

FUEL POVERTY (TARGETS, DEFINITION AND STRATEGY) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2019

EXPLANATORY NOTES

THE ACT

Summary

3. The Act contains the following key elements—
 - It enshrines in legislation the Scottish Government’s fuel poverty targets. The primary target is that, by the year 2040, as far as reasonably possible, no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty but that, in any event, the following objectives are met: no more than 5% are in fuel poverty, no more than 1% are in extreme fuel poverty, and the median fuel poverty gap is no more than £250 (in 2015 prices). There is also a 2040 target which applies at the level of local authority areas: the objectives to be met are the same as they are at a Scotland-wide level, but they are to be met with reference to each individual local authority area instead. In addition, there are two interim targets at a national level. There is a target for the year 2030: that no more than 15% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty, no more than 5% are in extreme fuel poverty, and the median fuel poverty gap is no more than £350 (in 2015 prices). There is also a target for the year 2035: that no more than 10% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty, no more than 3% are in extreme fuel poverty, and the median fuel poverty gap is no more than £300 (in 2015 prices).
 - It establishes a new definition of fuel poverty, including how levels of fuel poverty are to be measured. There is also a related definition of extreme fuel poverty. In addition, the fuel poverty gap (which applies to those who are in fuel poverty and measures how deeply they are in it) is defined.
 - It places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to produce a long-term fuel poverty strategy within a year of the Act being brought into force. The strategy will set out how delivery of the fuel poverty targets will be achieved and set out a monitoring framework to oversee progress in meeting the targets.
 - It places a duty on the Scottish Ministers to produce a report every 3 years. This will provide an update on progress being made towards meeting the fuel poverty targets and set out the detail of the plans for the next 3 year period. A duty is also placed on the Scottish Ministers to report to the Parliament on whether or not the 2040 target is met, and also on whether or not the 2040 target in relation to local authority areas is met.
 - It establishes a Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel with responsibility for reporting to the Scottish Ministers on progress towards the fuel poverty targets, the likelihood of meeting them, and the extent to which the drivers of fuel poverty are being addressed.