



Photo: Mark Kerrison

2019 - 2020

ANNUAL REPORT

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1. WHAT A YEAR!

For millions of people finding money for fuel bills is more of a crisis than ever, in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. More energy is needed when people are stuck at home, while many incomes are reaching rock bottom and debts are mounting up. People are rationing not only heat and electricity but food. Many have found that their grocery bills have increased. One in five families with children have been [going hungry](#) in this wealthy country -- and in poorer parts of the world, famines are under way. Heat, power, and food are essentials for health -- as is good housing. Not accidentally, the poorest communities, and particularly people of colour, are facing the highest death toll, along with older people, especially in the undervalued, under-resourced, underbelly of care, UK "care homes".

This is the horror now being confronted by a groundswell of grassroots people and networks, organising to support our own families and communities and to demand from the government, from politicians, and from businesses, a total reversal of priorities. Health must come first, and an economy that prioritises the market has been shown not to deliver on health. Brutal realities that have long been clear to millions who are fighting over fuel bills, housing, heating, food and inadequate incomes, are now public for the world to see. So is the money that can clearly be found when wanted, for instance for furlough and huge sums to keep businesses afloat. What seemed impossible has proved to be both do-able and essential.


At this moment of clarity, and with so many people and organisations coming together, we have a chance to move away from the deadly energy markets and housing provision that kill [10,000 people a year](#) in cold homes and leave many others with no home at all. And at the same time, as the clock nears midnight, we may have a chance to avert the worst of a climate apocalypse.

2. SUMMARY OF THE YEAR 2019 - 2020

For FPA, as for everyone, 2019-2020 has been a year of responding to emergencies. We have continued and extended our ongoing work supporting people who ask for help in dealing with their energy companies, heat providers or landlords. This support takes many forms, from advice and advocacy to campaigning and bringing together people who are fighting similar or related battles.

Our main focuses this year have been:

- Responding to requests for a fuel poverty perspective on practical measures to mitigate **climate change**, locally, nationally, and internationally, based on our experience on the ground
- Pressing for measures to help with the huge crisis of **unaffordable energy** in the Covid-19 pandemic, including for people on prepayment meters, and for a **green and socially just recovery**
- Continuing the Safe Cladding and Insulation Now (SCIN) campaign for **safe cladding and insulation**, and supporting high-rise residents still living with flammable cladding, or in buildings where cladding and insulation has been removed but not replaced
- Pressing for **energy efficiency retrofits** to be rolled out at scale, while respecting the need for safe, sustainable materials, careful assessment and monitoring, and accountability to residents
- The campaign to ensure that **District Heating**, now being massively expanded in the UK, does not leave residents cold through outages or high prices. Working with residents, with local authorities and others in the District Heating industry, and with BEIS, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Working to get relief from poorly functioning **heat pumps**, and contributing to a BEIS consultation on on heat pumps and “green gas” (“Future support for low carbon heat”)
- Collaboratively researching, developing and exploring our proposal for a **band of free energy** to ensure that everyone can afford to heat their homes, and to keep cool enough in the summer.
- Supporting calls from **pensioners, carers**, and others for an **income sufficient** for a decent standard of living.



3. CLIMATE THE ENDURING EMERGENCY

There have always been two sides to FPA's work - fighting for survival and fighting for a world where we can live in harmony with each other and nature. The fight against poverty and injustice intersects, sometimes in difficult ways, with the battle to limit and mitigate climate change. Yet the two can succeed together. In fact, they can only succeed together.

There is now a very widespread and explicit acceptance that social justice must be a priority of the climate movement. This is partly due to Covid 19, and partly thanks to Black Lives Matter, the Yellow Vests in France, decades of pressure from indigenous-led environmental movements, and the work of people around the world sketching out various forms of Green New Deal which could transform economies. As a result, there are ever-increasing demands on FPA, which has always integrated climate with poverty, and integrated "experts" with grassroots organising, and which has been seeking for many years to resolve potential contradictions as they appear in practice. People organising on climate, whether in meetings or on the streets, are welcoming and seeking out our experience.



3.1 TAKING TO THE STREETS: AUTUMN 2019

In the autumn of 2019 FPA took part in the mass mobilisations against climate change being organised all over the world.

On 20 September we took the SCIN banner reading: “Safe Cladding and Insulation Now!” to the **UK Student Climate Network strike** in London - and had dozens of interested queries on the lines of, “what’s that got to do with climate change?”. Clearly, insulation, a key weapon against carbon emissions, has yet to make it onto many mainstream climate organisers’ agendas.

We also gave out hundreds of our popular little pink [“Pressing Questions” pamphlet, titled “Climate Justice -- at home --](#) and saw people studying them all over the park. And Ruth did a [3 minute interview](#) as part of the “Solutions Zone”, with safe, non-toxic insulation figuring prominently.

Then, during the **Extinction Rebellion's October Uprising**, we joined the Global Justice Rebellion at St James Park and Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, to discuss different demands and battles for survival, especially in the Global South. Although our two planned sessions were cancelled due to police action against the encampment (an action that was later ruled illegal) we had brought to these discussions our more UK-based demands for climate justice (found [here](#)). We shared our experience of battles over housing and heating and the thorny issue of subsidies, carbon taxes and the rising price of fossil fuels. Global Justice Rebellion signed our Open Letter and helped organise for our demonstration on cladding **outside the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, MHCLG** (below, Section 5.1).



3.2 LOCAL CLIMATE INITIATIVES: HEATING, HOUSING, & LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Much important work for the climate is going on at a local level, and FPA has continued to work with these initiatives. In several London boroughs we've been feeding back residents' experiences on housing and heating systems to local groups trying to get their local authorities to act on the climate emergency.

Throughout the autumn we worked with **Sustainable Hackney**, contributing to their "Community Response to Hackney Council's Declaration of a Climate Emergency".

On 2 November at the invitation of **Southwark Extinction Rebellion**, we took part in a big meeting on "Housing and the Climate Crisis". We later contributed to the section on "building efficiency and heating" in their submission to the Southwark Plan.

On 23 November Ruth London served as a specialist at **Brent's Climate (Citizens) Assembly**. This random, representative sample of Brent residents were very focused on looking at what should be done in response to the climate crisis, and there were some great, very concrete, discussions. For an FPA report see [here](#). Brent council published [their report](#) on the assembly in February (2020), and referred to Ruth's contribution.



We're also developing our relationship with Brent's exceptional private tenants' rights organisation, "[Advice4Renters](#)", contributing copies of our MiniGuide to customers' rights, "In trouble with your Energy Company?", meeting in their office, and liaising on policy questions related to improving energy efficiency in privately rented homes.

On 8 February Ruth and Diane took part in the highly successful all-day event [Speak Up for the Climate](#) organised by **Friends of the Earth Lambeth**, and DAWN - Dulwich and West Norwood Climate Coalition. With over 100 people, including many active and inspiring children and 6th formers, this was a lively exchange to which we contributed with a presentation on Housing, Heating, and Climate Justice.

“When Ruth London, Director of Fuel Poverty Action, talked about housing retrofits in relation to improving people’s living conditions – and the moral responsibility for this – it prompted an unusual round of applause and the message stuck.”

