

## Stafford Borough Council ECO: Help to Heat Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent.

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Publication of this statement can be found at:

[https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cme/DocMan1/Housing/Flexible-Eligibility Statement of Intent.pdf](https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cme/DocMan1/Housing/Flexible-Eligibility%20Statement%20of%20Intent.pdf)

Contact details: Warmer Homes Stafford – 0800 677 1785 / [advice@mea.org.uk](mailto:advice@mea.org.uk)

### 1. Introduction

Fuel poverty can cause low income and vulnerable households to live in cold, unhealthy homes and push them further into debt. Stafford Borough Council welcomes Local Authority Flexible Eligibility powers through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) as a way to help address this issue locally. Households can benefit from ECO funding if they are in receipt of 'Affordable Warmth' qualifying benefits. Flexible Eligibility allows the council to define additional criteria to ensure additional fuel poor or low income households and those that are vulnerable to the effects of a cold home can access support. Further details about Flexible Eligibility are set out in the Government's Energy Company Obligation, ECO 2018 – 2022: government response

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/727065/Energy Company Obligation ECO3 2018-2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727065/Energy_Company_Obligation_ECO3_2018-2022.pdf)

The final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from energy saving improvements under Affordable Warmth will be made by the obligated suppliers or their agents/contractors. Inclusion in a Declaration issued by the local authority to a supplier will not guarantee installation of measures, as the final decision will depend on i) survey carried out by suppliers agents/contractors and installation costs calculated, ii) the energy savings that can be achieved for a property, and iii) whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their ECO targets.

Stafford Borough Council's Flexible Eligibility scheme is managed by Marches Energy Agency ([www.mea.org.uk](http://www.mea.org.uk)), who run the Warmer Homes Stafford advice line in partnership with the Council.

Warmer Homes Stafford / 0800 677 1785 / [advice@mea.org.uk](mailto:advice@mea.org.uk) / [www.warmerhomesstafford.org.uk](http://www.warmerhomesstafford.org.uk)

## 2. Eligible Households

Households receiving Affordable Warmth benefits will qualify for ECO funding through the Affordable Warmth route and should make applications for funding via Warmer Homes Stafford or directly through an approved contractor or an energy supplier.

### 2.1 Eligible Tenures

ECO Flexible Eligibility is available to private sector households. In accordance with the national guidance, the tenure of a property affects eligibility for certain measures.

Owner Occupied premises where household will qualify for any ECO measure<sup>1</sup> if a householder is designated as Fuel Poor (FP) or Low Income and Vulnerable to the Cold (LIVC)

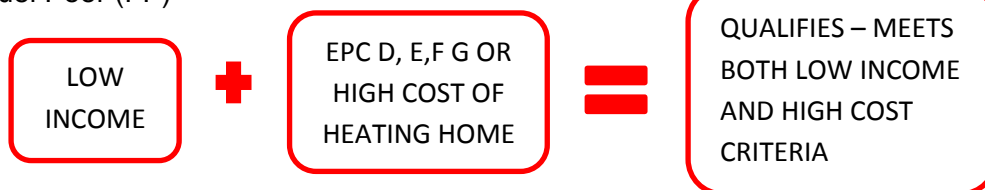
Private rented premises are eligible where;

- a) EPC A to E rated premises, where a household is deemed FP or LIVC, but installation measure(s) is not the replacement or repair of a boiler, electric storage heater or central heating system that has broken down.
- b) EPC F, G or those without a valid EPC, where a household is deemed FP or LIVC and installation measure is only solid wall insulation and or a renewable heating measure;

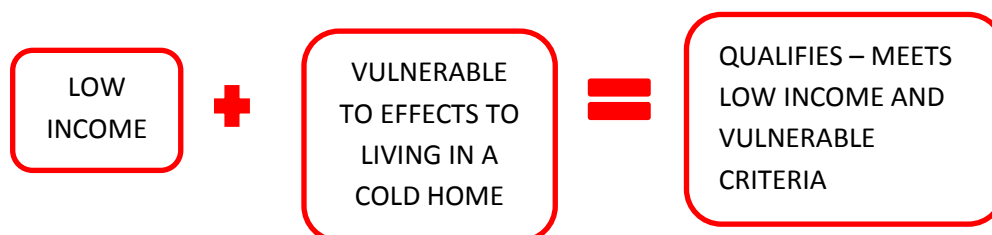
N.B - In-fill Specific targeting for F and G Properties under LA Flex EPC Band F and G Private Rented Properties are not eligible under LA Flex, except for solid wall insulation or renewable heating measures as landlords are responsible for meeting these standards under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards regulations.

### 2.2 Householders qualify if they are determined to be Fuel Poor (FP) or low income and vulnerable to the effects of living a cold home (LIVC).

