



ECO FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT OF INTENT

North Devon Council

January 2021

Version 2

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government backed scheme where major energy suppliers are required to provide funding for energy saving measures in homes occupied by vulnerable householders. Residents are deemed eligible for funding if they receive certain state benefits, or if they meet the criteria set out by their Local Authority in a Statement of Intent (this is referred to as LA Flexible Eligibility).

North Devon Council (NDC) plans to use LA Flexible Eligibility to help residents in fuel poverty and those at risk from cold related illnesses, improve their homes and save energy and money on their fuel bills. This Statement of Intent sets out how residents will be assessed and declared eligible for ECO funding in accordance with guidance provided by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

According to the latest government statistics¹, 11.7% of all households in North Devon are considered fuel poor. This is higher than the average for Devon (10.7%), the South West region (9.4%) and the whole of England (10.3%).

NDC is working to tackle poor housing and fuel poverty in the district through a combination of: intervention, support and signposting. In providing this Statement of Intent, we will contribute to the Council's priorities to provide "Becoming focused on delivering the best for our citizens".

Please note that meeting the criteria in this Statement of Intent does not guarantee the installation of measures. The final decision is made by the obligated energy supplier or their agents/contractors and will depend on:

- 1) The survey carried out and the installation costs calculated
- 2) The projected fuel bill savings that can be achieved in the property
- 3) Whether a obligated energy supplier has achieved their ECO target or require further measures to meet their ECO target

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-detailed-tables-2020>

2. HOW THE LA INTENDS TO IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS

ECO Flexibility Eligibility assistance is only available to private tenure households (i.e. not Social Housing).

In order to be eligible for this funding, a household must fit one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Living in fuel poverty - low income and high cost ("LIHC")
- b) Low income and vulnerability to cold ("LIVC")
- c) Solid wall insulation in-fill scheme ("in-fill")

Private Renters

Please note that in private rented accommodation there are Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) restrictions in place on certain measures. For example, funding for loft insulation is only granted to qualifying tenants that live in a property with an EPC in band A to E (whereas F or G rated properties are excluded). These EPC restrictions take president over any EPC criteria listed in this Statement of Intent for any eligible private renting tenant. There are no EPC restrictions for owner-occupied households.

2a Criteria for identifying households in fuel poverty – Low Income and High Cost (LIHC)

Residents must meet the 'Low Income' criteria and the 'High Cost' criteria to be determined eligible for funding:

Low Income	Household income (after rent or mortgage) per composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single person household = £25,000 • A household with 2 or more people = £30,000
<i>And</i>	
High Cost	The property has an EPC in band E, F or G
	<i>Or</i>
	The property has an EPC in band D and the property: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has no central heating, or • Is not connected to the mains gas network, or • Has solid walls, or • Is a System Built property, or • Has non-standard cavity wall, or • Is a Park Home
	<i>Or</i>
	If no EPC is available, the property must score "10 or greater" on the Property Condition table below (i)

i) Property Condition Table

Property Details	Type	Points	Tick Box	Score
Number of bedrooms:	1	1		
	2	2		
	3+	3		
Number of people living in the property:	1	1		
	2	2		
	3+	3		
How much loft insulation is present?	None	5		
	Up to 150mm	3		
	250mm and above	1		
What is the wall type?	System built	5		
	Solid stone/brick	3		
	Cavity construction	1		
How much wall insulation is present?	External	1		
	Internal	1		
	Cavity	2		
	None	5		
What heating fuel is used within the property?	Mains gas	1		
	Oil	2		
	LPG	3		
	Electric	5		
	Solid fuel	5		
Is there a central heating system within the property and what age is this?	Less than 10 years old	1		
	Over ten years old	3		
	Broken system	5		
	No system	5		
			Total	

2b Criteria for identifying low income and vulnerable to cold (LIVC)

Residents must meet the 'Low Income' criteria and the 'Vulnerable to Cold' criteria to be determined eligible for funding:

