Energy Poverty and Social Isolation

16 October 2018
Energy poverty and Social Relations

Lucie Middlemiss, Pepa Ambrosio Albala, Nick Emmel, Jan Gilbertson, Ross Gillard, Tom Hargreaves, Caroline Mullen, Tony Ryan, Carolyn Snell, Angela Tod
@luciemiddlemiss
Lived experience of energy poverty

• Qualitative research, looking at what it feels like to experience energy poverty in daily life.

• Lots of data in UK context, new studies emerging in other nations (the Netherlands, Spain, New Zealand).

• Energy poverty: the inability of households to access adequate energy services, including home heating, electrical appliance use and mobility (Simcock et al., 2016).
Vulnerability to energy poverty

Challenges to vulnerability
• quality of dwelling fabric
• energy costs and supply issues
• stability of household income
• tenancy relations
• social relations within the household and outside
• ill health

(from Middlemiss and Gillard, 2015)
Social relations (capabilities)

- **the capability to have relationships**: functioning when household members are able to make and maintain connections with others in the household; family and friends; key agencies and abstract others.

- **the capability to have dignity**: functioning when household members do not feel stigma, and have confidence in their social position.

- **the capability to participate in society**: functioning when household members have opportunities to shape social institutions.

(brought together from Sen and Nussbaum’s work, and theorising)
Key questions

• How do people’s social relations enable/prevent them from accessing energy services?
• How do people’s access to energy services enable/prevent them from having social relations capabilities?
• What else structures this relationship?
# Qualitative secondary data

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Data description</th>
<th>Dates collected</th>
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<tr>
<td>Warm Front</td>
<td>Jan Gilbertson</td>
<td>Interviews with households including a child under 16 (n=24), and interviews with households including a person over 60 or a person under 60 with a disability (n=25), in urban areas across England. Following installation of new heating system and some insulation measures.</td>
<td>Spring of 2003</td>
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<td>KWILLT</td>
<td>Angela Tod</td>
<td>Interviews with older people (55+) mainly living alone in Rotherham</td>
<td>Winters of 2009-10; 2010-11</td>
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<td>Lived experience of FP 1</td>
<td>Lucie Middlemiss</td>
<td>Interviews with a range of household types, in Scotland and England on lived experience of fuel poverty.</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILT</td>
<td>Jan Gilbertson</td>
<td>Interviews with pensioners, mostly living alone, (two interviews with families with children under 16) across England.</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>Lived experience of FP 2</td>
<td>Ross Gillard, Lucie Middlemiss</td>
<td>Interviews with a range of household types, in Scotland and England, on lived experience of fuel poverty, as well as thoughts about specific measures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel poverty and disabled people</td>
<td>Carolyn Snell</td>
<td>Interviews with people with a range of disabilities focusing on: their experiences of fuel poverty; their uptake of fuel poverty support mechanisms; their uptake of wider social policies; the impact of policy changes</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
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<td>Needs, mobility, poverty</td>
<td>Caroline Mullen</td>
<td>Low to medium income households, with a range of ages, tenures, urban/rural. Interviews about the way people travel, and the way that impacts on their lives.</td>
<td>Dec 2015-May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel poverty and social relations</td>
<td>Lucie Middlemiss</td>
<td>Interviews with a range of households in Leeds and Bradford, about how their fuel poverty is affected by their social relations.</td>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
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Social relations enabling access to energy

(...) Anyway I rang them up, I said oh my daughter’s got a friend who’s married to a plumber, and they were around when all this was going on, and Andy had said just let me have a look, and he looked in there, he says well they’ve connected the pipes wrongly. They’d put the hot on the cold tap and vice versa so that’s why it wasn’t working. So they came back again. By this time I was really fed up. (Woman, 71)
Lack of access to energy leading to difficult SR

“...the main person is my sister really because she doesn’t drive and she’s pregnant and she’s got a 4 year old and I used to feel really sorry for her because she’s in a similar situation to what I was when I was not driving and I was taking the kids to school and everything(...) But yeah, I can’t do that for her at the moment though, because like I said it’s too much of a waste of my petrol. So she does occasionally, if she’s really stuck she’ll give me a fiver towards petrol and stuff and I’ll do it but before I was just doing it every day just to help her out.”

