

# **The Derbyshire County Council Healthy Home Programme**

## **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)**

### **Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent (Version 1.0)**

Date of publication 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017

Publication on website [www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk)

#### **1) Introduction**

Derbyshire's councils aim to support householders struggling to achieve affordable warmth or who are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

The Council recognises that vulnerable householders need help to access grants to carry out improvements to their homes to help them stay warm and well at home.

This document outlines a collaborative approach between the Derbyshire Healthy Home Programme, Derbyshire district councils and partners to adopt a 'flexible' approach to assessing client eligibility for access to ECO grants.

The Statement of Intent (SOI) allows district councils and partners to refer clients to the Healthy Home programme for an eligibility assessment and outlines the methodology the Council will use to identify these householders.

Should the assessment result in a client meeting the eligibility criteria, then Derbyshire County Council will sign a declaration to confirm eligibility and submit the declaration to a number of energy companies or a managing agent to seek ECO funding towards the cost of installing heating or insulation.

ECO contributions will not cover the entire cost of the improvements and the householder may be expected to pay an additional contribution.

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 agents/contractors and installation costs,
- ii) The energy savings that can be achieved for a property,
- iii) Whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their ECO targets.

## **2. How the LA intends to identify eligible households**

The relationship between living in a cold home and the impact that this has upon certain health conditions is well documented. This section outlines how the SOI will use indicators of low income, energy efficiency characteristics and health conditions to determine eligibility for support from ECO in either of the following private tenure categories.

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

### ***2(a) Criteria for identifying fuel poverty***

Fuel poverty is defined as living with low income and high heating costs.

#### ***Low income characteristics***

An income assessment will be carried out to ascertain whether a household is determined to be living on a low income. The assessment will request evidence of any of the following:

- Households containing a resident in receipt of certain income related benefits, or
- If not in receipt of relevant benefits then household income will be assessed and a decision will be made as to whether or not an income threshold has been met in relation to the household composition, or
- An assessment of net household income after expenditure (excluding housing costs).

The council reserves the right to request copies of bank statements or authorisation to contact the client's bank on behalf of the client and request copies of statements.

If required, the council may refer complex benefit calculations to the welfare and benefits team for advice about eligibility'

Householders will be offered a range of fuel management services to help them afford to heat their home to a safe temperature.

### ***High energy cost characteristics***

An energy efficiency assessment will be carried out to ascertain whether the household displays high energy consumption characteristics or whether a household is unable to heat their home to an adequate temperature e.g.

- No heating or hot water system
- Broken systems
- Very old and inefficient heating systems
- Very poor insulation levels
- Non gas heating systems e.g. coal, electricity, oil
- Inefficient heating controls and thermostats
- Household occupancy and heating needs
- Age, size and property construction

Energy efficiency characteristics will be used by energy suppliers to determine the potential for ECO funding contributions.

### **2(b) Criteria for identifying low income and vulnerability to cold**

The same low income characteristics will be applied as in 2(a).

#### ***Vulnerability to the cold***

Health and vulnerability to the cold will be assessed in conjunction with Adult Social Care or diagnosed by healthcare professionals. The following categories are referenced by NICE as those most vulnerable to the health risks associated with cold homes:

- a) People with cardiovascular conditions
- b) People with respiratory conditions
- c) People with mental health conditions
- d) People with disabilities
- e) Older people (65 and over)
- f) Young children (under 5)
- g) Pregnant women
- h) People with addictions
- i) People who have attended hospital due to a fall
- j) Terminal illness
- k) Suppressed immune systems e.g. from cancer treatment

The assessor will ensure that households are offered any relevant wellbeing service that may improve their ability to live comfortably in their own home.

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

## **2(c) Criteria for solid wall insulation (SWI) “in fill” properties**

The Healthy Home programme isn't actively searching for fuel poor households requiring SWI grants through ECO. This is because it is likely that the ECO grants will be insufficient to enable a household in fuel poverty to cover the additional funding required to pay for the full cost of the works.

To increase the economies of scale of SWI projects in homes which are not fuel poor, OFGEM has agreed that these properties will be eligible for ECO funding where they are co-located with a minimum percentage of households assessed to be fuel poor or living on a low income and vulnerable to the cold.

The criteria for this will be:

- Semi-detached houses/bungalows and buildings with 2 premises – at least 50% of properties in an SWI project need to meet ECO flex eligibility
- Same terrace – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must meet ECO flex eligibility
- Same building – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must meet ECO flex eligibility
- Adjacent properties – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must meet ECO flex eligibility

## **3) Acting on behalf of another local authority**

Derbyshire County Council is not acting on behalf of another local authority

## **4) Joint Statement of Intent**

Derbyshire County Council is not working in association with another local authority.

## **5) Governance**

This SOI has been produced by the Derbyshire Healthy Home Programme on behalf of Derbyshire County Council and in partnership with all 8 Derbyshire district councils i.e.

- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council
- Derbyshire Dales District Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- High Peak Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- South Derbyshire District Council

District councils and other partners are invited to identify householders in fuel poverty or those living in a cold home and vulnerable to the cold.

Householder's permission will be sought to refer their details to the Derbyshire Health Home programme for an assessment in accordance with this SOI.

An SOI monitoring report will be presented to the Derbyshire Healthy Home Programme Board on a 6 monthly basis or as and when requested.

Derbyshire County Council is the governing body responsible for the SOI and has delegated operational responsibility to Bill Purvis, Derbyshire Healthy Home Programme Manager to determine householder eligibility and authorise declarations from referrals received.

## **6) Referrals**

The Derbyshire Healthy Home programme will identify vulnerable households by working with health, housing and care partners such as: district council Officers, NHS staff, Adult Care, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue, Chesterfield Home Improvement Agency, Metropolitan Housing, Vspa or Welfare Rights.

Residents may refer themselves directly to the project for an assessment by emailing [healthyhome@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:healthyhome@derbyshire.gov.uk) or calling 01629 536919.

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

Evidence will be captured to verify eligibility as outlined in Section 2a and 2b.

The number of declarations refused and outcomes of declarations approved will be reported to the Derbyshire Healthy Programme Board on a 6 monthly basis or as and when requested.

A sample audit will be carried out every 6 months by the Healthy Home Programme to ensure consistency when applying ECO flex eligibility criteria and controls in place to prevent fraud.

## **8) Signature**



**Dean Wallace / Director of Public Health / Derbyshire County Council / County Hall / Matlock / Derbyshire / DE4 3AG**