



Young Energy Professionals, Event Brief Fuel Poverty: What's Driving It & Who Is To Pay?

On 6th December 2018, Young Energy Professionals collaborated with Salford University's Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit to host its first seminar on a globally complex and multi-faceted issue – Fuel Poverty: What's Driving It & Who Is To Pay? To navigate this issue the seminar's goal was threefold, looking at why:

- Fuel poverty is a different problem in hot and cold climates
- Fuel needs are different in remote and urban areas
- The energy industry must play an active role in solving

The seminar gave a whistle stop tour of the contrasting dynamics that can create challenges, stopping off in the Western isles, inner city Manchester and eventually reaching New Zealand. Academics stressed the need of cross industry, academic and government partnerships to empower society with the tools needed to gain greater energy efficiency, given fuel poverty touches upon employment, social isolation, local economies and health services challenges.

The harsh reality of fuel poverty was also made apparent: 11% of households in England live in fuel poverty and every winter there are ~10,000 deaths due to cold homes – on par with the number of fatalities from breast or prostate cancer. This is despite the Government spending £3bn annually on energy efficiency initiatives.

Circling back to the seminar's core – who is to pay for fuel poverty – a lively debate ensued, deriving root causes from UK Victorian house building to a lack of present-day finance, political and industrial alignment. Delegates were able to step away from seeing users of utilities as consumers alone and instead attempted to understand vulnerability and the wider determinates that create the fuel poverty challenge.

Whilst the current energy trilemma challenges are deemed pivotal to how we combat fuel poverty issues in the modern day, these are indeed only the issues *of today* – fuel poverty, and the consumer vulnerability it creates, requires continuous awareness and collaboration. Presenters, delegates and organisers alike saw the need for further discussion on fuel poverty to ensure this socio-economic, industrial and political topic has the focus it deserves.

Organisers:

- Meera Kotak (innogy Consulting; YEP SteerCo)
- Kanika Selvan (npower; YEP Ambassador)

Presenters:

- Dr Graeme Sheriff (University of Salford)
- Dr Brian Whittington (Tighaen Innse Gall)
- Dr Aimee Ambrose (Sheffield Hallam University)
- Dr Rose Chard (CATAPULT Energy Systems)