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**An Bille um Straitéis Bochtaineacht Fuinnimh, 2022**  
**Energy Poverty Strategy Bill 2022**

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*Mar a tionscnaíodh*

*As initiated*

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**Energy Poverty Strategy Bill 2022**

# **Bill**

*entitled*

A Bill to establish an Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty; to define energy poverty; to design an appropriate methodology for measuring and tracking energy poverty in Ireland; to require the production of an energy poverty strategy every 5 years.

**Be it enacted by the Oireachtas as follows:**

**1. Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty**

- (1) The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications shall, within 3 months of the passing of this Bill, establish a group to be known as the Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty.
- (2) This Group shall be independently chaired and shall comprise experts from, but not limited to, academia, industry, stakeholders and NGOs with an interest in energy poverty, supplemented by officials from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of Social Protection, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and the Central Statistics Office.
- (3) The Minister shall make provision for this Group from existing Departmental resources.

## **2. Measuring and tracking energy poverty**

- (1) The Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty shall, within 3 months of its establishment, review the existing data on energy poverty levels in Ireland, along with the latest academic research in this sphere, and report back to the Minister on an appropriate methodology for measuring and tracking energy poverty levels in Ireland.

## **3. Definition of energy poverty**

- (1) A household shall be defined as being in energy poverty if they spend more than 10% of their disposable income on household energy costs in any one year; or where a household is forced to cut heating or electricity use due to financial constraints;
- (2) A household shall be defined as being in severe energy poverty if they spend more than 15% of their disposable income on household energy costs in any one year;
- (3) A household shall be defined as being in extreme energy poverty if they spend 20% or more of their disposable income on household energy costs in any one year.
- (4) Definitions of energy poverty may be updated or amended by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, following consultation and recommendation on the matter by the Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty.

## **4. Preparation of an Energy Poverty Strategy**

- (1) Within 6 months of the Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty delivering their report on an appropriate methodology for measuring and tracking energy poverty levels in Ireland under Section (2), the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications shall prepare an Energy Poverty Strategy.
- (2) The energy poverty strategy must—
  - a. identify the percentage of households currently living in energy poverty, severe energy poverty and extreme energy poverty, in line with the provisions of Section (3);
  - b. map energy poverty by local authority area and identify areas with high concentrations of energy poverty;
  - c. set out the approach the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, in conjunction with others as necessary, intends to take to tackle energy poverty;
  - d. set out organisations, or types of organisations, with which the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications intends to work to ensure that the energy poverty targets are met,
  - e. examine the adequacy of social welfare supports for those living in energy poverty;
  - f. examine the impact of the Carbon Tax and Public Service Obligation on those living in energy poverty;

- g. identify characteristics of households—
    - i. which are likely to be in energy poverty, or
    - ii. for which getting out of energy poverty presents particular challenges.
  - h. outline how home energy efficiency improvement schemes will be aimed at those living in energy poverty, across housing tenure types;
- (3) The approach set out under subsection (2)(c) must include provision for how to remove low levels of energy efficiency as a driver of energy poverty.
- (4) The energy poverty strategy may include such other information as the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications considers appropriate.
- (5) The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications will keep the energy poverty strategy under review and may revise it at any time deemed necessary.
- (6) Unless the context requires otherwise, a reference in this Bill to the energy poverty strategy includes a reference to the energy poverty strategy as revised following a review under Section 4(5).
- (7) Every 5 years the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications shall revise, update and publish a new Strategy in line with the conditions outlined in Section 4(2).
- (8) The Minister shall appear at the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Climate Action annually to update members of the Committee on the implementation of the energy poverty strategy and on the progress made towards reducing energy poverty.

## **5. Consultation on strategy**

- (1) In preparing an energy poverty strategy, the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications shall consult such persons as they consider appropriate.
- (2) The persons consulted under subsection (1) shall include—
  - a. individuals who are living, or have lived, in energy poverty,
  - b. local authorities,
  - c. people with a disability,
  - d. people with a long-term illness,
  - e. older people,
  - f. members of the Travelling Community,
  - g. individuals living in rural areas,
  - h. varied household tenure types, including homeowners and those renting privately and from local authorities,
  - i. the Expert Advisory Group on Energy Poverty, and
  - j. others the Minister may deem appropriate.

**6. Publication and laying of strategy**

- (1) The Minister shall, within 12 months of the passing of this Bill -
  - a. publish the energy poverty strategy, and
  - b. lay a copy of it before both Houses of the Oireachtas.
- (2) The Minister shall, before the expiration of an existing energy poverty strategy, publish the next 5-year strategy and lay a copy of it before both Houses of the Oireachtas.

**7. Short title and commencement**

- (1) This Bill shall come into operation seven days after the date of its passing.
- (2) The short title of this Bill is the Energy Poverty Strategy Bill 2022.

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**Energy Poverty Strategy Bill 2022**

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Darren O'Rourke TD, Claire Kerrane TD

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