



## Local Authority ECO Flexible Eligibility - Statement of Intent

- 1) Ryedale District Council, Hambleton District Council, Richmondshire District Council, Scarborough Borough Council (“the Councils”)
- 2) Date of publication 22 April 2021
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### 1) Introduction

This joint Statement of Intent (SOI) sets out how “the Councils” will work closely with energy companies, managing agents, installers, and customers to maximise the potential of the ECO Flexible Eligibility funding stream for fuel poor households.

Through ECO Flexible Eligibility, local authorities can set their own qualifying criteria to enable eligible homeowners and private renting tenants to benefit from funding for domestic energy efficiency measures. This funding is aimed at residents that are most likely to be in fuel poverty. Energy companies can allocate up to 25% of their full obligation to measures qualified via ECO Flexible Eligibility.

Our approach to ECO Flexible Eligibility is based on the following principles:

- Eligibility criteria is simple and streamlined
- Eligibility criteria is to be in line with other criteria used on current energy efficiency programmes being delivered by the Councils
- Engagement with energy suppliers, local members and partners is essential
- Funding opportunities are promoted throughout the districts

ECO Flexible Eligibility fits with the Councils’ commitment to reduce carbon emissions and alleviate fuel poverty, specifically:

- The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding of Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2015-21, which has nine priorities to meet the housing challenges within North Yorkshire. Specifically, Priority seven specifically aims to reduce carbon emissions, tackle fuel poverty and deliver efficient and secure energy.
- North Yorkshire Council Council’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy / Winter Health Strategy 2021-25.
- Individual Local Authority Climate Change Strategies.

### 2) How the Councils intend to identify eligible households

Households will be considered at risk of fuel poverty if they are determined to be a low income household and living in a high cost home in relation to energy use (Low Income / High Cost - LIHC) or have a pre-existing condition making them vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home (Low Income / Vulnerable to Cold - LIVC).

Households need to meet Stage 1 (Low Income) criteria and one of the Stage 2 (High Cost / Vulnerable to Cold) criteria – these are based on the March 2015 Government Fuel Poverty Strategy and the NICE guidance NG6 on “Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes.”)



Please note that meeting the Councils ECO Flexible Eligibility criteria does not guarantee the installation of measures. The final decision will depend upon:

- Identification of energy efficiency measures eligible for ECO Flex funding from an Energy Company
- The survey carried out by accredited contractor, the calculated installation costs and energy bill savings that can be achieved for the property
- If the Energy Company is willing to fund the energy efficiency measures.

Stage	Eligibility Criteria
1) Low Income	A total Gross Household Income not exceeding £30,000 per annum. (Employed and/or Pensionable income and/or benefit payment)
<b>And</b>	
2a) High Cost	Property EPC rating of E, F or G
2b) High Cost	Property EPC rating of D and living in a hard to treat home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Property has solid walls, non-standard cavity walls or system-built walls, or,</li> <li>- Property is off the gas network</li> </ul>
2c) Vulnerable to Cold	Property EPC rating of D; and a health condition made worse by cold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chronic respiratory condition, or</li> <li>- Cardiovascular condition, or</li> <li>- Musculoskeletal illness, or</li> <li>- Mental health condition</li> </ul>
2d) Vulnerable to Cold	Property EPC rating of D; and vulnerable due to age or circumstance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- over 70 years of age, or</li> <li>- a pregnant woman, or</li> <li>- have dependent children under 5 years of age</li> </ul>
2e) Exceptional Circumstances	<p>“the Councils” reserve the right to approve applications in exceptional circumstances, where the household income slightly exceeds the total income thresholds or where a resident is in need of assistance but does not meet the eligibility routes outlined within the Statement of Intent.</p> <p>Each ‘exception application’ will be reviewed on an individual case by case basis by ‘the Council’s’ through a partnership meeting. All ‘exception applications’ must be accompanied by a detailed application explaining why an exception is being sought. All approvals are solely at the discretion of “the Councils”.</p>
<b>Scarborough Council Households Only</b>	
<b><i>Households will also be eligible if the property is located within one of the 25% most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the UK.</i></b>	



### **Private renting sector restrictions**

There are EPC restrictions in place for the private renting sector which prevent access to ECO Flexible Eligibility for certain measures. This has been enforced to stop private landlords using ECO funding to meet their requirements under MEES legislation. (The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations 2018)

Private renting tenants are also prevented from accessing funding for heating system upgrades or repairs (i.e. boiler replacements) but can qualify for funding for first time central heating.