**Resources:** limited financial resources, no access to a car

**Roles/incumbents:** expectations associated with being a good sister.

**Capability to make and maintain relationships: Unable to offer reciprocal help.**

**Constrains access to energy services**
Dignity, stigma and access to energy

• “At one point she used to, she was saying to me, I don’t want to speak to them anymore because they kept on saying ‘pardon? What did you say?’ and she said the man he felt as if I wasn’t speaking English properly, or wasn’t making myself understood properly, she was made to feel – although she was making the effort to communicate properly – it was as if he wasn’t receiving it” (Husband, Warmfront interview)
Understanding social relations in context

Social context
- Stigma
- Access to resources
- Demographic
- Having a role

Social relations
- Ability to make and maintain relationships
- Sense of dignity
- Ability to participate in society

Access to energy services
Insights for policy and practice

• Social relations are a resource, and when they are enabled they can help people access energy services.

• When people can’t access energy services this can impact on their relationships.

• People’s ability to maintain social relations, and to maintain dignity are structured by a range of social factors.
Thank you for listening.

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Energy Poverty and Social Isolation

16 October 2018
Emotional engagements with Energy Poverty

Tom Hargreaves and Noel Longhurst
University of East Anglia

Twitter: @tom_hargreaves1; @noellonghurst
Energy Poverty and Isolation Seminar
Brussels, 16th October 2018
Fuel Poverty to Energy Vulnerability

• Many official definitions of fuel poverty see it resulting from: poor energy efficiency; low income; high energy costs.

• So, interventions focus on: improving efficiency; assisting households with costs; promoting supplier switching.

• These understandings are doubly-divorced from everyday life:
  • Isolate economic decision-making about energy, from wider everyday practices.
  • Adopt a narrow, technically-specified focus on energy efficiency as key problem, and ignore wide constellation of issues that render households vulnerable.
Fuel Poverty to Energy Vulnerability

Quality of dwelling fabric

Energy vulnerability

Energy cost and supply

Social relations in and out of household

Stability of household income

Ill health

Tenancy relations

“...the likelihood of a household being subject to fuel poverty, the sensitivity of that household to fuel poverty, and the capacity that household has to adapt to changes in fuel poverty.” Middlemiss and Gillard (2015)
Energy Vulnerability as Emotional Experience

• Lived experience studies have begun to recognize energy vulnerability as an emotional experience:
  • Fear, worry, anxiety, unhappiness, distress, embarrassment, stigma, isolation, lack of trust etc.

• BUT, emotions almost always seen as a consequence or side-effect of energy vulnerability
  • negative emotional experiences result from energy vulnerability.

• The role of emotions in energy vulnerability has rarely been given centre stage.
Equity and justice in energy markets

Multidisciplinary project exploring interactions between retail energy markets and their distributional impacts on vulnerable and under-researched groups in the UK (2016-18)

RP7: Lived experience of energy vulnerability
1. What is the lived experience of energy vulnerability for social housing tenants and in what ways do they express agency in relation to their energy usage?
2. What impacts do different kinds of intervention have on the lived experience of energy vulnerability?
3. What are the wider implications for the role of housing associations and other actors in tackling energy vulnerability?

Methods
• 5 telephone interviews with expert stakeholders
• 15 semi-structured interviews with tenants
• 9 interviews with Housing Association staff
Fear, worry and control...

Due to fear over bills, participants lives were marked by constant worry and active vigilance over their energy expenditure:

• “If I’ve got my money coming then that’s alright, I can do all my washing over the next 3 days...Whereas [if] it’s like ”I’ve got 2 weeks until I’ve got my money coming!”’, my washing starts to pile up and stuff like that!” (Paulette)

This led many to choose Pre-Payment Meters to manage risk and gain control:

• “Why people go on the key is they’re worried of getting in big debt...if we hadn’t been on the key we probably would have done to be honest.” (Susan)
Relations of care...

