

Julie James MS
Minister for Climate Change

31 March 2023

Dear Julie,

Fuel Poverty and the Warm Homes Programme

The future of the Warm Homes Programme (WHP) and Welsh Government efforts to tackle fuel poverty are of considerable interest to our Committee and to the stakeholders we engage with.

The cost of living crisis fuelled by the exponential rise in heating bills implications for household finances requires urgent action to insulate as many homes as possible before next winter. The Arbed programme ended in November 2021 and the Nest scheme is due to cease at the end of this month. So we are struggling to understand how you intend to ensure that there is no gap in provision of energy efficiency measures for fuel poor households in Wales. We are deeply concerned by the ongoing lack of clarity regarding the future of the scheme and the failure to set out a clear timetable for the successor.

We would therefore welcome a response to the following:

- When will the next Warm Homes Programme commence? What is the anticipated start date?
- When will the WHP's Nest scheme cease? Has Nest been extended beyond its original end date of March 2023?
- Will there be a gap in provision of support for energy efficiency to fuel poor households? How will you mitigate the impact of this gap over the summer months?
- When will you publish the revised fuel poverty action plan (your response to recommendation 2 of our report indicated "in 2023")?
- During the Business Statement on 21 March 2023 the Trefnydd confirmed that you would be bringing forward a statement on the scheme "before the end of the summer term". Will this statement include final details of the next iteration of the WHP including a clear indication on how quickly the plan can be implemented? If not, please can we have a

precise date for bringing forward regulations to create the next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme?

Despite the worst of the cold weather for winter 2022-23 being behind us, the outlook for many households remains challenging. It is vital that we are in a position to help support as many households as possible with energy efficiency measures in the coming months ahead of next winter. We therefore urge you to clarify the Welsh Government's intentions in that regard.

I would welcome a response by the beginning of the Summer term i.e. 24 April 2023. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee and the Minister for Social Justice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Jenny Rathbone" in a cursive, flowing script.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee