

Students Achieving Valuable Energy Savings 2 (SAVES 2)

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 754203

The aims:

- Give overview of the SAVES 2 project
- Details on the Student Switch Off+ campaign and its relation to fuel poverty
- Our Homes Fit for Study research around fuel poverty



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SAVES 2 is a student engagement project running in seven countries

- Funded by H2020 (Coordination and Support Action)
- Partnership of 11 organisations based in 8 different countries
- Started 1st May 2017 and lasts 42 months
- The project builds on the successful SAVES project co-funded through Intelligent Energy Europe (April 2014 – March 2017)
- NUS UK manages the consortium



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There are 11 organisations in 8 different countries

Student **engagement** delivery partners (country partners) deliver SSO and SSO+ to 14 universities

- NUS UK (UK)
- Union of Students in Ireland (Ireland)
- University of Sofia (Bulgaria)
- University of Bucharest (Romania)
- University of Cyprus (Cyprus)
- Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (Lithuania)
- Technical University of Crete (Greece)
- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece)



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We also have specialist partners

Technical partners – delivery of online energy dashboard:

- De Montfort University (UK)
- Ecovisum (UK)

Dissemination partner:

- Universities in the Capital Cities of Europe (UNICA) (Belgium)

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SAVES 2 is made of two different campaigns

Student Switch Off – student behaviour change campaign in university dormitories

Student Switch Off+ - engagement with students in the private rented sector around smart metering, energy efficiency, and help reduce their exposure to fuel poverty



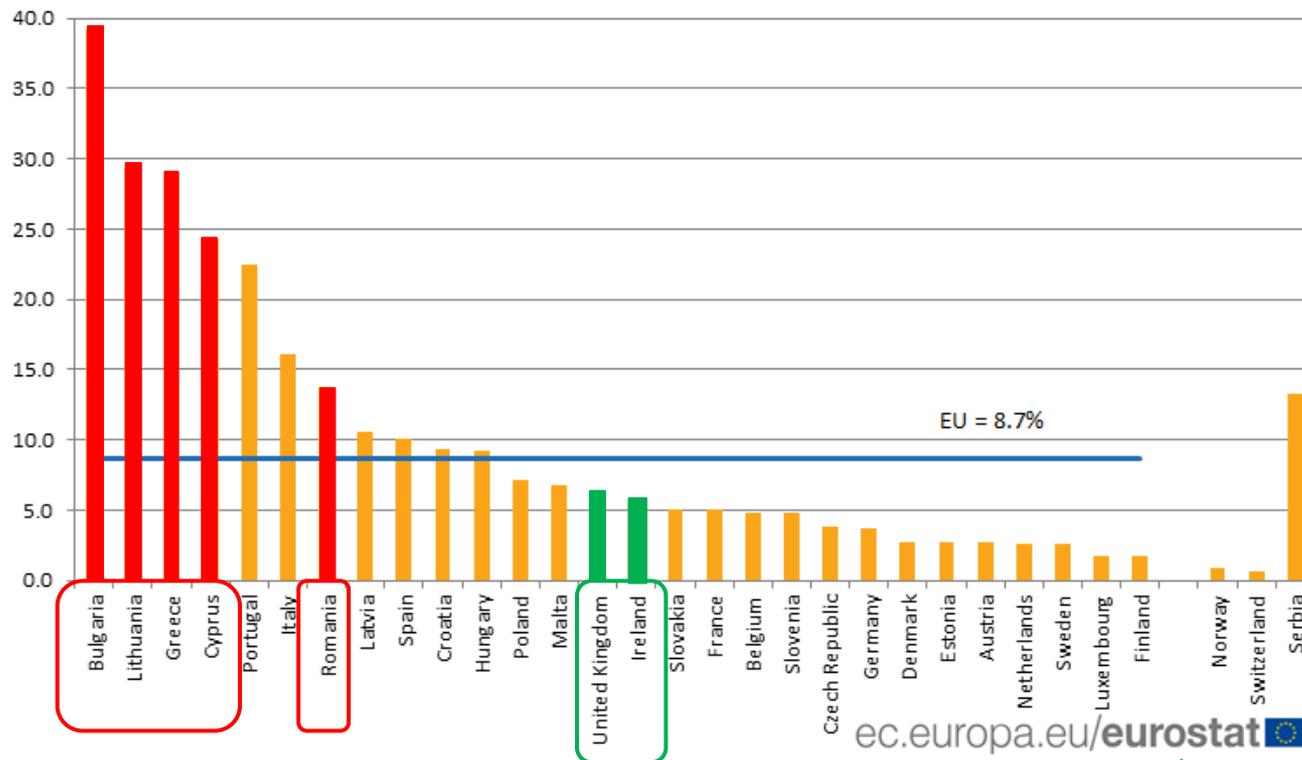
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Most of our participating countries have high levels of energy poverty

