

## Local Authority ECO Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

- 1) Worcestershire County Council
- 2) Acting on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Wyre Forest District Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council and Malvern Hills District Council.
- 3) Date of publication [01/04/2019]
- 4) Publication on website [www.warmerworcestershire.com](http://www.warmerworcestershire.com)
- 5) Review date: to be reviewed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

## Flexible Eligibility Criteria for ECO - Worcestershire April 2019- March 2022

This statement sets out the flexible eligibility criteria for ECO for Worcestershire April 2019-March 2022

### 1. What is the ECO Scheme?

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme in Great Britain to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. The Help to Heat element of the Government's ECO programme, also described as the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO), focuses on low income and vulnerable householders. These are householders who receive specific benefits and, for child benefits, are below a certain income threshold. This eligibility criteria is set by Government.

As part of Help to Heat, ECO legislation is permitting Local Areas to define additional criteria in their area to help those fuel poor households that fall outside the Help to Heat eligibility but are still in need of support. This is called the flexible element or flexible eligibility. This requires a Statement of Intent to be produced.

### 2. What are the qualifying Criteria for the ECO - Help to Heat Group

A person living in private domestic premises is a member of the help to heat group if they receive one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Tax Credits
- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment Living Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- War Pensions Mobility Supplement
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independent Payment
- Child Benefit (income thresholds apply- see table 1)

**Table 1: Qualifying income thresholds for households in receipt of child benefit**

Type of claim	Number of children or qualifying young persons			
	1	2	3	4 or more
Single claim	£18,500	£23,000	£27,500	£32,000
Joint claim	£25,500	£30,000	£34,500	£39,000

The Help to Heat criteria is set by Government.

### 3. What is Flexible Eligibility?

For the period running from October 2018- March 2022 energy suppliers will be able to achieve up to 25% of their Help to Heat target in households falling outside of the eligibility criteria described in section 2 above, who are defined as eligible by local authorities through their Statement of Intent.

There are two main categories of private tenure targeted by the scheme:

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

In addition, a proportion of non-fuel poor homes (in-fill) can be allowed for Solid Wall Insulation projects. In-fill can also apply to affordable warmth projects for example providing heating in blocks of flats.

### 4. The Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Authority

The council is required to:

- Produce and publish a Statement of Intent
- Produce, authorise and issue the declaration determining a household to be eligible
- Retain information to sufficiently evidence that a household meets the criteria outlined in the Statement of Intent for future reporting or audit

### 5. Introduction

Worcestershire Local Authorities have a long established, successful partnership for working to tackle fuel poverty and promote keeping warm and well. This Warmer Worcestershire partnership has a clear vision to deliver home energy efficiency programmes in line with NICE guidance quality standards to support delivery of the national fuel poverty strategy. The aim is to improve the energy efficiency of properties towards a C energy efficiency rating.

11.5%<sup>1</sup> of households in Worcestershire are considered to be living in fuel poverty. Over 17,800 households are in LSOA<sup>2</sup> areas in Worcestershire where fuel poverty is above the County average (11.5%).

<sup>1</sup> The fuel poverty figures referred to for Worcestershire in this document are 2016 data. This is the latest data available at the time of writing.

<sup>2</sup> Lower Super Output Area are a geography for the collection and publication of small scale statistics,

This statement of intent and subsequent declarations do not guarantee funding and/or the installation of measures for any household. All measures will be subject to technical survey by an appointed, qualified installer. Schemes may close suddenly and funding withdrawn if ECO providers targets have been achieved. The delivery of the flexible eligibility going forward is subject to government policy.

**6) How the Local Authority intends to identify eligible households**

**Worcestershire flexible eligibility**

Due to the diversity of households in the County, we have developed a number of criteria to ensure that we address household vulnerability to both fuel poverty and cold.