Brent Climate Assembly: Recommendations from Assembly members to Brent Council, February 2020

On 15 February Alexa attended the **London Leap** gathering. The 12-15 attendees, including environmental, community and social justice groups, and housing and union organisers, spent the day building a vision of what the transition to a city that works for the majority would look like. Earlier in the year, Ruth had a one-to-one with the London Leap organisers and also contributed to the project. Kennedy Walker and Sakina Sheikh from Platform published [a short report](#), ‘London Leap: Just Transition Values’ based on these conversations.

Ruth has been involved in a series of **Islington workshops** organised by GreenSCIES, Green Smart Community Integrated Energy Systems, gathering community input in working towards a local smart energy district. And at an event hosted by environmental charity ‘Possible’ in February on the decarbonisation of heat, we raised a proposal for thermal imaging in the hands of Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs), which is to be pursued post lockdown.

We’ve also taken part in discussions on the potential local provisions of a Green New Deal, for instance three of our members were panelists at a Labour for a Green New Deal session on ‘COVID, Housing and the Green Deal’, and we contributed to the work of Green New Deal UK in setting up the Build Back Better coalition.



4. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SURVIVAL AND RECOVERY

The Covid pandemic came to a UK where over a fifth of the population, and over a third of children were already living in poverty, and many safeguards, from benefits to services, had been cut or even lost. Fuel poverty, however defined, was already a crisis for many families and single people, was proving particularly dangerous for pensioners and disabled people. In September, we had submitted a response to the government's [Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for England](#), challenging the foundations of their plans (see below, "Consultation responses").

But Covid made everything much worse.

Early in the Covid crisis the government and energy suppliers reached an [agreement designed to prevent people being cut off supply](#) when illness or job loss made it impossible for them to pay their bills or to top up their prepayment meters. Our first action in response to this situation was to widely publicise the agreement. We followed this with a [petition to challenge it where it falls short](#). An ad hoc working group of Frances S, Frances L, Rhiannon and Ruth picked up work on this and related issues throughout the spring and summer.

The petition has had some good media coverage (below) and has helped shape the public debate.

- [Evening Standard](#)
- [Inside Housing](#)
- [The Ecologist](#)
- [Morning Star](#)
- [Left Foot Forward](#)

The first demand of the petition was immediate free credit for all prepayment meter users so that they are not left in the cold while trying to negotiate with suppliers, at a time when they could be ill or otherwise in crisis. Arrangements for extra credit to be added have in many cases been working, but provide only temporary respite from what suppliers refer to as “self-disconnection”.

In the pandemic, prepayment meters have the additional disadvantage that people who are shielding may not be able to get to shops to top up their keys or cards, and may not have help from people they can trust to do this for them. We are heartened to learn that at least one energy supplier(Bulb) is systematically moving people onto credit meters. Suppliers commonly impose prepayment meters on people who do not want them as an alternative to disconnection. They cost more to run, and when you cannot pay it, your heat, light, fridge, or gas just click off.

But even for customers with credit meters, the agreement was far too limited, with a strong emphasis on suppliers lending credit, which will have to be paid back. We also pressed for companies to advertise the help available. Instead, some have been obstructionist. For example, in May, British Gas was putting off callers who told them they could not use their supply. If their problem was lack of funds, a recorded voice referred them to their local authority for help. This was in defiance of the agreement, and after a call from a member of FPA who queried it, we found that the recording had been changed.

Not everyone is covered by the gas and electric suppliers’ agreement. We have pressed for the agreement to be **extended to users of District Heating**. District Heating (DH), also known as “heat networks”, provides heat rather than gas or electricity and is not governed by Ofgem. DH users were excluded from the agreement. We raised their situation with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and with ADE, the Association for Decentralised Energy, (the leading trade association for the industry). We also took this issue to the lively group of women in the DH industry, Divas, which brings together women working for different heat providers, the Heat Trust, and others. The newly formed Heat Networks Industry Council (HNIC) did finally complete [an agreement](#) with the government mirroring BEIS’s agreement with suppliers of gas and electricity, but it only applies to the limited number of schemes that are covered by HNIC.

Furthermore, the HNIC agreement missed a crucial issue -- the **need to cover extra electricity costs for residents when DH systems break down** (see below) and people are forced to heat both their homes and their water with direct electricity. In this situation, the cost of heating can soar. This is an issue that we have continued to raise in many forums, but one that there has been a marked reluctance to address. Finally, we brought it up yet again at a meeting organised by the British Standards Institution to discuss how to specify technical and customer service standards for District Heating. This time we were offered a discussion with the head of heat network policy at BEIS. District heating users who have suffered from this crisis are helping to supply further evidence of it. We are hopeful that BEIS will now be able to organise some relief for people who otherwise could be left in the cold, without hot water, and with nowhere to turn to for help if their heat networks fail this coming winter.

Meanwhile, in August, we responded to an **Ofgem consultation** on how present licensing agreements for gas and electricity suppliers can be tightened to ensure people get help when they need it, and to prevent so-called “self-disconnections” and “self-rationing” by people with prepayment meters. This consultation precedes the Covid emergency, but is made all the more urgent by it. We pressed for help to be guaranteed and well advertised, rather than more monitoring of how people use their supply, which can be both impractical and intrusive. Ofgem are considering what should happen when the problem goes deeper than a temporary cash flow problem -- many people simply cannot afford the cost of keeping warm. We believe that, as with water, this basic and essential service can and must be maintained in a crisis. For our response, a team composed of Ruth, Frances L, Frances S and Peter McCann proposed a series of more long-term solutions, and crucially, pressed for “additional support credit” to continue to be provided until further support is in place so people can cover their reasonable costs.

We also raised with Ofgem the plight of customers whose heat network goes down, those whose insulation and cladding has been removed, and those whose heat pumps are inadequate. In all such cases they are likely to need exceptional amounts of electricity, which the regulated electricity industry should respond to.

“When it starts getting darker and colder in September it will start feeling like Christmas. Christmas scares me because I know the heater will be on for a long time.”

Hyder Ali Pirwany, aged 79, Devon.

A good proportion of our work in response to the Covid crisis has been in **collaboration with other organisations and networks.**

- We are active members of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, and helped to shape the Coalition’s petition and lobbying in preparation for the coming hard winter, where, in the [Coalition’s words](#), “over 200,000 households are set to fall into fuel poverty as the economy struggles to recover from lockdown.” We were particularly glad that the petition, press release and statements to government reflect our concern that debt relief should in fact be relief: “not deferral of payment”
- We are also members of Build Back Better, a very broad network of organisations working to ensure that during and after the pandemic social provisions, housing, and climate measures are more adequate, and more equitable, than they have been up till now.
- We regularly liaise on these issues with friends at Repowering London, Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO), the PCS union, Advice 4 Renters, the TUC LESE Pensioners’ Network, and in academia, and we have submitted proposals to the Labour Party and the Green Party in response to their requests.
- We have supported the call for a Care Income, as proposed by the Global Women’s Strike and by the Green New Deal for Europe as a key part of their [Covid strategy](#). This income would go to the people doing unpaid the crucial work of caring for their families, and their communities,
- We have met with [People’s Energy](#), and [support](#) their [petition](#) for a government grant fund to make sure people can get financial support. We believe that suppliers who benefit from such a deal with the government, should meet certain conditions, including no dividends while they are receiving public funds. There are many suppliers who have for years left people to die from the cold, forced prepayment meters on people (sometimes illegally), lobbied against renewable energy, and benefited from subsidies of fossil fuels. They cannot continue along the same tracks. But with the energy market failing to deliver, a government fund is now a matter of life and death for low-income households..
- In May we submitted a proposal to the BEIS Parliamentary Select Committee suggesting that they investigate how to guarantee access to energy, and making a series of practical suggestions that could move us towards this goal. We flagged up to others with personal experience the opportunity to submit such proposals, and some did so.

