

# Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

2021 Update

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report is prepared in accordance with guidance issued to local authorities under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. The 'Act' recognises local authorities' ability to use their position to improve the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their areas and requires authorities to provide reports on what is being done and to report to the Secretary of State on progress in implementing related measures.
- 1.2. The report sets out the Council's current performance in terms of our population and household demographics; data concerning the energy efficiency and thermal quality of our residents' homes; the relationship between these and resulting levels of fuel poverty; and our proposals to improve health, housing standards and energy efficiency in the Borough.
- 1.3. The Council and its partners have been proactive in tackling the issues of cold homes and the impact they have on fuel poverty, health (including excess winter deaths) and carbon emissions through a variety of mechanisms, including:
  - Delivery of advice, assistance and measures through Warmer Homes Stafford, a partnership between the local authority and a specialist energy agent.
  - Promotion of low cost and free energy efficiency measures under the Energy Company Obligation.
  - Collaboration with other district and borough councils within Staffordshire, along with Staffordshire County Council, E. ON, Beat the Cold, Communitas Energy CIC and Affordable Warmth Solutions with National Grid.
  - Partnership working with the voluntary, community, social enterprise and health sectors; and with private and social housing landlords.
  - Supporting the local 'green' supply chain.
  - Enforcement of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System in relation to cold homes.
- 1.4. This report sets out the actions the Council intends to take to continue improving the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in the area.

## 2. Our Ambitions and Priorities

- 2.1. The Council's [Corporate Business Plan 2021-2024](#) sets out our vision for “A prosperous and attractive Borough with strong communities” and is a three-year plan for “how we will continue to deliver and sustain economic growth, respect our environment, support our communities and ensure that the Borough is a great place in which to live, work and visit.”
- 2.2. To ensure the Council achieves its strategic objectives within the plan, key pieces of work in respect of Home Energy Conservation are informed and shaped accordingly:
  - 2.2.1. “To improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing”.

We will continue with a ‘Health in All’ approach with our partners, ensuring that the health of local people is paramount in everything we do – this is a firm part of our agenda when considering the negative health impacts of cold homes and in preparing our localised schemes for tackling fuel poverty and improving housing standards.

We encourage and support our residents to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and lifestyle – equipping people with the right information advice and guidance to manage their energy costs and consumption and to plan for the future maintenance of their homes is an important part of building resilience and sustainability into our communities.

To work towards everyone having access to safe and suitable accommodation we will provide support to enable residents to choose a good quality home, where we encourage and promote high standards, in particular in the private rented sector and use our enforcement powers to remedy poor conditions. A new Housing and Wellbeing Strategy is being developed and will include policies on affordable warmth, carbon reduction and fuel poverty.

- 2.2.2. “To tackle Climate Change by implementing our Climate Change and Green Recovery objectives.”

[The Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy 2020-2040](#) outlines how we will work with our partners and community to achieve a more sustainable borough. We have committed to supporting the reduction of carbon emissions from domestic properties. Through advice, information, and access to funding we will enable residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes with low carbon heating solutions, better insulation and behaviour changes.

Our green recovery plans will align economic recovery measures with the achievement of long-term climate change goals. We will focus on economic growth through the promotion of green jobs and technology, recognising the importance of the local energy efficiency retrofit supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings.

[The Local Plan for Stafford Borough](#) is currently being reviewed. A key objective is to promote sustainable construction and house building and encourage renewable energy production. The Plan will include policies supporting the building of sustainable and carbon neutral homes and designs for community heating.

### 3. Data and evidence of need

- 3.1. In 2015, the Building Research Establishment (BRE) were commissioned to undertake a stock survey for housing within Stafford Borough. This identified areas with high numbers of households in fuel poverty by comparing Energy Performance Certificate ratings with local indices of deprivation and other related data.
- 3.2. More recently, Stafford Borough Council has been working to identify non-gas households. The gas network maps have been combined with data from online sources and the BRE Stock Survey to identify wards and streets with higher levels of fuel poverty, low income and deprivation than other parts of the borough.
- 3.3. As part of the Warmer Homes Stafford programme, our specialist energy agent engages with a variety of organisations across the Borough to identify users of other services who may also be households living in fuel poverty. Areas where households receive WHS measures are investigated to detect neighbouring, eligible, fuel-poor properties.
- 3.4. In 2021, the method used to measure fuel poverty in England is changing to use the Low-Income, Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator, replacing the previously used Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator.

Under the LILEE indicator, a household is fuel poor if:

- The home has a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below, and;
- when the resident spends the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

There are 3 important elements in determining whether a household is fuel poor:

1. Household income.
2. Household energy requirements.
3. Fuel prices.

Data is not yet available at local authority level under the new LILEE indicator. The most recently published data using the LIHC methods indicates that more than one in ten Stafford households are living in fuel poverty. This is higher than the national average<sup>1</sup>.

- 3.5. The typical demographic approaching the WHS advice service is people over age 65 and those with long-term health conditions. We are seeing an increasing ageing population in Stafford Borough. By 2030, it is predicted that there will be 6,000 additional people aged 75 and over. Stafford has a higher proportion of lone pensioner households compared to the national average. Additionally, there is a higher proportion of residents in the Borough with a limiting long-term illness compared to the national average. As a result of these forecasts, the demands on the service are predicted to increase which suggests there may be more households living in fuel poverty.
- 3.6. A large number of homes in the borough are located in rural areas, where houses are typically older and are more likely to use traditional (solid fuel) methods to heat

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<sup>1</sup> (Staffordshire County Council, 2018) *Stafford District Data Pack*. Retrieved from <https://www.staffordshireobservatory.org.uk/documents/District-Borough-Data-Packs/2018/Stafford-Data-Pack-2018.pdf>

homes than in urban areas. As a result, there are more homes using oil and solid fuel in Stafford Borough (9%) than nationally and regionally (both 4%).

- 3.7. As a result of Covid-19, the cohort of households approaching the WHS advice service has changed in the last year. We are seeing an increasing number of young, employed, single parent families and couples with children contacting WHS for support. It is understood that this shift is being experienced on a national scale for energy advice services and is linked to reduced incomes due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

## 4. Delivery Mechanisms

### 4.1. Warmer Homes Stafford

Stafford Borough Council works in partnership with a specialist energy agent to deliver our [Warmer Homes Stafford](#) advice service. The scheme provides a platform for residents to access a range of energy saving advice (in line with guidance on the health risks associated with cold homes from the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#)), heating and insulation grants, and measures which support carbon reduction.

Warmer Homes Stafford is a free to access, specialised energy advice service that provides advisory services to residents on how to save energy. This is provided over the telephone, in writing via email and letters, at public events, via health and voluntary sector partnerships or networking, and during home visits.

The Warmer Homes Stafford scheme offers residents a telephone and email advice service with a range of support and information. This includes advice on energy efficiency measures, support to access grants and funding, help with heating systems, how to effectively use heating controls, signing residents up to the Priority Services Register, checking eligibility for grants and government schemes such as the Warm Homes Discount and ensuring the resident is on the best energy deal from their supplier. The service also applies for grants on behalf of the householders, including hardship and energy efficiency funds.

To promote the service, Stafford Borough Council has a dedicated information page on its website with contact links and externally, there is a dedicated [website](#) for the service, hosted by our specialist partner. Prior to Covid-19, the Council would work in Stafford Town Market Square, the Guildhall Shopping Centre and other community assets such as Rising Brook Baptist Church and Stone Community Hub to put on public displays, to promote the scheme to residents, and to host meetings and networking events; activity which we intend to resume when it is safe to do so and in line with government guidance.

Warmer Homes Stafford ordinarily operates at several outreach events in partnership with the Council or third sector organisations, such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Staffordshire Community Foundation, to bring advice and support to the community through a series of events and training/briefing sessions to frontline workers.

As a result of Covid-19, in-person events have not taken place throughout 2020/21 but the Warmer Homes Stafford team continue to work proactively to provide advice and support to the community. In November 2020, the Council set up a directory of signposting information, advice and guidance online in response to feedback from

community groups, parish councils and statutory partners, in relation to community needs arising through impacts of Covid-19. A webinar on financial distress and hardship was organised for residents. A member of the Warmer Homes Stafford team attended and provided information about the service to the audience.

Stafford Borough Council works with partners to create promotional material, which includes posters, flyers, leaflets, press releases, social media posts and website development. These materials are distributed at events, during home visits, through flyer handouts at public events, displayed in the Council offices and shared online.

Due to Covid-19, home visits were also not possible in 2020/21. However, the Warmer Homes Stafford team have adapted to new working methods and have been able to provide more regular and long-term support over the telephone to those individuals with complex situations.

The Council's [Housing Assistance Policy](#) makes capital funding available to provide Fuel Poverty Top-up grants. These assist households in fuel poverty to meet their contributions towards the costs of heating and insulation measures when there are shortfalls in external funding sources.

#### 4.2. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. Following the Spring 2018 consultation, the Government set out in its response that ECO3 will fully focus on Affordable Warmth – low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households.

The ECO “Local Authority Flexible Eligibility” programme allows councils to make declarations determining that certain households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes and vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, are referred to ECO obligated suppliers for support under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO.

Councils involved in the Flexible Eligibility programme are required to issue a Statement of Intent that they are going to identify households as eligible, and the criteria they are going to use; and a declaration that the authority has been consulted on the installation of measures in a home. Stafford Borough Council published its most recent [Statement of Intent](#) in September 2020.

#### 4.3. Staffordshire Warmer Homes

We also work collaboratively with other district and borough councils within Staffordshire, along with Staffordshire County Council, E. ON, Beat the Cold, Communitas Energy CIC and Affordable Warmth Solutions with National Grid. The consortium is known collectively as [Staffordshire Warmer Homes](#) and delivers several successful countywide schemes to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. Through our WHS advice service, residents with identified needs are assisted with eligibility screening and referred seamlessly to Staffordshire Warmer Homes to receive a range of funded energy efficiency measures.

Staffordshire Warmer Homes projects have been funded as follows:

#### 4.3.1. Warm Homes Fund - Category 1:

- £3.7 million provided by Affordable Warmth Solutions on behalf of Cadent and E.ON for measures across Staffordshire
- Approximately £462,500 is anticipated to be spent in Stafford Borough

#### 4.3.2. Warm Homes Fund - Category 2:

- £562,000 provided by Affordable Warmth Solutions and matched by Energy Company Obligation monies and Communitas Energy CIC, providing a total amount of £1.41 million for measures across Staffordshire
- Approximately £176,000 expected to be spent in Stafford Borough

#### 4.3.3. Green Homes Grants

Of the £2bn Green Homes Grant scheme introduced in summer 2020, £500m was assigned for Local Authority Delivery (LAD). LAD enables local authorities to bid for grant funding to support low-income households in their area with energy efficiency and low carbon heating upgrades. £200m was made available through local authority grant competitions in 2020, known as phases 1A and 1B and £300m was allocated under Phase 2 between the five regional Local Energy Hubs.

Staffordshire Warmer Homes was successful in its consortium application for Green Homes Grants LADS Phase 1. Since the end of 2020, the programme has been live, receiving applications and delivering measures throughout Staffordshire. Eligible households can receive a variety of measures from the following: External and Cavity Wall Insulation; Loft Insulation; Underfloor Insulation; Room in Roof Insulation; Air Source Heat Pumps; Solar Thermal; Windows and Doors; Heating Controls and Solar PV. Many households can receive multiple measures to retrofit their homes. The project ensures the average spend of measures per household is £10,000.

Recently, Stafford Borough Council received its allocation for Green Homes Grants LAD Phase 2 via the Midlands Energy Hub. Staffordshire Warmer Homes has received approval from the Midlands Energy Hub for the consortium to deliver a Phase 2 project collaboratively. Similarly to Phase 1, the same measures will be available for households at the same average spend level per household. Where funding for Phase 1 is taken from a combined Staffordshire-wide pot, in Phase 2 each district and borough council will retain its individually allocated funding level in the delivery of the project.

- Green Homes Grants - Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS) - Phase 1:
  - £920,000 provided by BEIS for measures across Staffordshire
  - Approximately £115,000 projected to be spent on measures in Stafford Borough
- Green Homes Grants - Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS) - Phase 2:
  - £605,000 provided by BEIS and released via Midlands Energy Hub for measures delivered in Stafford Borough.

Stafford Borough Council could not manage the delivery of a scheme such as GHG: LAD alone; it is only by virtue of the Staffordshire Warmer Homes consortium that we are able to offer this funding. A barrier we face in applying for funding alone is the limited time available to complete proper procurement in relation to securing funding and spending deadlines.

Through the Staffordshire Warmer Homes schemes, it is predicted that up to 58 measures funded by Green Homes Grants will be installed in homes across Stafford Borough per year, dependent on measure mix and the option of multiple measures being delivered in one household.

## 5. Delivery Performance

### 5.1. Warmer Homes Stafford

In 2020/21, the Warmer Homes Stafford scheme:

- Supported 566 individual households with advice, guidance, and referrals for measures.
- Referred 386 households for financial help with:
  - Covid-19 relief support through the Staffordshire Community Foundation. Up to £200 was available for households financially affected by Covid-19.
  - Fuel vouchers
  - Assistance with fuel bills by negotiating payment plans, debt resolution and changing tariffs.
- Made 109 onward referrals for part / wholly funded energy efficiency measures.
- Added 95 vulnerable households to the Priority Services Register.
- Employed 4 additional members of staff to meet the unusually high demand on the service because of Covid-19.
- Trained staff members to a minimum of NVQ Level 3 in Providing Energy Advice. The team has also created its own CPD training on fuel poverty.

### 5.2. The Energy Company Obligation

Since 2018/19 to May 2021, there have been 139 Flexible Eligibility (ECO) declarations issued to households. 73 have been issued for low-income, vulnerable households and 66 were issued for fuel poor households, to identify these residents as eligible for ECO funded measures under local terms.