Private rented properties

For ECO3 national policy restricts the measures which can be funded for the private rented sector. The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards is a legal requirement for landlords to improve the energy efficiency of the poorest performing private rental properties to allow the ongoing rental of the premises (exemptions apply where improvements are not possible). ECO funding cannot be used to bring a property in the lowest energy efficiency bands up to the minimum standard. A full list of measures eligible for ECO funding for the private rented sector including any EPC banding requirements can be found via the Ofgem guidance (table 14)

[https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2018/12/eco3\\_guidance\\_delivery\\_v1.1.pdf](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2018/12/eco3_guidance_delivery_v1.1.pdf)

Only measures listed as eligible for the private rented sector by Ofgem can be considered under ECO Flex for the private rented sector. Measures are subject to funding availability. The tenant must be deemed eligible under one of the criteria referred to below.

<b>Criteria</b>
<b>Criteria 1:</b> A household income below the Worcestershire median of £33,129 (gross) per annum and the property not connected to mains gas. <b>(Fuel Poverty based on higher energy costs for properties not connected to mains gas)</b>
<b>Criteria 2:</b> Anyone who has qualified for a Disabled Facilities Grant in the last 3 years. (low income, vulnerable to cold)
<b>Criteria 3:</b> Anyone over the age of 65 years old or child under the age of 5 years old or is in full time education with a household income below the Worcestershire median of £33,129 (gross) per annum. <b>(Low income, vulnerable to cold based on increase mortality rates in the over 65 years age group in colder weather and negative health and education attainment implication for children living in a cold home)</b>
Criteria 4: A household with an existing diagnosed health conditions made worse by living in a cold home (conditions defined in the NICE guideline NG6 as cardiovascular conditions, respiratory conditions, mental health conditions and disabilities) and an income of below the Worcestershire median household income of £33,129 (gross) per annum <b>(Low income, vulnerable to cold based on health conditions that could be made worse by living in a cold home )</b>

**Criteria 5:** A privately owned household with an existing, valid EPC rating of D, E,F and G

and a household income of below the Worcestershire median household income of £33,129 (gross) per annum

**(Fuel poverty based on higher energy costs associated with lower energy efficiency ratings)**

**Criteria 6;** Any privately owned household with a pre-payment meter and a household income below the Worcestershire median of £33,129 (gross) per annum (fuel poverty based on higher risk of fuel debt)

**Criteria 7: A household deemed eligible through the Low Income High Cost Assessment set by the District Network Operator for gas connections** (fuel poverty based on low income high cost assessment used by DNOs)

**Criteria 8:** Anyone living in a park home on a residential park homes site with a household income below the Worcestershire median of £33,129 (low income, vulnerable to cold based on inefficient construction type)

**Criteria 9: First Time Central Heating only-** A household with no existing central heating, located within 23m of a gas main (or distance deemed feasible by the District Network Operator) and a household income below the Worcestershire median of £33,129 (gross) per annum **(low income, vulnerable to cold due to no existing central heating being available)**

#### **External Wall Insulation (EWI)**

There are currently no plans to run an external wall insulation scheme. We intend to facilitate EWI for one off properties situated within EWI schemes administered by other organisations, i.e. right to buy properties that adjoin properties having EWI installed by a social housing provider.

. This will be reviewed when more information is available to the project board regarding the levels of funding to support installation. Independent quality inspections of each external wall insulation job would be required for external wall insulation to be supported under flexible element. There is currently no funding to facilitate independent quality inspections.

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

Worcestershire County Council is acting on behalf of the following local authorities:

Bromsgrove District Council  
Redditch Borough Council  
Malvern Hills District Council  
Wyre Forest District Council  
Worcester City Council  
Wychavon District Council

All local authorities work in partnership under the long established Warmer Worcestershire brand for delivering energy efficiency measures to tackle fuel poverty in Worcestershire.