A thermal image of a two-story house at night. The image uses a color scale where red and yellow indicate warmer areas and blue indicates cooler areas. The roof and upper walls show higher temperatures (red/yellow), while the windows and lower walls are cooler (blue).

5. ENERGY EFFICIENCY: WARM AND SAFE?

Energy efficiency in the home, beginning with homes that are well designed, in good repair, and well insulated, is critical to keeping warm in the winter and cool in summer. It is also indispensable for mitigating climate change. Unmistakably a win-win, it is not necessarily as straight-forward as it first appears. Everything depends on the materials used, the suitability and execution of retrofits chosen, and accountability to residents.

5.1 CLADDING: THREE YEARS ON FROM GRENFELL

On 17 October we delivered to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) a second Open Letter demanding safe cladding and insulation --

Following up on our first such letter exactly one year before. In both cases, the letters were initiated as part of our SCIN campaign: **“Safe Cladding and Insulation Now”**. This time, the letter had over 80 weighty signatures collected by Ruaidhri in just over a week, including six national unions, nine MPs from three parties, and many organisations, all furious that the commitments made on replacing flammable cladding had not been met. And furious, also, that programmes to install insulation have been cut by over 90%, while thousands die each year from the cold.

The lively speak-out included residents affected by dangerous cladding, poor housing and missing insulation, and supporters from the NEU, All African Women’s Group, Biofuelwatch, the Global Women’s Strike, Sustainable Hackney, XR Youth, Lambeth Pensioners Action Group and the National Pensioners Convention. Grenfell MP Emma Dent Coad delivered the letter, as MHCLG had refused to meet residents (in the middle of the climate rebellion)! The event had in fact been timed to coincide with Extinction Rebellion’s October Uprising to enable climate activists to lend their support to demands, like insulation, that reduce carbon emissions while also making it possible for people on low incomes to keep warm and bring down bills. In response, there was strong support and presence from Global Justice Rebellion.

For a fuller report and the letter itself, see [here](#).

Progress towards safe cladding and insulation since then has been painfully slow.

As of 31 July 2020 Grenfell-style ACM cladding had still only been removed from under half of the affected buildings, and only one third had completed remediation. The figures for local authority and housing association homes are better than for private blocks, with just over half having completed remediation and 72% removal. But all of these figures are dwarfed by the huge numbers of homes which still have other combustible materials on their external walls. The parliamentary Communities and Local Government Select Committee estimates that there are 2,000 such buildings. Many of these buildings also have further issues like inadequate fire breaks (34%), and combustible or missing insulation (30%).

On 11 March 2020 the Chancellor announced in the Budget a £1 billion fund for the removal and replacement of **unsafe non-ACM cladding systems**. Other combustible cladding - and other materials on external walls - are banned for new buildings but not existing ones. The government is currently consulting on including lower buildings, from 11m high. The parliamentary committee estimates the cost of needed works to prevent another such fire at £15 billion, and suggests that "Any residential building where works have not commenced by December 2020 should be subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order".

Residents' mental health is still in pieces from living in flammable buildings, and many are also paying a high price financially, e.g. for 24-hour fire watch services. As the number of buildings facing re-cladding continues to expand, with residents fighting for the inclusion of lower buildings and different types of flammable cladding, we're continuing to raise the issue of **homes being cold when cladding has been taken off**. And we've helped get this included in others' [campaigns](#) (for example this campaign from Axe the Housing Act), .

We've continued to support residents of Pendleton high rise estate in Salford, who have lived for three years in buildings that have Grenfell-style cladding, and replicate all the same other fire dangers as those found in Grenfell itself. Not even the faulty fire doors have been fixed. The cost to these social housing tenants' mental health has been disastrous, and made worse by the social landlord. The Coronavirus lockdown has been especially hard in these unsafe buildings. Landlord Pendleton Together ordered some tenants indoors when they spent more than half an hour in their garden -- and sent letters threatening them with the police or implications for their tenancies. All of this has been highlighted by Graeme Langton, who was elected Chair of his tenants and residents association but was removed from the post by the landlord; he has been fighting on building safety issues for years, and is now an FPA member. We rounded up some support for the residents including from their MP, Rebecca Long-Bailey, and Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People. If nothing else, Pendleton Together should know that their treatment of people with mental health issues is being watched.

In the meantime, we have continued to have a presence at Grenfell silent walks and protests, and have supported the development of a promising new play: "Dictating to the Estate."

Graeme Langton from Pendleton, Salford, speaks before delivery of the Open Letter



Photo: Mark Kerrison

5.2 INSULATION RETROFITS AND FUTURE HOMES STANDARDS

There are many organisations trying to get widespread and effective retrofits of insulation and other energy efficiency measures, and much of our work has been in conjunction with others.

As always our contributions are based on the experience of residents we have worked with or consulted. We have sought to provide a platform for those like the Salford residents, and the determined fighters in the cavity wall insulation victims' organisation [CIVALLI](#), who are suffering from retrofits that turned out to be disastrous. CIVALLI have highlighted how, far from solving their problems, insulation has left their homes overwhelmed with damp and in some cases uninhabitable. Guarantees have proved worthless.

The devastating consequences of **badly chosen, badly implemented retrofits** have been widely acknowledged, and led to a major government investigation, with the Bonfield Review published in 2016. But the conclusions of that review are only now beginning to be implemented. Under the new procedures homes must be assessed before work starts, and retrofits should be certified as appropriate, planned, supervised, and checked. These new PAS 2035 standards apply to refurbishments with ECO funding but are not yet generally established, even for retrofits with government funding.

The climate movement, local organisers, tenants and residents organisations, and political parties are often ill-informed about these issues, and have pressed for insulation and other energy inefficiency measures without taking the potential outcomes into account. We have worked, where we can, to fill this gap and raise awareness, and we are frequently asked to speak or provide written materials on energy efficiency and/or heating by groups that are working on local or national demands. We are not experts but can pass on people's experience to different localities, and help make space for them to speak.

