

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2026/27

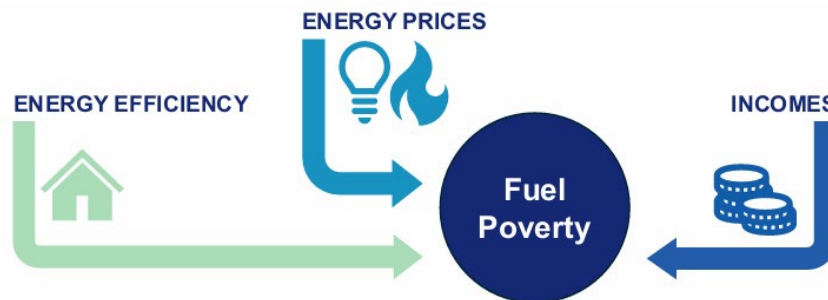
Fuel Poverty

Summary points

- 10.6% (approximately 21,394 households) of all households in Bristol are living in fuel poverty¹, higher than the national average (9.9%).
- Energy prices continue to fluctuate and there continues to be a high number of people seeking support with energy bills and debt.

Background

Fuel poverty is a term that is typically used to describe a person on a low income who's struggling to afford their energy costs. The drivers of fuel poverty are shown below:



Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics in England 2026 Report

Living in fuel poverty and experiencing a cold home have been shown to have a significant impact on mental and physical health including:

- increased blood pressure
- suppression of the immune system
- increased airway constriction and mucus production in the lungs
- mental health impacts

Several large-scale evidence reviews have suggested that living in a cold home and coping with unaffordable fuel bills can have significant adverse implications for a wide range of outcomes, including health, educational and social outcomes²³⁴.

Fuel poverty is measured using the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator*. Under this indicator, a household is considered fuel poor if:

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

There is evidence of some very low-income households living in EPC C rated homes and struggling to afford their fuel bills. We recognise that these households may not be captured by this definition, therefore this is likely to be an underestimate. These households face the same

¹ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 2025. Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report 2025

² Marmot Review Team. 2011. The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty.

³ Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2016. Understanding the Characteristics of Low Income Households Most at Risk from Living in Cold Homes.

⁴ NICE. 2015. Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes.

negative outcomes, but the root cause is related to a broader context of poverty, not necessarily specific to fuel.

*This definition replaces the Low Income High Costs (LIHC) definition of fuel poverty which does not take account of energy efficiency. EPC ratings can often be inaccurate due to issues with quality control in the industry and does not take account of if a heating system in a property is broken, faulty or not being used.

National picture

The increased cost of living continues to impact households nationally, with poverty rates increasing. The current energy price cap is £1,641 per year for a typical dual-fuel household paying by direct debit. On 1 July 2026 the energy price cap rises by 13%, taking the average annual bill for households on standard variable tariffs to £1,862 from 1 July to 30 September 2026, up from £1,641. That means a typical household will pay about £221 more a year⁵.

In the last few years Citizens Advice have seen record numbers of people seeking energy issues. Since the peak in 2023, the number of citizens seeking support for energy issues has decreased, however numbers remain considerably higher than in 2021 with 224,105 people seeking support in 2025⁶. The average amount of debt is currently at near-record levels, with the average energy debt being £1,897 in January 2026. This is true of energy debt and rent arrears.

Fuel Poverty (2024 data)

Based on the LILEE definition, there was an estimated 21,394 fuel poor households in Bristol in 2024, representing 10.6% of all households (BEIS, 2026)⁷. This is higher than the rate for England (9.9%), as shown in Figure 1 (below).

Please note: This data is reported 2 years in arrears therefore will not yet reflect the current energy market.