Fuel Poor (FP)



Low income and vulnerable to a cold home (LIVC)



In exceptional circumstances, the local authority may use their discretion.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2018/11/eco3\\_measures\\_table\\_v3.pdf](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2018/11/eco3_measures_table_v3.pdf)

Please note that all households applying for the Warm Home Fund for first time central heating will use an alternative application process, as outlined in Appendix 1 (page 7). This is to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of this project across Staffordshire.

### 2.3 Low income qualifying criteria

Households will qualify if they have a net annual household income of under **£22,000 after housing costs (rent and/or mortgage)**. Household income is defined as income from all household members from all sources including net earnings (after tax), income from savings and investments, pensions, all benefits (including housing benefit) and net council tax payments. Housing costs are defined as rent or mortgage, including ground rent and any reasonable service charges (e.g. for flats). The latest Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report, 2018 from DECC states that the median (average) income after housing costs (AHC) i.e. once rent or mortgage are taken out, in 2016 was £22,017<sup>2</sup> for the overall population. Therefore, the Council will identify households in fuel poverty as those that have an income of **£22,000 or less**.

### 2.4 High Cost Household / Fuel Poor (FP) Criteria

Households will qualify if their homes have an energy performance rating of E, F or G. Where no EPC is present, the 'High Cost' table below will be used to determine eligibility. In addition, all households with no central heating, or solid fuel central heating, will qualify.

Those properties without EPCs will be determined as meeting the high cost criteria if they score 6 points or more using the following table:

Question		
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	<b>0</b>
	2	<b>1</b>
	3	<b>2</b>
	4	<b>3</b>
What type of property is it?	Flat	<b>1</b>
	Mid Terrace	<b>2</b>
	Semi-detached/ End Terrace	<b>3</b>
	Detached House	<b>4</b>
	Park home	<b>5</b>
Was the home built before 1964?	Yes	<b>1</b>
	No	<b>0</b>
What is the main wall type?	Solid - uninsulated	<b>4</b>
	Solid - insulated	<b>0</b>
	Cavity - not filled	<b>4</b>
	Cavity - filled	<b>0</b>
What is the main heating type?	Gas Central Heating	<b>0</b>
	Gas Room Heaters	<b>2</b>
	Oil/LPG	<b>2</b>
	Electricity	<b>3</b>

<sup>2</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719106/Fuel\\_Poverty\\_Statistics\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719106/Fuel_Poverty_Statistics_Report_2018.pdf)

	Other	3
Heating system completely broken down?	Yes	6
	No	0

## 2.5 Low Income and Vulnerable (LIVC) qualifying criteria

Certain households are more vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home. Households\* will qualify under the Flexible Eligibility criteria where they have **one occupant or more** who is vulnerable to the cold outlined in the **NICE guideline**<sup>3</sup> NG6 “Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes” as shown below:

- People with cardiovascular conditions
- People with respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
- People with mental health conditions
- People with disabilities
- Older people (65 and older)
- Households with young children (from new-born to school age)
- Pregnant women
- People who are terminally ill
- People with suppressed immune systems
- 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 (if living in private tenure)
- Households in debt

## 1.6 Solid Wall “in-fill” project

To increase economies of scale, solid wall insulation projects which are not deemed ‘fuel poor’ will be deemed eligible for support where they are co-located with a minimum percentage of households deemed to be fuel poor (FP) or low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home (LIVC). See below;

Property Type	LA declaration requirements	In-fill available
Project consisting of a pair of semi-detached houses or bungalows, or a building containing no more than two domestic premises	At least one of the two properties must be declared by the Council as fuel poor i.e. 50% of the properties must be fuel poor	The other property to which it is directly adjoined is eligible for solid wall insulation.
Project consisting of any premises that are contained in the same building (e.g. flats), immediately adjacent buildings (e.g. neighbouring detached properties) or in the same terrace	At least two in three properties on the list must be declared by the Council as fuel poor i.e. at least 66% of the properties are fuel poor	The other (i.e. up to one third) of properties in the project are eligible for solid wall insulation, provided they are either in the same building, an immediately adjacent building or in the same terrace as the ones identified as fuel poor

<sup>3 3</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/chapter/What-is-this-guideline-about>

### **3. Acting on behalf of another Local Authority**

This is not applicable.

### **4. Joint Statement of Intent**

This is not applicable.

### **5. Governance**

5.1 Stafford Borough Council reports progress towards its various energy and carbon reduction objectives through the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) reports.

5.2 The declaration of households who meet the Council's agreed Flexible Eligibility criteria will be signed off by an appropriate senior officer.

5.3 The final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from energy saving improvements under Affordable Warmth and Flexible Eligibility will be made by the obligated suppliers or their agents/contractors.