To improve what we can offer, we have also been advancing our understanding of the issues involved in, for instance, ventilation or heat pumps, by attending webinars offered by those working in the relevant industries. The availability of these events to a wider public has been a surprising side-effect of the Covid-19 pandemic

It was encouraging when in July 2020 the government announced a £2 billion fund for retrofitting homes, plus £50 million for a pilot to explore new ways of carrying out retrofits of social housing. The programme is currently for seven months. Like many others campaigning on fuel poverty and energy efficiency, we are pressing for this start to be converted to a long term commitment -- and for it to include effective safeguards.

Following the announcement we discussed with **renters' organisations** and advisers how to ensure that government funding - aimed at homeowners and landlords - does not bypass them. We met with Andrew Warren from the British Energy Efficiency Federation, and repeatedly with E3G ("strategists on the political economy of climate change"), to thrash out what the funding will mean in practice and how to secure the ongoing commitment needed to get the decimated retrofitting industry up and running at the scale required by the climate and fuel poverty crises. We posed Parliamentary Questions. We were quoted extensively in national and local press on the need for government retrofit funding to be sustained and well designed, and we spoke on the subject to online meetings organised by Labour for a Green New Deal and by the London Green Party.

Despite government assurances that “quality” will be “at the heart of the new £2 billion green homes grants”, we remain very worried about the shortage of **experienced, accredited tradespeople** to do the work, the short time frame, lack of ongoing commitment, ambiguity about what materials are safe, and the fact that new standards are not yet in place. It is also deeply discouraging that, at the same time as initiating the retrofit programme, the government is proposing a deeply flawed [Future Homes Standard](#) for new-build homes. The proposed new standard leaves residents in danger of poor ventilation and overheating; falls down on monitoring and enforcement mechanisms; and leaves the door open for further dependence on fossil fuels, “offset” by solar panels. It would also prevent local authorities from imposing higher standards locally. To meet energy efficiency targets, **thousands of homes built now would need retrofitting in the near future**. Yet making a new home genuinely zero-carbon at the outset is around [five times cheaper](#) than retrofitting it later, and will almost always reduce residents’ energy bills as well.

As we enter our new year, we are planning on how to move forward on all of these issues, beginning with a series of online events under the title **“Making Green Come True”**. Focusing as always on the gap between what is promised or advertised, and what actually happens on the ground, these events will be based on the experiences of residents in both older and new-build housing, and will offer a chance to explore and debate the issues with heating and housing “experts”.

“FPA contributes the information that tenants need to challenge landlords – private, housing associations and local authorities – to demand things such as insulation, and sustainable heating which will not only provide more comfort but cut bills and carbon emissions.”

Sandra McLeod, Sustainable Hackney

6. DISTRICT HEATING

"FPA have been amazing and very informative in helping with the heating issues I am facing. I don't know what I would have done without them!"

Miss Lewis, Peabody tenant, Phoenix Works, Tower Hamlets

6.1 Backing up residents in crisis with District Heating

In 2016 we became involved with a fight over the District Heating scheme on the Myatts Field North estate in Lambeth, and in 2017 published a [comprehensive report](#) on that disaster. Since then, we have been a resource point for residents in trouble with their communal heat and hot water, and, conversely, for journalists, and bodies like the CMA, and BEIS. **District Heating (DH), also known as "heat networks"**, is like central heating for a whole block, estate, or neighbourhood. If well-designed and run it can be reliable and effective. It can make heat much more affordable and greatly increase residents' warmth and health. If based on renewable energy sources, as is beginning to be the case, it can be crucial to cutting carbon emissions. But in too many cases -- new estates as well as old -- it is badly designed, badly maintained, badly administered, and overpriced. And residents on a DH estate cannot switch. We have been doing all we can to support their many fights for reliable, affordable heat and hot water.

In addition to estates from Southwark, Hillingdon and Lambeth that we have been working with for years, we were contacted this year by residents from two estates in Tower Hamlets, the private New Festival Quarter, and a nearby estate, Phoenix Works, which houses tenants of Peabody Housing Association. We have worked closely with both over the past few months. New Festival

Quarter residents, as leaseholders, have faced appalling bills for badly managed installations and maintenance of their equipment. The Peabody tenants have faced extremely high tariffs for their heat, contrary to promises when they accepted the flats. They have succeeded in halving their tariff -- a great achievement - but are still waiting for refunds on earlier overcharging, and better control of their heating to cut costs and prevent waste.

In May 2020 we hosted a **Zoom call for residents** from six estates with problematic DH. The highlight of this call was a presentation by Southwark leaseholder Murat Kaya and his lawyer Josef Cannon of Cornerstone Barristers on how they managed to win nearly £4,000 repayment from Southwark Council after work that he had had to pay for led only to more and more outages. We also heard from residents in three other boroughs, and finally from Rhiannon Hughes, from Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations, which has for years been supporting tenants through a nightmare of outages.

This was the first such pan-London meeting since 2017 when FPA first brought DH users together in a room. The Zoom call helped build new relationships, and several residents groups are now in discussion with Cornerstone Barristers to see how **legal cases** can be brought. While District Heating remains unregulated, normal landlord and tenant law, consumer law, and contract law should be applicable. So far, this has proved very difficult to enforce, partly due to the costs of bringing a case. The result is that District Heating has been essentially lawless -- a situation we are determined to change.

Work has continued most intensively In Southwark, where together with SGTO we have been supporting residents wrestling with the problems of old and decaying pipework and a local authority that, starved of resources, is constantly rushing from one breakdown to another with no lasting solution.

For an account of this year's organising in Southwark see Appendix 1.

Finally, in August, we contributed a section on dealing with heating system problems, including both District Heating and heat pumps, to the fantastic new Tower Blocks UK online resource, [Fix My Block](#). This, too, will help give tenants the power to challenge the intolerable costs and unreliability of their service.

“FPA have supported me throughout my case by highlighting my situation to gather support. Now having won my case I attend their events to share my success & hopefully pass on information to others.”

Murat Kaya, leaseholder who won a case against Southwark council on costs of his District Heating.

6.2 Contributing to policy on District Heating

As in other years we have contributed actively to policy discussions and debates on heat networks on a national, london-wide, and local level.

There's a small light at the end of the tunnel in the form of movement towards regulation of the **District Heating industry**. Regulation will not deal with many of the main problems, caused by the way DH is financed, planned, sized, and maintained in the UK, but it will be a step forward. The government is now consulting on regulation which they say would lead to greater transparency and options for redress if things go wrong, and would make all networks carbon neutral by . . . 2050. FPA submitted a [detailed response](#) to the **BEIS consultation** (1 May 2020), based on our experience on estates in London and beyond, and on detailed consultation with residents, several of whom contributed to our response..

FPA worked hard last year to submit concrete evidence of how District Heating often works in practice to inform the Mayor's consultation on the new London Plan. We were disappointed that despite an appearance of listening to objections, the Plan in the end was basically unchanged and did not impose appropriate conditions on new heat networks. Along with Just Space and other groups FPA protested; [our letter](#), submitted 5 February, was a bid to prevent Londoners being left in the cold. This complaint however has been superseded by the Secretary of State roundly rejecting the London Plan as a whole, and in effect demanding that it be re-written from scratch. The government has asked the mayor to reduce his control over housing developments, and to remove residents' right to a ballot on regeneration of their estates. In contrast to the government's direction, we believe that in general more, not less, local authority control and accountability are needed over both housing and heating standards. This would help ensure that new homes are warm, that heating is effective and affordable, and that people's vital support networks are maintained.

