

# Community fuel poverty initiatives and older people in the UK

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# Three ways of knowing *fuel poverty*

10% definition   Modelled data

Statistical

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**Statistical**

Experience, subjective

Narratives

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Experience, subjective

**Experiential**

Narratives

# Three ways of knowing *fuel poverty*

Organisations  
**Procedural**  
Criteria  
Processes

10% definition   Modelled data

**Statistical**

Experience, subjective  
**Experiential**  
Narratives

# PhD Methodology

Examination of UK national policies tackling fuel poverty

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graph TD; A[Examination of UK national policies tackling fuel poverty] --> B[Ethnographic style observations of three community organisations working on fuel poverty in England]; B --> C[Semi-structured interviews with 17 older households across the corresponding three areas in England];
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Ethnographic style observations of three community organisations working on fuel poverty in England

Semi-structured interviews with 17 older households across the corresponding three areas in England

# Statistical representation

- **Official government definition**

Households are considered fuel poor if:

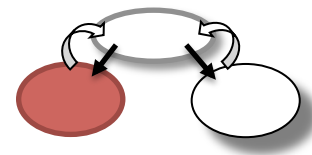
They have required fuel costs that are above the median level AND Were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line (Hills, 2012)

- **Generally understood definition**

A household living on a low income in a home which cannot be kept warm at a reasonable cost



NEA Many Faces of fuel poverty

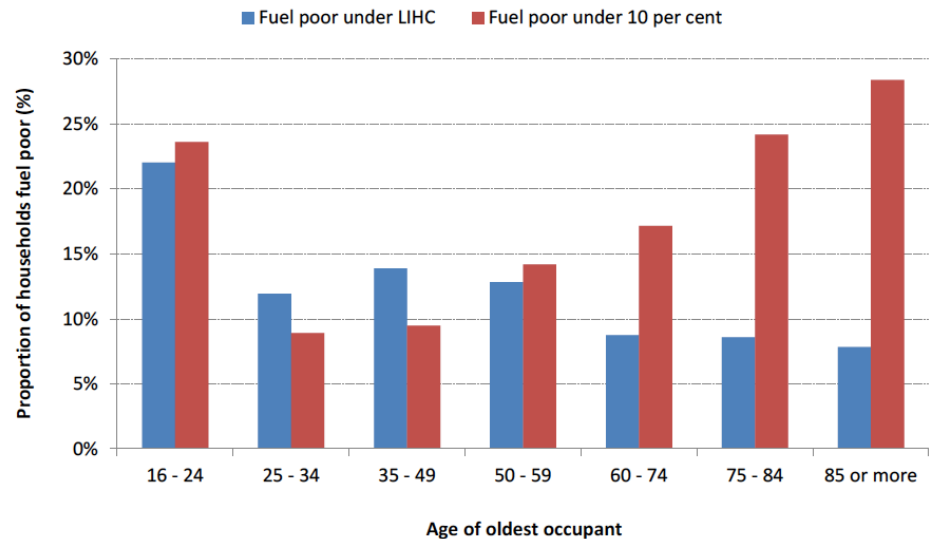


# Statistical representation

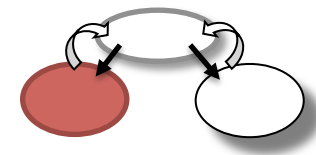
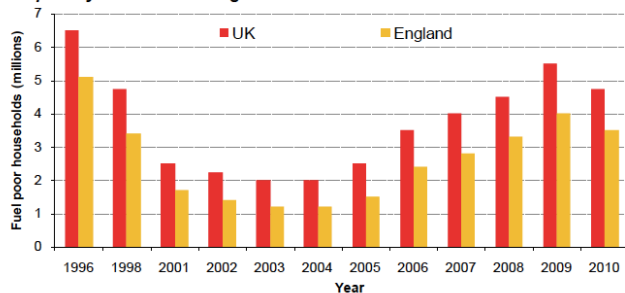
**Chart 1.3 – the 10 per cent, Low Income High Cost headcount and Fuel Poverty Gap measures of fuel poverty, England 1996-2011**



**Chart 4.8: Fuel poverty by age of the oldest household member, 2011**



**Chart – fuel poverty in the UK and England 1996-2010**





# Procedural way of knowing

## The home visit

- Community based/local organisations with a priority to tackle fuel poverty
- Self referral or referral by another organisations (debt support org, health worker...)
- Covers a range of topics but the aim is to “tackle fuel poverty”



Keeping warm and healthy

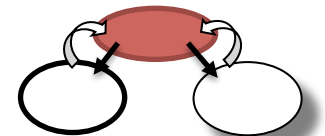


Managing energy bills and payment methods

Dealing with energy suppliers

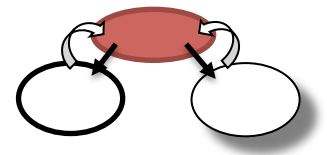


Practical advice on domestic technologies and energy efficient



# Procedural way of knowing

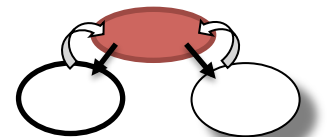
The home visit



# Procedural way of knowing

## The home visit

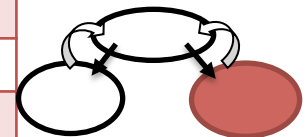
- Starting information on the resident
- Conversational tone
- Important (and relatively unimportant) information
- Follow up action



