

General Election 2015: Energy Efficiency and Insulation

Around one third of heat produced by central heating is rapidly lost through the roof, ceiling and walls. This means we lose hundreds of pounds worth of energy every year through our drafty housing. Home insulation could save us that money, make our homes warmer and healthier, and help stop carbon emissions destroying the climate too.

How can I engage with local candidates during the election?

At election time, politicians often make grand promises they have no intention of keeping. We can't believe what they say – but questioning them can let them know there are things we are not prepared to tolerate – now, or after the election. Fuel poverty is one of those things! There are a number of different ways you can make your voice heard during election time. You could:

- attend your local hustings and ask a question,
- ask a question when they are canvassing in your local area,
- write a letter to your local paper,
- write a letter or email to your local candidates.

Local hustings are one of the easiest ways to challenge your candidates and keep them on their toes. Please turn over for a suggested question about what they intend to do about our leaky, draughty homes, and for some extra background information in case you want to challenge their reply. If it's convenient, it can be good to gather some information about your local area or you might want to mention your own situation or a friend's!

QUESTION:

Would you support a program of mass street insulation beginning in areas where many homes are poorly insulated and in poor repair, to replace the scaled down obligations on energy companies, which they don't even meet?

- This year we are anticipating that 12,000 people will die from living in a cold home, this is one of the highest numbers in Europe.
- Currently around 6 million UK households on low incomes are struggling in heat-leaking homes that are impossible to keep warm (Friends of the Earth)
- In an average UK home one third of heat is rapidly lost through the roof, ceiling and walls. This means that a typical poorly insulated home wastes every £1 out of £3 on heating.
- Despite the fact that Sweden is significantly colder than the UK during winter, four times more people in the UK struggle to heat their homes. This is partly because we have double the number of draughty, substandard homes in the UK – 15.9% of homes compared to 8.4% of homes in Sweden (Association for Energy Conservation 2013).
- People living in cold homes are putting extra pressure on the NHS as many people end up in hospital with breathing problems such as pneumonia. It is estimated that illnesses caused by living in a cold home costs the NHS £1.3 billion every year. This could be dramatically reduced if governments fixed the houses that leak heat.
- Not only does insulation bring down the bills, it also reduces mental and physical health problems and saves lives.