

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) : Help to Heat Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Information about the scheme

This document sets out the details of the Kent-wide scheme on behalf of the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership.

Name of the local authority: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

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This document can be found on the Council's website by following this link:

[Eco Help to heat statement of intent](#)

Introduction

This Statement of Intent (SOI) sets out how Tunbridge Wells Borough Council intends to identify households who could be eligible for Government's ECO: Help to Heat funding, in accordance with guidelines from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). This Scheme is part of the Government's Affordable Warmth programme.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council welcomes the introduction of the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility scheme and intends to utilise the scheme to direct a proportion of funding to residents who struggle to heat their home to a comfortable standard, or who have a specific condition which may make them more vulnerable to the effects of a cold home. Through this

scheme Tunbridge Wells Borough Council intends to reduce fuel poverty and minimise the health risks associated with living in a cold home.

Kent County Council works in partnership with 13 local authorities and wider strategic partners (from the health sector, private sector and energy sector) through a number of partnerships including the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership (KMSEP) and the Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership (KEEP).

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council intends to work with approved contractors and obligated energy suppliers as part of the KMSEP's existing retrofitting framework and energy referral scheme called Warm Homes. Through the Warm Homes scheme Tunbridge Wells Borough Council hopes to utilise flexible eligibility alongside other local funding schemes where possible, to reduce the installation costs of energy measures for residents as much as possible.

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. Inclusion in a declaration of eligibility issued by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, to a supplier or contractor, will not guarantee installation of any measures, as the final decision will depend on:

- i. identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat;
- ii. the contractor's or energy supplier's assessment of the energy savings that can be achieved for a property, and;
- iii. whether the supplier has achieved their targets or requires further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets.

In identifying households as eligible under flexible eligibility, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will obtain consent from households before including them in a declaration.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council 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.

How the Council intends to identify eligible households

ECO Flexible Eligibility Help to Heat funding is only available to private tenure households.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will identify households that may benefit from flexible eligibility in a number of ways.

Subject to availability of resources within Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the legal use of data, private tenure households must fit one, or more of the following criteria:

- living in fuel poverty but not in receipt of benefits;

- low income and vulnerability to cold.

These criteria will be kept under review in relation to levels of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the practices of other authorities.

Criteria for identifying households 'living in fuel poverty, but not in receipt of benefits'

For those living in private tenure households, fuel poverty is assessed based on the national Government model of a household having high energy costs and a low income. The following ways of identifying fuel poverty will be assessed:

- if the household does not receive an income related benefit and has an income of £30,150 (after paying for rent/mortgage), then the household will be identified as having a low income;¹
- the Council will cross reference data which we hold or can access to establish whether the household has high energy costs. Examples include:
 - energy performance certificates (rated D, E, F & G)/SAP ratings, pre-payment meters, expenditure on fuel, the housing type/age/condition including park homes, levels of insulation in the property, heating type, whether the property has a working heating system);
- low income households living in energy inefficient housing in the private rented sector will also be identified through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004.

Criteria for identifying low income and vulnerability to cold:

Low income will be assessed by:

If the household does not receive an income related benefit and has an income of £30,150 (after paying for rent/mortgage), then the household will be identified as low income.

To establish vulnerability to cold, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will target households containing people with the followings characteristics, which reflect the National Institute for Health and Care Excellences (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes. Specifically these are:

- older people (aged over 60 years and particularly those over 75 years);
- young children (under five years);
- people with respiratory conditions (for example chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and childhood asthma);
- people with cardiovascular conditions (e.g. ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease);

¹ Source: a median net annual income threshold for Sevenoaks, Swale and Tunbridge Wells has been calculated from the ONS dataset 'Small area income estimates for middle layer super output areas, England and Wales', utilising [Net annual income \(equivalised\) after housing costs](#)' data for Financial Year ending 2016.

- people with mental health conditions (for example schizophrenia, bipolar disorder);
- pregnant women;
- people with addictions (for example substance abuse);
- people who have attended hospital due to a fall;
- people with dementia;
- people with neurobiological and related conditions (for example fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis CFS/ME)
- people with terminal illness;
- people with autoimmune & immune deficiency diseases (e.g. from cancer treatment, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), multiple sclerosis (MS));
- people with disabilities;
- haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia);
- people with severe learning disabilities.

Vulnerability to the cold will also be identified by taking into account the living circumstances of the person, This includes:

- people who move in and out of homelessness;
- recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (if living in private tenure);
- people living in park homes.

Any referral or enquiry received that does not meet the above requirements will be considered on a case by case basis.

Eligibility under the scheme means that you will be put forward for funding by your local council, however, this does not guarantee funding under Government's ECO: Help to Heat funding. The final decision on whether you receive this funding will be made by the obligated energy supplier who provides this funding, or their contractors/delivery partners.

Referrals

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will ensure appropriate referral processes are in place while maintaining the protection of personal data. This will include:

- self-referrals by residents into partnership schemes (such as the Warm Homes scheme);
- referrals from local authorities, on behalf of residents;
- identification of eligible households using housing stock conditions data, where held by the Council. We will also work with partner agencies to determine those that may be vulnerable due to living in a cold home, and/or suffering from a qualifying medical condition.

Evidence, monitoring and reporting

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will record key information including the number of referrals made and the number of funded installations delivered, for reporting to BEIS.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will inform residents that they may be required to provide evidence of income and medical/health conditions at a later date, in order to deter fraudulent claims.

Governance and Signatures

This Statement of Intent (SOI) is signed on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council by:

Paul Taylor

Director of Change and Communities

Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1 RS

Declarations will be signed on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council by:

James Cox

Private Sector Housing Manager

Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1 RS