Care relationships can both exacerbate or ameliorate energy vulnerability.

Using energy to care for others:
• “If it was just me I’d probably have [the heating] switched off during the night, but at her age, she can’t keep herself warm.” (Glenda, referring to her elderly cat)

Drawing on care relations for help with bills:
• “Another single Mum….she’s got her nan always bailing her out…where I don’t have family that can do that for me, so we suffer!” (Paulette)

Those with an absence of care relations seemed to be the worst cases, leading to both social isolation and self-disconnection.
Stigma, embarrassment and trust...

Embarrassment and stigma prevented people asking for help...

• “Even if I go to my Mum...and say “Mum, can I borrow £20 for some electric?” I find that embarrassing. So I try not to put myself in that situation.” (Barbara)

Lack of trust in the market or support agencies prevented people from receiving potential help earlier:

• “I just can’t see the point of swap, change, swap, change, keep trying to find the best deal...they’re [Energy companies] all basically the same. They’re all in it for the same reasons.” (Annette and Pete)

• “You’re asking someone to actually divulge information with a complete stranger. We explain we’re Tenancy Support, we’re not the rent officer...we are there to offer support, but even with that, they still see you as somebody in authority...you’ve got to chip that away and that takes ages.” (Tenancy Support Officer)
Summary and implications...

• Fuel poverty is predominantly understood as resulting from technical (and market) failures:
  • Energy efficiency and switching are thus positioned as core solutions.

• For tenants energy vulnerability is an intensely *emotional* experience, yet this has been neglected to date.

• Energy vulnerability shapes *and is shaped by* multiple emotions.
Emotions can help cause energy vulnerability and hinder attempts to address it in 3 main ways:

i. Fear, anxiety, worry shapes heating regimes and other energy-using practices.

ii. Embarrassment, stigma and fear shape the kinds of support that is asked for and received.

iii. Trust in suppliers and worry about costs shapes engagement in the retail energy market.
Summary and implications...

• There is a need to better understand the role(s) of emotions in energy poverty and explore ways of building this into policy and practice.

• When intervening, time needs to be taken to create safe, shared spaces where trusting relationships, as well as financial and energy literacy, can be built.

• Energy poverty is a complex, dynamic and multi-faceted problem that requires ‘folk-first’ approaches (Baker et al 2018) that are developed and evaluated in the context of the lived experience.
Thank you!

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Centre for Competition Policy (CCP)
UK ERC
Energy Poverty and Social Isolation

16 October 2018
Introduction to the platform

Johannes Thema (Wuppertal Institute)
Energy Poverty and Social Isolation
European Parliament, Brussels 16 October 2018
Why do we need an Observatory?

• EESC first called for an Observatory in 2013
• Growing recognition and integration of energy poverty policy in the activities of EU institutions
• Extensive network of stakeholders active on the subject
• Lack of focused monitoring, reporting and understanding
• Ambitions contained in the Clean Energy policy package

Setup of EPOV by EC: Dec 2016, launch Jan 2018
• International Advisory Board of ~100 experts from 25 countries
• Broader engagement with energy poverty stakeholders
The Observatory: A living platform

Open access, transparency, knowledge, exchange through sections:
• Measurement, statistics, indicators: → indicators
• Collection of scientific knowledge: → publications
• Policy overview: → Policies & measures
• Support to practitioners: → Training resources
• Who is active in the field: → Relevant organisations
• Key issues for policy: → Guidance for policymakers
• Exchange: → Forum

→ continuously updated, developed, exchange with stakeholders
Live demo...

- [www.energypoverty.eu](http://www.energypoverty.eu)
Understanding Energy Poverty in Europe

EXPLORE THE INTERACTIVE INDICATORS
WHAT IS ENERGY POVERTY?
Adequate warmth, cooling, lighting and the energy to power appliances are essential services needed to guarantee a decent standard of living and citizens’ health. Energy poverty occurs when a household suffers from a lack of adequate energy services in the home.