### **6. Referrals and applications**

6.1 All potentially eligible households will need to apply through Warmer Homes Stafford (WHS). WHS is a partnership between Stafford Borough Council and Marches Energy Agency (MEA). Householders can apply directly by contacting WHS, or can be referred for an assessment (Freephone 0800 677 1785). WHS advisors will check eligibility and householders will be asked to agree to a verbal statement, to confirm they meet qualification criteria and give permission for their data to be shared as needed with the council and contractors, in line with GDPR regulations.

6.2 WHS facilitates a referral network of agencies such as charities, health care providers and community groups in order to make those who need the support most aware of the funding and how to apply.

6.3 Heating and insulation contractors carrying out work under Flexible Eligibility scheme must be on the list of MEA approved contractors in order to refer householders for an assessment. This framework is reviewed regularly.

6.4 Approved contractors can submit households they believe to be eligible for an assessment which will be undertaken by the WHS team. There is a secure referral process to enable this.

6.5 WHS will pass a draft Declaration listing the qualifying household to the council to be signed. Once this has been signed, it will be passed from WHS to an approved installer, who will arrange to carry out a household survey and works, as necessary.

## **7. Evidence, monitoring and reporting**

7.1 Data will be collected on each potential applicant through the governance processes described at paragraph 4 above. Households who contact the energy advice line and are eligible for ECO Flexible Eligibility together with the number of ECO Flexible Eligibility funded measures installed and the number of homes receiving measures will be recorded and reported upon by the WHS service, as part of the current quarterly Key Performance Indicators report to Stafford Borough Council

7.2 WHS advisors will visually inspect evidence of eligibility prior to an application being made, where possible. The Council will audit the process by writing to 1 in 10 applicant households asking for evidence of eligibility at the time of the application. A high level of non-compliance will trigger a review of the Flexible Eligibility process.

## **8. Statement of Intent authorisation**

Signed:



Date: 31/05/2019

Name: Anna Nevin

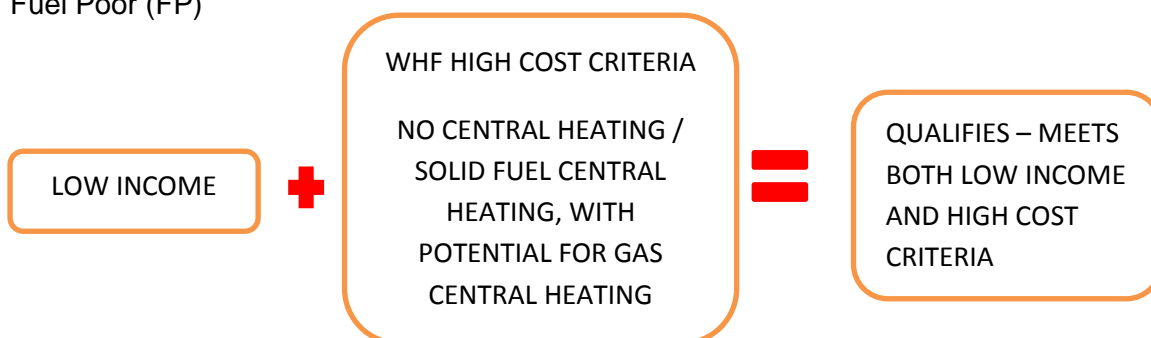
Job Title: Health and Housing Manager

## Appendix 1 – Qualification for Staffordshire Warm Homes Fund

Applicants qualifying for the Staffordshire Warm Home Fund are subject to alternative qualification criteria, to ensure a consistent approach across the county. The Warm Home Fund is a project enabling householders to receive funding for full central heating and a gas connection, if needed.

Qualification criteria can be summarised as follows:

Fuel Poor (FP)



### Low income qualifying criteria

Income is defined as annual gross income from all sources, including housing-related benefits, before tax. This should be determined based on the preceding annual tax year which runs from 6th April to 5th April of the following year.

Households will qualify if they have an income equal to or below those listed in the relevant category of the table, below.

Household Composition	Annual income limit (20% uplift on child benefit allowance)
1 Adult	£17,063
And 1 Child	£22,385
And 2 Child	£27,830
And 3 Child	£33,275
And 4+ Child	£38,720
2 Adults	£25,768
And 1 Child	£30,855
And 2 Child	£36,300
And 3 Child	£41,745
And 4+Child	£47,190

In exceptional circumstances, the local authority may deem a household eligible without the need to meet the above criteria.

**Referrals and applications** for the Warm Home Fund can be made through Warmer Homes Stafford or directly through a Staffordshire Warm Home Fund delivery partner. Applicants will be assessed by E.ON, the main delivery partner of the scheme. Householders will be asked to confirm they meet qualification criteria and give permission for their data to be shared as needed with the council and contractors, in line with GDPR regulations.