



Energy Company Obligation: Help to Heat

Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Local authority: North West Leicestershire District Council

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1) Introduction

North West Leicestershire (NWLDC) welcomes the introduction of Flexible Eligibility (FE) and intends to utilise it for the purposes of reducing fuel poverty in the District.

NWLDC is committed to reducing fuel poverty. Government estimates¹ indicate that around 4,535 households were in fuel poverty in our District in 2015 (11.3% of total households). We also know that this figure is much higher in certain areas (up to 20% of households).

NWLDC aims to support these households by:

- Supporting local energy efficiency support and advice schemes such as the 'Warm Homes' service operated by Leicestershire County Council.
- Encouraging households to access the best energy tariffs appropriate to their circumstances by running a Collective Switching Scheme
- Helping households to reduce debt by supporting debt advice schemes such as that delivered through Citizens Advice Leicestershire.
- Developing local schemes which assist people with accessing funding for energy efficiency measures such the Energy Company Obligation

Introducing flexible eligibility will extend and enhance the Council's ability to reach those in fuel poverty by allowing funding to be directed to meet the specific needs of NWLDC's "at risk" households.

It should be noted that the final decision on whether any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements rests with obligated energy suppliers or their contractors.

¹ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Fuel Poverty Statistics, Detailed Tables 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-detailed-tables-2017>

Inclusion in a Declaration of Eligibility issued by the Council to a supplier will not guarantee installation of measures. The final decision will depend on:

- i) identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat
- ii) the supplier's assessment of the cost-effectiveness of installing measures in relation to achieving its obligation, and
- iii) whether the supplier has achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets.

In identifying households as eligible under flexible eligibility NWLDC is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will seek the consent of households to including them in a Declaration. NWLDC expects any obligated energy supplier, or contractor working on their behalf, to comply with the Data Protection Act, to fully follow Ofgem requirements for the Energy Company Obligation Help to Heat, and to act in accordance with industry best practice in relation to consumer care and quality standards of any works that may take place. These are covered in a separate memorandum of understanding between the Council's delivery partner and the obligated party.

2) How NWLDC intends to identify eligible households

2a) ECO Flexible Criteria eligibility

NWLDC will refer residents eligible under existing ECO Affordable Warmth criteria (qualifying means tested benefits). Where this is not applicable applications will be processed under the following criteria (identical referral method) which have been designed to assist residents that may otherwise miss out on support available:

Eligible private sector households will need to meet one of the **Low Income criteria (A)**

AND

either one from **High Costs (B)** OR one from **Vulnerable to Cold (C)**

(A) Low Income:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support (IS)
- Pension Credit (PC – all types)
- Child Tax Credit (CTC – no income cap)
- Working Tax Credit (WTC – no income cap)
- Universal Credit (UC – no income cap)
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax reduction (not where only single occupant reduction applies)

- Have a household income (calculated after payment of mortgage or rent) below the corresponding thresholds in Table 1 below AND household savings of less than £8,000;

Table 1 – Income thresholds broadly consistent with those used under the Low Income High Costs indicator (2014)²³ inflated to represent 2017/18 prices

Household composition	Annual household income	Monthly household income Equivalent
1 adult (18 years and over)	£8,900	£740
and 1 child	£11,700	£980
and 2 children	£14,400	£1,200
and three children	£17,300	£1,440
and four or more children	£20,100	£1,680
2 adults (18 years and over)	£14,600	£1,220
and 1 child	£17,400	£1,450
and 2 children	£20,200	£1,680
and three children	£23,100	£1,930
and four or more children	£25,700	£2,140

(Benefit letters must be provided as evidence or bank/savings statement(s) if household income assessment only)

(B) High Cost:

- The property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E, F or G (where deemed as an accurate representation – i.e. property characteristics have not significantly changed since surveyed)

OR (where EPC does not exist)

- The property reaches a total score of 20 or above through the methodology below;

Question	Response	Score
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	0
	2	10
	3	18
	4	25
	5 or more	32
Are energy payments made by Direct Debit?	Yes	-7
	No	0
What type of property is it?	Semi-detached	-2
	Detached	6
	Mid terrace	-10
	End terrace	-4
	Flat / Maisonette	-20
When was your house built?	Before 1930	22
	1930 - 1964	14
	1965 - 1981	6

	1982 or later	0
Does the home have central heating? (i.e. radiators and a boiler)	Yes	-10
	No	10
How is your main heating system powered?	Mains gas	-5
	Electric	15
	Oil	10
	LPG (bulk/bottle gas)	15
	Solid Fuel	15
	Low carbon e.g. heat pump / biomass boiler	-20
What type of walls does your property primarily have?	Solid brick/stone	15
	Cavity wall (insulated)	0
	Cavity wall (not insulated)	4
	Other (e.g. system build, concrete block, cob, park home)	15
Does at least one member of the household spend most of the day in the home?	Yes	1
	No	0

