financial savings to tenants is estimated to be over £68,000.
- Investment of over £1.2m in new heating systems.
- Progressed two of our deep retrofit projects, which are expected to complete in 2024/25.
- Reduced the number of properties known to have EPC Band E-G ratings from 215 to 71.
- Providing advice and support to tenants, staff and stakeholders, including engagement as part of Energy Week 2023 and the relaunch of a revised tenant energy booklet.





## NB Housing

NB Housing are a housing association that believes housing should be better. Homes that are affordable, secure and promote opportunity, to ensure everyone has an affordable, sustainable home in a supportive community that enables them to lead their best lives.

NB Housing is proud to present our first EPC A rated scheme in Cookstown. The bungalows are built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and low energy building techniques. The homes are heated using the Nilan Green Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery system with additional energy provided via photovoltaic solar panels. The low energy building methods used to construct these bungalows will mean that our tenants benefit from improved energy efficiency, reduction in carbon emissions, and lower heating bills in comfortable sustainable homes.



A stylized, layered flame graphic in a darker shade of purple, located in the bottom right corner of the image. It consists of several overlapping, teardrop-shaped elements that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling fire.

**To have a  
more equal  
society**



# Ways that Housing Executive tenants save money and reduce fuel poverty

## Financial Inclusion Strategy

Approved in June 2023, the Housing Executive's five-year Financial Inclusion Strategy embeds financial inclusion at the heart of as many customer services as possible. It has a robust action plan which enables Housing Executive staff help tenants maximise their income, achieve financial flexibility, and access financial services and information. All Housing Executive tenants and customers are offered Making Your Money Work/ Financial Inclusion services at every stage of their customer journey, from application and an offer of tenancy, to sign-up, anytime they fall into arrears, if there is a change in their circumstances, and more.

Over 2023/24, some of the strategy actions which have been helping our tenants with the cost-of-living crisis are:

- Maintaining and further developing connections with food and fuel banks to refer tenants in crisis.
- Establishing a proactive project to encourage uptake of rate rebate so this does not need to be paid out of pocket.
- Working with external agencies to sign-post employment and training opportunities.
- Working closely with Advice NI to assist tenants who are struggling with debt.
- Holding outreach clinics in the community where tenants can drop in and speak to a Financial Inclusion Manager who can assist with finances or refer them to other services for help.
- Promoting the Housing Executive delivered NI Oil Savings Network.
- Working collaboratively to sign-post to accessible alternatives to illegal and high-cost lending.
- Proactively developing pathways to find and assist tenants in need who are not presenting with rent arrears.



## Making your money work

In delivering the Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Executive frontline staff provide the 'Making Your Money Work' service which aims to assist tenants to improve their financial wellbeing through provision of:

- Advice and assistance with simple household budgeting and benefit entitlement. This element of the service has been enhanced with the introduction of the Benefit & Budgeting Calculator. The calculator enables staff to help tenants check they are in receipt of the correct benefits for their circumstances and access tips to increase financial resilience.
- Referrals to independent specialist advice providers for tenants with serious or complex debt issues.
- Referrals to floating support services for tenants with perceived vulnerabilities.
- Direction to further advice and assistance via the Department for Communities "Make the Call" service.
- Information regarding the Housing Executive delivered NI Oil Savings Network.

During the 2023/24 financial year, Housing Executive staff offered over 9,000 Making Your Money Work services. Over half were accepted by tenants. The majority of acceptances were referrals to the Financial Inclusion team. However, frontline staff performed 264 Benefit and Budget Calculations and referred 115 tenants to Make the Call.

Where Making Your Money Work services were provided by frontline staff to tenants during 2023/24, those tenant's rent accounts saw a positive impact in 55% of cases, six months post-intervention. Further, over the same 12 months, extra Housing Cost benefit payments were evident in 59% of cases.

During 2023/24, we strengthened our relationship with Advice NI who provide confidential accredited debt advice to tenants. Over the last 12 months, frontline staff referred 301 tenants for debt advice. Making Your Money Work triggers are also an opportunity for staff to identify extra support needs and over the past 12 months frontline staff referred 247 tenants for floating support.

The Making Your Money Work service is currently being expanded under the new Financial Inclusion Strategy. This expansion builds upon the existing service to further enhance provision by facilitating access to further advice and assistance regarding bank account options, credit unions, energy suppliers, media packages, and employment opportunities.



## The Housing Executive's Financial Inclusion Managers

Over the course of 2023/24, the Housing Executive embedded an expanded Financial Inclusion Team. There are now a total of seven Financial Inclusion Managers and three Deputy Financial Inclusion Managers working within the Housing Executive.

Three of the Financial Inclusion Managers work as part of Housing Solutions providing much needed financial advice, assistance, and support to customers from the moment they first contact the Housing Executive.

