

**Abstract submitted for consideration for the 12th Annual IAS-STS Conference
(Special Session: Social Justice and Diversity).**

Title: Energy poverty eradication in policy and practice: lessons from the English experiment.

Authors: Lauren J. Probert¹, Dennis L. Loveday¹ and Victoria Haines²

¹ School of Civil and Building Engineering, Loughborough University

² Loughborough Design School, Loughborough University

Correspondence Address: Lauren Probert, School of Civil and Building Engineering, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TU. Email: l.probert@lboro.ac.uk.

Energy poverty – or fuel poverty, as it is designated in the United Kingdom – is the situation whereby a household faces unmanageable domestic energy costs because of an inefficient dwelling. As the costs of the necessary transition to a low carbon economy mount, there arises the need to ensure that the shift is an equitable one.

The UK has been politically progressive in tackling energy poverty. In 2000, nations of the UK became the first to legislate for the establishment of a quantifiable definition of the concept of ‘fuel poverty’, as well as for eradication targets. However, despite the strong precedent established by the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 (WHECA), fuel poverty levels are higher today than they were a decade ago. Approaching 2016, eradication targets have motivated policy overhaul, encompassing both a re-evaluation of the fuel poverty definition and the development of a new Energy Company Obligation.

This presentation will report evaluation of the apparent policy failure with respect to fuel poverty in the United Kingdom, focusing specifically upon the English legislative case. Analysis of the early political development of the WHECA will be discussed, accompanied by an account of resultant strategy. Where weak points are identified, suggestions will be offered as to how these might be avoided in future policy. The presentation will conclude with recommendations as to how European countries looking to develop their own approaches to energy poverty might improve upon the example of England in order to build more effective policies.