



**GREEN
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Webinar Fuel Poverty & Health

Groundwork Green Doctors

Ealing Training Hub
November 2025

Webinar Fuel Poverty & Health

Groundwork Green Doctors



Session Outline

- About Groundwork and the Green Doctors team
- Our aims
- Fuel poverty: definition, key drivers, risk factors, and possible signs
- What householders may say & what you might encounter during a visit
- The link between fuel poverty and ill health
- Possible health impacts of cold homes
- Damp, mould, and condensation
- Carbon monoxide (CO) awareness
- Encouraging behavioural change
- Discounts and further support available
- Energy Crisis & the state of the market
- The Healthy Homes Ealing service, Green Doctors one-to-one energy advice
- Eligibility criteria and how to make a referral
- Resident's feedback
- Q&A

Groundwork is a federation of charities mobilising practical community action on poverty and the environment across the UK.



We help people create better places...

By making communities greener, healthier and better prepared for the future and enabling people to work together to bring about change in their local area.



We help people improve their prospects...

By increasing confidence, skills, wellbeing and employability and helping those out of work find jobs in the green economy.



We help people protect the planet...

By supporting people and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, cut waste and take practical action to combat the climate and nature emergencies.

Fuel Poverty & Health

Groundwork Green Doctors



Part of the community charity, Groundwork London, Green Doctors are a team of expert energy advisers. For 19 years the Green Doctors have been helping households in London save money, stay warm and improve energy efficiency at home. **We provide free and impartial energy advice.**

We work in partnership with London Boroughs, Social Prescribing Link Workers, CA, and other organisations to deliver free home visits/phone consultations where we give advice on bills and provide referrals to further services to improve health and well-being of residents.



Green Doctors- Our aims



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Improve
health and
reduce the
impacts of
cold homes

Service user
Income
maximisation

Enable
behavioral
change and
taking action

What is Fuel Poverty?

A household spends more than 10% of their disposable income on fuel.

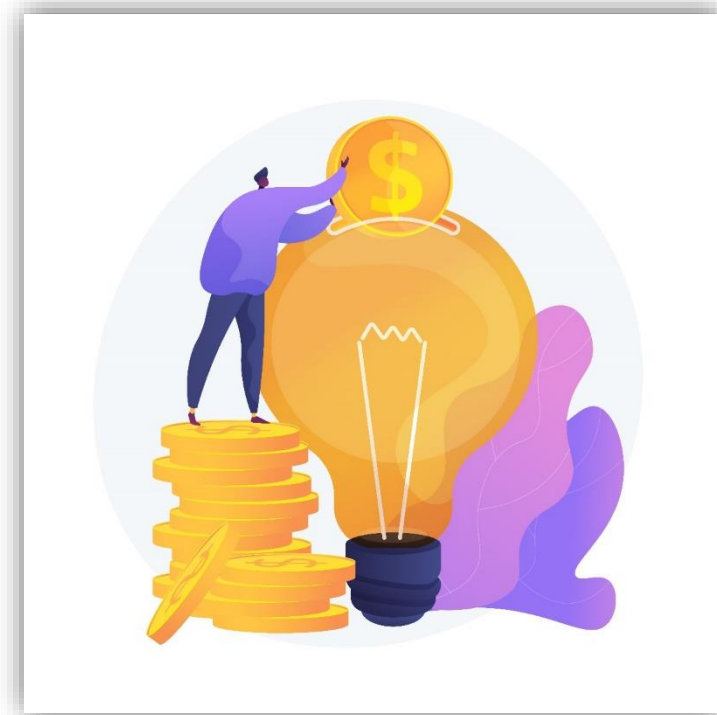
OR

If a household spent enough to properly heat their home, they would fall below the poverty line.

How many people are affected in England?

- Over 2.73 million households (2024)
- Almost 11.0 % of all households

After remaining stable from 2019, the proportion of fuel poor households has decreased since 2022.



Fuel Poverty Key Drivers



Energy Efficiency measures lifted 59,000 household out of fuel poverty between 2023 and 2024 .



Incomes grew in 2024, but this was partially offset by increased housing costs. Overall, these changes brought 52,000 households out of fuel poverty.



Energy Prices rose in 2024 after accounting for changes in rebates, moving 42,000 households into fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is often caused by a combination of all three key drivers. Low-income family with high energy bills living in a poorly insulated home.

