



Definition of 'fuel poverty'

Fuel poverty statistics estimate the number of households that need to spend more than ten percent of their income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, as well as meeting their other fuel needs such as lighting and appliances; cooking and water heating.

Facts about fuel poverty*

- There were 743,000 rural households living in fuel poverty in 2007.
- In 2007, 17.15% of all rural households were living in fuel poverty compared to 12.17% of urban households;
- 44% of the low income households in rural areas lived in fuel poverty in 2005 compared to 26% in urban areas.
- In 2009, the number of fuel poor households was estimated to be well in excess of one million; at least a 34% increase from 2007. It is estimated that one in four of all rural households were fuel poor in 2009.
- In 2008, households off the gas network, mostly to be found in rural areas, could in some cases face typical energy bills of £1700 per year against £1000 per year for those with mains gas.
- Over two thirds of the 9.2 million dwellings considered 'hard to treat' are dwellings with solid walls and off the gas network; the vast majority will be in rural areas.
- Approximately only 15% of Warm Front Grants are currently used to support rural areas.
- 36% of all rural households have no mains gas and rely on more expensive fuels such as, LPG and coal to heat their homes.
- 34% of all rural households are solid wall properties which are more difficult and expensive to insulate. It can cost up to 90% more to deal with energy inefficiency in a rural home compared to an urban home.

*Source:
Rural Services Network 2010

Home Energy Saving Event

FOCUS ON PLUMPTON

Ruth Segal, Plumpton Village Action Plan Team

The Plumpton Village Action Plan (VAP) Team recently organised a Home Energy Saving Event. The VAP Team had identified that high energy costs and dependence on oil were a concern for many households in the Village. They were also aware that some had already found low carbon alternatives to oil and electricity run heating systems and so organised an evening where some of these individuals could discuss their experiences, costs and outcomes with those who were interested.

It proved to be a very successful approach with about 60 people attending to hear about solar panels, wood burning stoves, air-exchange systems, ground source heat pumps and insulation from those who had become, through their own research and experiences, informal expert in these systems. There were also a number of displays and information leaflets.

The evening was attended by Lewes District Council and Plumpton is now considering whether it will get involved in an energy monitoring scheme being run by the District.

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ENERGY SAVING CASE STUDY: 2 Holly Cottages

One of the houses featured in the presentations at Plumpton was 2 Holly Cottages, a semi-detached cottage built in 1865 for workers in the local brick works. The ground floor has 9 inch solid brick walls and the upper storey is timber-framed, tile-hung on the outside and lath and plaster inside. The original floors were solid. The windows in the front of the house were a particular problem. They have very thin Victorian glass diamond panes

puttied into a zinc lattice frame. They are important for preserving the character of the house, but lose over twice as much heat as modern single glazed windows. There is no mains gas available at this site and no room to put a gas storage cylinder.

Solutions include a photo-voltaic system (picture 1), solar thermal panels, ground source heat pump (2), underfloor heating (3), insulation plus time, energy and money.

For more information, visit www.ovesco.co.uk