The other seven team members work directly with our tenants to provide in-depth benefits and money advice.

The team are here to:

- Carry out benefit checks, and help tenants to resolve complex benefits issues;
- Help with household budgeting;
- Provide impartial advice to help reduce any debts and ensure

tenants can make the most of their household income;

- Help tenants to access other services to help alleviate immediate financial hardship (e.g. charitable organisations, grants etc);
- Support frontline staff in delivery of the Making Your Money Work service.

Throughout 2023/24, the team assisted just over 4,250 tenants who were referred to them by frontline staff - an average of 354 per month. During this period, the Financial Inclusion Managers also unlocked just over £2.2million in extra benefits for Housing Executive tenants. During 2023/24 where the Financial Inclusion team had a positive impact on the rent account, those rent accounts saw a collective reduction in rent arrears of £747k six months post-intervention.

## Deputy Financial Inclusion Managers

Pension Credit is one of the most underclaimed benefits in the UK; the UK government estimates £1.7 billion goes unclaimed each year. Pension Credit is a passport benefit, meaning those who are entitled can also access other help such as Housing Benefit and winter fuel payments. In 2023/24, on top of normal duties, the Deputy Financial Inclusion team began proactively contacting pension aged tenants in receipt of nil or partial Housing Benefit to offer a benefit check. Over the last 12 months the team have contacted over 850 tenants helping them to boost their income during this challenging economic time and facilitating access to Cold Weather Payments. Some sample outcomes have been included below:

The Financial Inclusion team proactively contacted a pension age tenant to offer a benefit check. The tenant lives alone and prior to contact was paying full rent and rates from their state pension of £181 per week, widow benefit of £90 per month and Attendance Allowance of £92.60 per week. Following a benefit check, the tenant was found to be entitled to pension credit of £64.71 per week and consequently, housing benefit of £56.72 per week. The Financial Inclusion team helped the tenant to apply for both. This tenant's income has now increased by **£6,314.36 per year**.

An elderly tenant had no entitlement to Housing Benefit as she had approximately £17k in savings. The tenant was not receiving any disability benefits, so the Deputy Financial Inclusion Manager advised her to claim for Attendance Allowance. This was awarded at the high rate of £101 per week. This then entitled the tenant to Pension Credits of approximately £45 per week which has now given her full entitlement to housing benefit. This has led to an increase in income of approximately £230 per week or £12,000 per year.

A pension age tenant engaged with a Financial Inclusion Manager and reported their Housing Benefit had stopped. The tenant's son had moved in and was working full time, so their Housing Benefit ended due to highest non-dependent deduction applied. The tenant's only income was state pension of £203.85 per week so she now had to pay £108.10 per week out of this for rent and rates. The Financial Inclusion team discussed health issues with the tenant, and she stated she had applied for DLA/PIP previously but was refused due to insufficient care needs. The Financial Inclusion team assisted her to apply for Attendance Allowance and she was awarded high rate of £101.75 per week, this then meant that the non-dependent deduction would be removed, and she received arrears of £1,149 Housing Benefit which left her rent account in credit by £1,358. Her annual income has now increased by £10,912.20.

# Transition of the Natural Gas Network to a more sustainable energy mix



## Evolve

2023-24 has been another transformative period for Evolve as the company continues to play a leading role in decarbonising the energy industry and supporting Northern Ireland's Path to Net Zero Strategy. Evolve's commitment to sustainability and innovation remains at the forefront of its operations.

Evolve, formerly known as SGN Natural Gas, is on track to hit another milestone this year. The company is set to surpass 4,500 connections across both its domestic and commercial operations – a significant achievement that underscores the ongoing dedication involved in expanding access to a cleaner, more sustainable energy future. Evolve's efforts in connecting more homes and businesses across Derry/Londonderry, Tyrone, and Fermanagh have been met with enthusiastic support, reinforcing the critical role gas plays not just in local communities but also across key industries.

As part of the journey towards a fully decarbonised network, significant infrastructural upgrades have taken place. These improvements not only enhance the reliability and efficiency of the network but also pave the way for the integration of greener energy sources, such as biomethane, with Evolve having facilitated the first ever direct-to-grid injection of this green gas in Dungannon last year. By continuously modernising our network, Evolve is ensuring that the region is well-equipped to meet the growing demand for sustainable energy.



## Phoenix Energy

Phoenix Energy has been providing fuel choice to homes and businesses across its licensed area since it was first established. Since then, it has created considerable environmental, social and economic value to the region and customer base it serves.

The company now owns and operates the largest gas distribution network locally, providing the safe and secure distribution of natural gas to the 256,000 domestic and business customers already connected to its network. With a gas pipeline that extends across more than 4,000km, Phoenix is responsible for the maintenance of its infrastructure as well as the 24/7 operation and transportation platform for natural gas suppliers and customers across its licenced area which encompasses Greater Belfast, Larne and East Down.

