

Barnsley's Affordable Warmth Charter



Affordable warmth for everyone

Vision

A Barnsley where everyone lives in a warm, healthy, energy-efficient home.

Many households in Barnsley face challenges in heating their home, particularly over the winter months. With rising and potentially unstable energy prices, many more households live in homes that have poor energy efficiency levels which cannot be kept warm at a reasonable cost.

Fuel poverty can mean making stark choices between energy and other essentials or falling into debt. For some, the result is living in a cold home, which can have significant impacts on residents' health and wellbeing.

Strategic fit

This Charter will follow local and national legislation in relation to affordable warmth, links to tackle the cost-of-living crisis and improving energy efficiency. As such, our Affordable Warmth Charter supports the Government's current and future fuel poverty strategy. Internationally, the plan fits with three objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 1: No poverty
- SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Locally this document aligns with the council's Barnsley 2030 ambitions.

The Charter is overseen by the Housing Board, and is a vital part of Barnsley's new Housing Strategy 2024-28, which focuses on four pillars:

- Pillar 1: Maximising existing housing
- Pillar 2: Supporting strong and resilient communities
- Pillar 3: Supporting people to live healthy independent lives
- Pillar 4: Enabling sustainable housing growth to meet need

Collective priorities

1. Energy efficient homes

Partner organisations are committed to energy efficient homes.

Energy efficient homes bring a range of benefits:

- Health and wellbeing: households living in more efficient, warmer homes are less vulnerable to cold and damp related ill health and falling into fuel poverty,
- Environmental: increased efficiency can lower greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change,
- Economic: accessing energy efficiency supply chain can lower individual utility bills and improving energy efficiency of housing on a large scale can boost the green economy, creating local jobs and training opportunities.

Residents on a low income, older people, those with health conditions and young families are most vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty and cold homes.

Households that cannot afford to spend money on fuel to keep their homes warm are more vulnerable to cold and damp related illnesses.

Insulation and heating improvements are the most effective way to improve home energy efficiency and achieve affordable warmth.

Building on our commitments

- Seek out and maximise long term funding opportunities for the delivery of home insulation measures for fuel poor households.
- Develop partnership pathways for Affordable Warmth to enable relevant frontline services to refer for energy efficiency support.
- Scale up of retrofit of private and social housing over the next 10 years to raise EPC levels to C and above.

2. Affordable energy

Partner organisations are committed to schemes that ensure affordable energy for all households.

Energy affordability is affected by household income, fuel prices and home energy efficiency. Low disposable income is a key cause of fuel poverty in Barnsley and many households are not accessing the benefits they are entitled to.

These income related factors affect a household's ability to affordably heat and make their home warm and healthy to live in.

Building on our commitments

- An ambition for all new housing to exceed minimum standards to ensure all new homes are wholly affordable and promote sustainable living.
- Targeted support for the most vulnerable households, based on up-to-date data and insights.
- Investigate opportunities to introduce low-carbon heat networks to provide affordable energy to new and existing householders on a geographic basis

3. Employment, education and skills

Partner organisations are committed to promoting and delivering best practice education and workforce skills development.

Straightforward advice and education are effective ways to help households gain knowledge and skills to save and better manage their home energy.

Raising awareness of the help available, particularly amongst vulnerable and marginalised groups, can make a big difference in helping access support to make homes warmer and healthier.

We will strive to develop a competent, proactive, local workforce to upgrade our existing homes, making them more energy efficient.

A whole house approach will be adopted by improving the fabric of the building first and then introducing renewable energy and heat sources, such as solar panels and heat pumps where suitable.

Building on our commitments

- Work at a regional level to scale up ability to deliver retrofit of energy efficiency measures on a regional scale and enhancing local supply chain and contracts.
- Support construction companies to up-skill the workforce around residential retrofit and low carbon technologies to develop sustainable supply chains.
- Raise awareness and promote the co-benefits associated through climate education and housing, such as carbon literacy.
- Promote, provide and attend training and awareness sessions on how to identify fuel poverty and support residents to achieve affordable warmth.

4. Partnership working

Partner organisations are committed to collaborating to tackle energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty and cold homes can only effectively be tackled by a range of services and organisations working together; this helps to maximise and make the best use of the resources available and reach those in the greatest need.

National, regional, and local policy must reflect our local issues to best support our work to improve home energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty.

This includes working with SYMCA and South Yorkshire Housing Partnership to maximise opportunities for collaborative working and devolved funding on key issues that impact Barnsley.

Building on our commitments

- Affordable Warmth charter members commit to raise awareness of fuel poverty and cold homes by communicating impacts and support available to residents, their employees and other partners
- Working closely with partners, employees and residents to ensure those at most risk of fuel poverty and cold weather are supported to access advice and support
- Improving data sharing, research and sharing best practice.

5. Low-carbon commitments

Partner organisations are committed to schemes that contribute to affordable warmth, energy efficiency and low-carbon targets and in the longer-term support low-income households in the transition to low-carbon heating, in line with [Barnsley Zero 2045 targets](#).

As part of the commitment, organisations support affordable warmth by reducing energy demand and ensuring homes are thermally comfortable and energy efficient

Building on our commitments

- Working towards targets for sustainable housing across the borough, as outlined in the Housing Strategy and Sustainable Energy Action Plan, including any subsequent additions. ,
- Retrofit homes to significantly increase energy efficiency and provide a long term, right first-time solutions for fuel poverty which also reduces carbon and future proofs against rising fuel costs.
- Utilise existing networks such as the Positive Climate Partnership to promote cross-organisational working to tackle fuel poverty and affordable warmth issues linking with the Barnsley 2030 Board.

Ways of achieving affordable warmth

Easy wins

- Making an official statement of your commitment to the objective of helping homes to achieve affordable warmth.
- Working in partnership with other affordable warmth stakeholders as part of the Affordable Warmth Charter group.
- Looking at what your organisation can do to help achieve affordable warmth.
- Engage with your staff about their own experiences of affordable warmth and fuel poverty.

Making a difference

- Referring your service users for home energy advice and energy efficiency improvements; If you are responsible for housing; by making energy efficiency improvements to the housing to reduce fuel poverty.

- Encouraging your organisation's staff to undertake home energy and fuel poverty awareness training.
- Committing resources to help with the delivery of fuel poverty and home energy efficiency schemes.
- Helping to promote and publicise local home energy efficiency and income maximisation schemes by distributing and cascading information.

Signing up to collective priorities

If your organisation is working towards the vision and principles of the Charter, then you can sign up to the Charter [online](#), or contact warmhomes@barnsley.gov.uk to find out more.

Organisations who make this pledge will be awarded the Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter Mark to demonstrate their commitment and may also be invited to join the Affordable Warmth Charter group.

What to do next

- Complete the online [Charter Registration Form](#), setting out what you will do to promote the principles and objectives of the Charter.
- Join Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter group. Here you can attend regular meetings where you can share information, learning and best practice with other partnership members.
- Demonstrate you have contributed to the promotion of affordable warmth, display your Barnsley Affordable Warmth Charter Mark.

For further information about the Affordable Warmth Charter, please visit barnsley.gov.uk/affordablewarmthcharter or send an email to jennifermacphail@barnsley.gov.uk.