

Statement of Intent – Flexible Eligibility (version 2)

Name of Local Authority: Rushcliffe Borough Council

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1. Introduction

Addressing fuel poverty is a priority for Rushcliffe Borough Council and is identified in its Housing Delivery Plan 2016 – 2021. This states a key priority of “Reducing fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of homes across the district and by promoting information and advice to reduce fuel bills”.

Rushcliffe Borough Council is committed to tackling climate change and to making a major contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the Borough; this is being addressed through our Climate Change Strategy 2009 -2020, updated 2013.

The Council intends to utilise the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) "Flexible Eligibility (FLEXI)" mechanism for the purposes of reducing fuel poverty in the district.

2. How the Council intends to identify eligible households

The Council will declare eligible households that will benefit from the installation of energy saving measures under FLEXI as either those that are living in fuel poverty, living on a low income and/or vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

The criteria used by the Council will be as follows:

A) Identifying fuel poverty or at risk

To identify a household as being in fuel poverty, the Council adopts the following approach and requires that the household must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- i. Meet the low income threshold high energy costs criteria
- ii. Determine that the household residents suffers from vulnerability to cold
- iii. Lives in a park homes site.

i. Low Income High Costs (LIHC)

Households eligible under the LIHC criteria will include those:

In receipt of eligible benefits. This can include households who receive benefits but miss out on the support due to the ECO cut off point.

The Council will reserve the right to flexibility when determining eligibility around the above criteria, when the residents are found to be struggling under unforeseen circumstances not covered in the existing guidance.

ii. Vulnerability to cold

The Council will target households with residents vulnerable to cold, through the Nottinghamshire Warm Homes on Prescription Project (see section 3 below)

iii. Park homes

Park homes are renowned for being difficult and costly to heat, with their occupants likely to be in fuel poverty. The Council intends to support projects which improve the energy efficiency of residential park homes and which will benefit the wellbeing of residents living in park homes.

B. Solid wall insulation "in-fill" projects

The Council intends to support regeneration projects across the Borough where solid wall insulation is feasible, permitted under Planning legislation and can attract funding. The FLEXI criteria allow for household that are not in fuel poverty or vulnerable to be funded in these types of projects.

These households will be eligible if they are in the same terrace, in an immediately adjacent building or are in the same building as an eligible household.

The in-fill requirement criteria must meet the minimum percentages as follows:

| Property Type | LA Declaration Requirements | In-Fill |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-detached or pair of properties• Building containing no more than 2 domestic properties | 50% of properties must be in fuel poverty (ie at least one in two properties) | Adjacent property is eligible for solid wall insulation under in-fill criteria |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terrace properties• Building containing multiple properties / flats• Building immediately adjacent | 66% of properties must be in fuel poverty (ie at least two in three properties) | Up to one third of properties can be Declared as eligible |

3. Warm Homes on Prescription project (WHOP)

Nottinghamshire District & Borough Councils are targeting eligible residents through the Warm Homes on Prescription project. The project aims to help low income residents with cold-sensitive long-term health conditions to achieve affordable warmth.

The project was set up in 2015/16 through the collaboration of councils within the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities' Energy Partnership (LAEP). The intention is to use the ECO Flexible Eligibility policy to enhance the assistance that can be provided to the target audience.

The project is a delivery component of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) and supports the objectives of the Nottinghamshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

Referrals are generated by Local Authority Officers, Third Sector Organisations, GP Practices and Integrated Care Teams who are identifying 'high risk' patients with long term health conditions which are made worse by cold living conditions, particularly COPD and other respiratory diseases and those at risk of heart attack, stroke and falls. If they are on low income and struggle to keep their homes warm in winter they will be offered assistance from the project.

A home visit from the project team will assess the energy efficiency of the home and whether the patient can afford to keep the house at a healthy temperature. A range of actions are then taken to achieve affordable warmth on behalf of the householder, including commissioning heating and insulation works and income maximisation (benefits checks and fuel switching).

Positive impacts on patients' health and wellbeing are anticipated, leading to cost savings to the NHS particularly around anticipated reductions in emergency admissions, readmissions and visits to A&E for these patients.

Funding will be sought from a range of sources, including the NHS, to enable expansion of the project to other GP Practices across Nottinghamshire.

Characteristics of the target patient group:

- have cold-sensitive long term health conditions
- live in a cold home (in fuel poverty)

- high risk; on unplanned admissions register
- living in the Rushcliffe Borough Council boundary
- owner occupier or renting as a private sector tenant

Households in fuel poverty are likely to live in a cold home. Around 12% of households in Nottinghamshire are in fuel poverty (East Midlands average is 10.4%); this could be twice as high in deprived areas. Focusing resources on this target group will have the most impact and will maximise NHS cost savings.

Eligible Households for WHOP are individuals who must:

(a). Tenure - Be living in the domestic housing sector and be:

- An owner-occupier.
- Renting a home from a private landlord (subject to funding availability)

(b). Fuel poverty status

Be 'at risk of' or 'living in' fuel poverty (i.e. either qualifying on the basis of 'low income high cost' or more generally living in a 'cold' home that they struggle to afford to heat) and in need of:

- **Heating** - that is operational, controllable and capable of heating every room efficiently; and/or
- **Insulation measures** - (where there is already an adequate heating system – see above).
(*Note: The guiding principle is an offering of heating first then insulation*).