### 5.3. Staffordshire Warmer Homes

Up to the end of 2020/21, the Staffordshire Warmer Homes schemes have:

- Installed 34 first time central heating systems into homes
- Replaced 28 boilers
- Referred 3 households to Communitas Energy CIC to receive Air Source Heat Pump installations
- Installed 1 measure through the Green Homes Grant LADS Phase 1 project
- Generated a pipeline of 12 further eligible, funded measures through the Green Homes Grant LADS Phase 1 project
- Reduced CO2 emissions through supporting the delivery of insulation measures

5.4. The following figures are forecasted targets for Stafford Borough by the end of each Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme:

- Warm Homes Fund Category 1 – 100 First Time Central Heating Systems

- Warm Homes Fund Category 2 – 8 Air Source Heat Pumps
- Green Homes Grants - Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS) Phase 1 – 18 measures in 14 homes
- Green Homes Grants - Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS) Phase 2 – 14 External Wall Insulation, 14 Air Source Heat Pumps, 14 Solar PV, 12 Lower Cost Measures

## 6. Partnerships and Stakeholders

### 6.1. Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Health partners

Warmer Homes Stafford is linked with local hospital discharge teams, elderly care facilitators from the NHS Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust Staying Well Service and NHS therapy centre, Greyfriars. The Warmer Homes Stafford service also communicates messages to the voluntary sector through the VCSE Locality Forum hosted by Support Staffordshire.

### 6.2. Local Economy

Stafford Borough Council is a member of the [Staffordshire Business and Environment Network \(SBEN\)](#). The Network help to enhance skills and knowledge through environmental training and counselling and provides businesses with practical advice on developing and implementing environmental policies as well as promoting examples of good environmental practice. The group have created a Low Carbon Business Enterprise Programme and part of this programme supports the decarbonisation of buildings. Stafford Borough Council attends events held by the SBEN and refers businesses to the Network for grant funding to support low carbon initiatives.

Stafford Borough Council is part of the Staffordshire Warmer Homes consortium, working with Beat the Cold, Staffordshire County Council, E. ON and Communitas Energy CIC to deliver the Warm Homes Fund Categories 1 and 2 and the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Schemes Phases 1 and 2.

### 6.3. Private Landlords

Stafford Borough Council has a partnership with the National Landlord Association to run regular landlord forums where changes in law are discussed. Where appropriate, the Council issues press releases, emails and letters and provides information on its website on changes to standards and any other issues relevant to private landlords and tenants.

### 6.4. Social Housing

#### 6.4.1. Partnership working with Registered Housing Providers

The Warmer Homes Stafford scheme does not directly target social housing tenants. Instead, it prefers to work more closely with registered housing providers to support them in delivering measures and updating their properties in line with their set maintenance plans. Where funding schemes are open to social housing residents, it is found that the level of engagement is similar to that of residents in the private rented sector.

Communication with registered housing providers is currently being undertaken by our specialist energy advice agent on behalf of Stafford

Borough Council, through the Staffordshire Warmer Homes schemes to explore opportunities to install energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures in social housing. The partnership is working to develop relationships with registered housing providers to install measures into eligible households and retrofit homes where the EPC rating is D or lower.

As part of the Warm Homes Fund Category 1 scheme, we successfully liaised with a registered housing provider who supported permissions for a community scheme, connecting several of their properties to the gas mains and installing first time central heating systems. This approach benefitted more fuel poor households than another part of the Warm Homes Fund project, which had delivered numerous one-off connections to individual properties.

#### 6.4.2. Shared information and understanding

To access the information and knowledge that we would expect to need for social housing retrofit projects, on-going and proactive partnership working between Stafford Borough Council and registered housing providers with homes in the borough is essential. Whilst Energy Performance Certificate data is publicly available, there is a requirement to engage effectively with providers, and to have access to their stock condition survey to make meaningful and jointly relevant, strategic delivery plans.

With mutual commitment to key objectives relating to fuel poverty and carbon reduction we hope to develop greater understanding and insight into matters such as stock condition; property data; provider approaches to procurement; costings; alignment with existing internal maintenance/upgrade plans; tenant engagement and management plans. To date, there is limited alignment for social providers between energy efficiency retrofit, and maintenance plans.

#### 6.4.3. Challenges

As part of the Warm Homes Fund Category 1 project, connecting homes to the gas mains and installing first time central heating systems, the Staffordshire Warmer Homes partnership is focussing on delivering measures via community schemes: connecting a whole street or estate to the gas mains. Where successful, this has resulted in more residents benefitting from the scheme and whole communities being alleviated from fuel poverty.

In practice, the delivery of a community scheme can be very difficult. For the scheme to be financially viable, approximately 90% of homes on the targeted street / estate need to sign up for connections. This can create barriers where a small number of residents choose not to engage and / or a large proportion of properties are rented; the need to seek approval from the landlord can elongate the process. Effective partnership working with registered providers is a welcome solution to this; challenges remain with properties rented from private landlords.

The Warm Homes Fund Category 2 project, funding 120 air source heat pumps across Staffordshire presents challenges in finding the most suitable property type to receive this measure and achieve the required outcomes. In practical terms, some properties simply do not have enough outside space to store the heat pump, for example, in blocks of flats or terraced houses.

