



Miatta Fahnbulleh MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero)
By Email

14 October 2024

Dear Miatta,

I write to share concerns regarding implementation of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) programme, and to urge you to urgently scale up investment in the long term, nationwide home insulation programme we need. As the former cabinet member responsible for home insulation programmes in the county, this is an issue close to my heart.

Fuel poverty is particularly high in my constituency of North Herefordshire, and there are many homes that are poorly insulated.

Many Herefordshire homes fit the criteria for the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG). I am pleased that a number of these have been retrofitted under HUG, through a consortium programme managed by Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH).

However, I understand that the MNZH has failed to reach its targets across the region, and as a result has had its funding cut by DESNEZ. This cut has been passed down to participating local authorities and contracting bodies without any recognition of the success or failure of each local authority.

Herefordshire has therefore been unfairly penalised for under-delivery elsewhere in the region. In fact, Herefordshire is not only the best-performing local authority in the region, it is also one of the best-performing local authorities in the UK. So why has funding for this high-performing programme been stopped?

Cutting HUG funding in this way is yet another example of the immensely damaging stop-start approach to home insulation funding that has prevailed for the past decade or more. It makes it simply impossible for local authorities, contractors, skills training bodies, and anyone else involved in the sector to plan or invest.

In the short term, surely DESNEZ should be directing more funding to those local authorities that, like Herefordshire, have shown that they can effectively deliver home insulation programmes - rather than stop successful programmes mid-implementation.

In the medium and long term, DESNEZ must set out as soon as possible a strategic, multi-year, fully-funded nationwide programme to invest in insulating all homes that need it, with enough long-term certainty to encourage and support skills development and supply chain development, and enough flexibility to allow movement of funding between years.

Please can you assure me that you are working hard with colleagues in the Treasury to establish this multi-year strategic insulation programme?



Ellie Chowns MP
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

And please can you assure me that successful local programmes will not be penalised for under-performance by others?

I look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Chowns'.

Ellie Chowns MP, North Herefordshire.