

# Fuel poverty in Edinburgh

As power companies announce yet another hike in gas and electricity prices the work being done by North Edinburgh Trust (NET) becomes more important than ever.

The team is working with the local community to highlight issues people in the area face when trying to reduce energy usage while keeping warm. [NET](#) is conducting a Fuel Poverty Audit as part of its ongoing 'Net your Carbons' programme. NET's Fuel Poverty audit is a small area study of 6 blocks of high rise flats in Muirhouse that will look at residents' experiences of fuel poverty.

NET chose this area of North Edinburgh after work undertaken through their Future Families initiative indicated that the occupants of these blocks of flats could be suffering particular difficulties with fuel poverty as a direct result of the heating systems installed.

Chief Executive Jackie McKenna said: "The Muirhouse high-rises are not on the gas grid and so were fitted with electric storage heating systems. We suspect that many of the residents will have prepayment meters excluding them from cheaper tariffs available to those paying by other methods such as direct debit and e-billing".

Forecasts indicate more severe weather is on its way and the recent announcement of further increases in fuel costs could result in some residents being unable to heat their homes adequately and push others into debt in order to feed the meter.

The City of Edinburgh Council is currently undertaking a pilot project in a similar block of high-rise flats in Leith. That project will trial the replacement of storage heaters with an alternative more energy efficient and hopefully cheaper heating system.

“This ‘NET Your Carbons’ fuel poverty study in Muirhouse could provide local tenants groups with enough supporting data to put forward a strong case for their own homes to be considered for a similar replacement system in the near future” added Jackie.

NET’s Future Families initiative came to an end this month. The initiative allowed NET to identify and work with households to deliver practical advice and introduce measures to reduce carbon emissions and save money. The participants learned how to effectively use and install energy saving gadgets issued by the government and shared tips save energy and do their bit to help Scotland achieve its carbon reduction targets.

Brian Robertson from West Granton took part in Future Families and said:-“It was a really cold winter last year and many people in this community couldn’t afford to heat their homes. The energy companies don’t do enough to help people; so we need to do something ourselves”

Earlier this year a joint bid with the council failed to secure funding that would have enabled NET to build on the work to tackle fuel poverty in the city.

‘These are difficult times for everyone but NET is exploring alternative option to secure funding that will allow us to continue the excellent work the team has done to date’ said Jackie.

The North Edinburgh Trust has a website which you can access [here](#). They describe themselves thus:-

*The North Edinburgh Trust is a community development trust that aims to maximise community influence, address poverty and bring real economic and community benefits to the North Edinburgh area.*

*An independent community-led organisation, we support*

*community involvement and participation within North Edinburgh, and in particular within the neighbourhood partnership structures. In addition we work closely with other agencies and stakeholders to help tackle the unacceptable levels of poverty that exist within North Edinburgh and improve the appeal and wealth of the local area. Through innovative initiatives and creative approaches, we aim to work together to ensure that the community is at the heart of local decision making and add real value to both the local community and the wider economy.*