The approach to retrofit change for leaseholders in mixed tenure blocks is different to the approach for residents who are renting their home. Liaising closely with registered housing providers throughout the process of works encourages cooperation. The challenge occurs in the time required for housing providers to complete a Section 20 (Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) consultation for the property they wish to improve. The minimum timescales for statutory consultation often do not fit within the tight timescales of funding periods. This can discourage registered housing providers from engaging in government funded projects.

## 7. Local Green Supply Chain

- 7.1. As part of the regeneration programme for Stafford Town Centre, we are working with local businesses and stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce, to understand how we can support the local supply chain in public sector projects.
- 7.2. All installers employed through E. ON's installer framework for the Staffordshire Warmer Homes projects are required to be PAS2035 compliant. This includes Trustmark registration.
- 7.3. Within the Climate Change and Green Recovery Strategy 2020-2040, we have committed to focus on economic growth through the promotion of green jobs and technology.

## 8. Enforcement of MEES

### 8.1. Resources

- 8.1.1. The Housing Standards Team is a sub-team of the wider Health and Housing Team at Stafford Borough Council. The Lead Officer for Housing Standards is responsible for leading on enforcement of the Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).
- 8.1.2. The Housing Options sub team sits alongside Housing Standards. This setup enables the Council to take a holistic approach to housing issues. The sub-teams collaborate to provide residents with advice on housing standards as an upstream homelessness prevention approach. In December 2019, the Options team recruited a Housing Solutions Officer who works to improve the council's relationship with private landlords. The objective of the role is to find more housing options for residents who are homeless or potentially homeless, as well as increasing communication with landlords and tenants to improve knowledge and awareness of housing standards legislation.

### 8.2. Challenges

- 8.2.1. A key barrier Stafford Borough Council faces is limited staffing resources. We would need to conduct a cost benefit analysis of the impact of enforcement before undertaking specific actions to proactively enforce MEES. We would also need to proactively identify non-compliant properties and landlords as we currently do not have access to this information. We will keep under review any opportunities to bid for relevant funding and support, or to work in partnership which may enable us to overcome these barriers.
- 8.2.2. Stafford Borough Council does not currently directly target properties which do not comply with MEES due to prioritisation of resources but addresses

concerns where it becomes aware of such properties following the normal course of housing standards or housing advice cases. Advice and enforcement is provided if determined at an inspection conducted by the Housing Standards team. In these instances, the Council's [Enforcement](#) and [Housing Assistance Policies](#) also apply.

## 9. Smart Metering

- 9.1. As part of the delivery of Warmer Homes Stafford, smart meters are not actively promoted to residents accessing the service. However, where enquiries are received in relation to smart meters, impartial advice is given. WHS utilise materials from Smart Energy GB and provide these to residents who have enquired about wanting a smart meter.

## 10. Future Schemes and Wider Incentives

- 10.1. We will continue to access further schemes, and / or successors to current schemes.
- 10.2. Through the Staffordshire Warmer Homes consortium, we will actively seek additional funds to provide support to residents in saving energy and reduce carbon production, as and when these become available.

## HECA Report 2021

### Current Performance Data

#### ECO measures installed in households

| Area Name     | Carbon Saving Target (CERO) | Carbon Savings Community (CSCO) | Affordable Warmth (HHCRO) | ECO measures installed | Households with at least one usual resident | ECO measures per 1,000 households |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Stafford      | 2,020                       | 212                             | 1,565                     | 3,797                  | 57,733                                      | 65.8                              |
| Staffordshire | 15,819                      | 3,236                           | 15,076                    | 34,131                 | 366,751                                     | 93.1                              |
| West Midlands | 100,464                     | 63,852                          | 196,038                   | 360,354                | 2,366,567                                   | 152.3                             |
| England       | 874,183                     | 402,049                         | 1,194,572                 | 2,470,804              | 22,884,180                                  | 108.0                             |

(BEIS, 2021)

#### Households in receipt of ECO measures

| Area Name     | Households in receipt of ECO measures | Households with at least one usual resident | Households in receipt of ECO measures per 1,000 households |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stafford      | 2,927                                 | 57,733                                      | 50.7                                                       |
| Staffordshire | 26,239                                | 366,751                                     | 71.5                                                       |
| West Midlands | 250,357                               | 2,366,567                                   | 105.8                                                      |
| England       | 125,419                               | 22,884,180                                  | 78.4                                                       |

(BEIS, 2021)

#### Mean Domestic Gas Consumption

| Area Name     | Mean Domestic Gas Consumption (kWh) |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Stafford      | 14,036                              |
| West Midlands | 13,737                              |
| England       | 13,516                              |

(BEIS, 2019)

#### Average Domestic Electricity Consumption

| Area Name     | Mean Domestic Electricity Consumption (kWh) |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Stafford      | 3,677                                       |
| West Midlands | 3,615                                       |
| England       | 3,611                                       |

(BEIS, 2019)

## Fuel Poverty

In 2021, the method used to measure fuel poverty in England is changing to use the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator, rather than the old Low Income High Costs (LIHC) indicator.