The EPC restriction is only in place for private rented accommodation and must be considered in conjunction with the eligibility criteria set out in this Statement of Intent.

Currently, private renting tenants can only qualify for ECO funded measures if the property they rent has an EPC in band E or above (other than Solid Wall Insulation, First Time Central Heating and Renewable Heating where EPCs can also be in band F or G).

### **Requirements for SWI "in-fill" installations**

Residents that don't meet the criteria in this Statement of Intent could still benefit from ECO funding for Solid Wall Insulation through the "in-fill" mechanism.

Where a household doesn't meet the criteria, they can be declared "in-fill" if they are:

- A) in an immediately adjacent building to; or
- B) are in the same building as a household that does meet the criteria in this Statement of Intent; or
- C) in the same terrace as, or
- D) back to back entire terraces, but only if the back of the actual properties are touching (not back to back garden / alleyway separates the terrace)

There is also a minimum percentage of households that can apply:

<b>Property Type</b>	<b>LA declaration requirements</b>
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 meet the eligibility criteria in this Sol (i.e. 50% of the properties are LIHC or LIVC).
Project consisting of any premises that are contained in the same building (e.g. flats), immediately adjacent buildings (e.g. neighbouring properties) or in the same terrace.	All properties that are receiving a LA Flex measure must be covered by a declaration. This applies to LIHC, LIVC and infill properties. Up to 50% of total LIHC or LIVC combined properties within the project can receive a measure.

### **3) Governance**

The Councils will work with project partners to identify households that meet the ECO Flexible Eligibility criteria. This will be done through an 'agreed ways of working' contract. Partners will engage with residents and collect the required evidence to demonstrate eligibility. They will also liaise with ECO obligated Energy Companies on the applicant's behalf and prepare and maintain all the necessary paperwork to demonstrate that the criteria can be fully complied with.

The Council's reserve the right not to issue declarations where the above criteria have not been



met. Any breaches in ECO Regulations will be reported to Trading Standards.

By signing an ECO Flex Declaration, the council does not endorse the organisation making the ECO Flex Declaration and does not accept any liability for the works carried out

The Officers responsible for signing valid “Local Authority Declarations” as determined through delegated authority are as follows:

Ryedale District Council:	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Hambleton District Council:	Residential Team Leader
Richmondshire District Council:	Improvement and Adaptions Advisor
Scarborough Borough Council:	HIA Manager

#### 4) Referrals

The Councils will receive referrals for ECO Flexibly Eligibility in the following ways:

1. Self-referrals from residents
2. From other Council teams or partner organisations
3. Warm & Well in North Yorkshire
4. Referrals from accredited managing agents or installers
5. From front line staff within the health and social care sectors and trusted partner agencies

#### 5) Evidence, monitoring and reporting

Each applicant will be asked how they were made aware of the scheme, which will enable us to monitor the different targeting pathways/promotional methods. The data collected from residents will be sufficient to confirm their eligibility. This will include:

- Name, address and telephone number
- Proof of income
- EPC or alternative agreed assessment

Evidencing Vulnerability:

- Over 70 years of age (birth certificate, passport or driving licence)
- Pregnant women (Mat B1 letter)
- Child under 5 years of age (birth certificate)
- Health condition exacerbated by cold (letter from GP, letter from hospital, invitation for free flu jab for health reasons, referral from a medical professional)

To reduce the risk of fraud, checks will be made on eligibility and auditing of claimants will be carried out on a random sample of households on a post installation basis.

Quarterly project meetings will be held with the project partners to monitor progress.



## 6) Signatures

### Ryedale District Council

Name: Phillip Spurr  
Position: Programme Director for Economic Development, Business and Partnerships

### Hambleton District Council

Name: Paul Staines  
Position: Director - Environment

### Richmondshire District Council

Name: Colin Dales  
Position: Corporate Director (Operations)

20 April 2021

### Scarborough Borough Council

Name: Fiona Casson  
Position: Senior Solicitor (Del AR 21.04.21)

22. April 2021