

## Winter deaths figures show the unacceptable costs of not upgrading Scotland's homes

**Existing Homes Alliance Scotland media release**

**For immediate release: Tuesday 18 October 2016**

Figures published today by the Scottish Government [1] on 'additional winter deaths' [2] show that this country's cold and draughty housing stock must be upgraded as a matter of urgency to tackle fuel poverty and protect the ill and vulnerable, the Existing Homes Alliance argued.

The statistics show that 2,850 "extra" vulnerable people died in Scotland last winter, when compared with the average for the rest of the year. Scottish Ministers have pledged to make energy efficiency a National Infrastructure Priority [3], but plans are still under development. In the meantime, the Alliance is pressing for a more substantial financial commitment to be made and for much needed regulation to ensure that no-one in Scotland is forced to live in fuel poverty as a consequence of a cold and poorly-insulated home [4].

Lori McElroy, chair of the Existing Homes Alliance, said:

"It remains a grave concern to us that the condition of many homes in Scotland is still leading to the death of ill and vulnerable people living in fuel poverty. The figures published today show the unacceptable cost of the status quo, and they must spur new action. The Scottish Government should set an objective of supporting all homes to reach a band C standard for energy performance by 2025 so that no one in the country is living in a cold and draughty home.

"We are pleased that this issue has continued to rise up the political agenda, but now is the time for the concerted effort that will be required to provide warm, healthy and affordable homes for all. We know how it can be done, and we know what it will cost. Given how many

people are still dying needlessly every year, we want to work with Ministers and other political parties to drive down these figures."

Brian Sloan, Chief Executive of Age Scotland, said:

"Death rates often increase with colder weather, chiefly because of lower indoor temperatures and not wrapping up enough against the cold when going outside. Yet other countries with similar climates do consistently better in protecting their vulnerable citizens, and we must do more. Too many homes are colder than is either necessary or healthy for older people, often because of both substandard insulation and scandalously high energy bills. A Warm Homes Bill which reduces fuel poverty by incentivising improvements in energy efficiency, raising standards, and promoting shared heating is essential if we want to avoid another lengthy list of preventable loss of life next year."

ENDS

[1] The full statistics are available here:

<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2016/winter-mortality-in-scotland-201516>

[2] The World Health Organisation estimates that 30% of such deaths are attributable to cold homes - see p.88 here:

[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/142077/e95004.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/142077/e95004.pdf)

[3] For information on this priority status, see:

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Integrated-approach-to-energy-efficiency-2195.aspx>

[4] More than 50 organisations from across business and civic society in Scotland have signed a joint statement calling on the Scottish Government to support all homes to reach at least a 'C' Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating by 2025:

[http://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/EXHAS\\_jointstatement\\_Oct15.pdf](http://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/EXHAS_jointstatement_Oct15.pdf)

Contact

James Mackenzie

[press@existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk](mailto:press@existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk)

07921 333 617