Under the LILEE indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- They are living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below and
- When they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

There are 3 important elements in determining whether a household is fuel poor:

4. Household income
5. Household energy requirements
6. Fuel prices

(BEIS, 2021)

Data is not yet available at local authority level under the new LILEE indicator.

Most recent data published that uses the former LIHC indicator is as follows:

More than one in ten Stafford households are living in fuel poverty. This is higher than the national average. (Staffordshire County Council, 2018)

### Households in Fuel Poverty

| Area name     | Number of households | Number of households in fuel poverty | Proportion of households fuel poor (%) |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Stafford      | 59,511               | 8,493                                | 14.3%                                  |
| Staffordshire | 379,914              | 57,618                               | 15.2%                                  |
| West Midlands | 2,454,896            | 429,730                              | 17.5%                                  |
| England       | 23,661,751           | 3,175,979                            | 13.4%                                  |

(BEIS, 2021)

24% of the Borough's LSOAs have higher levels of fuel poverty than the borough-wide, county, regional and national averages. (BEIS, 2021)

## Borough Profile

### Population

Stafford Borough is home to 137,280 people. The population has increased by nearly 4% since 2014. (ONS, 2019)

### Demographics

The overall population of Stafford is projected to increase between 2017 and 2027 by 3% with a significant growth in people aged 65 and over (17%) and aged 85 and over (37%). The rate of increase in the number of older people in Stafford is faster than the England average and equates to 1,300 additional residents aged 85 and over by 2027.

5% of Stafford residents (7,100 people) live within the most deprived national quintile.

The dependency ratio for older people in Stafford is 36 older people for every 100 people of working age which is higher than England. (Staffordshire County Council, 2018)

### Household Profile

| Indicator                                                               | Period | Stafford | West Midlands | England |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------|---------------|---------|
| Lone parent households. % of households                                 | 2011   | 5.4      | 7.5           | 7.1     |
| Household overcrowding. % of households                                 | 2011   | 2        | 4.6           | 4.8     |
| % of children in low income families (under 16)                         | 2016   | 10.9%    | 20.3%         | 17%     |
| % of older people in poverty: income deprivation affecting older people | 2019   | 8.3      | 10            | 14.2    |

(Public Health England, 2021)

### Employment Rates

75.8% of 16–64-year-olds in Stafford Borough are in employment. This is higher than both regional and national levels (73.7% and 75.4% respectively).

| Indicator           | Stafford (No.) | Stafford (%) | West Midlands (%) | Great Britain (%) |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Economically Active | 66,900         | 78.9         | 78                | 79.1              |
| In Employment       | 64,500         | 75.8         | 73.7              | 75.4              |
| Employees           | 59,300         | 69.7         | 64.4              | 65.2              |
| Self Employed       | 5,200          | #            | 9.2               | 9.9               |
| Unemployed          | 2,400          | 3.6          | 5.3               | 4.6               |

(Nomis, 2020)

Around 24% (31,900) of the population of Stafford are estimated to be financially stressed, i.e. find it difficult or very difficult to cope on their current income. (Staffordshire County Council, 2018)

The gap in the employment rate between those with a long-term health condition and the overall employment rate is higher in Stafford (12.7) than the gap regionally (9.9) and nationally (10.6). (Public Health England, 2021)

### Health of Population

Life expectancy at birth in Stafford for both males (80.3 years) and females (84.2) is higher than the national averages (79.8 and 83.4 respectively), and similar for females to the national average at 83 years. (Public Health England, 2021)

### Excess Winter Deaths

An estimated 28,300 excess winter deaths occurred in England and Wales in winter 2019 to 2020, which was 19.6% higher than winter 2018 to 2019.

Overall, the excess winter mortality index in 2019 to 2020 for England was higher for males than females for the first time since 1994-95.

Respiratory diseases continued to be the leading cause of excess winter deaths that occurred in 2019 to 2020.

When using deaths data including COVID-19 there were an estimated 8,700 EWD during the 2019 to 2020 winter. This is the lowest number recorded since the data time series began in 1950 to 1951. However, the low estimate is explained by the comparison with the large number of COVID-19 deaths that occurred mainly in the non-winter months April to July, rather than an exceptionally low number of winter deaths. (ONS, 2021)

The EWD Index (below) is calculated as excess winter deaths divided by the average non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage. The percentage of EWD in Stafford Borough was significantly lower than rates in both the West Midlands and England.

| <b>Excess Winter Deaths Index<br/>(Aug 2018 - Jul 2019)</b> | <b>Stafford</b> | <b>West Midlands</b> | <b>England</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|
|                                                             | 6.6%            | 13.9%                | 15.1%          |

(ONS, 2020)