Learn more

ABOUT THE OBSERVATORY
The EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) is an exciting new initiative by the European Commission to help Member States in their efforts to combat energy poverty. It exists to improve the measuring, monitoring and sharing of knowledge and best practice on energy poverty.

Learn more

BECOME A MEMBER
Registering as a member is free, and allows you to interact with other key stakeholders in the field, access members-only content and discover new collaboration opportunities.

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Highlights

Publications
Browse research on energy poverty via our evidence repository of scientific articles, reports and other documents.

Policies & Measures
Search for practical examples of policies and measures to address energy poverty.

Guidance for Policymakers
Get advice on essential points to consider when drafting policies to address energy poverty.
Knowledge & Resources

Knowledge & Resources about energy poverty—the most extensive database on the internet

Publications
Scientific articles, reports and other documents categorized according to country, language, theme and publication type.

Policies & Measures
Policies & Measures categorized according to country, type of measure, target groups, financing method and energy carrier.

Training Resources
A collection of material for training. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.

Relevant Organisations
Organisations active in energy poverty research, policy-making or field work.

Guidance for Policymakers
Guidance for policymakers on how energy poverty can be defined and measured, what policies could be implemented and how these could be funded.

SUBMIT KNOWLEDGE & RESOURCES
The Observatory is actively accepting contributions from its members to enrich the Knowledge & Resources section.
Use the links below to submit new content for review:
- Submit Publications
- Submit Policies & Measures
- Submit Training Resources
- Submit Relevant Organizations
Publications

This section contains scientific articles, reports and other documents related to energy poverty.

Order by: Publication date

- **Low Carbon Heat and Rural Fuel Poverty – Lessons from across Europe**
  
  Community Energy Plus
  
  2017

  - European Union
  - Policies & Measures

- **Energy Poverty in Greece: Social Innovation Recommendations to tackle the phenomenon**
  
  Corovesi, A., Touloupaki, E., Chrysogelos, N., and Metaxa, K.
  
  2017

  - Greece
  - Policies & Measures
  - Impacts

- **The energy poverty barometer (2016) (Barometer Energiearmoede (2016))**
  
  Delbeke, B. and Meyer, S.
  
  2017

  - Belgium
  - Measurement

- **The energy poverty barometer (2017) (Barometer Energiearmoede (2017))**
  
  Delbeke, B. and Meyer, S.
  
  2017

  - Belgium
  - Measurement

- **Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency (Fuel Poverty ed Efficienza Energetica)**
  
  Federeseco, Federconsumatori, Unione Nazionale Consumatori, AICARR
  
  2017

  - Italy
  - Policies & Measures

FILTER PUBLICATIONS

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  1983

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  2017

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  To bring the most relevant results on top, combine with Order by: “Search relevance”.

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SUBMIT NEW PUBLICATION
Policies & Measures

This section contains information about policies and measures addressing energy poverty.

Order by: Measure title (A-Z)

- **"Living better" programme (Programme Habiter Mieux)**
  - France  Building insulation  Heating system  Highlighted
  The Habiter Mieux programme aims to provide financial support to renovate dwellings of low income households to improve energy efficiency. It includes different types of grants and loans financed by different parts of the government, including the National Housing Agency (Anah), the General...

- **Action in low-income households to improve energy efficiency through visits and energy diagnosis (ACHIEVE)**
  - Bulgaria  France  Germany  Slovenia  United Kingdom  Energy audits
  In ACHIEVE, long-term unemployed people, volunteers or students are mobilized and trained to develop a large-scale energy advice service towards low-income households facing difficulties with their energy bills.

- **Agreements on energy education and consultation for energy consumers (Energijos vartotojų švietimo ir konsultavimo susitarimų sudarymo tvarkos)**
  - Lithuania  Information and awareness
  This measure requires energy suppliers to establish an agreement with the national government, where these suppliers commit to educate and advise household on energy efficiency measures.

- **Assistance in case of material distress (Pomoc v hmotnej núdzi)**
  - Slovakia  Social support
  This measure provides general income support to low-income households to cover living expenses.

