



Action for Warm Homes

Introducing NEA's Research Team



September 2018

Introduction

NEA believes that policy and practice should be evidence-based and our research seeks to advance the existing body of knowledge on fuel poverty, domestic energy issues and assess the impact of associated policy and practice interventions. NEA's in-house Research Team has over 25 years' combined experience of working in these fields and is strengthened by working closely with colleagues within NEA and with external partners. Over the years, NEA's Research Team has conducted research alongside academic institutions; the EU; central and local governments; community and voluntary sector agencies; consumer groups; housing associations; the health and social care; the entire breadth of the energy sector; the water industry; and private sector product manufacturers and installers. This collective breadth of insight helps to ensure that NEA is the expert voice on behalf of the fuel poor and helps the charity in achieving its vision of no-one living in fuel poverty. The Research Team's principal functions are to:

- *Develop a wide understanding of the changing patterns of fuel poverty, its causes and consequences*
- *Provide information and analysis support to ensure staff and our supporters are up-to-date with current fuel poverty research, relevant policies and statistics*
- *Analyse the role and impact of relevant local, national or EU policy frameworks*
- *Evaluate internal and external projects designed, partly or wholly, to promote domestic energy efficiency and warmer homes, and to identify solutions*
- *Act as a knowledge broker between fuel poverty stakeholders and the academic sector (in the UK and Europe) to strengthen links and collaboration*
- *Interpret and disseminate key insights to contribute to the development of effective policy making and successful delivery on the ground*
- *Support wider efforts to raise awareness of fuel poverty as an issue which can be eliminated with coherent action and promote domestic energy efficiency as the most enduring and effective means of ending fuel poverty.*

NEA's research reports have helped set the policy agenda. More recently, these have included ***Bridging the Gap*** which revealed that over 1 million fuel-poor families in England will not have the cash to meet basic living expenses this winter, and that some families are facing an income shortfall of up to £9,331 per year to cover basic essentials, including energy; ***Understanding Carbon Monoxide risks in households vulnerable to fuel poverty*** investigated the relationship between fuel poverty and carbon monoxide (CO) risk; ***Heat Decarbonisation: potential impacts on social equity and fuel poverty*** examined the approaches, costs and benefits associated with the drive to reduce the carbon impact of domestic heating; and ***Cold Homes and Excess Winter Deaths***, published with E3G, investigated the extent to which excess winter mortality is exacerbated by UK homes not being resilient to the cold.

In the coming year, NEA plans to strengthen our research and evidence to advance our four key advocacy priorities:

- *Helping the worst first & ensuring consistent outcomes for vulnerable households*
- *Enhancing preventative health action*
- *Clean, inclusive growth and innovation*
- *Enhancing co-operation across the nations*

Snapshot of recent projects

The Research Team works on a variety of projects at any one time using social research methods that cross the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Research ranges from primary and secondary research to evaluation and policy analysis. The examples below highlight the diversity of our recent work. Please refer to our website for more information.

- **Under One Roof:** Research commissioned by Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Liverpool City Council to evaluate different approaches of health bodies to address cold-related ill health and support fuel poverty initiatives.
- **Connecting Homes for Health:** Primary research commissioned by Northern Gas Networks (NGN) to identify and assess the impact of a more inclusive health-based criteria for connecting vulnerable households to the gas network and providing gas central heating.

Health



- **Reactive Repair & Replacement Service:** An evaluation of a joint project between Warm Zones CIC and a Gas Distribution Network that provides a rapid response service for vulnerable households who have a gas heating appliance condemned.
- **Making Every Contact Count:** Following a review of disconnection support a good practice protocol for vulnerable customers is being piloted by Northern Gas Networks. Using an action research approach NEA is providing formative evaluation to help shape and inform decisions throughout delivery and the future.

Networks



- **npower/Macmillan evaluation:** Commissioned by npower to examine the impact of the npower Macmillan Fund payment plan and Macmillan's Energy Advice Team among people affected by cancer, including the extent that fuel poverty risk was minimised and wellbeing enhanced.
- **Smart Insights:** Research for SSE to examine energy use among customers that are deaf & the digitally excluded. Insights will be used to inform the future design & delivery of services to vulnerable customers, including the smart meter roll out.

Vulnerability



- **Smart Up:** An EU-funded project with partners from the UK, Spain, Malta, Italy & France that sought to understand the impact of tailored energy advice on the use of smart meters & in-home displays to manage consumption and engage in energy saving behaviour.
- **Energywise:** NEA is a partner to this UK Power Networks, University College London & British Gas project which received Ofgem LCNF funding. It examined the extent of energy shifting and saving that can be facilitated through smart meters, time of use tariffs and energy efficiency among fuel-poor customers.

Smart



For more information on the Research Team and its work please visit:

<http://www.nea.org.uk/research/>

Meet the Team

•Helen has over 15 years of applied social research experience and has worked for NEA since 2001 after completing a BSc (Hons) in Sociology and Social Research at the University of Northumbria. Helen also holds an MSc in Social Research (2008) and MSc in Public Administration (2014). Areas of research interest include social policy and in particular issues relating to poverty, energy and social justice. Helen is experienced in mixed-methods approaches and led the social evaluation of NEA's Health and Innovation Programme. She represents NEA on the Management Board of the University of Manchester-led consortium delivering the EU's Energy Poverty Observatory.

Helen Stockton
Research Manager



•Jamie received her PhD in Anthropology from Durham in 2015, and has an MA in Research Methods in Social Anthropology. She is skilled in the delivery of research projects that use both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry, and has over 6 years of experience in working with vulnerable groups, including migrant communities and individuals with mental health conditions. Jamie's areas of research interest include health inequalities and she is currently working with a Gas Distribution Network to pilot a scheme which will test new, health-based eligibility criteria for connecting vulnerable households to the gas grid.

Jamie-Leigh Ruse
Senior Research &
Policy Officer



• Martin has over 20 years of experience of social research in housing and regeneration. He holds a BA (Hons) in Social Policy and an MPhil by research. Martin has a background in community development and social housing. He has worked as a self employed research consultant, held university research fellowships, and was Assistant Director (Research) at the Northern Housing Consortium. Martin is currently exploring the energy needs of vulnerable people and those with long-term illness. He is also leading on collating the collective insights of the organisation by integrating our policy, research and practice experience.

Martin Wood
Senior Research &
Policy Officer



•After graduating from Durham University with a BA in Sociology, Louise joined Citizens Advice where she undertook research on a range of projects including the private rented sector, welfare support and rural isolation, before working in Citizens Advice's Energy Team where she undertook qualitative research into health and housing referral services and smart meters. Prior to joining NEA, Louise worked in health policy and led on research into community and primary care. Louise is currently working on research into safeguarding vulnerable households disconnected from gas supply and the evaluation of an affordable energy and healthy eating project.

Louise Clanfield
Research & Policy
Officer



•Kelly received an MA in Human Geography Research (2017) from Newcastle University (specialising in the interconnection between Fuel and Food Poverties) and a BA in Human Geography (University of Hull - 2016). Kelly is experienced in delivering research that uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods and her areas of interest include poverty, austerity and social justice. Kelly has led on the Warm and Healthy Homes follow-up evaluation to examine longer-term impacts of energy efficiency interventions on health and well-being and is working on a project that focuses on the energy needs of those living with Dementia and their carers.

Kelly Garlick
Research Assistant