#### **8) Governance**

Primary contact for signing the declarations

ECO Project Manager  
 Worcestershire County Council  
 Spetchley Road  
 Worcester  
 Worcestershire  
 WR5 2NP

Secondary contact  
 Sustainability Manager  
 Worcestershire County Council  
 Spetchley Road  
 Worcester  
 Worcestershire  
 WR5 2NP

**10 step governance process**

Step	activity	Who is responsible
1	Statement of intent published on <a href="http://www.warmerworcestershire.com">www.warmerworcestershire.com</a>	Worcestershire County Council
2	<b>Householder eligibility assessment:</b> Householder contact logged with referral agent. Application and consent forms completed by the customer and returned to the referral agent.	Referral agent
3	Householder offered additional energy advice i.e. switching suppliers, understanding their energy bill, smart meters	Referral agent
4	Declaration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A single declaration per property is sent by the appointed referral agent to Worcestershire County Council</li> <li>- Cross checked with information in statement of intent and referral agents records</li> </ul> Any rejected declaration return to step 2.	Worcestershire County Council
5	Referral sent to delivery partner with customer consent	Referral agent
6	<b>Property eligibility assessment;</b> Technical survey	Installer
7	Measure and funding options offered to the customer based on technical survey	Installer
8	Install accepted or rejected by the customer. Install arrangements made between the customer and installer	Customer and installer
9	Customer feedback requested	Referral agent
10	Review of process, cases and customer feedback completed by the Project Manager.	Project board

The project board will consist of a representative from the following organisations:

Worcestershire County Council  
Bromsgrove District Council  
Redditch Borough Council  
Wyre Forest District Council  
Worcester City Council  
Malvern Hills District Council  
Wychavon District Council  
Referral agent Act on Energy

## **9) Referrals**

Marketing will be undertaken by Local Authorities utilising available data to aid targeting to the eligible criteria groups referred to above. The programme will predominantly focus on self referral as a result of marketing activity, such as direct mail to households who may be eligible. Any marketing will contain the local authority logo for the organisation undertaking the marketing and the Warmer Worcestershire logo as a minimum.

The appointed referral agent will take all calls related to this programme and collect the relevant data, which will be stored and managed in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016. Householders will be asked to consent to their contact details being passed from the referral agent to a named installer. The Warmer Worcestershire privacy notice can be viewed via [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/privacy)

Worcestershire County Council will confirm with the referral agent that the declaration has been agreed. The referral agent is then responsible for making the referrals to their chosen installer. Declarations will only be signed when received from the appointed referral agent.

The project will also accept referrals from frontline workers who are working with a client who may require energy efficiency improvements to their homes. Full householder eligibility will be determined during the initial contact with the resident made by the referral agent.

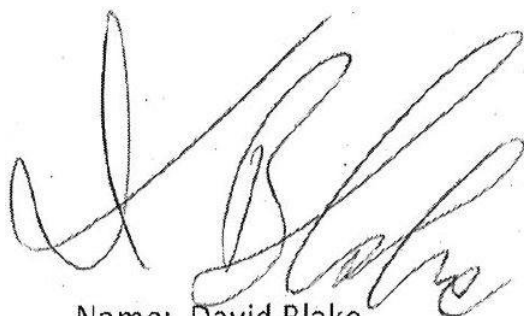
**10) Signature**

Name: Paul Robinson  
Position: Chief Executive  
Organisation: Worcestershire County Council

Signed: 

Name: VIC ALLISON  
Position: DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR  
Organisation: WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Signed: 



Name: David Blake  
Position: Managing Director  
Organisation: Worcester City Council

Name: JANE ALEXANDER  
Position: PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR  
Organisation: WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Signed: 

10) Signature

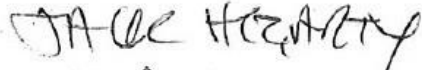


Name: Kevin Dicks

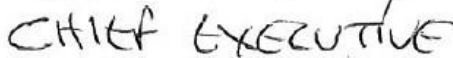
Position: Chief Executive

Organisation: Bromsgrove District Council - Redditch Borough Council

Name:



Position:



Organisation: Malvern Hills District Council

Signed:

