

Our Ref/Ein Cyf: ST/TP/SJ
Your Ref/Eich Cyf:
Date/Dyddiad: 4 January 2010
Please ask for/Gofynnwch am: Steve Thomas
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WLGA • CLILC

Nuria Zolle
Chair of the Fuel Poverty Charter Coalition
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Temple of Peace
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Dear Nuria

Fuel Poverty Charter

Thank you for your email to Councillor Davies which he passed to me for a response.

In relation to the specific requests for local authorities, as you will be aware, there is an existing Energy Efficiency Policy Agreement between WAG and WLGA. The agreement was developed in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust and NEA Cymru and states that 'each authority should consider making a commitment to establish an Affordable Warmth action plan to combat fuel poverty'.

The review undertaken by your organisation in March 2008 found that the vast majority of councils had prepared AWAPs and those that had not had gone some way towards it. Implementation of the plans, however, was not as advanced. The review found that there had been slow progress by many authorities, with some claiming a lack of resources. Certainly some of the AWAPs refer to the need to embed actions in the Health, Social Care and Well Being Plans, Children & Young People's plans and other plans. We see this as a sensible step, as fuel poverty issues do cut across service areas and link readily to social, economic and environmental issues.

For example, there has been significant work on fuel poverty by Strategy for Older People Coordinators and their colleagues. Under the remit of the Strategy this has focussed largely on awareness raising through the 'Keep Well This Winter' annual campaign, in which packs have been distributed by local authorities to older people and representative organisations. In addition, events throughout Wales have been organised as part of the awareness raising.

WLGA attended the Older People's Commissioner's Fuel Poverty Summit last year which brought together a number of agencies and older people to discuss the way forward and we have supported the Commissioner's work to raise awareness of the Home Heat Helpline.

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Turning to the Charter, as you know there is already work underway by various agencies in relation to many of the points listed. We agree with statement that a proposal for a duty on local authorities to tackle fuel poverty would have to be backed by the resources necessary to discharge the duty effectively.

Subject to these comments, in particular on the issue of resources, we support aims of the Charter and the requests upon local government. I would suggest though that responsibilities for delivering the points in the Charter need to be laid out clearly. Whilst the Charter "makes specific recommendations and calls for specific action from all levels of government, the regulator and suppliers" it is not readily apparent which body is expected to do what in relation to each of the points listed. Whilst that would convert the Charter into more of an action plan (that would have to be signed up to by all parties) it would clarify accountabilities and facilitate monitoring of progress.

I trust this response answers your queries and we look forward to working with you as you take this forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr