

MANIFESTO OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BETTER POLICIES FOR HEALTHY HOMES

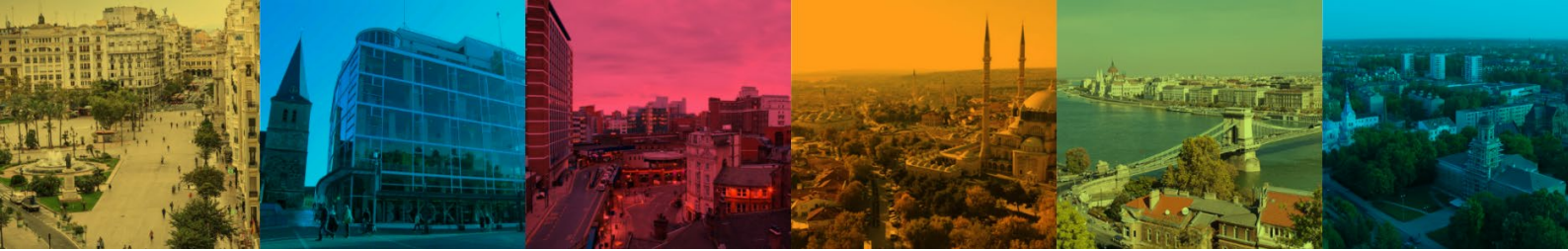
This manifesto is aimed at local leaders. It suggests a series of actions that combine health and energy poverty action. The cities who sign up recognise their role to fight fuel poverty that extend beyond short-term emergency solutions.



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Help us ensure everyone can live in a healthy home

Changes to climate such as hotter summers and wetter winters can affect those who are living with long term conditions such as asthma, arthritis, and COPD more than most. Additionally, living in a cold, damp house may lead to a deterioration to a person's health and wellbeing. The cost of living crisis and the associated increase in people living in fuel poverty has led to an increase in people seeking out warm places to spend their time such as on warm buses. As a result, 'warm spaces' have been created to offer respite to those in need.

Health problems could be symptomatic of those living in fuel poverty. For people in some parts of the UK and Europe, fuel poverty has become an all-year-round issue that requires structural changes in the way we work, plan, and combine policy actions in our cities. There is an urgent need to address fuel poverty, and to make the connection between public health and access to affordable energy. Local authorities play a key role in this, which is why the WELLBASED Health Homes campaign been launched. Its aim is to support local authorities to with their own healthy homes action plans.

Sign the manifesto and become a Healthy Homes council.

The WELLBASED Healthy Homes campaign wants to raise awareness amongst local leaders, councils, and communities about the impact that fuel poverty has on people's health. In the UK, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) defines a household of being in fuel poverty 'if after housing costs, the total fuel costs needed to maintain a satisfactory heating regime are more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income'. The European Commission defines it as 'when energy bills represent a high percentage of consumers income, affecting their capacity to cover other expenses, or when consumers are forced to reduce their energy consumption with an impact on their physical or mental well-being'.¹

By signing this manifesto the council commits to:

- Demonstrating a fair and inclusive approach to Net Zero transition.
- Improving health and energy efficiency activities that enable people to better cope with environmental changes.
- Reducing fuel poverty and understanding the link to health inequalities and the impact this has on the wider health and care system.

Each signatory will get the chance to:

- Collaborate with a network of committed cities to discuss fuel poverty related health issues.
- Access first-hand research results and best practices from practitioners
- Attend the End Energy Poverty Forum and Final WELLBASED event in Valencia in 2025

¹ https://en.auvergnerhonealpes-ee.fr/fileadmin/user_upload/mediatheque/AURA-EE_anglais/Documents/European_projects/POWERITY/Policy_brief_on_tackling_energy_poverty_with_low-carbon_interventions.pdf





Why we need to act.

Fuel poverty has become an issue that affects millions of people across the UK and Europe. It is not only detrimental to people's quality of life but can also impact their physical and mental health².

We recognise that:

- No one should live without access to essential energy.
- Fuel poverty disproportionately affects vulnerable groups and can perpetuate social inequalities.
- Living in inadequate temperatures at home during the coldest or warmest months combined with poor housing conditions can have adverse impact on people's physical and mental wellbeing.

Unacceptable Health Consequences

Fuel poverty has a significant impact on the physical and mental health of individuals³. It also increases pressure on the public health and social care system.

- Exposure to extreme temperatures and excessive humidity in poorly conditioned homes increases the risk of respiratory illnesses such as asthma and respiratory infections.
- Anxiety, depression, and stress associated with energy poverty are harmful to mental health.
- Inadequate heating can worsen long term conditions further diminishing a person's quality of life.

What do Healthy Homes cities do?

The WELLBASED Healthy Homes campaign asks councils to implement policies through which they take the lead in addressing fuel poverty and its detrimental effects on physical and mental health.

Key actions that signatory cities should take forward are:

- ✓ **Connect fuel poverty and health targets** in early stages of planning, i.e. embed in local strategic plans such as the carbon-neutrality roadmaps and climate action plans (using appropriate indicators, identification of those most affected and systematic monitoring).
- ✓ **Foster continuous training of professionals** (e.g. housing officers, social workers, health professionals) on the close links between energy poverty and health.
- ✓ **Create a coalition, working group or roundtable of energy and health actors** to push forward the agenda (including health, social care, and energy actors).
- ✓ **Provide support and means to regular and widespread energy audits and other energy advice services**, especially targeting the most vulnerable.
- ✓ Create and/or promote **fuel poverty alleviation services and health support**.

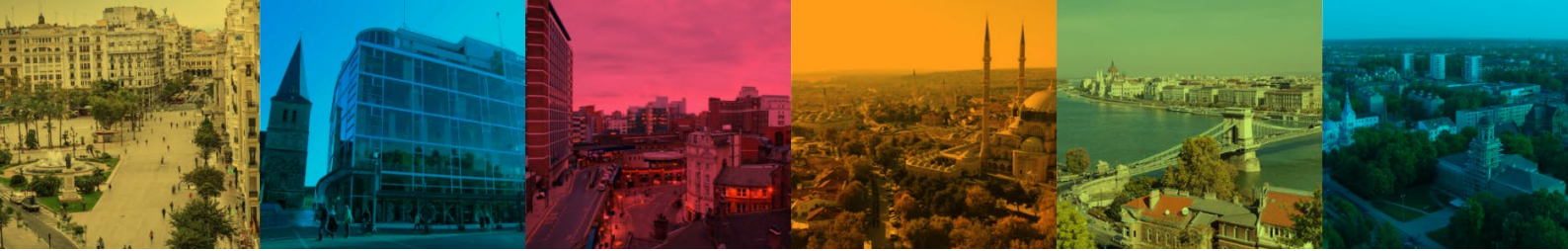
² Thomson H, Snell C, Bouzarovski S. Health, Well-Being and Energy Poverty in Europe: A Comparative Study of 32 European Countries. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2017;14(6).

Liddell C. et al. Living in a cold and damp home: frameworks for understanding impacts on mental well-being. *Public Health* 129 (2015) 191-199

³ Marmot Review Team. (2011). *The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty*.

<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty>





This is how your council becomes a ‘Healthy Homes’ partner:

By signing this manifesto, your council shows its determination to reduce fuel poverty-related ill-health. By working collaboratively, cities will address fuel poverty and work towards healthy homes for everyone. Through this campaign, incremental small changes in every city will deliver improved outcomes with long-lasting effects.

[Please confirm by email](#) before 28 June 2024 the latest that your city joins the campaign. Send us your signed manifesto. We will then add your city logo to the list of signatories and provide visibility and networking opportunities to all of them!

This campaign is an initiative by the European WELLBASED team, composed of city practitioners, researchers and NGOs: www.wellbased.eu

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