



Note of End Fuel Poverty Coalition meeting Tuesday 28 June 2011 at Unison, Euston Road

Present:

William Baker – Consumer Focus	WB
Nancy Platts – Campaign Co-ordinator	NP
Lotte Blair - Association for the Conservation of Energy	LB
David Arnold – Unison	DA
Mervyn Kholer – Age UK	MK

Apologies were received from Bob Smytherman (FPRA), Angela Mawle (UKHPA), Anne Fox (NCT), Dave Powell (FoE) and Alison Pursehouse (NPC)

NOTES

Matters Arising

a) Hills Review

- Evidence submitted and acknowledged
- WB and KB will be attending the stakeholder event on 18th July
- It was noted that the Coalition had not yet been offered a meeting with John Hills as promised
- **Action: NP to chase up meeting for EFPC with the Hills Review Team**

b) Private Rented Sector

- It was agreed that there was still time to take action and engage students.
- **Action: LB to send text to NP**
- **Action: NP to contact NUS and ask for details of university housing offices and for distribution of statement to students with request to contact their MPs.**

c) ECO

- Evidence submitted and acknowledged
- **Action: NP to contact Scrutiny Clerk re: opportunity to give oral evidence**

d) Meetings

- Few responses had been received from EFPC members re: campaign planning meeting and September meeting. It was agreed that to be meaningful, this meeting needs to be attended by the majority of members. It was agreed to move the September meeting to the Thursday 22 September after Lib Dem conference had finished (subject to Ed Matthew being able to attend this date as a speaker). Brief discussion on Party conference activity – agreed it is probably too late and too costly to organise separate EFPC events but to contact members with a view to securing speaker places on relevant panels.
- **Action: NP to email group with new September date after checking availability with Ed Matthew and request dates for August from EFPC members.**

- Action: NP to request speaker places on panels at Party Conferences.

e) Future of EFPC

- Action: NP and PS to work on public engagement plan for publicising successes and building support and activism for EFPC.

1. ECO campaign (exclusive focus on low income consumers, plus more resources beyond ECO for fuel poverty)

- WB felt that there were mixed messages coming from the Govt about the extent to which ECO will focus on low income consumers. Civil servants have admitted that Green Deal Finance may be slow to take off, meaning that ECO will account for the bulk of energy efficiency activity in the first few years.
- The Energy Bill impact assessment states that the Government expects 100% of solid wall insulation (SWI) activity to take place in social housing for the first couple of years, predominantly through ECO. This means that ECO won't be available to underpin Green Deal Finance for SWI in 'able to pay' households during this time. The Government anticipates that by 2018 all solid wall social housing will be insulated. However, it doesn't give details of where funding from social housing providers will come from, given that it expects providers to pay at least 50% of the costs of SWI .
- It was agreed that we need to encourage housing organisations to join the EFPC; discussions to this effect are taking place with the National Federation of Housing Associations.
- With respect to the EFPC call that resources beyond ECO are required to tackle fuel poverty, WB reported that Ed Matthew of E3G is hoping to speak at the September meeting of EFPC.
- The Government will receive around £9bn pa through the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), which is effectively paid for by energy consumers. EFPC supporters are working with Ed's new campaign initiative to advocate the recycling of these proceeds back to consumers in the form of a major energy efficiency retrofit programme.
- TUC have an event on Wednesday 6 July 'What Makes a Good [Green Government](#)' to develop campaign 'asks'
- DA said that Unison was interested in the role of local authorities' co-ordinating energy efficiency measures as their parliamentary research showed that jobs that may be created.
- DA suggested that EFPC consider a Select Committee Inquiry, EDM and Westminster Hall debate.
- NP to check TUC website for material/position on ETS
- Action: WB and NP to pursue NFHA as membership of EFPC
- Action: NP to explore possible parliamentary activities to promote the ECO campaign

2. Hills Fuel Poverty Review

- We need to know who in EFPC has met the DECC review team.
- WB said that Consumer Focus had met the team and fed back that the 2016 date is not up for debate; they insisted the review will be independent to Government and may come up with unpalatable recommendations. They are looking at

- revising the definition of fuel poverty but claimed that this would not be influenced by the level of resources government says is available.
- The team said that their working assumption is that fuel poverty does exist. They are currently pulling together responses from the call for evidence and are working on four areas:
 1. impacts of fuel poverty: health evidence was considered strong;,social impacts less so
 2. behaviours – factors that 'lock' people into fuel poverty, distributional impact
 3. measures and definitions of fuel poverty, e.g. use of thresholds, making the 10% ratio more dynamic, using a combination of indicators
 4. interventions and optimal mixes of policies, e.g. identifying the most cost effective combination of energy efficiency, income and fuel price measures.
 - Consumer Focus urged the team to take into account the costs of cold-related ill health and other wider costs, as well as the direct costs of fuel poverty programmes
 - An interim report is due to be published for Government in October.
 - EFPC members were reminded about the stakeholder event on 18th July.

3. Energy Bill update

- a) The Bill has reached Report stage –date not yet announced.
- b) **Private Rented Sector (PRS)** – LB reported on Huhne's disappointing announcement on minimum energy efficiency (e/e) standards in the PRS. The PRS campaign asked for all rented properties to have a minimum e/e rating of E before letting by 2016. The Government statement only refers to the use of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings without specifying the minimum required. It also only intends to require landlords to implement measures that are available under Green Deal finance and meet the Golden Rule to bring the property up to E before they let it.
- c) The PRS campaign are sufficiently assured that the minimum standard will be E (but concerned that it is not really a minimum standard if no-one is above it) and will now focus on an amendment to raise the standard above E at later dates and to return the deadline to 2016. The latest report of the Committee for Climate Change backs the 2016 deadline. The clause giving local authorities powers to serve improvement notices in 2014 has now disappeared and tenants will simply be able to request 'reasonable' measures.
- d) The PRS campaign is also working hard on measures to prevent retaliatory convictions and is focusing efforts on MPs who signed the EDM.
- e) Bob Smytherman wrote to EFPC to express concerns about the implications of Green Deal for leaseholders living in flats
- f) EFPC members to note Channel 4 Despatches programme on [rogue landlords](#).
- g) **Disconnection and PPM-** WB reported that fuel companies will be allowed to disconnect consumers who fall behind with their Green Deal charges. The recovery of energy bill and Green Deal debt from ppm consumers will be apportioned according to the respective proportions of each element to the total bill. However, this is complicated given that Green Deal will be recovered through electricity ppms, yet

the bulk of the saving will be on gas bills..It was agreed that EFPC need to agree a coalition position on this issue.

- Action: WB to ask Liz Laine of Consumer Focus to contact Bob Smytherman to see if CF can help.
- Action: NP to co-ordinate the drafting of a statement on disconnection and prepayment meters with debt specialists at Consumer Focus and Peter Smith.

4. Rising Fuel Prices – implications for EFPC

- MK attended the National Pensioners Convention annual conference and reported back that rising fuel prices is on the NPC list of issues for the coming year. NPC want to double the winter fuel payment.
- Action: NP to email NPC for a line on their official position.

5. Campaign Planning

- Supporters – need to get housing, local govt and health organisations involved.
- Ideas for discussion included, 'where the future lies' – consider more activity at a local level, using public health legislation, new definitions and targeting areas of multiple deprivation, membership and skills sets, identify top 10 key asks
- EFPC supporters urged to look at IPPR report on the [carbon floor price](#) released today, particularly with respect to predicted impact on fuel poverty.
- DA suggested EFPC liaised with the National Right to Fuel Campaign (NRFC) about joint work.
- It was agreed that we need to get as many people in the room as possible so need to review date planned for August.
- Action: NP to speak with DA about NRFC and email EFPC supporters about August date.
- NP and WB to put together a draft outline for the campaign meeting prior to the meeting and circulate EFPC supporters for comment.