Possible signs of Fuel Poverty



The Occupants

- Low income
- High fuel costs
- Fuel payment method
- Unemployed
- Age – 16-25-year-olds
- Older person
- Multi-person household – dependent children
- Medical condition
- Lack of knowledge/ attitudes towards efficiency

The Property

- Age
- Size
- Poorly insulated
- Solid walls
- Single glazed windows
- Inefficient heating system
- Off-gas network
- Tenure – private rented sector
- Damp, mould, condensation
- Poor roof, gutters, brickwork etc

What the householder may say



...about their home:

- It is usually too cold
- It is draughty
- Condensation is a problem
- Have mould stains on walls or curtains
- Need to wear a lot of clothing/blankets to keep warm
- Stay in bed to keep warm

...about their heating:

- Do not have it on that often
- Ration the heat
- Only heat one room
- Use portable bottled gas heaters
- Use electric fan and convector heaters rather than central heating
- Heating controls absent/not working/switched off



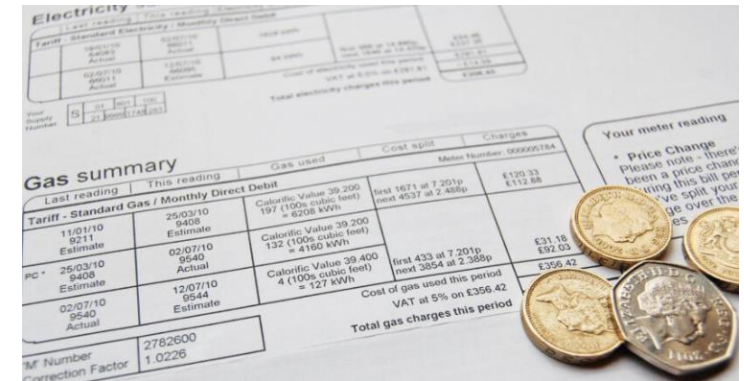
What the householder may say

...about their fuel bills:

- Cost in too high
- Getting into fuel debt
- I got inaccurate, estimate or incorrect bills
- Having to cut back on other spending to pay the gas and electricity bill
- Have had letters and calls from their supplier about owing money
- Uses prepayment meter to avoid incurring in debt
- Sometimes forgets to top up the meter

...about their health/that of others in the property:

- Often not well
- Have respiratory problems
- Children constantly have runny noses, rashes, ear infections, conjunctivitis/often absent from school
- Vulnerable older adults are at risk from abnormal low body temperature; **signs include** slurry speech, shallow breathing, pale, blue or ashy skin tone.



What You Might Encounter



What you may feel in a property

- Cold
- Large differences in temperatures between rooms
- Resident's hands cold to the touch
- Damp
- Sense of gloom
- Depressed atmosphere



What you may see in a property

- Children constantly have runny noses, rashes, ear infections, conjunctivitis
- Children often off school
- Children emotional/tired
- Mould stains on walls and curtains
- Peeling wallpaper paint
- Ventilation points blocked
- Householder wearing too much clothing



What You Might Encounter

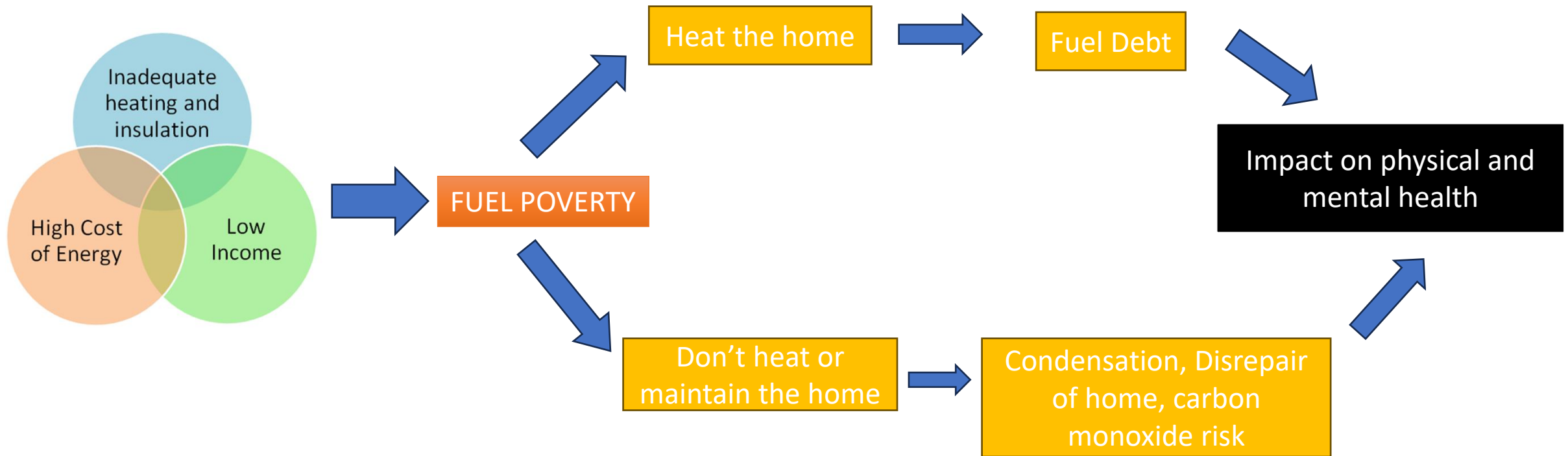


What you may notice about the heating

- Portable bottled gas heaters
- Partial or no fixed heating system
- Heating controls absent/not working/switched off
- Visual evidence that heating appliances are not being used e.g. dust on heating elements



The Links Between Fuel Poverty and Ill Health



Health Implications



- Increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- Higher blood pressure
- Increased risk of COPD, Asthma, and respiratory infections
- Worsening arthritis
- Falls and other accidents
- Excess winter deaths

Other impacts of cold homes

- Households have to make tough decisions about where to spend their income, e.g. choosing between heating and eating
- 'Stress and anxiety about unaffordable fuel bills
- Social isolation - less willing to invite friends and family to home
- Children struggling to complete homework



Our Advice



- Damp/Mould/Condensation
- Carbon Monoxide
- Behavioral Change
- Discounts and further support

Damp/Mould/Condensation



Rising damp: occurs when water from the ground rises up into the walls or floors because damp proof courses in walls or damp proof membranes in floors are either not present or faulty. It's typically found in ground floor rooms and can be identified by a musty smell and damp patches that don't dry. This will leave a “tide mark” about 1 m above the floor.



Penetrating damp (sometimes caused by disrepair): is caused by moisture entering the house through leaking water pipes, a damaged roof, blocked gutters, gaps around window frames and cracked or defective rendering and brickwork.



Damp/Mould/Condensation



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Condensation damp: The most common type of damp, which occurs when warm, moist air hits cold surfaces, causing water droplets to form. It's often found in poorly ventilated areas like kitchens and bathrooms. Is caused by water vapour generated by activities like cooking and bathing.



Condensation and Indoor Air Balance



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Heating

**The Perfect
Environment**

Insulation

Ventilation



Behavioral change: How we can reduce condensation



In the **Living Room & Bedroom:**

- Open window trickle vents during the day or when going out, or open windows for at least 10 minutes every day.
- Hang thick, heavy lined curtains during the winter to help keep the room warm.
- Don't put furniture, including beds, against any external walls and try to leave a gap between the wall and furniture to allow airflow.
- Buy a dehumidifier

In the **Kitchen:**

- Close internal doors whilst cooking and open a window
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Put lids on pans

Behavioral change: How we can reduce condensation



In the **Bathroom:**

- Open windows whilst bathing/washing and leave open for about 20 minutes after, if it is safe to do so
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Take shorter and cooler showers
- When running a bath put the cold water in first; this results in significantly less condensation
- Wipe down windows, mirrors/tiles/shower doors with a window squeegee and mop up the moisture with an absorbent cloth.

Decorating:

- Use mould-resistant paint on areas prone to mould such a ceiling above windows.
- When wallpapering use paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth
- Use thermal lining paper under wallpaper when decorating.

Possible health impacts of Fuel Poverty: Carbon Monoxide



Carbon monoxide/CO is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas produced when fuels are burned incorrectly, e.g. when there is insufficient oxygen.

Carbon monoxide enters our blood through the lungs and attaches to our haemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen around our body. It reduces the amount of oxygen in our blood.

CO is measured in parts per million (PPM). Prolonged exposure to levels of 10ppm or above has been shown to have adverse effects on our body and brain.

Symptoms of CO include:

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Breathlessness
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?



