

WARM RENTS PROGRAMME



Healthy
Homes Hub

Making cold homes
a thing of the past



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COLD HOMES REMAIN ONE OF THE MOST PERSISTENT AND DAMAGING INEQUALITIES IN THE UK HOUSING SYSTEM.

Despite decades of investment and regulation, too many residents continue to live in homes that are routinely too cold to be safe, with consequences that are well understood and yet stubbornly unresolved.

The Warm Rents Programme is Healthy Homes Hub's flagship initiative for 2026/27. It brings together housing providers, technology partners and policy insight to test a simple but powerful idea: that warmth should be treated as a core component of rent, not an optional extra that residents must struggle to afford.

Warm Rents is about delivering minimum safe warmth in practice, not prescribing comfort or removing resident choice.

Warm Rents moves the sector from managing the consequences of cold homes to preventing them. Crucially, it also provides housing providers with a robust, shared evidence base to inform national policy discussions. By testing what works in real homes, under real operating conditions, the programme enables the sector to engage government with confidence, grounded in data, lived experience and operational reality rather than theory.



THE PROBLEM WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE.

Cold homes are not just uncomfortable. They directly contribute to poor health outcomes, particularly for children, older people and those living with existing health conditions.

Prolonged exposure to low indoor temperatures increases the risk of respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, mental health stress and excess winter deaths. Cold homes also create the conditions in which damp and mould thrive, placing additional strain on residents and landlords alike.

For children, cold and damp homes are associated with higher rates of asthma, more school absences and poorer educational outcomes. For older residents and those with long-term conditions, they increase the likelihood of hospital admission and delayed recovery. These impacts do not sit outside the housing system – they flow directly from it.

At the same time, housing providers are facing growing pressure from damp and mould cases, disrepair claims, rising repairs demand and reputational risk. While the relationship between fuel poverty and rent arrears continues to be explored across the sector, many landlords recognise that unaffordable energy costs can destabilise household finances and increase risk over time.

Importantly, this is not just about managing downside risk. Housing providers are increasingly clear about their positive ambition to tackle fuel poverty, reduce health inequalities and ensure residents can live safely and with dignity in their homes. The current approach, however, remains largely reactive, costly and ultimately unsustainable. Warm Rents offers a route towards earlier intervention, greater certainty and a more preventative model that aligns social purpose with operational reality.

WHY FUEL POVERTY PERSISTS IN SOCIAL HOUSING.

**FUEL POVERTY IN
SOCIAL HOUSING
IS NOT CAUSED
BY RESIDENT
BEHAVIOUR.
IT IS STRUCTURAL.**

Most social housing residents have little or no control over the energy efficiency of their homes. Many live in older properties that are expensive to heat and difficult to upgrade. The social rent formula, established over twenty years ago, does not reflect energy performance and offers no incentive or flexibility to address this imbalance. At the same time, rent caps constrain innovation, even where landlords are motivated to act and invest differently.

The result is a system where tenants in the least efficient homes often face the highest energy costs, while landlords absorb the downstream consequences of cold-related damage and ill health.

Warm Rents responds to this reality directly.

WHAT IS THE WARM RENTS PROGRAMME?

Warm Rents introduces a straightforward but important principle: landlords actively ensure that homes are warm, by funding the heating required to maintain a minimum safe indoor temperature of 16–18°C during occupied periods.

Where residents participating in the programme are identified as being unable to afford to heat their homes to a safe level, their landlord steps in to cover the cost of achieving that baseline warmth. This moves the sector beyond monitoring cold homes to taking responsibility for ensuring warmth is delivered in practice.

This does not necessarily mean homes are heated constantly, nor does it remove resident choice. Instead, it ensures that no household experiences prolonged exposure to unsafe indoor temperatures. Residents retain full control over their heating above the agreed minimum threshold and can choose how warm they want their home to be beyond this baseline.

The programme is delivered through five live projects, each using proven technology to identify homes that are struggling to consistently reach 16–18°C and to trigger proactive intervention.

While the delivery mechanism differs by solution, the principle is consistent: housing providers work with residents who are under-heating their homes and, where affordability is the barrier, provide landlord-funded support, such as fuel vouchers or equivalent mechanisms, to enable the home to be heated to the minimum safe temperature.

Together, these projects test different routes to delivering and evidencing minimum warmth at scale, building a shared understanding of what works, for whom, and at what cost. Detailed delivery models for each solution will be shared with organisations interested in joining the programme.

As a guide, the indicative cost of funding heat is approximately £500 + VAT per home for the heating season. Where a lower minimum temperature of 16°C is applied, this cost is expected to be lower. The indicative costs will also vary by property performance. Part of the learning is understanding this variation.

Through the Warm Rents Project, technology will also be developed to enable landlords, over time, to bundle a minimum level of warmth into rent, rather than relying solely on short-term support mechanisms.

THE START

WHERE THIS STARTED.

During the winter of 2024/25, Healthy Homes Hub worked with Switchee and three housing providers (Clarion Housing Group, Places for People, Yorkshire Housing) to test early Warm Rents principles in practice.

Homes that were routinely sitting at temperatures as low as 12–13°C were supported to reach and maintain 18°C. This led to immediate reductions in mould risk and improved living conditions, providing a strong foundation for wider testing and learning.

LEARNINGS

WHAT THE PROGRAMME IS LOOKING TO LEARN.

