



Election Insights



Just Transition March 2026

A just transition can only be secured when people experiencing poverty are put first

Years of unaffordable energy costs have forced households into hardship. People experiencing the worst energy harms face the greatest barriers to the net-zero transition: trapped in the coldest homes, burdened with the highest energy bills, and forced to live with damp and mould. Yet they stand to benefit most from a just transition that puts people first. Across our network in 2025:



More than **25,000** people sought energy advice – **one in six of everyone who came to our Bureaux**, up from one in ten in 2021.



More than **2,500** people sought advice with a combined **£6.7 million in energy debt**, up 43% from 2021



More than **one-in-four** seeking advice about their rented property needed help with **damp, mould and repairs issues**.

To deliver a truly just transition, the next Scottish Government must prioritise poverty, fix cold homes, and build a strong advice infrastructure



Prioritise poverty

People in poverty must be put first in the transition to net zero. That means progressive distribution of funding so that those experiencing the most harm are front of the queue for warmer homes, lower energy bills, and clean heating.



Fix cold homes

Cold, energy inefficient homes lock people into fuel poverty: a barrier to cutting emissions and ending unaffordable energy bills. Scotland will not reach net zero or zero poverty until cold homes across all tenures are fixed.



Build the advice infrastructure

Advice and information services are a vital enabler towards a just transition: essential partners providing local, trusted support so that people and communities can improve energy efficiency in their homes and access clean heat technology that meets their needs.

Climate action and social justice are inextricably linked; progress on both must align to deliver impact for people, places and the planet

High essential costs, mounting debts, unsafe and insecure housing and an inadequate social security system leave many people living permanently on the edge of crisis. The only credible and just pathway to net-zero must also mean zero poverty. Tackling fuel poverty and targeted support for energy efficiency measures must be designed and delivered with people and communities experiencing the greatest harm - they cannot remain the preserve of those better off.



Marta's experience:

Marta, a single parent with two boys aged 2 and 4, came to her CAB in crisis. Flooding had left her council home damp, and the cost of running dehumidifiers had drained her prepayment meter. With her next social security payment 9 days away, she did not have enough money to feed her children. Marta's cooker had also broken and with no support available to replace it she felt overwhelmed, powerless and unable to provide even the essentials for her family.



CAS election ask:

The next Scottish Government must ensure net-zero investment is directed first to households experiencing fuel poverty. Cutting emissions and tackling inequality must be treated as twin, non-negotiable objectives with progressive funding distribution.

Local, trusted advice and information services are an essential enabler to an inclusive net-zero transition

Local advice underpinned by local knowledge, delivered by local people, is not only imperative when people face crisis – this will power the long-term change required to help deliver on net zero targets. Our network provided over **12,200** pieces of energy-efficiency advice to more than **7,700** people in 2025 alone. However, people cannot benefit from support that they cannot easily access. Annual funding cycles will not deliver the generational ambition needed here. Sustained, long-term funding would enable the advice sector to build its existing strengths to act early and stop instability and inequality before it takes root.



Lukas' experience:

Lukas, who is in his eighties, came to his local CAB for support after a steep increase in his bills following the installation of an air source heat pump and solar panels. He'd been approached by a door-to-door salesperson who said he could apply for a grant to improve the energy efficiency of his home. Instead of saving money, Lukas' bills rose to £400 a month. He feels taken advantage of and has lost trust in energy efficiency schemes.



CAS election ask:

To secure a just transition, the next Scottish Government must invest in the advice and information transition – developing and investing in the infrastructure that already exists and is trusted today, to ensure we have the skills and capability we need for tomorrow. This requires sustainable, multi-year funding.

For more information please contact

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