

Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Minister of State (Minister for Business,
Energy and Clean Growth)
The Department of Business Energy and
Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
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Dear *Kwasi Kwarteng*

Funding for domestic energy and fuel poverty in London

I am writing to you as chair of the London Association of Local Energy Officers (ALEO London). ALEO London represents local authority energy and fuel poverty officers in the capital, and our members are actively involved in a wide range of energy, fuel poverty and carbon reduction initiatives.

We warmly welcome the planned Home Upgrade Grant and await the details of this and the rest of the Government's plans for domestic energy efficiency and fuel poverty with great interest.

I understand that plans are being developed to deliver the initial round of the Home Upgrade Grant, and my purpose in writing is to flag up the need for particular attention on London.

The Government's latest data identifies that 12% of households in London are in fuel poverty. This is the highest level since records began. London contains the area with the highest level of fuel poverty in England, with many other areas across the capital in significant need.

Yet, despite the severity of the issue, London has consistently lost out on funding through supplier obligations. The reasons for this are complex, but partly the nature of our housing stock and partly perceptions of the obligated parties and their agents of working here compared to elsewhere in the country: higher staffing costs, difficulties driving and parking, and the challenge of working with a highly diverse and more transient population.

In recent years London boroughs and the Greater London Authority have joined forces on fuel poverty and retrofit, precisely because we know we need to work harder to make fuel poverty and energy programmes work in London. There is now a fuel poverty advice service operating across the whole of London and a streamlined approach to the Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility that ensures it covers all 33 boroughs. The GLA in addition are

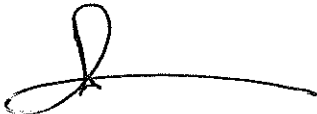
providing funding for heating, ventilation and insulation through their Warmer Homes Fund. This has created a programme of support covering the whole region delivered through local authorities working in partnership with the GLA.

We have the delivery mechanisms in place. But the level of need from vulnerable households is beyond our current resources. The new Home Upgrade Grant is an opportunity to start to rebalance this, but to achieve there should be a ringfenced allocation that fully reflects the level of need across the region. London also needs funding that fits with the structures we have in the capital.

We enthusiastically welcome the idea of the Home Upgrade Grant and support the move to progress delivery of this much-needed funding with an initial regionally-based grant while an overall scheme manager is being appointed. Given the way we are already working in London ALEO London members are concerned at the suggestion that the first year of the Home Upgrade Grant will be allocated to the Local Energy Partnerships who have no presence in London itself. Allocating funding for London and within London to match the way we are working must be a more effective and efficient way to deliver on our shared aims.

I would be happy to provide further detail in support of the above points if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Martin O'Brien', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin O'Brien
Association of Local Energy Officers (London)

The Association of Local Energy Officers London (ALEO London) represents local authority energy and fuel poverty officers in Greater London. We have over 60 local authority members from across the 33 London boroughs and over 40 associate members from partner organisations involved in promoting home energy efficiency within the capital.