Across 2026/27, Warm Rents will generate shared learning in five key areas:

- **Operational delivery:** How landlords can identify cold homes early and intervene effectively at scale.
- **Fair targeting:** How to distinguish between homes that are cold due to affordability and those that are structurally expensive to heat.
- **Cost and value:** How preventative investment compares to ongoing reactive spend on damp, mould and disrepair.
- **Policy insight:** What evidence is needed to support future approaches to rent-setting and rent payment processes, including how it relates to benefits, that recognise warmth as a core component of a healthy home.
- **Health and Wellbeing of residents:** The benefits to residents and their families - before and after.

THE SOLUTIONS BEING TESTED.

Warm Rents is delivered as a structured learning programme rather than a single solution. Each delivery partner leads on their project solution, creating a rounded view of what it takes to guarantee warmth in practice.



Aico monitors whether homes stay warm during occupancy, using sensor and smart meter data to identify cold homes and prove interventions are working.



Sero's heat-as-a-service model funds baseline warmth while preserving resident choice, making retrofit financially stronger by cutting ongoing heating costs.



IoT Solutions Group

IoTSG measures, verifies and targets support, distinguishing under-heating from structural heat loss and proving interventions deliver lasting warmth.



Take positive steps today

ZapCarbon uses predictive environmental data to maintain 16–18°C, preventing risk, reducing repairs and improving home health.



Using HeatSage technology to provide affordable warmth to homes heated by electric storage heaters, creating positive outcomes for asset managers and tenants.

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS.

Healthy Homes Hub leads programme design, governance and learning. Participating housing providers test one or more Warm Rents projects across different stock types and geographies.

Data, insight and learning are shared across the programme, enabling participating organisations to compare approaches, understand trade-offs and accelerate adoption without each organisation having to start from scratch. This is a learning collaboration, not a procurement exercise.



LEARNING FROM DIFFERENT RENT MODELS

The programme also draws on wider sector thinking, including work exploring how social rents could better reflect energy efficiency.

Warm Rents provides practical protection for residents now, while generating the evidence needed to inform future policy discussions on rent-setting, affordability and innovation within existing constraints.

PAYING FOR WARM RENTS – A SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE.



The question is often asked: how can landlords afford to guarantee warmth?

The reality is that the sector is already paying, just in less effective ways.

Housing providers currently absorb the cost of repeated damp and mould remediation, reactive repairs, disrepair claims, void losses, fuel vouchers and staff time managing complaints and crises. Residents live with the health and social consequences, and the NHS bears the wider cost.

Warm Rents reframes this spend. By preventing cold homes, landlords can reduce avoidable demand, protect asset condition and create a more stable operating environment. The programme supports a shift from reactive response to preventative investment.

OUTCOMES WE ARE SEEKING.

The Warm Rents Programme will track and evaluate outcomes including:



Time homes spend below the minimum warmth threshold



Repairs demand and repeat issues linked to cold, damp and mould



Asset performance indicators



Proxy health outcomes



Resident-reported comfort & wellbeing

We will be working with independent researchers to measure the qualitative and quantitative outputs of this programme, that will be shared with all involved, and the wider sector.

This evidence will support organisational decision-making and national policy engagement.



TIMELINE & PROCESS.

Spring 2026

Sign up to project(s) by end of April 2026

Data governance agreed.

Definition of small common core dataset

Programme onboarding, scoping and
resident and home selection

2026

Summer/Autumn 2026

Installation of devices if required

Resident engagement and baseline data
collection (purpose-led, proportionate,
and consent-based by design)

Winter 2026/2027

Live delivery period with ongoing
monitoring and intervention

2027

Spring 2027

Evaluation, shared learning and policy insight

THE COST

PROGRAMME COST.

Participation is offered as flat programme fee of **£5,000 plus VAT for each Housing Provider.**

Each housing provider needs to include a minimum of 10 homes, but ideally 50+ homes in the project.

The cost of the heating for each home is anticipated to be £500 + VAT for the heating between October 2026 and March 2027.

JOIN PROGRAMME

JOIN THE WARM RENTS PROGRAMME.

Warm Rents sets out a practical, scalable route towards eradicating fuel poverty from social housing.

To express interest or book a chat, please email alex@healthyhomeshub.uk or register below.

[Register now](#)

WHO WILL LEAD THE PROGRAMME?

The programme will be led by Alex Willey, who is heading up delivery and engagement across the sector.

Alex will be working closely with participating providers and partners to ensure the learning is robust, practical and shared openly as the programme progresses.



ALEX WILLEY

Project Director

Alex Willey is a housing leader with over 15 years of experience driving performance improvement, strategy and sustainability across the social housing sector.

Before joining Healthy Homes Hub, Alex held a number of Director positions at Clarion Housing Association most recently as Director of Performance, Quality and Compliance, where she was responsible for performance, quality, and regulatory compliance while working closely with customers to deliver on strategic priorities. Prior to this, she held roles covering Clarion's long-term approach to asset performance, investment, sustainability, and oversaw major schemes to create thriving, sustainable communities.

Alongside her executive roles, Alex has been a Board Member at Building with Nature and the Green Spaces Advisory Board, supporting best practice in green infrastructure design, and previously served as a Trustee at the UK Green Building Council.



WHY US?

WHY HEALTHY HOMES HUB?

The Healthy Homes Hub is a collaborative platform that brings together expertise in housing, health, and sustainability. Our mission is to improve housing quality and resident health through knowledge-sharing, best practices, and policy influence.

Healthy Homes Hub acts as an independent convener and learning partner. We bring together housing, health, technology and lived experience to help the sector focus on what works.

Our role is to turn pilots into programmes, insight into action and innovation into shared progress.