Carbon Monoxide



Although carbon monoxide is a danger to all homes, those in fuel poverty are at greater risk. Householders in fuel poverty may be:

- Unable to afford gas safety checks
- Living in energy inefficient homes which encourage CO risks
- Suffering from ill health, so may not be able to identify effects of CO
- Partaking in risky CO-related behaviours

CO in the home



- Be aware that CO can move between buildings, this could be between terraced properties, but CO could also move upwards, e.g. from a takeaway to a flat above.
- Certain behaviours may influence carbon monoxide exposure.
- Cooking with a large pot over multiple gas burners
- Using oversized pots for gas burners
- Putting tin foil around gas burners (intending to keep it clean)
- Heating the home using the grill or oven
- Using generators to heat or power the home in the event of a power cut, house flooding or house renovation, and the generator is incorrectly placed
- Smoking cigarettes or shish pipes indoors

Keeping Safe



- Think **C.O.M.A**
- **C** - Cohabitees/companions: Is anyone else in the property affected (including pets)?
- **O** – Outdoors: Do your symptoms improve when out of the building ('better outdoors')?
- **M** – Maintenance: Are your fuel-burning appliances and vents properly maintained?
- **A** – Alarm: Do you have a carbon monoxide alarm?

What to do?



- If a carbon monoxide alarm sounds or the householder believes there to be a leak
- Stop using all appliances and evacuate the property immediately (try to stay calm and avoid raising your heart rate)
- Call the National Gas Emergency Service number on **0800 111 999** to report the incident or the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300 363
- Do not go back into the property (wait for advice from the emergency services)
- Get immediate medical help

Testing the System



- CO alarms should be tested regularly, ideally every month.
- The majority of alarms will have a 'test' button, in which the householder holds down the button to ensure that it beeps.
- Testing sprays are also available for purchase. Please refer to instructional manuals to find out how best to test individual alarms.
- The testing of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms does not require specialist skills or knowledge and should be straightforward for householders to do.
- Landlords should consider providing residents with a demonstration and/or instructions to support resident understanding of how, and how often, to test their smoke alarms and make sure they are in working order.

Behavioural Change



Behavioural Change: Small Actions, Big Impact

Small changes in how we use energy at home can lead to **real savings over time** – both in **money and energy**.

To Save Energy, We Need to Understand:

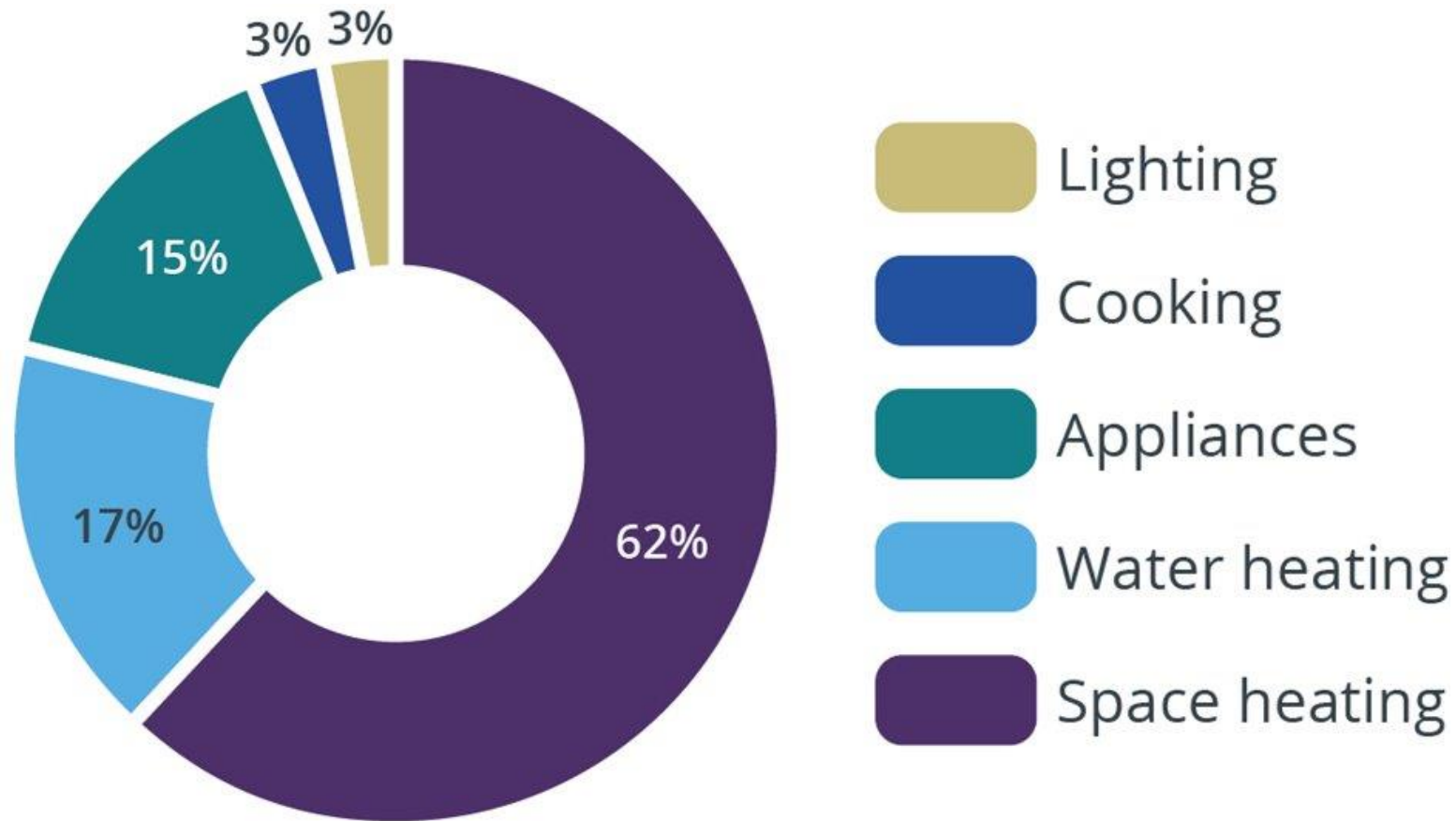
- ✓ How we use energy at home
- ✓ Where heat is lost
- ✓ Simple energy-saving tips



