1. Do you agree with the Scottish Government’s proposal to provide for a statutory target to reduce fuel poverty to no more than 5 per cent of Scottish Households by 2040.

Yes. We agree it is vital that there is a target and clear goals set to achieve this. Also, this means that it is kept on the agenda.

2. Do you agree with the Scottish Government’s proposals for a revised definition of fuel poverty?

Yes. Agree this definition needs to be revised. We agree with this revised definition and think it is a good definitive way to look at fuel poverty. There is always going to be a need for a clear definition, as there needs to be a clear way to describe this for the purpose of grants and other programmes to assess eligibility.

We particularly agree with the second part of the definition, which looks at people’s household incomes and whether, after housing costs, they have a sufficient amount to have an acceptable standard of living. The inclusion of housing costs in this calculation is vital to ensure that more people can be seen as fuel poor. Especially people in the private sector who may not spend more than 60% of income on fuel, however could spend more than 10% on fuel once there rent was taken off their income as rent is constantly increasing in this sector.

3. Do you agree with provisions in the Bill requiring the Scottish Government to publish a fuel poverty strategy? Do you also agree with the consultation requirements set out in relation to the strategy?

Yes, agree. These targets are very ambitious, so in order for there to be a good chance of achievement, there needs to be a clear strategy. Therefore, by publishing this it gives a clear pathway and clear goals to each sector so they understand what the plan is.

Definitely agree with the consultation process. There are many different sectors with vast amounts of experience working with people in fuel poverty, that understand what works and what doesn’t work and also consulting with families themselves to discuss what can be done to help people in fuel poverty.
4. **A draft fuel poverty strategy was published alongside the Bill on 27 June. Do you have any views on the extent to which the measures set out in the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for Scotland 2018 will contribute to meeting the Government’s new target? Have lessons been learned from previous initiatives?**

This draft strategy discusses a ‘public energy company’ what does this mean? I think there needs to be more information on this?

Also, it is clear that within the strategy there will be advice and support to help people in fuel poverty. However, what specifically will be done?

Will there be funding for energy advisers and will there be a national helpline? There is already citrus energy which helps people get advice on switching via telephone – however, this is not well used or advertised. It may be an idea to try and make companies implement the number for the citrus helpline on annual statements, to encourage take up and general knowledge of this service.

Discussed changing the standards for private tenancies, however will there be support for landlords to implement these changes; and help and assistance to ensure they are helped to comply. Also there possibly should be consequences for not bringing a tenancy up to repair - such as an automatic civil case similar to the tenancy deposit scheme – where if a landlord fails to place a deposit in a tenancy deposit scheme, within 30 days of tenancy commencing, the tenant can automatically apply for 3 times the deposit as compensation.

The WHD is mentioned in the strategy however this is a UK Government benefit, therefore Scotland does not have clarity or security on the life span of this. If this was to be stopped, is there any alternative that Scotland could implement?

The WHD is heavily relied upon. In addition, Cold Weather Payments have never been increased for many years, is this something that could be looked at? Could Scotland top these up when they are paid? Also could these be paid direct to fuel companies, to reduce bills in line with WHD as there is a risk this may not always be used for its purpose, or that people cannot get out to top up with the money they have in the bank due to adverse weather?

5. **Do you have any views on the Scottish Government’s reporting requirements to the Scottish Parliament, as set out in the Bill?**

No.

**Comment from Children and Families:**

Cannot see any mention of Housing Associations and their ability/ responsibility (do they not discharge LA responsibilities on our behalf?) in this and the practice in this area is variable (aware of one local provider who got the gas capped on a meter where there was a lone parent and her under 3 child residing in the property until £95 was paid to uncap it so she could get her heating on again).
Capping of meters leads to/equates to fuel poverty and this should be a focus of the bill in terms of practice/ responses.

Stirling Council
31 October 2018