### Mental Health

| <b>Indicator</b>                                               | <b>Period</b> | <b>Stafford</b> | <b>West Midlands</b> | <b>England</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <b>Emergency Hospital Admissions for Intentional Self Harm</b> | 2019-20       | 273.5           | 189.1                | 192.6          |
| <b>Suicide rate (persons)</b>                                  | 2017-19       | 13.1            | 10.2                 | 10.1           |
| <b>% of common mental disorders in population aged 16+</b>     | 2017          | 14.1            | 17.7                 | 16.9           |
| <b>% reporting depression or anxiety</b>                       | 2016-17       | 12.9            | 14.1                 | 13.7           |

(Public Health England, 2021)

## Age of Housing Stock

In 2012, more than 18% of dwellings in Stafford Borough were constructed prior to 1930, a time period where dwellings are likely to have solid walls or hard to heat cavities.

| Property Build Periods | Stafford |        | Staffordshire (%) | West Midlands (%) | England (%) |
|------------------------|----------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                        | No.      | %      |                   |                   |             |
| <b>Pre 1900</b>        | 6,320    | 11.19% | 11.37%            | 11.93%            | 16.25%      |
| <b>1900 – 1918</b>     | 1,820    | 3.22%  | 3.98%             | 4.71%             | 5.58%       |
| <b>1919 – 1929</b>     | 2,130    | 3.77%  | 3.40%             | 5.83%             | 5.32%       |
| <b>1930 – 1939</b>     | 4,320    | 7.65%  | 8.21%             | 12.53%            | 11.19%      |
| <b>1945 – 1954</b>     | 5,090    | 9.02%  | 7.93%             | 8.21%             | 7.12%       |
| <b>1955 – 1964</b>     | 8,130    | 14.40% | 13.61%            | 12.76%            | 10.95%      |
| <b>1965 – 1972</b>     | 7,220    | 12.79% | 14.43%            | 12.27%            | 10.52%      |
| <b>1973 – 1982</b>     | 6,590    | 11.67% | 12.74%            | 10.03%            | 9.85%       |
| <b>1983 – 1992</b>     | 4,150    | 7.35%  | 7.86%             | 6.96%             | 7.62%       |
| <b>1993 – 1999</b>     | 3,360    | 5.95%  | 6.19%             | 5.37%             | 5.54%       |
| <b>2000 – 2009</b>     | 5,220    | 9.25%  | 7.80%             | 7.08%             | 7.75%       |
| <b>2010 – 2012</b>     | 500      | 0.89%  | 0.98%             | 1.06%             | 1.30%       |
| <b>Unknown</b>         | 1,610    | 2.85%  | 1.49%             | 1.28%             | 1.01%       |

(Valuation Office Agency, 2012)

## Housing Delivery

Within its Local Plan 2011-2031, Stafford Borough Council has committed to delivering 500 new homes annually (Stafford Borough Council, 2014). The Local Plan for Stafford Borough is currently being reviewed. The New Local Plan 2020-2040 will include a key objective to promote sustainable construction and house building and encourage renewable energy production. The Plan will include policies supporting the building of sustainable and carbon neutral homes and designs for community heating. (Stafford Borough Council, 2021)

Since 2011, 5,582 new homes have been delivered in the Borough, with an average of 620 homes delivered every year.

| Year                          | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | Total | Average |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| <b>No. of Homes Delivered</b> | 425     | 306     | 411     | 428     | 688     | 1,010   | 863     | 699     | 752     | 5582  | 620     |

(Stafford Borough Council, 2020)

## Urban-Rural Distribution

There are approximately 43,300 people in Stafford living in rural areas, which equates to 32.2% of the population (Staffordshire County Council, 2018). This is significantly higher than the proportion of people living in rural areas across the West Midlands (15%) and England (17%). Research conducted by the National Housing Federation shows that rural areas have suffered from a lack of investment in new homes and the improvement of existing homes. Rural areas typically have older housing that use traditional, often more expensive, methods to heat homes than urban homes (National Housing Federation, 2018).

## Housing Tenure

As shown in the table below, Stafford has a significantly higher percentage of owner-occupied homes than across England. Levels of social and private rented properties are subsequently lower in Stafford than England.

| Indicator               | Stafford |      | England    |      |
|-------------------------|----------|------|------------|------|
|                         | No.      | %    | No.        | %    |
| <b>Social Housing</b>   | 8,719    | 14%  | 4,174,286  | 17%  |
| <b>Owner-Occupied</b>   | 46,877   | 76%  | 15,276,733 | 63%  |
| <b>Privately Rented</b> | 5,853    | 10%  | 4,807,635  | 20%  |
| <b>Total Households</b> | 61,444   | 100% | 24,258,654 | 100% |

(ONS, 2019) (ONS, 2021)

## Central Heating

Stafford Borough has a similar proportion of homes on the gas mains as regional and national figures. The proportion of homes using electricity as a heating source is slightly lower in Stafford than regionally and nationally.