Energy Use in the Home



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Where does heat escape from the home?



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Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) measure the energy efficiency standard of homes.



Homes rated F or G are considered dangerously cold and a risk to health.

[Find an Energy Performance Certificate \(EPC\)](#)

Here are some of the energy saving tips we share with residents:

- ✓ Draught-proof your windows and doors-**potential saving of £ 85.**
- ✓ Switch appliances off standby-**potential savings £ 45 a year.**
- ✓ Use fewer, colder washes for your laundry-**potential saving a year £ 27.**
- ✓ Only boil as much water as you need in the kettle- **potential saving £ 10 a year.**



Illustration from vectorjuice on Freepik

Discounts available (eligibility criteria apply):



✓ **Warm Home Discount:**

£150 one off discount from your electricity bill over winter.

If eligible, you will automatically be identified and contacted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It will reopen in October 2025.

✓ **Winter Fuel Payment:** An annual payment between £100 to £300 depending on your individual circumstances.

If you were born on or before 22 September 1959.

If you're eligible, you'll get a letter in October or November saying how much you'll get. Most eligible people will be paid in November or December 2025.

✓ **Household Support Fund- Local Authorities**

Residents may be able to get help with essential costs from their local council. This is sometimes known as 'the Household Support Fund'. This could help if you're struggling to afford things like: energy and water bills, food, essential items.

Discounts available (eligibility criteria apply):



Financial support schemes -Thames Water

- ✓ **WaterHelp:** Offer a 50% discount on the whole bill to eligible low-income household.

If your bill is more than 5% of your net income, you may be eligible for WaterHelp. This is also dependent on the number of occupants at the property.

- ✓ **WaterSure:** Offer yearly cap to eligible residents that are on a water meter.

This scheme helps customers who are on a meter and struggling to pay their bill. It can also help if you're using more water than average due to a large family or medical condition.