Low Income	Household income (after rent or mortgage) per composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single person household = £25,000 • A household with 2 or more people = £30,000
<i>And</i>	
Vulnerable to Cold	<p>A member of the household suffers from one or more of the following health conditions which have been diagnosed by a healthcare professional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiovascular condition • Respiratory condition (i.e. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, childhood asthma, etc.) • Mental health condition (moderate to severe) • Terminal illness • Dementia • Autoimmune or immunodeficiency diseases (e.g. diabetes, MS, lupus) • Suppressed immune systems (e.g. cancer treatment or HIV) • A health condition made worse by cold • Has a physical disability • People who move in and out of homelessness • People with addictions • People who have attended hospital due to a fall • Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees
<i>Or</i>	
	<p>A member of the household is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 65 years of age, or • A pregnant women, or • A child aged 5 years old or under

2c Criteria for Solid Wall Insulation (SWI) "in-fill" projects

To facilitate SWI projects in a locality, households with solid walls that do not meet the eligibility criteria set out in this Statement of Intent (2a or 2b) will be deemed eligible for ECO funding when they are co-located with a minimum percentage of households that do meet the eligibility criteria in this Statement of Intent.

The minimum percentage details are:

- Semi-detached houses/bungalows and buildings with 2 premises – at least 50% of properties in an SWI project must be LIHC or LIRC
- Same terrace – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must be LIHC or LIRC
- Same building – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must be LIHC or LIRC
- Adjacent properties – at least 66% of properties in a SWI project must be LIHC or LIRC

3. ACTING ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY

This Statement of Intent is made solely for NDC and independent from any other local authority.

4. JOINT STATEMENT OF INTENT

NDC is not currently part of any joint SOI or common criteria arrangement. This will be kept under review.

5. GOVERNANCE

The Home Adaptations, Improvements and Energy Efficiency Team at NDC will liaise with residents and ECO providers to produce the required declaration forms to prove a household meets the criteria in this Statement of Intent. The Head of Service for Environmental Health and Housing (or any qualified person they elect to delegate to), will be responsible for signing local authority declarations on behalf of NDC.

6. TARGETING AND IDENTIFYING ELIGIBLE RESIDENTS

NDC will work in partnership with organisations that have access to ECO funding to identify eligible residents under this Statement of Intent. The Council may also choose to procure delivery partners for this purpose.

The Council may support various third party marketing campaigns to recruit eligible residents, or carry out its own marketing activities to raise awareness of the funding opportunity. This could include targeted mailings using publically available EPC data to locate properties that require energy saving measures.

Any marketing activity carried out or supported by the Council will need to be officially approved and signed off by the Head of Service for Environmental Health & Housing (or any qualified person they elect to delegate to) before implementation.

NDC will also work with social care and support organisations that work with vulnerable residents and establish relevant referral mechanisms.

Eligible households will also be identified through routine inspections, which officers within Environmental Health & Housing undertake.

Low income households living in energy inefficient housing will be identified in the private rented sector through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004 and landlord associations/forums.

Where possible, the Council will continue to collaborate with other Devon authorities to develop effective partnership working and consistency across the county.

7. REFERRALS

NDC expects referrals for LA Flexible Eligibility to come from:

- 1) Residents (self-referrals)
- 2) Private sector landlords
- 3) Other Council departments
- 4) Social care or health organisations
- 5) Social prescribing organisations (who determine those that may be vulnerable or those with health conditions)
- 6) ECO providers, installers or agents
- 7) Citizens Advice.

NDC will ensure that any referral processes used comply with the latest data protection legislation.

8. EVIDENCE, MONITORING AND REPORTING

The data collected from residents will be suitable and sufficient to confirm their eligibility. This will include:


- 1) Name, address and contact details
- 2) Proof of household income
- 3) EPC (if LIHC)
- 4) Declaration from Health Care Professional (if LIRC), or
- 5) Other official document, i.e. birth certificate, MATB1 form

Records will be kept of all households that are declared eligible under this Statement of Intent until 31/3/2029. All personal data will be protected and not shared with any unauthorised third parties.

Current guidance encourages ECO suppliers to keep the relevant Local Authority informed of all measures installed on the basis of LA declarations made. Where ECO providers are operating within the district, the content and frequency of reporting will be agreed with that supplier. This will allow NDC to report to BEIS and include relevant information in any future Home Energy Conservation Act reports.

Suitable checks and enquiries will be made to prevent and detect fraud.

9. SIGNATURE

Signature:  _____

Jeremy W Mann; Head of Service for Environmental Health & Housing

Date: 12th April 2021

10. Contact Details

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