

## A Policy Impact Case Study Using Real World Data from Welsh Government Fuel Poverty Schemes to Inform Scheme Design.

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### Objectives

To reduce fuel poverty in Wales: the Welsh Government developed schemes to provide energy efficiency improvements to lower income households.

To inform scheme design: investigate health impacts by linking scheme data to health records.

Presented objective: to demonstrate how research findings using real world data can impact policy focus.

### Approach

The research was conducted by an independent researcher at Swansea University who co-produced research questions with the Welsh Government Fuel Poverty Policy Team.

A longitudinal dataset was created by linking anonymised 'Warm Homes: Nest' improvements data to residents' routine health records in the SAIL Databank at Swansea University. We examined recipient health before and after intervention compared with controls.

A high-level policy briefing and research report were published in the Welsh Government Social Research – Analysis for Policy series.

Findings were used to design and pilot new eligibility criteria to capture low-income individuals with a respiratory, circulatory or mental health condition.

### Results

This presentation will describe the policy impact pathway from initial discussions with policymakers to real world change, including:

- securing ESRC funding for a Knowledge Transfer Fellowship, which included a 2013 data linking demonstration project...
- ... which allowed funding to be secured for a 2015-18 research project focused on the impact of improvements on recipient health...
- ... which published emerging findings in 2016...
- ... and substantive findings in 2017, showing a significant positive impact of improvements on recipient health...
- ... which policymakers used to design a pilot to test ways to widen eligibility criteria to include individuals on a low income with a respiratory, circulatory or mental health condition...
- ... which led to scheme criteria being widened in 2019.

By 2021, 25% of recipients entered the scheme via the 'health route'.

### Conclusion

By delivering research findings generated using linked real world data, and focused on questions co-produced with policymakers, researchers can successfully impact the design and implementation of government policy, thereby improving the lives of people in the real world - in this case, the health of the citizens of Wales.