With the severe heat of summer 2020, we made contact with residents whose heat networks have caused them problems in the past from **overheating**. Heat networks commonly put out heat from the pipes all summer, as the heating is linked in with the hot water system which cannot be turned off. We put residents from three estates in touch with a Financial Times journalist who did a [substantial report](#) on the issue. We plan to continue to campaign on this issue, as it is likely to become [still more lethal](#) in years to come.

As mentioned in Section 4 above we have taken up the issue of district heating users needing exceptional amounts of electric power when they are suffering a heat network outage. We are pressing hard to get some protection in place before this winter.

Since March, Ruth London has been taking part in Divas -- an informal and amicable network of "Women in District Heating" that has otherwise included only women employed in the industry. Ruth has sought to bring in the perspective of women using District Heating. This has been welcomed, and Divas has been informative and helpful to our work, for instance on the issues of protection and compensation. We continue to get help and advice, as well, from others inside the industry. It informs our campaigning, and sometimes enables us to offer very specific advice to people with technical or contractual problems.

"Ruth and colleagues at Fuel Poverty Action consistently raise the problems of heat network consumers, providing very valuable insight and constructive advice on how regulation should be designed to ensure heat network customers get improved service in the future regime."

Arran Mornin, Head of Heat Networks Policy, Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

7. HEAT PUMPS

Heat pumps, which employ electricity to gather and use the heat present in sources like the air, the ground, or a river, are a very promising new technology. But like District Heating, they have in the UK been subject to unskilled, unmonitored, and often disastrous installation and commissioning, which make the reality very far from the promise.

In July 2020, having taken part in wide consultation on the issues involved, we submitted [our response](#) to the **BEIS consultation on the “Future of Low Carbon Heat”**, including heat pumps, and “green gas”. We wrote:

Like heat networks, heat pumps are entirely dependent on appropriate design, installation, commissioning and maintenance if they are to work properly. Instead, to date, thousands of residents have lived with installations that fail to keep them warm, but destroy their quality of life. If not installed by well-trained workmen, the noise alone can be overwhelming. Some models, even if correctly installed, have fans running constantly. For this reason, we have found that heat pumps have a very bad name among people we work with, for example on social housing estates

We go on to offer a page of recommendations on **“how might consumer protection risks be mitigated”** and how the industry could be made accountable to the public and the people who use it. We also question the amount of funding, its timing and the proposed voucher scheme, that threaten to undermine the potential of low-carbon heat investment.

At the same time, we have been working with tenants of the high rise blocks in **Pendleton, Salford** on the heat pump problems that have added to their long list of crises (see above, re cladding). Heat pumps that were put in several years ago when flats were refurbished have never worked properly. Some tenants have found themselves paying £60 to £70 per week for their energy, when a properly working heat pump should cost only around £1 a day. Tenants went to Pendleton Together with the issues when they first came up, and the problems were even highlighted in a BBC Ripoff Britain documentary three years ago. But, unbelievably, some people are still living with the same situation now. With the combustible cladding finally coming off the blocks, tenants with no adequate heating could have a dangerously cold winter.

With one of the affected tenants, Frances from our team is working to find out exactly what is wrong with the heat pumps so that we have the information to press for a solution through all available channels.

"I don't put the heating on at all. It costs me around £1000 a year just for washing pots and having a shower. After years of getting no answers and no help some people have just given up and go without heating."

Eddie Farrell, Malus Court, Pendleton,
Salford

8. ENERGY FOR ALL: TURNING PRICING RIGHT-SIDE UP



When the UK went into coronavirus lock-down in March 2020, FPA went to work demanding immediate energy bill relief above and beyond what the UK government had offered (see Section 4 above). But we also discussed how the pandemic and the looming recession created an opportunity for transformative energy pricing changes -- and made such changes urgent. One thing we all need is security -- and for many, if you have to pay for something it isn't secure. We decided to revisit our 'Warm Floor' (now Energy for All or e4a) idea and explore the potential for a fully fledged campaign for a basic level of energy to be free..

FPA had been floating the e4a idea across the UK and Europe for over a year. In 2019, Ruth and Alexa brought the idea to Brussels for the Right to Energy Forum (February and June), Alexa brought the idea to Bristol for an Extinction Rebellion festival (March). Gianluca brought it to a conference in Barcelona for Right to Energy (November 2019), and throughout the winter we took it to various talks, workshops and conferences, continuing to raise it when they all went online.

We also made the proposal to the team working on the Green New Deal for Europe. While FPA have taken part in discussions about the Green New Deal in the UK, we have contributed most significantly to the European version. The Green New Deal for Europe takes the form of a detailed report or ["Blueprint"](#) which was submitted to the EU's Vice President. This report was the product of intensive discussion all over the continent, and FPA were party to these discussions throughout the autumn of 2019. In the end, the Blueprint is more decided than we have so far been ourselves: "One of the simplest ways to achieve this [eliminate energy poverty] while reducing energy use across the continent is to introduce an energy allowance. All households would benefit from an amount

of free energy up to a certain point necessary to satisfy essential needs: heating and cooking. Beyond that, the price would rise steeply, creating a powerful incentive for households to conserve energy. (4.3.3.) .

Against this background, at the beginning of lockdown, Caroline Lucas's Green Party office contacted us asking for more information about e4a. We were already at work on moving this proposal up our campaigning agenda. Between the Green Party working group, and conversations we were having as part of Building Back Better, it was becoming clear that politicians, campaign groups, and people facing poverty were showing an appetite for a real alternative to the UK's backwards energy pricing system. One motivation, for many, is to end the injustice that people who use less energy end up paying relatively more per unit while those who use more pay less.

An e4a working group formed, and met regularly in May, June and July to prepare for the next stage of e4a. It set up Zoom calls with FPA friends and supporters who we're working with on the ground, and who would be directly affected by pricing changes. We invited people from the Safe Cladding and Insulation Now campaign, from our work on District Heating in various housing estates, unions, pensioners groups, Crossroads Women's Centre, tenants and residents associations, and more. Over the course of two Zoom calls in June, over 20 people listened to Ruth's e4a description and discussed the ins and outs of the idea. We heard that universality was an important principle, that people thought it was important to connect e4a directly to renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, that energy allowances should reflect household size, and that people generally thought this was an important and necessarily transformative campaign idea, which they would be willing to support.

"TUC LESE Pensioners' Network support everyone has the right to energy - enough to cover their basic everyday needs. This amount of energy would be FREE or at a very low costs. People who use a lot of energy, way beyond their actual needs would have to pay a lot more and that would help cover the basic needs for everyone else.

The high price only kicks in over a certain amount, like income tax. We must unite to Campaign for FREE/AFFORDABLE energy. Those living alone who need more energy because of their age, health or vulnerability should receive extra energy as well as support

TUC LESE Pensioners' Network support and thank Fuel Poverty Action for their continuous campaigning."