# Experiential way of knowing

## Interviews with residents

General condition of health	Housing type	Housing tenure	Central Heating system	Payment type
Poor	Bungalow	Local authority	Gas	Payment card
Poor	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Quarterly bill
Moderate	Bungalow	Social Housing Provider	Gas	Payment card
Moderate	Bungalow	Local authority	Gas	Direct debit
Good	Bungalow	Local authority	Gas	Direct debit
Poor	House	Owner occupier	Oil	Prepayment Meter
M: Poor F: Good	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Prepayment Meter
Good	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit
Poor	Park home	Owner occupier	Oil	On bill
Moderate	Park home	Owner occupier	Bulk LPG	On bill
Good	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit
Good	Flat	Private rented	Gas	Prepayment Meter
Good	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit
Good	Bungalow	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit
Poor	Park home	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit
Good	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit
Good	House	Owner occupier	Gas	Direct debit



# Experiential way of knowing

## Interviews with residents

- **Warmth, heating and health**

When talking to interviewees about their use of energy the majority of the conversation was focused on energy used for space heating. Being 'warm' and 'comfortable' was seen as important for health

- **Costs, coping and common sense**

Setting against the costs involved in domestic energy consumption, alongside the recognition of the importance of keeping warm

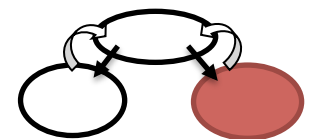
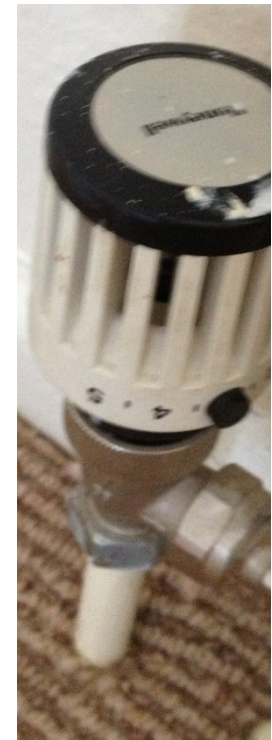
- **Patterns of heating the home**

Variations in where and what part of the house was heated.

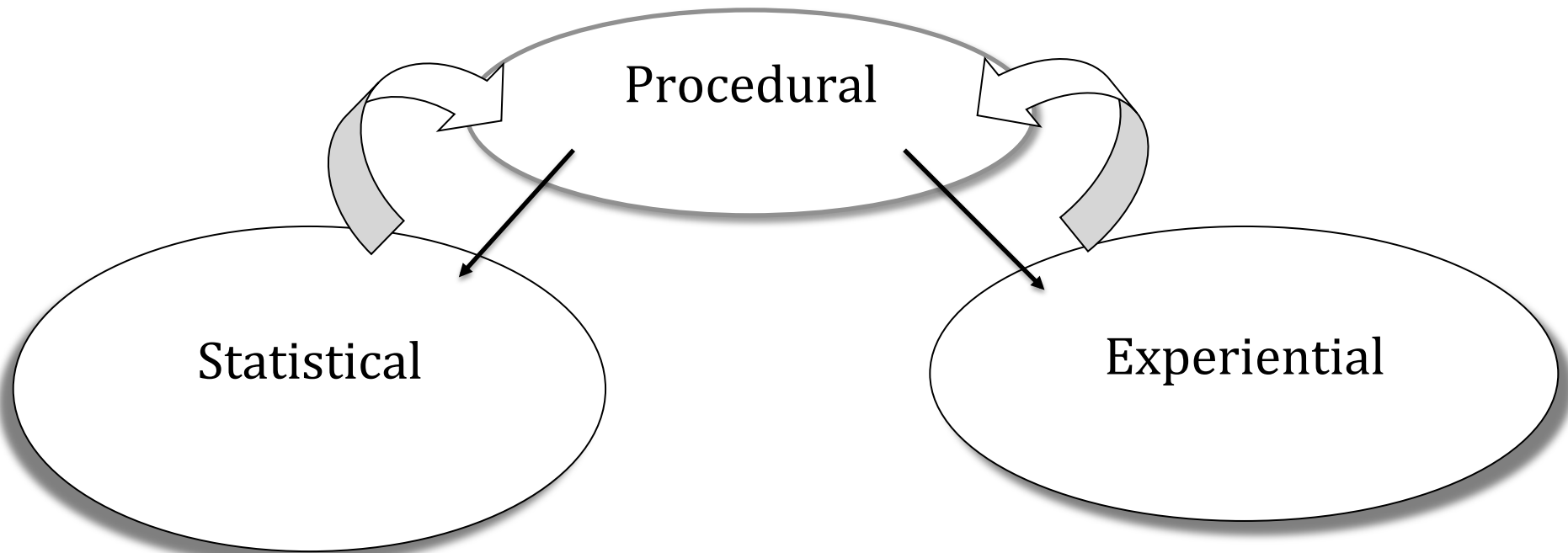
- Using secondary heating devices
- Wearing additional clothing
- Adjusting daily routines

Due to cost and sensation type/timing

- **Reflecting on coping and common sense**



# Three ways of knowing *fuel poverty*



# Provisional conclusions

- National policy and the official definition are about modeling, measuring and targeting
- For organisations, the different ways of knowing fuel poverty makes “tackling fuel poverty” difficult
- Responses to the challenge of keeping warm at an affordable price is not uniform within older households
- Everyday strategies of residents may obscure “the problem” that organisations are looking for

# Questions to be addressed...

- What are needs or energy services do the organisations procedures and processes imply are part of being or not being fuel poor?
- What problems for policy exist for different ways of knowing fuel poverty?



Thank you for listening

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