Phoenix is working on ways to decarbonise heating for consumers by replacing natural gas with renewable gases such as Biomethane and Green Hydrogen and embracing new technology.



## Firmus Energy

The Firmus Energy Distribution gas network build is now almost complete, making natural gas available to almost 200,000 homes and businesses throughout its network area, which stretches from Newry through the central corridor in NI to Derry-Londonderry. Firmus continue to connect around 4,000 homes and businesses each year. The Firmus network, and indeed all of the natural gas networks in NI, are suitable to transport biomethane and hydrogen which means that the natural gas industry is in a great position to transition to net zero carbon. Existing boilers can accept biomethane and a 20% blend of hydrogen so every new connection can facilitate renewable gas when it becomes available. The future has now already started with biomethane being recently injected into the gas network in Dungannon with many other producers finalising to inject as soon as they can. This is the first injection into the gas network in Ireland and is a major milestone for net zero in NI.



## Carbon Reduction Grant

Action Renewables supports the Carbon Reduction Grant, in conjunction with Firmus Energy, in recognition of the CO<sub>2</sub> savings which can be achieved by switching from oil or solid fuels to natural gas. This fuel transition results in an estimated 50% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction (based on a 28% differential in carbon emissions between burning oil and natural gas and assuming up to a further 30% saving through heating system efficiencies). This grant, launched during 2023-24, is an opportunity for householders to switch to gas and reduce their emissions. Due to demand, the grant period has been extended until 30th November 2024, and more information is available from [furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk](mailto:furtherinfo@firmusenergy.co.uk)

In addition, Action Renewables is actively involved in facilitating a pathway for renewable gas injection to decarbonise the natural gas network.

## Utility Regulator

Following public consultation in late 2023-24 the Utility Regulator launched its 2024-2029 Corporate Strategy entitled 'Protecting Consumers on the way to Net Zero'. The new strategy sets out Utility Regulator's commitment to delivering a low carbon future, while supporting a just transition to net zero and protecting Northern Ireland's energy and water consumers.

A key element of the Corporate Strategy is the new 2024-2029 Consumer Protection Programme, which is Utility Regulator's principal vehicle to deliver positive outcomes for electricity, gas and water consumers in Northern Ireland. The programme

outlines the intended approach to enhance protection for non-domestic, domestic and future consumers, along with those who may be in vulnerable circumstances.

Utility Regulator carries out electricity and gas network price control reviews that facilitate millions of pounds of investment in these networks that will help achieve decarbonisation.

Since 2019, Utility Regulator has approved £163.5 million of electricity network investment to support growth in low carbon technology. Investment in this technology has played a part in helping Northern Ireland meet its commitments on energy generated from renewable sources.

## NI Consumer Council

During the 2023/24 financial year, the Consumer Council continued to provide free independent support and advice to consumers and businesses throughout Northern Ireland.

The continued high energy prices saw an overall increased demand for the Consumer Council's energy price comparison tools. The tools help consumers save money on their home and small business energy bills by providing information and comparing different prices and tariffs. 145,761 consumers used the Consumer Council's energy price comparison tools (electricity and gas), which was up from 117,108 in 2022/23. 70,087 consumers viewed the home heating oil price checker, which was down from 91,316 the previous year. Energy price comparison tables, which cover electricity and gas were downloaded by 107,129 consumers, compared to 80,288 in 2022/23.



145,671

consumers used the Consumer Council's energy price comparison tools (electricity and gas)



70,087

consumers viewed the home heating oil price checker



107,129

consumers downloaded the energy price comparison table

## Measuring energy efficiency investment

During 2023/24, the Housing Executive invested approximately **£43.6m** in order to improve thermal efficiency, influence and increase strategic action to tackle fuel poverty and improve access to energy efficiency measures and advice across Northern Ireland working with the Department for Communities.

2023/24 Energy Efficiency Investment via the Housing Executive	£
Housing Executive Heating Schemes	21,700,000
Housing Executive Double Glazing	4,500,000
Large Scale Retrofit Programme* (ERDF)	2,800,000
DfC Affordable Warmth	14,400,000
DfC Boiler Replacement	139,000
Energy Marketing, advice and education to schools	83,515
Fund NEA	26,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£43,648,765</b>

\*ERDF £6.3m (£2.8m NIHE spend, with a further £3.5m of ERDF funding)

