

The Existing Homes Alliance (ExHA) is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, anti-poverty, energy advice and industry organisations arguing for urgent action to transform Scotland's existing housing stock to make it fit for the 21st century. We were established in 2010 and became a Scottish Charity in 2018.

We are calling for an ambitious programme of low-carbon refurbishment of Scotland's homes, along with incentives, support and regulations aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions and tackling fuel poverty. Such a programme makes environmental, social and economic sense.

Steering Group



The Existing Homes Alliance is chaired by Lori McElroy, and the Director is Elizabeth Leighton.

The following organisations are supporters of the Alliance:

A.C. Whyte, Association for the Conservation of Energy, Age Scotland, the Church of Scotland, Federation of Master Builders, Mineral Wool Insulation Manufacturers Association, National Insulation Association, SCARF, Scottish Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation, SHARE.

Why are we calling for change?

More than half of all energy used in Scotland goes into heating buildings¹. At the same time, over a quarter of Scotland's households are living in fuel poverty, unable to afford a warm, comfortable home and more than a million homes fall below the energy efficiency level recommended for our health. Improving the energy performance of Scotland's existing housing stock must have a central place in the Scottish Government's plans to meet climate change targets and to eradicate fuel poverty.

Much of the policy debate on housing focuses on new affordable housing supply. Yet existing homes which are warm, low carbon and affordable to heat, are a critical part of a housing stock that meets Scotland's needs now and in the future. More than 80% of existing homes will still be in use in 2050. Improving residential energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing carbon emissions, while at the same time addressing fuel poverty and creating jobs across the country. Urgent investment is required to seize this opportunity.

The Benefits:

No other infrastructure investment can achieve so much - helping to eradicate fuel poverty and its associated mortality and health problems; stimulating local jobs and boosting the building industry;

¹ Scottish Energy Strategy, 2017 Scottish Government

and playing a critical role in addressing national challenges of safeguarding energy security and tackling climate change

Only a bold approach to retrofitting homes throughout Scotland can tackle these problems at the pace of change required.

Energy Efficient Scotland

In 2015, the Scottish Government made the energy efficiency of buildings a National Infrastructure Priority, pledging to take a comprehensive approach over a sustained period to reducing energy use and switching to low carbon heat. In 2018, the government published the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, the cornerstone of this infrastructure priority, which sets out their plan to achieve near-zero carbon buildings by 2050.

We welcome the Route Map, and call for Energy Efficient Scotland to be given a statutory underpinning, including statutory targets and an independent oversight body. We believe an interim target of getting the vast majority of homes (where technically feasible and appropriate) to EPC band C should be brought forward to 2030. This should be accompanied by advice, incentives, and an engagement campaign and investment in the supply chain. Finally, we are arguing for more funding that is commensurate with the ambition of the Energy Efficient Scotland Programme.

Fuel Poverty (Targets, Strategy and Definition) Bill and Fuel Poverty Strategy

The Scottish Government published the Fuel Poverty Bill, along with a new Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2018. We welcome the bill as part of a long-term strategy to eradicate fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. There is a focus on all four drivers of fuel poverty (energy efficiency, income, energy price and how energy is used in the home) and a commitment to remove poor energy performance as a driver of fuel poverty.

While the focus on fuel poverty is welcome, we fear that the scope is too narrow and misses a 'once in a generation' opportunity to tackle energy efficiency as well and end the scandal of Scotland's cold, damp homes. This bill should support the achievement of warm, affordable and low carbon homes for *everyone* in Scotland, so no one is at risk of being in fuel poverty.

Specifically, we believe the Bill's overall target should be more ambitious, the new definition should recognise the higher costs of living in rural areas, and scrutiny provisions should be enhanced.

For more detailed briefings on Energy Efficient Scotland and the Fuel Poverty Bill, along with our Declaration on the future of Scotland's existing homes, please visit our website:
www.existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk

Join us

If you would like to know more or become a supporter, please contact us at info@existinghomesalliance.co.uk.