Ron Douglas (Chair) and / Linda Richards (Secretary), TUC LESE Pensioners' Network

Following the Zoom meetings, we circulated an online survey in order to reach more people and to continue to consult on the e4a idea. The [10-minute speech](#) Ruth gave at the beginning of the Zoom call was uploaded to YouTube to give survey respondents the context they needed to feed back on the idea. They were then asked to answer 10 questions over Survey Monkey. The survey was sent to 57 people and 40 responded. The results showed (see Appendix 2 for full results):

1. Most understood and agreed with idea in principle
2. Strong push to include sustainable energy (eg. solar panels)
3. Highlighted there should be distribution based on household size & income
4. In regards to source of extra funds, pretty equal and flat response

Previously, when we brought the idea of e4a to meetings and events we wanted to see if people supported the idea in principle. Now we wanted to work with quantitative analysts to determine how the costs of a basic energy allowance would be covered, and work through some of the difficult decisions involved in narrowing down our policy idea. The difficult decisions included:

- Where would the basic level of energy be set, and how much would people pay when using more than that amount?
- How to make sure the new tariff benefits people who need more energy than most
- How to pair with energy efficiency measures and renewable and/or local or communal energy sources
- How to ensure a government subsidy doesn't go to fossil fuel companies

We set up meetings with Michael Pugh of Basic Income Conversation, and several quantitative analysts, including:

- David Gordon and Ruzanna Chitchyan at Bristol University
- Adrienne Buller, Commonwealth think tank
- Emily Shaw, an energy market researcher

Work with these quantitative partners is ongoing. We are now starting discussions with Toby Bridgeman of the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE). Together, we have identified some of the challenges of this research including the need to consider analysis of the scheme's potential impact on the climate, as well as on people's ability to keep warm. Next steps include discussing the results of the quantitative analysis with other organisations, in one-to-one conversations.



9. PENSIONERS PERSIST

On 27 November Diane and Ruth took part in the **National Pensioners Convention's** annual event marking the statistics on last year's "**excess winter deaths**". At 23,200 the winter deaths statistics were down from the previous year's huge figure. One third are conventionally estimated to be due to cold homes. It was a wet but lively demo taking a coffin to Downing St. Our "Cold Homes Kill" banner and chants enlivened it a lot. And it was a good chance to catch up with other pensioners we've worked with and meet new people.

On 3 December Ruth spoke at the regular meeting of **TUC LESE Pensioners' Network**. This was a good, sizeable meeting and very enthusiastic, with an excellent speaker on transport as well. It has led to some welcome and much needed donations and affiliations and strengthened our ongoing relationship with an important network of active, experienced people. However, plans for a follow-up FPA session on housing at their next conference were cancelled due to Covid, which has affected pensioners' organising more than most.

In March, the **Women's Working Party of the National Pensioners Convention** published an article by Diane and Frances S on "Action for a greener, fairer energy future", in their newsletter, The Exchange.

Digital technology is a real barrier for many people of pension age, including several active FPA members. It remains a priority for us to ensure that even those of us who struggle with the tech, or don't have access to it, can be heard and fully taken into account. A key lynchpin in this is **Ellen Lebethe**, an FPA member who chairs Lambeth Pensioners Action Group, and is Vice President of the National Pensioners Convention.

10. INTERNATIONAL

“Fuel Poverty Action’s contribution to the work of the Green New Deal for Europe campaign was vital — both in mapping the root causes of fuel poverty, and in helping to chart a path forward.”

Pawel Wargan, Campaign Coordinator,
The Green New Deal for Europe

FPA is strongly UK based but draws inspiration and experience from people elsewhere, especially in Europe, who are working on a similar agenda. This year,

In September and October 2019 we contributed to the housing section of Green New Deal for Europe’s Blueprint for a just transition with detailed stipulations on housing construction practices and accountability to residents (their section 2.4.1) as well as on Energy for All (see above, Section 8).

In November 2019 we were invited to a two day conference against ending energy and fuel poverty. Gianluca went. The conference was co-hosted by Enginyeria Sense Fronteres, Nuevo Modelo Energético, Alianca Contra La Pobreza Energética and the Rosa Luxembourg Institute. It was an informative couple of days of learning from European and Latin American organisations fighting fuel poverty and seeing how their struggles aligned with our own. We developed relationships with European contacts.

in July 2020 we were asked again to meet with them and a Belgian energy poverty group to discuss and advise them on Prepayment Meters as they were under threat of getting them.

In August the favour was returned when they advised us on the issue of disconnections and how they got them banned in Catalonia.

Throughout the year we have helped define policy in the Europe-wide Right to Energy Coalition (R2E), a European network working on issues of pricing, taxes, fossil fuel subsidies, energy efficiency, and protection for fuel poor people as prices rise.

We are currently getting involved in an initiative related to retrofits for COP26.

11. FINANCE REPORT

Despite our lack of core funding, we are keeping our heads above water, because the vast majority of our work has been done on a voluntary basis by our members. This huge non-monetary donation has in fact increased greatly this year, as more people have got involved and those already active have increased their time commitment. Our treasurer, Phil, reports below:

At the start of the year we had £5,576, we finished with £7,388.

Spending

We spent £1027, £784 of which was worker wages, the remaining £243 on admin, advertising and photo costs.

Donations

We had £3210 of income, most of which was from private donations including £500 from Slough Unite, and £700 from the British Pensioners and Trade Union Association. For the first time this year we've started getting donations via our website, which add up to £324.

Fundraising

Our most consistent support in recent years has come from Edge Fund, a grant-making body which supports efforts to achieve social, economic and environmental justice – and which gives those they help a say in where the money goes. FPA have taken part in this process, for instance attending their virtual gathering and AGM in July. This year we won a very welcome £500 emergency COVID grant from Edge Fund in May which helped with the much intensified workload at that time. We thank them!

Elsewhere, we continue to struggle. In January we put a lot of work into an application for funding for community climate work from the national lottery.

Our work fit the criteria precisely, but unfortunately we didn't win a grant. They said it was a strong application and that we were very close! We will, as they suggested, try again in the next round.

Savings

There have been some savings this year now that we're not using much meeting space! Last year we spent £1000 on venue hire and £200 on printing, this year has been much lighter on those things. The main saving clearly has been not paying workers this year.

Outgoings

Income

Income	Amount
Private or small donations	1209
Grant (Edge Fund)	500
Large donations (Trade Unions)	1500
	£3209

Outgoings

Outgoing	Amount
Worker wages	784
Food for meetings	40
Advertising/Photos	70
Admin, Stationary	133
	£1027

Emma Dent Coad MP presents Open Letter on cladding and insulation at MHCLG



Photo: Mark Kerrison

AT A GLANCE

Consultation responses

[Response to consultation on the Government's Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for England](#) – September 2019

We do not engage with the definition of fuel poverty proposed. Instead, we propose a strategy based on high standards for all, as opposed to ever-increasing means-testing; adequate incomes as opposed to cuts in benefits, pensions and wages; support for genuinely renewable energy and community energy programmes; street by street insulation programmes; and tariffs that promise security for those least able to pay. We believe the draft Strategy fails to address the ways in which many specific government policies force up energy prices or bring down incomes and housing standards.

