

ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION: HELP TO HEAT LOCAL AUTHORITY FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT OF INTENT

Local Authority: Ashford Borough Council

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URL: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing/private-sector-grants>

Introduction:

Ashford Borough Council welcomes the introduction of Flexible Eligibility (FE) and intend to utilise it for the purposes of reducing fuel poverty in the Borough. This Statement of intent (SOI) sets out how households will be declared to eligible for ECO: Help to Heat funding, in accordance with guidelines from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). This scheme is part of the government's Affordable Warmth programme.

It should be noted that the final decision on whether any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements rest with obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. Inclusion in a Declaration of Eligibility issued by the Council to supplier will not guarantee installation of any works that may help reduce fuel poverty and the final decision will depend on:

1. Identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat.
2. The supplier's assessment of the cost effectiveness of installing measure in relation to achieving its obligation.
3. 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 Ashford Borough Council (ABC) is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will obtain consent from households before including them in a Declaration.

Ashford 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. These are covered in a separate memorandum of understanding between the Council and the obligated party.

How Ashford Borough Council intends to identify eligible households

The Council will identify household that may benefit from flexible eligibility in a number of ways:

By identifying fuel poverty:

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

1. Living in fuel poverty but not in receipt of benefits
2. Low income and vulnerability to cold (LIVC)

This 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 'living in Fuel Poverty', but not in receipt of benefits:

For those living in private tenure the following will be assessed:

- Households not in receipt of income related benefit will be assessed using the following income thresholds:-

Household Composition	Annual Household Income	Monthly Household Income Equivalent
Single person (18 years and over)	£10,000	£835
2 people	£15,000	£1250
2 people + child(ren)	£20,000	£1666

- If a household has an income under these thresholds, depending on composition, then it will be identified as being 'low income'.
- The Council will cross reference data which we hold or can assess on Energy Performance Certificates/SAP ratings, pre-payment meters, expenditure on fuel, housing type/age/condition, and heating type.
- Low income households living in energy inefficient housing will be identified in the private rented sector through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004.

Criteria for identifying low income and vulnerability to cold:

The Council will target households containing people with the following characteristics, which reflect the National Institute for health and care excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes. Specifically these are:

- Older people (aged 60 and particularly those over 75)
- Young children (under 5)
- People with respiratory conditions (in particular chronic pulmonary disease (COPD) and childhood asthma)
- People with cardiovascular conditions (e.g. ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease)
- People with mental health conditions (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- Pregnant women
- People with addictions (e.g. substance misuse)
- People who have attended hospital due to a fall
- People with dementia
- People with neurobiological and related conditions (e.g. fibromyalgia, ME)
- People with terminal illness
- People with autoimmune and immune deficiency diseases (e.g. from cancer treatment, HIV, MS)
- People with disabilities
- Haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia)
- People with severe learning difficulties
- People who move in and out of homelessness
- Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (if living in private tenure)

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

Referrals

Ashford Borough Council will ensure appropriate referral processes are in place while maintaining the protection of personal data. This will include initial identification of eligible households using the BRE Housing Stock Assessment for Ashford. We will also work with partner agencies to determine those that may be vulnerable due to living in a cold home, suffering from a qualifying medical condition.

Evidence, monitoring and reporting

Ashford Borough Council will record key information including the number of referrals made and the number of funded installations delivered for reporting both to BEIS and future Home Energy conservation reports.

Governance

The Statement of Intent (SOI) will be signed on behalf of Ashford Borough Council by:

Tracey Kerly
Chief Executive
Ashford Borough Council
01233 330201
Tracey.kerly@ashford.gov.uk

Signature:
Chief Executive



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Declarations will be signed on behalf of Ashford Borough Council by:

Julian Watts
Senior Environmental Health Office – Private Sector Housing
Ashford Borough Council
01233 330339
julian.watts@ashford.gov.uk

Signature:



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