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London Assembly
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Dear Victoria

Assembly report on tackling fuel poverty in London

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2012 regarding the recent Assembly report on tackling fuel poverty in London. As stated in our written evidence, we welcome the London Assembly's Health and Public Services Committee's investigation into fuel poverty and share the Assembly's concern about the effects of fuel poverty on the health and well-being of many vulnerable families in London.

In my borough of Islington we are also working to become a Green Deal provider which we hope will help to tackle fuel poverty.

You requested comments on recommendations 1, 2 and 8; these are as follows:

Recommendation 1: The mapping tool is welcomed but would benefit from a greater degree of granularity. Such is the localised diversity of many London wards that targeting fuel poverty measures at ward level may not be entirely effective as ward level data will tend to miss those in fuel poverty when they live near wealthy people. Data at a lower level would see greater use of the dataset by boroughs, to this end we would welcome a gradual improvement from ward level data to lower layer super output area data (and ideally ultimately Census output area data).

Recommendation 2: I am advised that the London Carbon Action Network has agreed to establish a London Affordable Warmth and Health Forum and welcome this development. The collective expertise of the members of LCAAN is significant and they will bring a lot to the table in terms of planning co-ordinated but locally delivered action to tackle fuel poverty across London. London Councils will promote and support this forum through its officer and member networks.

Recommendation 8: We fully support the development of an affordable warmth strategy for London and recommend that best practice from boroughs, social landlords, health organisations and others is considered when forming the strategy.

The five remaining recommendations are generally welcomed, in particular recommendation 4. With regards to recommendations 3 and 5, there is a potential conflict with the central aim of RE:NEW2 to lever in as much CERT (carbon emissions reduction target) funding as possible. Most fuel poverty is in central London where the least amount of CERT has been historically spent, largely due to the types of housing stock in inner London such as solid walls and blocks of flats. CERT money is more easily spent in outer London but this is much less likely to help with fuel poverty.

Yours sincerely

Catherine West

Cllr Catherine West
Chair of the London Councils Transport and Environment Committee