

# Poor will be hit hardest by climate change

**The poorest people in the UK, already struggling to heat their homes and buy healthy food, will be hit hardest by green taxes, according to a new study.**

By Louise Gray, Environment Correspondent  
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A new coalition of leading UK environmental and social justice groups have warned poor housing, health, lack of home insurance and less money to adapt will mean the deprived are worst hit by climate change.

The impacts of rising temperatures will affect them most, as they tend to live in lower quality, less energy-efficient housing, have less access to insurance in case of floods or storm damage and less money to adapt to higher prices of fuel and food.

The poorest section of society also suffers from less healthy conditions and worse access to healthcare - which could leave them more vulnerable to impacts on health of rising temperatures such as increases in infectious diseases.

Even measures to combat climate change, such as higher taxation on fossil fuels, could worsen their situation, the report said.

But the coalition, led by Oxfam and think tank the New Economics Foundation (NEF), said tackling climate change also offered huge opportunities for cutting poverty in the UK.

For example, improving home insulation cuts carbon emissions from energy use as well as reducing energy bills and the number of people in fuel poverty. Also improving local food production and distribution will boost healthy eating and and cut carbon.

Moves to a low carbon economy could stimulate new opportunities in jobs such as installing installation, while better public transport could cut air pollution and improve health as well as provide better mobility for poor people.

The coalition, which also includes Friends of the Earth and the Royal College of Nursing, said the Government must ensure any green taxes to tackle climate change do not make the situation worse for the poor.

Andrew Simms, policy director of NEF, said: "Climate change will hit the poorest people in Britain first and worst, unless the Government tackles poverty and global warming together.

"Direct hits from climate upheaval will exacerbate existing problems with health and poor housing, and introduce new ones.

"Without coherent policies on transport, energy, the environment and social justice, progress in one area could undermine advances in another.

"But a well designed programme of national environmental transformation that creates jobs, makes better homes as well as healthier food and better transport systems, provides a historic opportunity to solve long-standing and deeply entrenched problems of poverty and social injustice."