

Local Authority ECO Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

- 1) Worcestershire County Council
- 2) Acting on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Wyre Forest District Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Malvern Hills District Council.
- 3) Date of publication [21/07/2017]
- 4) Publication on website www.warmerworcestershire.com
- 5) Review date: to be reviewed by 30th September 2018

Flexible Eligibility Criteria for ECO - Worcestershire April 2017 - September 2018

This statement sets out the flexible eligibility criteria for ECO for Worcestershire April 2017 – September 2018.

1. What is the ECO Scheme?

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. The Help to Heat element of the Government's ECO programme, also described as the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO), focuses on low income and vulnerable householders. These are householders who receive specific benefits and, for tax credits and universal credits, are below a certain income threshold. This eligibility criteria is set by Government.

As part of Help to Heat, ECO legislation is permitting Local Areas to define additional criteria in their area to help those fuel poor households that fall outside the Help to Heat eligibility but are still in need of support. This is called the flexible element or flexible eligibility. This requires a Statement of Intent to be produced.

2. What are the qualifying Criteria for the ECO - Help to Heat Group

A person living in private domestic premises is a member of the help to heat group if they receive one of the following benefits:

- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Pension Guarantee Credit

OR

- Tax credits

On the condition that the household's relevant income does not exceed the amount set out in the rows corresponding to the type of claim and the number of children or qualifying young persons.

Type of claim	Number of children or qualifying young persons for whom the claimant is responsible				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
Single claim	£13,200	£17,400	£21,600	£25,800	£30,000
Joint claim	£19,800	£24,000	£28,200	£32,400	£36,600

OR

- **Universal Credit**

On the condition that the household's relevant monthly income in any of the preceding 12 assessment periods does not exceed the amount set out in the rows corresponding to the type of claim and the number of children or qualifying young persons.

Type of claim	Number of children or qualifying young persons for whom the claimant is responsible				
	0	1	2	3	4 or more
Single claim	£1,100	£1,450	£1,800	£2,150	£2,500
Joint claimant	£1,650	£2,000	£2,350	£2,700	£3,050

The Help to Heat criteria is set by Government.

3. What is Flexible Eligibility?

For the period running from April 2017 – September 2018 energy suppliers will be able to achieve up to 10% of their Help to Heat target in households falling outside of the eligibility criteria described in section 2 above, who are defined as eligible by local authorities through their Statement of Intent.

There are two main categories of private tenure targeted by the scheme:

- People living in fuel poverty, in particular those not in receipt of eligible benefits
- People living on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home

In addition, a proportion of non-fuel poor homes (in-fill) can be allowed for Solid Wall Insulation projects.

4. The Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Authority

The council is required to:

- Produce and publish a Statement of Intent
- Produce, authorise and issue the declaration determining a household to be eligible
- Retain information to sufficiently evidence that a household meets the criteria outlined in the Statement of Intent for future reporting or audit

6) Introduction

Worcestershire Local Authorities have a long established, successful partnership for working to tackle fuel poverty and promote keeping warm and well. This Warmer Worcestershire partnership has a clear vision to deliver home energy efficiency programmes in line with NICE guidance quality standards to support delivery of the national fuel poverty strategy. The aim is to improve the energy efficiency of properties towards a C energy rating.

10.8% of households in Worcestershire are considered to be living in fuel poverty. 104,000 households are in LSOA¹ areas in Worcestershire where fuel poverty is above the national average (10.6%), with over 12,500 of these households in LSOA areas with fuel poverty levels above 20%.

This statement of intent and subsequent declarations do not guarantee funding and/or the installation of measures for any household. All measures will be subject to technical survey by the procured delivery partner. Schemes may close suddenly and funding withdrawn if delivery partner targets have been achieved. The delivery of the flexible eligibility going forward is subject to government policy.

7) How the LA intends to identify eligible households

Worcestershire flexible eligibility

Due to the diversity of households in the County, we have developed a number of criteria to ensure that we address household vulnerability to both fuel poverty and cold.

Criteria 1: Low Income High fuel Costs (LIHC) fuel poverty data. Any household within an LSOA with fuel poverty levels above the Worcestershire average will be eligible.

Criteria 2: Anyone who has qualified for a previous heating scheme listed below, or disabled facilities grant (all pre-qualified) or the Connecting Families programme, will automatically qualify.

Previous heating schemes:

Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency Fund

Redditch Energy Efficiency Fund

Worcestershire Boilers on Prescription

Wychavon Warm and Healthy Homes Assistance Fund

Malvern Warm and Healthy Homes Assistance Fund

Wyre Forest Warm Homes Discretionary Grant

Worcester Health Through Warmth Assistance

Criteria 3: Anyone over the age of 65 years old, a household with a child under the age of 5 years old or where householder is pregnant and with a household income below the Worcestershire average of £39,515 (gross) per annum.