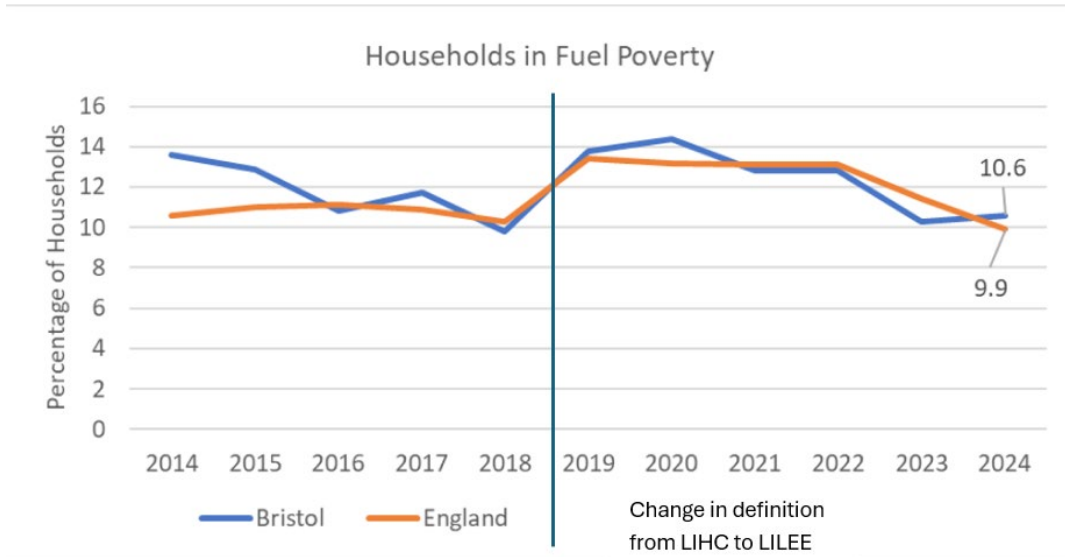


Figure 1: Percentage of households in Fuel Poverty in Bristol (data 2011 – 2018 based on Low Income High Cost (LIHC) metric, data 2019 onwards based on Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) metric). Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 2026. Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report 2026 (2024 Data).

⁵ [Energy price cap unit rates and standing charges | Ofgem](#)

⁶ [Citizens Advice data dashboard | Flourish](#)

⁷ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2025. Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report 2026 (2024 Data).

Local data

The Quality of Life survey also provides insight into fuel poverty in Bristol⁸. In 2024 (latest available data):

- **Almost one third** of residents (30%) were extremely or moderately worried about keeping their home warm this winter, similar to last year (31%), but rising to 40% in most deprived areas,
- **1 in 10 residents** (11%) found it difficult to manage financially, rising to 17% in most deprived areas.
- **Only three quarters of residents** (72%) were satisfied with the state of repair of their home, reducing to 65% in most deprived areas,

Fuel Poverty 2026 (2024 data)

The map (Figure 2) shows large variation in rates of fuel poverty across the city.

By LSOA, rates varied from 19.8% in Lower Clifton Hill to 5.4% in Charlton Mead in Henbury and Brentry.

The top 20 LSOAs were in the following Wards: Clifton, Clifton Down, Cotham, Easton, Central, Larence Hill, Horfield, Windmill Hill and Southmead.

A cluster can be seen in Cotham and Clifton. This is likely to be because there are areas with large student populations and old Georgian homes with low energy efficiency ratings (EPC), therefore have higher energy bills.

Proportion of households fuel poor in Bristol (%) by LSOA

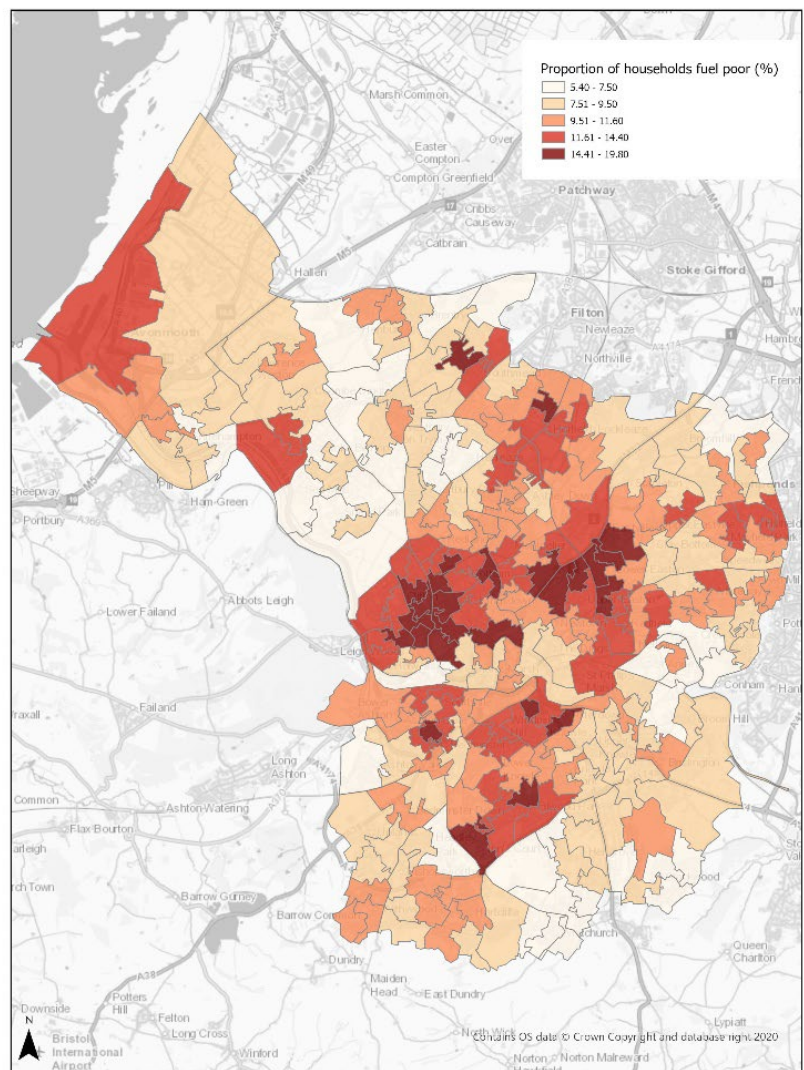


Figure 2: Percentage of households in Fuel Poverty in Bristol

Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 2026. Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report 2026 (2024 Data).

⁸ Quality of Life survey data, Bristol City Council (2024)

Equalities data:

Fuel poverty data is assessed at a geographical level. Equalities data is not available at a local level. Nationally, we know that Households with children typically had higher rates of fuel poverty, particularly single parent households had the highest proportion of households in fuel poverty. Households with an HRP (household reference person) belonging to the Other and Black ethnicity group had the highest rate of fuel poverty⁹.

Citizen's Advice report supporting over 3 times as many Black/Black British residents each month than White residents with energy affordability (per 100,00 people)¹⁰. They also support over double the number of residents with a disability or long-term health condition than not.

Further data / links / consultations:

A One City Fuel Poverty Action Plan has been developed by the No Cold Homes Steering group and Bristol City Council. This action plan aims to guide cross-sector, city-wide collaboration to tackle the challenge of cold homes and aims to galvanise action to support vulnerable households. The key goal is that by 2030, nobody in Bristol will suffer from a cold home due to fuel poverty. To view the action plan visit: [One City Strategies - Bristol One City](#)

A Damp, Mould and Fuel Poverty toolkit was developed in 2025 to support staff to identify and respond to damp, mould or fuel poverty concerns. View the toolkit here: [Damp-mould-and-fuel-poverty-toolkit-2026.pdf](#)

Further links:

- [JSNA Chapter on Fuel Poverty](#)
- [Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\) 2025 Fuel Poverty Statistics report for England](#)
- [Food insecurity JSNA data chapter](#)
- [Deprivation JSNA data chapter](#)
- Eat or heat: fuel poverty and childhood respiratory health (2022) [Eat or heat: fuel poverty and childhood respiratory health - The Lancet Respiratory Medicine](#)

Covid-19 Impact:

Addressed throughout section.

Date updated: May 2026

Next update due: May 2027

⁹ [Annual fuel poverty statistics report: 2026](#)

¹⁰ [Citizens Advice data dashboard | Flourish](#)