People who cannot afford to keep their home adequately warm, 2016
(share of total population)



ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Jan 4th, 2018

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SSO+ engages students in the private rented sector

- Supports students on their transition out of dormitories into the private-rented sector
- Aims to reduce the exposure of students to fuel poverty
- Raises awareness of: Energy Performance Certificates, smart meters, rights to request energy efficiency improvements, personal energy-saving actions

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There are a number of activities as part of SSO+

- Regular emails to students living in the private rented sector on advise
- Training session at the start of the academic year (free for all students' unions to use)
- Materials eg: Mock energy bill
- Regular social media posts and competitions
- Surveys and focus groups
- Further surveys and focus groups (part of HFFS)

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NUS has carried out HFFS research twice

- It is often seen as a 'rite of passage' for students live in sub standard accommodation
- First round of research in 2013, that got a lot of media attention with key findings such as:

State of housing

61%
had damp, mould or condensation in their home



Students and energy

More than half have felt uncomfortably cold in their home



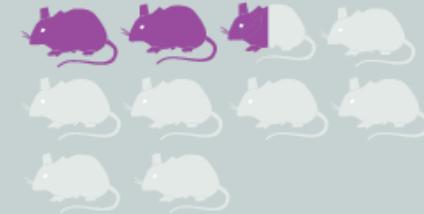
and two fifths struggle to pay energy bills



39%

24%

had slugs, mice or another infestation



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In 2017 got funded by EAGA trust to carry out further research

- Focussed in particular on student experiences of energy poverty in the private rented sector
- Data gathered through: online survey (2,509 students completed it, 6 online focus groups with 41 student participants)
- As part of SAVES 2, further research was performed with landlords (focus groups and surveys)

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Summary of findings

- **29%** had requested an **EPC** but didn't receive one - and those who reported being uncomfortably cold in their accommodation were less likely to have done so.
- **42%** struggled at least from time to time to **pay their energy bills**, and those who reported feeling uncomfortably cold were more likely to say that paying bills was a struggle.
- Energy bills and rent payments were the most commonly reported type of payment that respondents had found themselves unable to pay (7%).
- **38%** had experienced **damp or mould** on walls or ceilings in their current accommodation, and those who lived in cold homes were more likely to report this experience.
- **9%** said they didn't have any **control of the heating** where they lived, with some focus group participants noting that control was retained by their landlord.
- **55%** said their accommodation was **much, or a bit colder**, than they would have liked over the winter, and **49%** had felt **uncomfortably cold** in their accommodation.

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Summary of findings

- **43%** had **turned their heating off** even though they would have liked it on because of concerns about energy costs.
- **49%** said their accommodation was **poorly insulated / draughty**.
- **68%** used **blankets or hot water bottles** to stay warm because their accommodation was colder than they would have liked.
- **50%** had worn **extra layers** to bed because their accommodation was colder than they would have liked, with focus group participants confirming this finding:

"It's warmer to go outside for a run sometimes to heat up.... other than that: layers, layers, layers! Thermal tights, dressing gowns, blankets, and my beloved hot water bottles." Woman, 3rd year, London

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Cold homes have a significant impact on students

- Focus group participants commonly reported feeling low and miserable, their **mental health** and wellbeing affected by living in a cold home.

"Sometimes in bed when it's bitterly cold we all feel like crying..." Woman, 3rd year, North East

- Participants reported that managing in a cold home could place **significant strain on social relationships** within households, as a result of trying to negotiate variable financial capabilities and thermal preferences. Tactics used to cope with the cold also resulted in individuals feeling excluded.

"Makes me sad and lonely at times 'cause I have to always be in my bedroom under duvet." Woman, 3rd year, South West

- Participants also reported impacts on their **physical health**, with increased frequency of colds and flu being common.

"I had pneumonia in December - I'm fairly sure that was because of the cold." Woman, 2nd year, West Midlands

- Impact on **academic work** was also reported, with participants struggling to work in the cold temperatures in their accommodation. For some, this experiences had a positive outcome in it led to spending more time in the library in order to avoid being at home.

"It's also meant we can't work at home when we'd like as it's usually too cold"

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SAVES 2 research expands on this

- Makes a similar analysis in Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Ireland and Bulgaria
- Looks at landlord-student relationships
- Looks at landlord experiences of student tenants and their awareness of energy efficiency

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Key take aways

- The impact that living in cold home/in fuel poverty can have on **physical and mental wellbeing** of students
- Students are an **often ignored group** of the population that live in fuel poverty
- The common challenge of private rented accommodation and the **lack of direct financial incentive for landlords** to make improvements
- Example from the UK where landlords are going to be mandated to bring their properties up to EPC band E (assuming the exemptions are removed!)

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Full HFFS report can be found here

<https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research/homes-fit-for-study>

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