

IT harnessed in the fight against fuel poverty

New online map launched to tackle fuel poverty

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- Online tool to make it easier to target funding at those most in need
- Government and energy industry team up to help fuel-poor households

Information technology is being harnessed in a new initiative to tackle fuel poverty.

The Off-Gas Grid Map - Britain's first ever online map showing all the postcodes in the country not connected to the gas network - was unveiled at the National Energy Action Conference in Sheffield.

The database aims to make it much easier for those organisations with the funding to tackle fuel poverty, for example, through connecting homes to cheaper natural gas, to target the areas most in need.

But the map will also enable other organisations, such as local authorities and housing associations, as well as individuals, to identify areas with high levels of fuel poverty and come forward to seek help. The map is accessible at www.nongasmap.org.uk where organisations can register for access to the post code level data.

The initiative has been spearheaded by the Government's Fuel Poverty Advisory Group and the Department for Energy and Climate Change, and funded by National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions.

Energy Minister Lord Bourne said: "As a one nation government on the side of consumers, we are determined to ensure that hardworking families can keep their homes warm and their bills low. We know that people living off the gas grid are more likely to have difficulty with their energy bills and that's why we are taking action to help people who need it the most.

"Along with our £25 million funding announcement this month to local authorities to tackle fuel poverty, we have also partnered with National Grid and industry groups to identify where these people are and the best way to help them."

The project was led and developed by Jeremy Nesbitt, Managing Director of National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions (AWS), and saw a host of organisations joining forces to support the initiative, including Energy Suppliers, Third Sector Groups, devolved governments, electricity distribution companies and trade associations.

Jeremy said: "I am absolutely delighted to launch this database. It has taken several months of work, involving people across the energy industry and beyond. One of the biggest barriers to tackling fuel poverty is identifying where those fuel-poor households are so we can help. For the first time we have a single repository of information that everyone can access and it is possible to match those with the funding to those most in need.

"The database will help underpin future policy development on fuel poverty and assist with the delivery of schemes to support the government's Fuel Poverty Strategy. For example, National Grid in partnership with Affordable Warmth Solutions, has already connected 29,000 fuel-poor homes to the gas network and we expect to connect a further 25,500 by 2021. This information will be invaluable in targeting the poorest homes."

Tom Wright, Chair of Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, said: "The non-gas map is a great example of the role Industry, facilitated by the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, can have working in partnership with Government. This map improves the tools available to help more effectively target and deliver support to non-gas homes, who we know can face some of the highest costs of keeping warm."

Jenny Saunders, CEO of National Energy Action, said: "I hope all local authorities and their delivery partners will use this database to allocate energy efficiency budgets and resources to households whose energy bills are much higher than average, and who will most benefit from alternative sources of heating."

The database has been carefully developed to ensure that personal details, such as the names and addresses of householders, are not identified. Instead, people can search via postcodes which will show characteristics about groups of properties and whether they are or can easily be connected to the gas network.

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- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
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Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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