Criteria 4: Private rented sector households in Worcestershire for insulation measures only

¹ Lower Super Output Area are a geography for the collection and publication of small scale statistics,

Criteria 5: A householder with an existing diagnosed health condition made worse by living in a cold home (such as a cardiovascular conditions, respiratory conditions,) and an EPC rating of E,F and G and/or an income of below the Worcestershire average household income of £39,515 (gross) per annum

Criteria 6; Any privately owned household with a pre-payment meter.

Criteria 7: Any ex social housing property sold into private ownership (right to buy properties)

External Wall Insulation

In the first year there are currently no plans to run an external wall insulation scheme, beyond facilitating one off infill projects (see below). This will be reviewed at the end of the transition year, in September 2018, when more information is available to the project board regarding the levels of funding to support installation. Independent quality inspections of each external wall insulation job would be required for external wall insulation to be supported under flexible element.

We intend to facilitate EWI for one off properties situated within EWI schemes administered by other organisations, i.e. right to buy properties that adjoin properties having EWI installed by a social housing provider.

8) Acting on behalf of another local authority

Worcestershire County Council is acting on behalf of the following local authorities:

Bromsgrove District Council

Redditch Borough Council

Malvern Hills District Council

Wyre Forest District Council

Worcester City Council

Wychavon District Council

All local authorities work in partnership under the long established Warmer Worcestershire brand for delivering energy efficiency measures to tackle fuel poverty in Worcestershire.

9) Governance

Primary contact for signing the declarations

ECO Project Manager

Worcestershire County Council

Spetchley Road

Worcester

Worcestershire

WR5 2NP

Secondary contact

Sustainability Manager

Worcestershire County Council

Spetchley Road

Worcester
Worcestershire
WR5 2NP

If primary and secondary contacts are unavailable, declarations can be signed by the following officers for installations by district area:

- Climate Change and Energy Support Officer, Housing, Bromsgrove District Council
- Climate Change and Energy Support Officer, Housing Redditch Borough Council
- Principal Health & Sustainability Officer, Housing, Wyre Forest District Council
- Housing Service Improvement Officer, Housing, Worcester City Council
- Principal Housing Officer, Housing, Malvern Hills District Council
- Principal Housing Officer, Housing, Wychavon District Council.

10 step governance process

Step	activity	Who is responsible
1	Statement of intent published on www.warmerworcestershire.com	Worcestershire County Council
2	Householder eligibility assessment: Householder contact logged with referral agent	Referral agent
3	Householder offered additional energy advice i.e. switching suppliers, understanding their energy bill, smart meters	Referral agent
4	Declaration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Batch of properties added to declaration - Cross checked with information in statement of intent and referral agents records 	Worcestershire County Council
5	Declaration approval Agree content of the declarations. Any rejections return to step 2.	Project board
6	Referral sent to delivery partner with customer consent	Worcestershire County Council/referral agent
7	Property eligibility assessment; Technical survey	Delivery partner
8	Measure and funding options offered based on technical survey	Delivery partner
9	Customer feedback	Referral agent
10	Review of process, cases and customer feedback at monthly project board	Project board

The project board will consist of a representative from the following organisations:

Worcestershire County Council
Bromsgrove District Council
Redditch Borough Council
Wyre Forest District Council
Worcester City Council
Malvern Hills District Council

Wychavon District Council
Referral agent (to be appointed)
Delivery partner (to be appointed)

10) Referrals

Marketing will be undertaken by Local Authorities utilising available data to aid targeting to the eligible criteria groups referred to above. The programme will predominantly focus on self referral as a result of marketing activity, such as direct mail to households who may be eligible. Any marketing will contain the local authority logo for the organisation undertaking the marketing and the Warmer Worcestershire logo as a minimum.

The appointed referral agent will take all calls related to this programme and collect the relevant data, which will be stored and managed in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Householders will be asked to consent to their contact details being passed from the referral agent to the delivery partner to continue in the process.

Worcestershire County Council will confirm with the delivery partner and the referral agent when the declaration has been made and those referrals will then be passed to the delivery partner for the technical survey.

The project will also accept referrals from frontline workers who are working with a client who may require energy efficiency improvements to their homes. Full householder eligibility will be determined during the initial contact with the resident made by the referral agent.

11) Signature

Name: Clare Marchant
Position: Chief Executive
Organisation: Worcestershire County Council

Signed:



Name: Jack Hegarty
Position: Managing Director
Organisation: Malvern Hills District Council

Signed:



Name: Vic Allison
Position: Deputy Managing Director
Organisation: Wychavon District Council

Signed:



Name: CAROLINE NEWLANDS
Position: SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL
Organisation: WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Signed:



Name: David Blake
Position: Managing Director
Organisation: Worcester City Council

Signed:



Name: Kevin Dicks
Position: Chief Executive
Organisation: Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils

Signed:

