

Abstract: IAS-STS Work-in-Progress Workshop.
Lauren Probert, Loughborough University

Under the most recent interpretation of the term, UK Government define fuel poverty as the situation whereby low income households are required to use high quantities of energy to achieve adequate levels of domestic thermal comfort because they inhabit inefficient dwellings. English law currently requires that fuel poverty be eradicated by 2016. At present, the responsibility for meeting this target is split between UK Government and the largest six energy suppliers, who together account for over 90% of domestic accounts. One of the core questions in defining the adequacy of this division of roles is in deciding how the considerable funds required to achieve fuel poverty eradication should be raised.

In this presentation, I will give an account of the work exploring the funding of English fuel poverty alleviation that I have undertaken thus far as a Research Fellow at the IAS-STS in Graz, Austria. Firstly, I will share the outcomes of a systematic literature review that has sought to establish the level of expenditure that would be required to insulate the English housing stock against fuel poverty. I will then explicate three possible sources of such funds; levies on energy bills, income taxation, and a hypothecated carbon tax. Each of these options will be discussed in terms of their likely distributive effects, as well as political and practical considerations around their adoption. I will conclude by offering recommendations as to how fuel poverty eradication in England might most effectively be funded.