[Response to BEIS consultation: Heat Networks: Building a Market Framework](#) June 2020

People from many District Heating housing estates, and some experts from inside the industry as well, contributed to FPA's response to the government's consultation on a "Market Framework" for District Heating. This BEIS inquiry prominently included questions about how to regulate the industry to protect consumers.

[Response to Labour Party Green Recovery Consultation](#) - June 2020

In the context of Labour concerns about employment and regional development, this looks at specific FPA Policy Proposals for a green recovery from COVID-19, including energy efficient homes, sound heating systems, renewable energy, an affordable pricing structure, and a care income.

[Response to Future Support for Low Carbon Heat Consultation \(BEIS\)](#) July 2020

We offer recommendations on how the provision of heat pumps could be made accountable to users to ensure that the technology is suitably selected, installed, and maintained. We question the amount of funding, proposed, its timing and the proposed voucher scheme, that threaten to undermine the potential of low-carbon heat investment. We also question the use of "green gas" for purposes of domestic heating.

[Response to Ofgem's Self-disconnection and self-rationing final proposals – statutory consultation](#) - August 2020

We support Ofgem's proposals designed to prevent people being cut off from their gas and electricity supplies for lack of funds, but press for them to go further, to prohibit all such disconnection. Endorsing the extension of additional credit support, we challenge the imposition of Prepayment Meters and standing charges which have devastating impacts on people who are already in dire straits.

AT A GLANCE

Media coverage

Media Coverage of Fuel Poverty Action increased this year.

- Our attendance at the September 2019 global climate strike was picked up by the [Geographical](#). That event was also the occasion for a very succinct and widely disseminated interview with Ruth on socially just climate solutions - 3 minutes on "[Solutions Now](#)".
- We received coverage of our MHCLG demonstration in October 2019 from the Morning Star, Salford Star, and Inside Housing.
- In November 2019, the Morning Star mentioned us again in an article covering people being forced to choose between food and heating.
- In February we wrote an article The Exchange, the newsletter of the Women's Working Party of the National Pensioners Convention,
- In early March, we were mentioned in the [Docklands & East London Observer](#) in a piece highlighting Peabody's extortionate heating charges.
- In late March, our petition on suppliers' support for people affected by Covid- was covered by the [Evening Standard](#), [Inside Housing](#), [The Ecologist](#), [The Morning Star](#), and [Left Foot Forward](#).
- Our press release on the Southwark District Heating victory in May 2020 was picked up by the [Ecologist](#) and the Waltham Forest Echo.
- Also in May we contributed a further article to the Ecologist: "We need home insulation, not more roads". .
- In mid-July FPAs concerns on new government funding in the context of the deepening fuel poverty crisis were covered by over 50 national, local, or specialist (welfare, or energy related) outlets, following a press release by the [End Fuel Poverty Coalition..](#)
- In August we contributed to a [Financial Times article](#) on the growing issue of overheating, and put the journalist in touch with affected residents.
- There were, in addition, numerous mentions or quotes, and occasionally interviews, in blogs, on social media, and in local or specialist publications.

Thanks are due to Dave and Phil who did an excellent job completely revamping our media contact list.

AT A GLANCE

Support and collaboration:

We appreciate the substantial contributions of experts in the fields of energy, heating and housing, including:

- Syed Ahmed, Director, Energy for London
- Claire Eades and Pauline Saunders, CIVALLI (cavity wall insulation victims)
- Gary Hatcher, General Manager, PowerNaturally (heat pumps installer)
- Michael King, Co-convenor, UK District Energy Vanguards Network
- Andrew Warren, Chair, British Energy Efficiency Federation (BEEF)
- Prof. Tom Woolley, architect, specialist in natural building materials

On the Energy for All project and issues of poverty and pricing, we have benefitted from consulting:

- William Baker, Citizens Advice
- Clemence Hutin Friends of the Earth, Europe
- David Pike, People's Energy Company
- Peter Smith, NEA (National Energy & Action)
- Louise Sunderland (Regulatory Assistance Project)
- Pawel Wargan (Green New Deal for Europe)
- And our much lamented friend, Rev. Paul Nicolson, who is greatly missed.
- We are currently in discussion with:
- David Gordon and Ruzanna Chitchyan (Bristol University)
- Toby Bridgeman, (Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE))
- Adrienne Buller (Commonwealth)
- Emily Shaw (Aurora Energy)

We are active and contributing members of the following networks and coalitions:

Build Back Better

- End Fuel Poverty Coalition
- Radical Housing Network
- Right to Energy Coalition

Organisations & networks we have worked with this year:

- Advice 4 Renters (Brent)
- All African Women's Group
- Aliança Contra La Pobresa Energètica
- Biofuelwatch
- Community Energy London
- Coppermill Heights Residents Association (Hale Village, Tottenham)
- Disabled People Against Cuts
- Divas (women in District Heating)
- Dulwich and West Norwood Climate Coalition
- E3G
- Extinction Rebellion
- Fossil Free London
- Friends of the Earth, Lambeth
- Generation Rent
- Global Justice Rebellion
- Global Women's Strike
- Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People
- Green New Deal for Europe
- Green New Deal UK
- GreenSCIES (Green Smart Community Integrated Energy Systems)
- Homes for All
- Just Space
- Labour for a Green New Deal
- Lambeth Pensioners Action Group
- London Green Party
- London Renters Union
- London Tenants Federation
- Malus Tenants and Residents Association and Salford high-rise residents
- Myatts Field South Tenants and Residents Association
- National Pensioners Convention (NPC)
- New Festival Quarter Residents Association
- Nuevo Modelo Energético
- Oval Quarter Residents Association
- Pembroke Park Residents Association
- Peabody residents at Phoenix Works, Tower HamletsPCS Union
- Platform
- Possible.
- Reclaim the Power
- Repowering London
- Réseau wallon pour l'accès durable à l'énergie (RWADE), Belgium
- SELCE (South East London Community Energy)
- Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations
- Southwark Planning Network
- Sustainable Hackney
- Tower Blocks UK
- TUC LESE (London East and South East) Pensioners' Network
- Unite (Housing Workers Branch)
- WinVisible (women with visible and invisible disabilities)

We also appreciate our supportive meeting venues (pre-lockdown): Crossroads Women's Centre in Kentish Town, Friends of the Earth HQ in Stockwell, the Common House in Bethnal Green, Advice 4 Renters in Kilburn

THE CORE TEAM

Over the past year our all-volunteer work team has included the following people who have offered their time and commitment on a long-term basis. Many others have been involved in the work more recently, or sporadically.

