



ECO Flexible Eligibility

Statement of Intent

- 1) Torrige District Council
- 2) March 7th 2018
- 3) Version 3
- 4) Publication on website: <http://www.torrige.gov.uk/article/11066/Energy-efficiency-advice>

1) Introduction

Torrige District Council (TDC) welcomes the introduction of the flexible eligibility part of ECO, and will utilise it to help residents in fuel poverty or at risk from cold related ill health in the district. This Statement of Intent sets out how households will be assessed and declared eligible for ECO, in accordance with guidelines provided by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial strategy (BEIS). This scheme is part of the government's Affordable Warmth Programme and takes into account the Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report for England published by BEIS¹. In providing this statement we will contribute to the council's priorities to provide stronger, safer, healthier communities and for TDC to be an effective and customer focussed council.

Fuel poverty rates are significant across Devon, with many households experiencing high cost and poor quality housing. This is recognised in the Devon Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019 and addressing this issue is one of the goals for the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board².

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment local profile for Torrige shows a fuel poverty rate for Torrige higher than the national and regional average³.

TDC is working to tackle poor housing and fuel poverty in the District through a combination of intervention, support and signposting.

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/639118/Fuel_Poverty_Statistics_Report_2017_revised_August.pdf

² <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/strategies/>

³ <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/profiles/district/>

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

Meeting the flexible eligibility criteria does not guarantee the installation of measures. The final decision is made by the energy suppliers or their agents/ contractors and will depend on:

- 1) The survey carried out by suppliers agents/contractors and installation costs calculated
- 2) The energy savings that can be achieved for a property
- 3) Whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their ECO targets.

2) How the LA intends to identify eligible households

ECO Flexibility assistance is only available to private tenure households.

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

- a) Living in fuel poverty, but not in receipt of benefits ("fuel poverty")
- b) Low income and vulnerability to cold ("LIVC")
- c) Solid Wall Insulation (SWI) "in-fill"

Torridge District Council will keep these criteria under review in relation to levels of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the developing practices of other authorities. This council seeks to maximise take up of the scheme for residents who fall within the criteria of need, within the statutory parameters of the arrangements.

2(a) Criteria for identifying households in fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is defined as living with low income but high heating costs. Two elements will be assessed to determine eligibility:

- i) For the 'low income' portion of this indicator, evidence will be sought that a member of the household is in receipt of an income related benefit in the first instance (housing benefit, council tax reduction/support [other than single person discount], child tax credit, working tax credit or universal credit). If no one in the household meets this criteria then a household will be identified as being on 'low income' if the annual household income (after housing and energy bills have been deducted) is less than £30 000.
- ii) For the 'high cost' portion of this indicator, eligible households will be identified as those that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'D' or lower. In the event that a property does not meet this criteria, the following property types will be deemed as meeting the definition due to their high energy bills, hard to treat and hard to reach nature:

- a) Park Homes and other permanent caravan residences (regardless of income)
- b) Privately rented properties including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (regardless of income)
- c) Properties heated by a fuel other than mains gas
- d) Flats above commercial premises
- e) System built properties
- f) Sheltered housing for the elderly
- g) Homes which require cavity wall insulation
- h) Homes which require solid wall insulation
- i) Homes with 100mm or less of lost insulation
- j) Homes with a boiler which meets the ECO Qualifying Boiler criteria

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

Three elements will be used to assess eligibility under this criteria:

- 1) 'Low income' portion of this identifier as set out under the previous section for 'fuel poverty'
- 2) 'High heating cost' as set out under the previous section for 'fuel poverty'
- 3) Vulnerability to cold will be assessed on the basis of information provided by the residents on any health conditions suffered by any member of the household which have been diagnosed by a healthcare professional. This information will be cross referenced against NICE guidelines and quality statement for the health risks associated with cold homes⁴. These are:
 - a. people with cardiovascular conditions
 - b. people with respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
 - c. people with mental health conditions
 - d. people with disabilities
 - e. older people (65 and older)
 - f. households with young children (up to 10 years old))
 - g. pregnant women
 - h. people with addictions
 - i. people with terminal illness
 - j. people living with dementia
 - k. people with autoimmune or immunodeficiency diseases (e.g. diabetes, MS, lupus)
 - l. people with suppressed immune systems (e.g. cancer treatment or HIV)
 - m. People who move in and out of homelessness
 - n. People in receipt of disability benefits including PIP & DLA

⁴ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/chapter/1-Recommendations>

- o. Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (living in private tenure)
- p. Anyone else with a health condition made worse by the cold (assessed against relevant guidance)

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

2 (c) Criteria for Solid wall Insulation (SWI) “in-fill” projects

To facilitate SWI projects in a locality, solid wall homes (i.e. no cavity wall) which are not ‘fuel poor’ will be eligible for Flexible ECO funding, where they are co-located with a minimum percentage of households assessed to be fuel poor or LIVC.

The criteria for this will be:

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

3) Acting on behalf of another local authority.

This declaration is made solely for Torridge District Council, and TDC are not acting on behalf of any other local authority.

4) Joint statement of intent

This declaration is made solely for Torridge District Council, and TDC are currently not part of any joint SOI or common criteria arrangement. This will be kept under review.

5) Governance

The Housing Renewal team at Torridge District Council will liaise with residents and ECO providers to produce the required declaration forms. The Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager will be responsible for signing local authority declarations on behalf of TDC.

6) Referrals

TDC expects referrals for Flexible Eligibility may come from:

1. Self referrals from residents
2. Other Council departments
3. Social care or health organisations
4. ECO providers, installers or agents

7) 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. Benefit details
3. Property type
4. Heating type, fuel and issues.

Records will be kept of all households targeted, referred and in receipt of any measure. All information will be kept in such a way to maintain the protection of personal data.

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 TDC to report to BEIS and include relevant information in any future Home Energy Conservation Reports.

Suitable checks and enquiries will be made to prevent and detect fraud including official letters on health conditions and DWP support.

8) Signature



Jenny Wallace
Head of Paid Service