- **Basic income support (Perustoimeentulotukea)**
  - Finland  Social support
  Basic income support is provided to households to cover their necessary daily expenses. In
Guidance for Policymakers

This page gives a short overview of essential points to consider for policymakers when drafting policies to address energy poverty: Measurement, Definition, Policies & Measures and Financing & Funding.

MEASUREMENT

The measurement of energy poverty is important to assess the current situation in terms of energy poverty. Energy poverty is notoriously difficult to quantify and measure, as it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Different indicators are possible:

- **Energy costs and income**: quantify energy poverty by looking at the energy expenditure of households in relation to an income measure (e.g. number of households spending more than a certain share of their income on domestic energy services)
- **Self-assessment**: assess energy poverty by asking households directly to what extent they feel able to afford energy (e.g. ability to keep home adequately warm in wintertime and cool in summertime)
- **Direct measurement**: measure physical variables to determine adequacy of energy services (e.g. room temperature)
- **Proxy Indicators**: give an impression of the energy poverty situation through related factors, such as arrears on utility bills, number of disconnections and housing quality.

See the report for the European Commission on Selecting Indicators to Measure Energy Poverty for more information on the measurement of energy poverty. Read more about the measurement of energy poverty in publications related to the theme Measurement in the Publications section.

DEFINITION

The definition of energy poor and/or vulnerable households is essential to target policies to those households that need assistance. This definition should be tailored to the specific situation in terms of climate, housing quality, economy and the structure of energy costs. The definition can also differ for particular types of policies: for example, disconnection protection during wintertime is often associated with targeting of physically more vulnerable households, such as disabled and pensioners, as these are most at risk in case of disconnection.

In general, targeting can be based on multiple parameters, which are related to some important causes behind energy poverty:
Training Resources

ACHIEVE

Frontline workers  National gov  Policy makers  
Practitioners  Regional/local gov  Advice  
Guidance/toolkit  Information pack  Literature

Achieve produces a variety of materials and tools that have been produced for the project that facilitates local energy poverty interventions, including training, modules, guides for advisors trained and...

ADEME Guide 40 tips and tricks for saving energy

Frontline workers  Practitioners  Public  Advice  
Literature

This guide provides advice to those who are concerned, day by day, about the quality of living conditions in their homes and their impact on the environment, those who are considering renovating...

Alleviating fuel poverty. The role of the energy café

National gov  Regional/local gov  Policy makers  
Civil servants  Frontline workers  Practitioners  
Guidance/toolkit  Information pack  Literature

A policy briefing which explores energy cafes (community-based advice sessions) to inform relevant bodies of their benefits and how to set up their own energy cafes.

Build and run collective workshops for households in fuel poverty

Frontline workers  Practitioners  Guidance/toolkit  
Training (P2P)  Literature

Training to enable practitioners to ask up and to run information workshops for households in energy poverty.

FILTER TRAINING RESOURCES

Audience

- All audiences

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RECENT TRAINING MATERIALS

18 Dec 2017  Advice  Guidance/toolkit  Information pack

ACHIEVE

03 Dec 2017  Advice  ADEME Guide 40 tips and tricks for saving energy  

28 Dec 2017  Advice  Literature

Alleviating fuel poverty. The role of the energy café

19 Dec 2017  Advice  Guidance/toolkit  Information pack  Training (P2P)

Build and run collective workshops for households in fuel poverty

26 Dec 2017  Advice  Guidance/toolkit  Information pack
**Relevant Organisations**

**Abbé Pierre Foundation (Fondation Abbé Pierre)**
- France
- NGO
- Tags: NGOs
- This Foundation aims to provide access to a decent dwelling to the vulnerable households, regardless of the resources or social status they possess. With the programme « Tous d'Abord » (Todos Primero), the Foundation aims to reduce energy poverty and increase access to affordable housing in both rural and urban zones.

**Accompany cities in energy strategy (ACCENT)**
- Spain
- Research & Consultancy
- Tags: Municipalities, Area-based targeting
- In this project, a tool is developed that will allow local public administrations to define energy strategies at city scale based on the estimated energy consumption of the buildings. The tool will enable the city to locate areas where buildings have low energy efficiency and those areas where there is a high percentage of domestic energy poverty.
- [http://www.accentproject.com/](http://www.accentproject.com/)

**Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development**
- Austria
- Research & Consultancy
- The Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development is a research institute that has carried out work on energy poverty.
- [http://oin.at/?lang=en](http://oin.at/?lang=en)

**Building retrofit potential (ENERFUND)**
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Ireland
- Bulgaria
- Romania
- Austria
- Slovakia
- Greece
- France
- United Kingdom
- Spain
- Slovenia
- Research & Consultancy
- Tags: Municipalities, Area-based targeting
- This project is developing a tool that will rate and score deep renovation opportunities – like a credit score used by banks to rate clients. The tool will be based on a set of parameters such as EPC data.
home adequately warm

Can afford to keep its home adequately warm?*

SWITCH INDICATOR

- (Primary) Inability to keep home adequately warm
- (Primary) High share of energy expenditure in income (2M)
- (Primary) Inability to keep home adequately warm
- (Primary) Arrears on utility bills
- (Primary) Hidden energy poverty (HEP)
- (Secondary) Poverty risk
- (Secondary) Equipped with air conditioning

VISUALISATION OPTIONS

Line graph  Bar chart  Map

INABILITY TO KEEP HOME ADEQUATELY WARM | 2015

Legend

UNIT
Population (%)

ACTIVE COUNTRIES

- AT  BE  BG  CH  CY
- CZ  DE  DK  EE  EL
- ES  FI  FR  HU
- HR  IE  IS  IT  LT
- LU  LV  MT  NL  NO
- PL  PT  RO  RS  SE
EPOV indicators

“Consensual” indicators (based on EU-SILC)
- % of pop. unable to keep home adequately warm
- % of pop. with (any) arrears on utility bills

“Expenditure” indicators (based on HBS)
- “2M”: % of pop. spending twice the national median in share of energy/income
- “HEP” (hidden energy poverty): % of pop. spending less than half the national median in absolute energy expenses

EPOV: disaggregation of indicators by income, tenure, urbanisation, dwelling type
Expenditure-based indicators

HEP

Issues with indicator calculation

Czech Republic

Sweden
VISUALISATION OPTIONS

VISUALISATION: Bar chart
CHOOSE YEAR: 2015
DISAGGREGATE BY: No disaggregation

INABILITY TO KEEP HOME ADEQUATELY WARM | 2015

Legend

UNIT
Population (%)

COUNTRIES
All | None

AT ✔ BE ✔ BG ✔
CH ✔ CY ✔ CZ ✔
DE ✔ DK ✔ EE ✔
EL ✔ ES ✔ EU ✔
FI ✔ FR ✔ HU ✔
HR ✔ IE ✔ IS ✔
IT ✔ LT ✔ LU ✔
LV ✔ MT ✔ NL ✔
NO ✔ PL ✔ PT ✔
RO ✔ RS ✔ SE ✔
SI ✔ SK ✔ UK ✔

PowerPoint Leervorlage
## Forums

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<td>By Johannes Thema 1 month 6 days ago</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>By Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences 3 days 23 min ago</td>
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**RECENT FORUM ACTIVITY**

- Additional funded places available for energy poverty workshop (30th March in Dublin) | 2 days 46 min ago
- Funding schemes | 2 weeks 1 day ago
Engage!

- Join the mailing list: [https://goo.gl/SLFuVe](https://goo.gl/SLFuVe)
- Twitter: #EPOV @EPOV_EU @wupperinst
- Visit our interactive web portal [www.energypoverty.eu](http://www.energypoverty.eu)
  - Contribute *publications* to the database
  - Submit energy poverty *policies* to our catalogue of measures
  - Become a *member*, write blog articles, join discussion forums
- Attend our *events*
Keep in contact

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contact@energypoverty.eu
@EPOV_EU  #EPOV
johannes.thema@wupperinst.org

Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy
Energy Poverty and Social Isolation

16 October 2018