(C) Vulnerable to Cold:

Eligible if:

- Receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Attendance Allowance (AA)
(Benefit letter / bank statement required as evidence)

OR

- Where a resident is vulnerable if:
 - Pregnant (*Mat B1 letter*)
 - Children aged under 5 (*birth certificate*)
 - Aged over 65 (*birth certificate, driving licence, passport, medical letter*)
 - Hospital admission due to a fall (*Letter from a medical professional*)

OR

- Has a health condition that can be exacerbated by the cold including:
 - Cardiovascular conditions
 - Respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and childhood asthma)
 - Musculoskeletal conditions (Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis)
 - Neurological conditions (ME, Fibromyalgia, Dementia, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy)

- Autoimmune and immunodeficiency diseases (e.g. lupus, MS, diabetes, HIV, resulting from cancer treatment)
- Mental health conditions (moderate / severe e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- Disabilities (diagnosed condition or impact on mobility or receipt of disability benefit)
- Terminal illness
- Severe learning disability
- Cancer
- Haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia)

(Letter from medical professional required to evidence condition(s))

2b) Solid Wall Insulation (SWI) “in-fill”

To increase the economies of scale of SWI projects, solid wall homes (i.e. brick or stone without a cavity) which are not ‘fuel poor’ can be classified as eligible for measures under the ECO Flexible funding where they are co-located with a minimum percentage of households assessed to be fuel poor (as per the above Low Income and High Cost (A+B), or Low Income and Vulnerable to Cold (A+C) criteria). The in-fill criteria will be:

- Semi-detached houses/bungalows and buildings with 2 premises – at least 50% of properties must meet the fuel poor criteria (A+B or A+C)
- Same terrace – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must meet fuel poor criteria (A+B or A+C)
- Same building – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must meet fuel poor criteria (A+B or A+C)
- Adjacent properties - at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must meet fuel poor criteria (A+B or A+C)

3) Acting on behalf of another local authority

This is currently not applicable

4) Governance

The SOI will be signed on behalf of NWLDC by Director of Housing Glyn Jones

Declarations will be signed on behalf of NWLDC by the Strategy and Partnership Officer, Zoe Davies.

5) Referrals

NWLDC expect declarations made for this funding will result from referrals via:

- The Warm Homes Team located within Leicestershire County Councils First Contact Plus Service
- NWLDC front line staff
- Harborough Energy, our delivery partner (residents may also self-refer via this route)
- Partner agencies such as health and social care
- Leicestershire Citizens Advice
- The Community and Voluntary sector and local charitable groups
- Other local organisations working with vulnerable people in the District.

Targeting:

NWLDC may propose the targeting of households in areas where fuel poverty is high or the factors affecting fuel poverty are known to be high, for example: areas off the main gas network; areas with high numbers of solid wall properties and areas of high deprivation.

The following data sets may be used to target households at risk of fuel poverty:

- EPC data
- Benefit data
- Health Needs Assessment & and Public Health data identifying priority neighbourhoods with higher prevalence of fuel poverty, deprivation and health inequalities
- GP referrals
- Non gas data

General referrals will also be encouraged through publicity campaigns including the use of press releases, social media, advertising in local newsletters, and publicity at local events.

6) Evidence, Monitoring and Reporting

Our delivery partner, Harborough Energy will collate information on households accessing measures under the flexible eligibility criteria. This will be provided as a monthly report to NWLDC's Strategy and Partnership Officer detailing household level information and a 6-monthly report summarising the number and type of measures funded under the scheme.

Monthly reports are expected to include:

- i) Referral date
- ii) Name of resident(s)
- iii) Address of property
- iv) Number of bedrooms
- v) Contact details
- vi) Survey date
- vii) Household measure characteristics including heating type and condition, insulation status
- viii) Installation date
- ix) Tenure

- x) Whether the household identified qualifies via the Affordable Warmth criteria or;
- xi) Qualifying ECO Flex criteria met (i.e. Low Income (A) plus High Cost (B) or Vulnerability to Cold (C) – for example: (A) Income Support and (B) EPC rated at F. Second example; (A) Child tax credit and (C) child under 5). Third example: (A) Low income band identified and (C) diagnosis of COPD.

6-monthly reports are expected to include:

- i) Number of households where measures were installed
- ii) Number of each type of measure installed
- iii) Estimate of value of funded measures delivered
- iv) Estimate of carbon savings delivered

NWLDC will audit the process by requesting evidence of eligibility for 1 in 20 applicant households at the time of approval. A high-level of non-compliance will trigger a review of the flexible eligibility process.

NWLDC will use the information provided in the reports to monitor the success of the SOI in meeting its aims with regard to reducing fuel poverty and if necessary will adjust the criteria in order to better target funding to those in need.

NWLDC will seek to develop and support local partnerships where possible to ensure that local businesses benefit from the opportunities arising.

7) Signature



Glyn Jones

Director of Housing, North West Leicestershire District Council

