

Business and charities unite in call for energy efficiency investment

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Leading charities and businesses today published a Declaration, 'Energy Efficiency First', calling on all political parties to make investment in home energy efficiency an infrastructure investment priority.

The Declaration states that to reach the UK's legally binding net-zero emission and fuel poverty targets, all the UK's homes will have to be made highly energy efficient. Additional public capital investment of £1 billion a year for the next 15 years is needed to ensure the targets are achieved.

The signatories point out that there is potential to reduce energy demand in UK homes by at least a quarter, saving the average household £270 every year. A quarter of the energy currently used could be saved and there is technical potential to cut home energy use in half.

The Declaration has been published on the day that the Energy Efficiency Infrastructure Group (EEIG) [1] sets out its vision for how to make all UK homes energy efficient. Called '*The Net-Zero Litmus Test*', it reminds politicians that energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to decarbonise the economy and would deliver a net benefit of over £50 billion to UK households, businesses and government.

The report finds that installation rate of home insulation measures has been cut by 95% since 2012. 170,000 homes are being upgraded with energy efficiency improvements in the UK each year but the number needs to rapidly rise to 1.2 million a year in order to meet decarbonisation targets. The EEIG reports progress made against its six-step plan to set up an energy efficiency infrastructure programme for the UK and sets out how to get on track.

Alasdair MacEwen, Spokesperson for the Energy Efficiency Infrastructure Group said, "*Achieving net-zero emissions cost-effectively is simply impossible without a huge cut in energy demand. Whether any political party is prepared to do this is the litmus test of whether it is serious about achieving net-zero emissions. It can only be achieved if we treat the decarbonisation of homes as the UK's number one infrastructure priority. No other infrastructure project can benefit so many and at the same time create returns on investment.*"

Tom Thackray, Director of Infrastructure and Energy Policy at the CBI said "*All government departments must buy in to improving the efficiency of our homes and buildings and work with industry to provide the correct regulation. Treating energy efficiency as an infrastructure priority, would change the way in which it is approached by the Government allowing the issue to be treated as other public investments, such as in public buildings and transport infrastructure. It would send a clear message to investors and consumers as to the direction and ambition of government policy.*"



Energy UK's chief executive, Lawrence Slade said:

"We've long pushed for energy efficient homes to be a national priority and with the net-zero target in place, it's even more urgent that we finally get serious about it.

"Energy efficiency measures cut emissions, reduce bills by hundreds of pounds a year and would show how the transition to net-zero can bring an immediate benefit to customers - especially when those who can least afford to waste energy often live in the draughtiest properties.

"To achieve this, we need to properly fund a national programme to support those who need it, provide clear incentives to those who are able to pay and ensure that the Government takes a much stronger line on building regulations and standards, making it a requirement in future that homes being sold or rented meet a minimum of EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) Band C and above. "

Peter Smith, Director of Policy and Research at fuel poverty charity, National Energy Action said *"Fuel poverty continues to be a very real and stark reality for millions of people across the UK. The aim to reach net-zero is one of the most ambitious strategic goals the UK Government has ever set. It will have profound implications for all UK citizens, businesses and society at large. The UK can only move rapidly towards net-zero, whilst creating a fair energy future for all citizens, if we urgently provide central investment to improve domestic energy efficiency. The top priority is to help the poorest households living in least efficient homes, mainly in rural areas and other hard to heat homes."*

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[1] *About the EEIG*

The EEIG represents a growing and broad-based coalition of over 25 industry groups, NGOs, charities and businesses that are asking for rapid improvement on energy efficiency in homes and buildings policy in the UK.

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