To qualify for the scheme, someone in your household **must receive a means-tested benefit**. You will also **need to have a water meter** and either:

- A medical condition that requires extra water **or**
- Three or more children under the age of 19 living at the property making you eligible for child benefits

Priority Services Register



As part of their license obligations **domestic gas, electricity and water suppliers** must offer services to customers who are:

- Of state pension age
- Disabled
- Suffering from a chronic illness
- Have a visual or hearing impairment
- Are in a vulnerable situation / experiencing a life changing event (this could include customers with mental health issues or those with temporary injuries)

Among the services provided are:

- Password and bill nominee scheme
- Bills available in large print and Braille as well as talking bills
- Meter reading service
- Meter moving to accessible location (if possible)
- Updates prior to and during a power cut. Emergency assistance if required.
- Free gas safety check (subject to further criteria)



Energy Crisis & the state of the market



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❖ Fuel Prices

The cost of energy remains one of the main concerns for households. Rising prices continue to put pressure on already stretched budgets.

❖ Switching Suppliers

We support residents in exploring options for switching energy providers/tariffs.

When considering a switch, we help explain:

- Unit rates and **daily standing charges**
- **Exit fees**
- New smart **time-of-use tariffs**, which offer cheaper rates during off-peak hours

❖ Smart Meters

Installing a smart meter helps households:

- Monitor their energy use in real time
- Identify opportunities to reduce consumption and costs
- Take better control of their bills



Illustration by storyset on Freepik

Healthy Homes Ealing Service



The Healthy Homes Ealing service is the main support tool available to Ealing residents for help with energy concerns. They have access to:

- ✓ **Freephone Healthy Homes Advice Line**

Provide advice on domestic energy related queries, including information on local and national grant initiatives, this is available to all Ealing residents.

- ✓ **Green Doctor Home visit**

Eligible household receive a home visit from a qualified energy advisor (Green Doctor). During the appointment, Green Doctors will advise the individual about saving energy through installing energy efficiency measures, accessing grants and further support.



Ealing Healthy Homes -Eligibility Criteria for home visits



Resident of the London Borough of Ealing ONLY

AND one of the below:

- ✓ Fuel poor, on a low income (under £23,000), or in receipt of any means tested benefits;
- ✓ A long-term health condition
- ✓ People with a disability
- ✓ Older people (65+)
- ✓ Households with children under 10

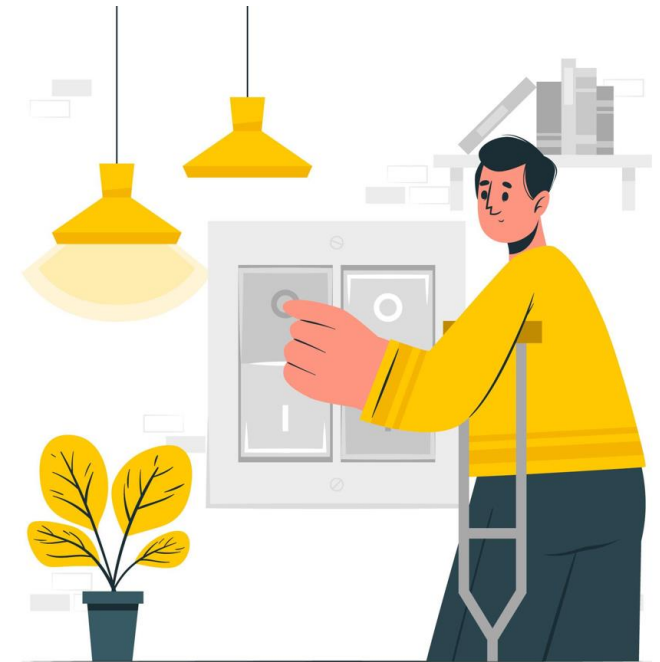


Illustration- Freepik

Green Doctors energy consultations: How we can help



During the home visit, the Green Doctor will help residents to:

- ✓ Personalised advice on energy bills- for example, help to understand confusing/incorrect bills
- ✓ Energy saving tips, encouraging behavioral change
- ✓ Financial help:
Supporting residents applying to discounts or other benefits may be entitled to:
 - ***Water Help (50 % discount on water bill)**
 - ***Water Sure (to cap the water bill)**
- ✓ **Priority Service Register-** a free utility support service to help people in vulnerable situations



Green Doctors energy consultations: How we can help



- ✓ Fuel debt management – Providing energy and water **debt advice** and supporting residents to **access grants**
- ✓ Help to apply to larger grants to improve home and heating efficiency (eg, boiler replacement, insulations, etc). For example the **ECO4 Scheme** that is a government initiative that aims to reduce carbon emissions and energy usage across the UK. It focuses on delivering energy efficiency upgrades to low income households, such as insulation and heating upgrades.
- ✓ Installing during the home visits free small energy-saving items such as **draft proofing strips, LED light bulbs/radiators panels, etc.**
- ✓ Signposting to other services for additional support with local organisations



