



## **Empowering Ceredigion through Community-based Energy Advice**

We are part of Severn Wye Energy Agency, a non-profit company and registered charity operating throughout Wales and its English border counties supporting communities, residents and businesses to create a sustainable, affordable, low carbon future.

Empowering Ceredigion through Community-based Energy Advice supports people who are struggling to heat and power their homes sufficiently and affordably.

### **What we do**

We deal with domestic energy issues, advising on practical and achievable energy-saving measures in the home, signposting retrofit measures or helping those in crisis fuel situations.

We check and explain energy statements and advise on ways to manage debt or reduce large energy bills.

We advocate on a client's behalf with energy suppliers.

We aim to empower clients to manage their own domestic energy situation in the future.

### **Who is eligible?**

Anyone living in Ceredigion who has problems with their domestic energy supply or bills.

### **How we can help**

We offer pop-up information events, small group talks, telephone consultations, and face-to-face meetings via informal drop-ins or arranged appointments. We also offer home visits where we give site-specific domestic energy advice.

If a client needs help with their energy supplier we can advocate on their behalf, with the ultimate goal of empowering them to confidently manage their own energy issues.

We also signpost and refer clients to other organisations if their needs extend beyond energy, and we follow up on referrals from stakeholder partners – which is where we hope you will play a key role.

### **The context for our work**

Fuel poverty remains a daily challenge for many in the UK, and the latest statistics show that the problem is increasing. Severn Wye works toward both the basic human needs of

warmth, good health and a safe home now, and promoting energy efficiency and low carbon energy for the future.

We aim to make new connections in Ceredigion communities with a view to providing free and confidential advice on domestic energy issues, as well as opening new avenues for referral to further support for more people.

Empowering Ceredigion through Community-based Energy Advice support is funded until May 2026 and is provided to clients free of charge

## **Fuel poverty – what is it?**

Fuel poverty in Wales is officially defined as having to spend more than 10% of household income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

Any household having to spend more than 20% is defined as being in severe fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty typically affects people with lower incomes, those living in older housing, people with limited mobility and/or specific medical needs, but as people struggle with the cost-of-living crisis, fuel poverty is starting to affect a much wider swathe of society.

In Wales, poor housing stock also takes its toll as these older properties are typically less energy efficient. A survey of Welsh Housing Conditions in 2017–18 recorded over 50% of all homes built before 1980 being in fuel poverty compared to just 6% of those built later.

## **Trends and predictions**

Winter 2024 is expected to cause further fuel poverty hardship. People will still be paying at least double what they did before 2021 and the latest round of price rises (a predicted 10% on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 and a further as yet unspecified rise on the first January 2025) will continue to cause problems for many. Standing charges also remain high and are a fixed costs even for those who manage to reduce their energy use.

In addition, there is also the nationwide impact of the Winter Fuel payment disappearing for an estimated 10 million pensioners and over 1 million pensioners eligible for the WFP not yet claiming pension Credits.

## **Fuel poverty and health**

Fuel poverty is more likely to affect those who have lower incomes and/or lower energy-efficiency housing, or higher energy needs, perhaps linked to medical conditions or other vulnerabilities.

Those most at risk include, the elderly, families with young children, people with disabilities, people on benefits, people in local authority/social housing or living in private rentals, people in temporary accommodation and people with long-term chronic health conditions.

The health impacts of a cold home can be far-reaching and long-lasting. People with cardiovascular and respiratory conditions or mental health issues, young children, the elderly, and anyone with a long-term, chronic medical condition is at particular risk.

Infants under five living in cold conditions have a 30% greater risk of admission to hospital or primary care and are one-and-a-half to three times more likely to develop symptoms of asthma. They are also more likely to experience negative impacts on their educational development; educational achievement is a key predictor of long-term health and longevity.

## Working together

### You can help us by:

- making a space for us at your premises, set up some appointments with your existing service users and call us in to see them
- refer clients to us using our [referral form](https://webforms.dizons.co.uk/severn_wye_energy_agency/2)  
([https://webforms.dizons.co.uk/severn\\_wye\\_energy\\_agency/2](https://webforms.dizons.co.uk/severn_wye_energy_agency/2))

### Contact us

Email the advocacy team on [communityadvice@severnwye.org.uk](mailto:communityadvice@severnwye.org.uk) or contact us directly:

#### Amanda Harries

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We hope this information is useful and that Empowering Ceredigion through Community-based Energy Advice becomes an additional resource you can use to help the people you work with.

We're looking forward to working with you.