The number of homes in Stafford using oil and other heating types is more than double the proportion as the West Midlands and England.

## Proportion of Households with Central Heating Types

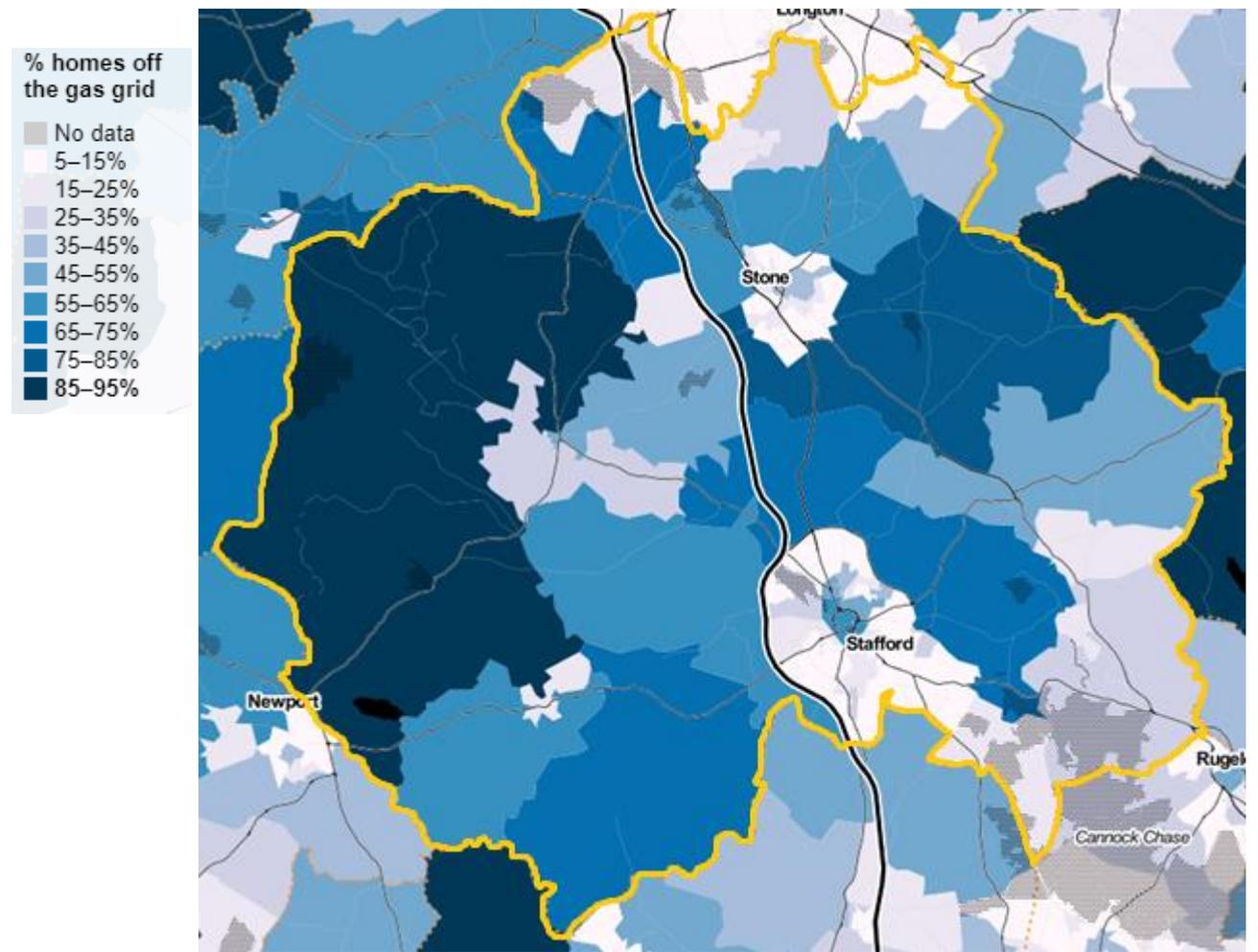
| Method of Heating / Fuel Type   | Stafford (%) | West Midlands (%) | England (%) |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <b>Community Heating Scheme</b> | 1%           | 2%                | 4%          |
| <b>Electricity</b>              | 8%           | 11%               | 11%         |
| <b>Heat Pump</b>                | 1%           | 1%                | 1%          |
| <b>Mains Gas</b>                | 80%          | 81%               | 79%         |
| <b>Oil</b>                      | 6%           | 3%                | 3%          |
| <b>Other*</b>                   | 3%           | 1%                | 1%          |

\*Includes dual fuel, solid fuel, tank or bottled gas, wood, B30K, bioethanol, biogas, biomass and liquid biofuel.

(ONS, 2020)

## Households off the Gas Grid

16,534 (27.3%) properties in Stafford Borough are estimated to have no access to gas. Of these, 66% are more than 23km away from a gas mains.



(Kiln for Affordable Warmth Solutions, 2021)

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