How to make a referral/access to the Green Doctors service:



- ✓ **Freephone Healthy Homes Advice Line**

0800 083 2265 (Freephone number- Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

- ✓ **Green Doctor Home visit**

0800 083 2265 (Freephone number- Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Complete this online form: <https://groundwork.secure.force.com/enquiry/>

or email: greendoctorsldn@groundwork.org.uk

For more information visit:

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201099/energy_efficiency_advice

<https://london.greendoctors.org.uk/>

We accept self-referrals



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0300 365 3005

GreenDoctorsLDN@groundwork.org.uk

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Home

About Groundwork

Consent Verification Form

Contact

Register for your FREE Green Doctor consultation

Thank you for your interest in the Green Doctor services. Please complete and submit the form below and one of our Green Doctors will be in touch with you shortly. If you have any questions about the form, please call us on 0300 365 3005.

Please note we are no longer able to take Green Homes Grant enquiries via this enquiry form. If you are contacting us about the Green Homes Grant only please follow this link <https://surveys.est.org.uk/s/SustainableWarmth/>

If you are contacting us about the Green Homes Grant only, your enquiry may not be responded to.

Are you applying for yourself or referring someone else? *

--Select--
--Select--
Myself
Someone else

- ☐ Saving money on my fuel bills and grants
☐ Cold and damp issues in the home
☐ Something else

Where did you hear about this service? *

--Select--



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First Name *

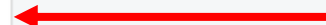
Last Name *

Phone Number * ⓘ

Alternative phone number (i.e. mobile) ⓘ

Email address

Postcode *



Formatted Postcode

☒ Please tick here to confirm the postcode is correct *

Please select your address *

- Select--
- Broadway Living Ltd, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London
- London Borough of Ealing, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London
- London Borough Of Ealing Reablement Service, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London
- Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London
- Rendezvous At Ealing Council Offices, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London



Resident's Feedback



"My flatmate and I found Ronald extremely knowledgeable, friendly and helpful. We are so grateful to be able to avail of this service, and are very pleased with the information and advice we received."

"I'm happy this service really help my family. Nuray was absolutely brilliant. She explained everything clearly, made me feel comfortable, and went above and beyond to support me. Thanks to her advice, I've already started making positive changes. I'm very grateful for her kindness and professionalism."

"I am beyond grateful for her help. Barbara's knowledge is impressive, and she was patient and kind throughout the process. Because of my memory issues, she wrote a detailed email I can refer to whenever needed. For the first time, I will be looking forward to my bills, as I am certain that with all the things I have learnt from Barbara, they will be significantly lower. I will definitely tell everyone I know about the Green Doctors. They are indeed lifesavers."

"Asking for help in times of hardship is difficult, so Nick, thank you for making it easier. I really appreciate all the work."

Green Doctors Flyer



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Healthy Homes Ealing



Call the Green Doctors

0800 083 2665

Struggling with your energy bills? **The call is free**

Our Green Doctors can help you:

- ✓ Reduce energy usage
- ✓ Install energy saving devices
- ✓ Tackle energy or water debt
- ✓ Priority Services Register

THE SERVICE IS FREE

Green Doctors are a part of Groundwork London, a charity that helps people save money, stay warm, and use less energy.

SCAN ME!



   **GREEN DOCTOR**

The money you deserve



If you're getting into debt over your energy bills, there may be grants that you can apply for. We'll check what support you are eligible for and help you apply for the money you deserve.

Energy saving tips

- ✓ Use energy-efficient lightbulbs
- ✓ Turn the thermostat down by 1°C
- ✓ Only boil as much water as needed in the kettle
- ✓ Turn appliances and chargers off at the plug



The service we provide

We provide energy efficiency guidance accessible to everyone. Support is available for vulnerable residents* to assist them in applying for:

- ✓ WaterSure, Water Plus
- ✓ Priority Services Register and connect them to additional resources for assistance.

*Eligibility applies

Groundwork London is a registered charity No. 1121105

To book your free advice session or for more information: 0800 083 2665

 [greendoctorsldn](#)  [GreenDoctorsLdn](#)

To request hard copies of the flyer, please email: carolina.castilla@groundwork.org.uk

Any Questions?



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