Ruth London, founding member of FPA, formed in 2011. A grandmother. active for five decades organising against poverty, discrimination and climate change, and against rape, she co-ordinates FPA's work. (Director)

Diane Skidmore, joined FPA 2012. She is 70, mother of six, grandmother, activist, council tenant for 30 years; home-educated last four children so also educated many others on her estate. A retired NHS health trainer, she still works to support healthy living and well-being. (Director)

Frances Sleap has been involved with FPA since 2012. She teaches Philosophy and Theology to sixth form students, and can sometimes bring her concerns with peace building and climate change to work. She is very concerned about fracking and likes to support local campaigns. She had a baby boy this year! (Director)

Ellen Lebethe started liaising with FPA around 2014 on actions exposing the scandal of "excess winter deaths". With a long history of struggles in the UK and in South Africa, she is chair of Lambeth Pensioners Action Group and Vice-chair of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC). She is also a member of the NPC London Region and the NPC Women's Working groups and chairs the NPC Minority Elders group. Since 2019 she has formally served as the NPC liaison with FPA.

Steve Burak In FPA since 2014, has also been active in Climate Camp, Occupy LSX, Rising Up, Extinction Rebellion, social housing groups, anti-racist and equality organisations - committed to a broad spectrum of the problems needing resolution. He often feeds in news from the many climate or housing-related meetings and demonstrations he takes part in.

David Rosenfeld joined in 2016. Dave worked in environmental and safety research and enforcement for 35 years and campaigned on politics of energy and workplace hazards. He joined the Greens in 2014 for a fairer world safe from environmental and social destruction.

Philip McMahon joined in 2017. He's a web developer at The Guardian newspaper. Outside of FPA, he's been active with Campaign Against Arms Trade for several years. He thinks retrofitting the UK's housing stock is an easy obvious win against climate change. (Director)

Alexa Waud joined FPA in 2018 and hit the ground running with the SCIN campaign. She has wide experience with climate justice campaigns, and works as a researcher, helping to gather experience and views from people in a wide range of situations, e.g. at Climate Assemblies. (Director)

Gianluca Cavallaro-Ng joined FPA in 2018. He is 23 and is involved in various social justice and environmental campaigns. He has a background in environmental policy and wants an end to fuel poverty and climate change. He's been doing organisational, and international, work in FPA. (Director)

Rebecca Turner joined FPA in January 2018. She has a background in architecture and cares deeply about ways in which the climate crisis affects people's lives be that through displacement, fuel poverty, access to safe/affordable housing or non-toxic building materials.

Rhiannon Hughes has worked with FPA for two years as campaigns and research officer for Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations, and gradually got more involved, joining the team this year. Her focuses are housing and heating and ensuring that people can get through the winter.

Ruaidhri Carroll joined in 2019, and worked on the climate mobilisations and the cladding demonstration in the autumn, and since then has been helping with admin. He is active in the Labour Party.

Yasmin Porter got involved in 2019. She's a business advisor, motivated by the circular economy and sustainable cities. She has plunged into work on our "Energy for All" initiative.

Frances Lobel works with Repowering London and has closely studied what protections there are -- or could be -- for people who cannot afford to pay their bills or top up their meters. She is looking at the prohibition of domestic water supply disconnections, to consolidate arguments for a similar prohibition in the energy sector. She joined the crew in 2020. . .

Graeme Langton lives in a Salford tower block and has fought hard for fire safety, care for residents' mental health, and many other pressing issues on his estate. Working with us for several years, he has recently joined FPA and contributes his experience and priorities to others.

Peter McCann joined FPA in 2020. They are an environmental campaigner and conservationist who is passionate about protecting the climate and nature in a way that works for everyone.

Appendix 1

Six months in Southwark: A local report

In the London borough of Southwark, Fuel Poverty Action has been supporting residents of blocks with poor-quality District Heating, working very closely with Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation. Rhiannon Hughes of SGTO drafted the following report:

2020 started with a tribunal case where a leaseholder was appealing a major bill for a district heating system that did not work. Mr Murat Kaya lives in Eugene Cotter House in Congreve and Barlow Estate off the Old Kent Road. The block had suffered years of district heating outages due to a replacement boiler system. Not only had tenants and leaseholders not received compensation, but they were also still paying service charges, and leaseholders were paying major work bills to the freeholder, Southwark Council.

Mr Kaya knew his major work charges were not fair and challenged them, using his meticulous records of outages. At the request of SGTO, FPA got involved in April 2019 when he first took his case to tribunal. Before a second tribunal date in February 2020 Mr Kaya secured a solicitor who was able to question the council closely and emphasise the impact of the outages and breach of service commitment. The challenge won Mr Kaya a 75% reduction in his major work bill and the council was ordered to return to him nearly £4000.

The continuing disaster of constant district heating outages all over the borough sparked SGTO and FPA to organise a public meeting to ensure people could access the support they deserve. FPA and SGTO knocked on doors on several estates to invite people to the meeting, but most people who came were from Setchell Road Estate, where the meeting was held. A variety of residents compared notes on how they had been treated: whether council housing officers had got in touch with them, what support they had been offered, and whether they had received compensation or reimbursement for outages.

A follow-up meeting was planned to help people reclaim their losses, but unfortunately, as coronavirus came to the UK we had to cancel it. Many people on the estates do not have access to digital technology, and keeping in touch has been a challenge. One partial solution has been a series of local radio broadcasts, Southwark Covid: A Housing Response -- on Resonance FM, where SGTO puts residents' questions directly to Southwark cabinet politicians and campaigners. This has provided opportunities to pursue district heating problems, and on 31 July the slot was devoted to an interview with FPA's Ruth London.

Following the Setchell event we had a round-table discussion at the start of March with Richard Seeley, the head of customer experience at Southwark Council. The discussion, including SGTO, FPA, and residents and TRA representatives from different estates, focussed on compensation for the thousands of people who are unable to wash or heat themselves during outages. The intention was to improve implementation of the Council's promise, secured last year, that no resident should be out of pocket due to DH breakdowns. We were assured that this commitment is still good, and although work to get it formalised in policies came to a halt with Covid-19, SGTO are continuing to press for it to be applied in practice. People must be able to pay for plug-in heaters in the coming winter.

All of our work in Southwark in the first quarter of this year was based on the daily crisis that people experience when district heating does not work.

Residents have had to rely on the kindness of family members and neighbours, to get warm, or give children a bath. Once lockdown started those who experienced outages and were fortunate enough to have someone to support them were suddenly unable to leave the house to visit that person. They were left indoors with a broken system. We are now bracing ourselves for a winter of further outages with longer fixing times as the supplies for replacement parts may be harder to acquire. If there is a second lockdown people will be unable to visit gyms for showers or warm up in libraries or Tenant and Resident Association Halls. These lifelines are all the support that people rely on when there are breakdowns. We are committed to make sure people remain warm and safe during lockdown.

Appendix 2 -- Energy for All Survey Results

Forty responses, with all who started the survey completing it.

- 85% said the concept of Energy for All made sense to them, others commenting for instance, that it should include water, internet access and food, or that it did not take account of welfare payments.
- 89% of respondents believed the initiative should be universal.
- Respondents highlighted the need to take into account green solutions
- Several thought it would need to be tailored to individual circumstances rather than allocating the same allowance to each household.

Full review of responses can be found [here](#).

**Annual Report produced with the help of Rhiannon Hughes, Ruth London,
Peter McCann, Gianluca Cavallaro-Ng, Yasmin Porter, Frances Sleaf,
Rebecca Turner & Alexa Waud.**