# Measuring Our Outcomes



## Outcomes: Improving People's Homes and Helping to Transform their Lives

Area of Activity	Position at the end of 2022/23	Indicators	Action	Progress during 2023/24
<b>Improving Domestic Energy Efficiency</b>	The fieldwork for the NI House Condition Survey 2023 is substantially completed.	Initiatives/Measures to improve energy efficiency	Evaluate/ Review data	Work continues on the NI House Condition Survey with initial results issued in the next financial year
<b>A</b>	Housing Executive staff promoted and engaged in various events, both virtually and in-person throughout 2022/23.	Improved access to energy efficiency advice (number of customers)	Market the energy efficiency message	Housing Executive continued to support events across Northern Ireland including
	<p>Housing Executive participated in the National Energy Action (NEA) UK-wide Fuel Poverty Awareness Day 2nd December 2022.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Energy Advice Service continues to provide advice to households, with 6,820 unique queries.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach events at both community, regional and national level.</li> <li>• Love Your Home events in June 2023 and March 2024.</li> <li>• Fuel Poverty Awareness Day 30 November 2023.</li> <li>• Energy Saving Week November 2023.</li> <li>• Fund Energy Topic with Eco Schools Programme.</li> <li>• Deliver Eco Schools Competition.</li> <li>• Fund the Architects of Change Programme.</li> </ul> <p>The Northern Ireland Energy Advice Service continues to provide advice to households, with 19,044 unique enquiries.</p>

## Outcomes: Improving People's Homes and Helping to Transform their Lives

Area of Activity	Position at the end of 2022/23	Indicators	Action	Progress during 2023/24
<b>Reducing Fuel Poverty</b>	<p>990 boilers installed through the Boiler Replacement Scheme £1.3m investment</p> <p>Affordable Warmth Scheme expenditure £16.8m</p> <p>NISEP contributed funding of almost £7.4m towards the installation of energy efficient heating systems and insulation measures.</p>	<p>Measured within NI House Condition Survey</p> <p>Increase of affordable warmth for disadvantaged energy consumers (NI Housing Condition Survey Fuel Poverty average)</p>	<p>Provide fuel purchasing opportunities for low income families</p>	<p>340 boilers installed through the Boiler Replacement Scheme. This scheme is now closed to new enquiries Sept 2023.</p> <p>Affordable Warmth Scheme expenditure £14.4m</p> <p>NISEP contributed funding of £7.4m towards the installation of energy efficient heating systems and insulation measures.</p>
<b>B</b>	The Oil Buying Network continues to grow its membership & help people save money on their oil.	Implement energy efficiency schemes within social and private housing sectors	Provide fuel purchasing opportunities for low income families	Over 4m litres of home heating oil ordered through the Oil Savings Network saving members over £406,000
	<p>5,591 Affordable Warmth Measures in 2,841 homes.</p> <p>3,308 homes approved.</p>	Increase of affordable warmth for disadvantaged energy consumers (NI Housing Condition Survey Fuel Poverty average)	Implement energy efficiency schemes within social and private housing sectors	<p>4,930 efficiency measures</p> <p>2,746 homes improved</p>

## Outcomes: Improving People's Homes and Helping to Transform their Lives

Area of Activity	Position at the end of 2022/23	Indicators	Action	Progress during 2023/24
<b>Living Sustainably - Protecting the Environment</b>	ERDF has now completed with a total of 1,406 homes improved at a cost of £31.8m - £18.3m of which was funded by ERDF.	Increased innovation in sustainable energy efficiency	Research and install innovative measures to create more efficient homes	ERDF is now complete.
	Housing Executive retained Platinum in the Business in the Community Environmental Benchmarking Survey 2023. ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Accreditation was awarded to the Housing Centre and DLO Offices in Portadown.	Increased innovation in sustainable energy efficiency	Seek to increase electricity consumption from renewable resources	Housing Executive once again retained Platinum status in the Business In the Community Environmental Benchmarking Survey 2023. ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Accreditation was awarded to the Housing Centre and DLO Offices in Portadown.

## Outcomes: Improving People's Homes and Helping to Transform their Lives

Area of Activity	Position at the end of 2022/23	Indicators	Action	Progress during 2023/24
<b>To have a More Equal Society</b>	Phoenix Natural Gas c.6000 SGN c.4,000 (total connections made) Firmus c. 4,000	Reduction from 68% household reliant on oil based heating systems (HCS)	Provide measures to secure energy mix	Phoenix Natural Gas 256,000 total connections Evolve 4,500 total connections Firmus c. 4,000 connections made manually







This document is available in alternate formats.  
For further information on the HECA Progress Report  
please contact:

Robert Clements  
Head of Sustainable Development  
Housing Executive  
The Housing Centre  
2 Adelaide Street Belfast  
BT2 8PB

Tel: 03448 920 900  
Email: [robert.clements@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:robert.clements@nihe.gov.uk)

**Housing**  
Executive

 [www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk)

 [facebook.com/housingexecutive](https://facebook.com/housingexecutive)

 [@nihecommunity](https://twitter.com/nihecommunity)