(c). Health & wellbeing status

- (i) Individual must be living with a **diagnosed long term health condition** (for example but not limited to):
- A cardiovascular condition (incl. coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure (hypertension), transient ischemic attack etc.)
 - Respiratory condition (COPD, childhood asthma etc.)
 - Neurological condition (including Dementia, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, epilepsy etc.)
 - Musculoskeletal conditions (incl. Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis etc.)
 - Blood conditions (incl. Sickle Cell Disease, Thalassemia etc.)
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Those with a mental health condition

Note: Applicants over 65 years, particularly those with cardiovascular or respiratory conditions, will be a particular priority for support as are those living in non-gas areas

AND/OR

- (ii) Individuals must be living with a diagnosed disability - that is the consequence of an impairment that is physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these

AND/ OR

- (iii) Have responsibility for one or more children 0-16yrs living with them (up to 20 years if the child is in full-time education – other than higher education)

AND/OR

(d) Be pregnant.

(d). Income or benefit status:

Eligible individuals must also:

(i) **Have a gross household income less than or equal to £16,010 per annum** (subject to periodic review)

OR be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

(ii) **Pension Credit**

(iii) **Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance** and

- a disability or pensioner premium
- a child who is disabled
- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- Have responsibility for a child 0-16 years living with them (up to 20 years if in full time education – other than higher education)

(iv) **Income-related Employment and Support Allowance** and

- the support or work-related component of ESA
- a severe or enhanced disability premium
- a pensioner premium
- a child who is disabled
- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- Have responsibility for a child 0-16 years living with them (up to 20 years if in full time education – other than higher education)

(v) **Universal Credit and not be employed or self-employed** and

- get a limited capability for work element (with or without a work-related activity element)
- get the disabled child element in their claim
- Have responsibility for child 0-16 living with them (up to 20 years if in full time education – other than higher education).

(e). Emergency intervention

In exceptional circumstances grant support can be considered for Eligible Individuals who meet the criteria but fail the income eligibility test **ONLY**, where they are at imminent risk of cold-related ill health or potential death due to a lack of a working central heating system (incl. oil, gas, LPG, solid fuel or electric storage heaters) or other mitigating circumstances. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

3.1 Governance for Warm Homes on Prescription

The Warm Homes on Prescription Project is overseen by a project board to provide robust governance to the project.

The Board comprises of one named officer from each of the Nottinghamshire district or borough council, a representative from Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Public Health, County & City, will be on the Board in an advisory role.

The objective of the Project Board is to offer a decision-making platform to assist the Warm Homes on Prescription Programme Manger effectively deliver the agreed targets. The Board is also a

platform to discuss and review the project and will make strategic decisions, including the project's future direction.

3.2 Warm Homes on Prescription Referrals

To effectively identify the most vulnerable residents in Nottinghamshire, the Warm Homes on Prescription project expects that Eligible Individuals will be referred for grant assistance to the project partnership primarily by:

- A health or social care practitioner working in a local authority, the NHS or voluntary/community sector

OR

- A local authority Environmental Health Officer
- A local authority practitioner
- A Fire Service/ community safety practitioner

3.3 Evidence, monitoring and reporting

a) Evidence of Eligibility

The Eligible Individual will need to evidence to the Local Authority that:

- They currently receive the qualifying benefit(s) and qualifying components or proof of income where relevant. Evidence of name, address and benefit receipt will suffice. This information can be sourced from 'proof of benefit' letters, award notices, annual review award notices, amended award notices, or provisional award notices. These should be on official letterhead depending on the type of benefit from HMRC, DWP/Jobcentre Plus, HM Government or the Pension Service.
- Bank statements showing official letterhead of a recognised bank operating in the UK will suffice as proof of household income for those qualifying on an income only basis. Bank statements should provide evidence of name and address of the Eligible Individual (their partner, parent or guardian where the Eligible Individual doesn't hold a bank account – i.e. the Eligible Individual is a child, incapacitated or has given power of attorney to a nominated individual(s) for their financial affairs).
- Evidence that the Eligible Individual lives in the property.

b) Monitoring

A report will be collated by the Local Authority detailing the following:

- i) Total number of households receiving at least one substantial physical measure, with relevant details on house location (i.e. address & postcode), tenure and breakdown of measure(s) installed.
- ii) Total number of measures delivered
- iii) Number of homes assisted with at least one substantial physical measure by tenure
- iv) Total number of installed measures with a completed quality assurance check and the outcome of each check, including any remedial actions;
- v) Total of blended funding spent on physical measures
- vi) Total capital funds spent on physical measures to date
- vii) Total match funds secured for both physical measures and advice

c) Reporting

A report will be presented to the Warm Homes on Prescription Project Board on a quarterly basis

d) Audit

The Local Authority will instruct internal audit on 5% of recipients to conduct an audit for the following purposes:

- review the accuracy and completeness of the Records, and
- otherwise identify any risks to, or shortcomings in, the delivery of the Project, and recommend any remedial steps the Independent Auditor considers may be necessary or desirable.

4. Acting on behalf of another Local Authority

We are not acting on behalf of another local authority.

5. Joint Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent is not produced in association with another local authority.

6. Decision Process and Monitoring

The declaration of households meeting the council’s flexible eligibility criteria will be decided by the Environmental Sustainability Officer and monitored by the Community Development Manager. Any disputes will be adjudicated by the Executive Manager – Communities. A report of this work will be provided annually to the Portfolio Holder for Community and Leisure, and published within the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 Progress reports.

7. Referrals for Declaration of Eligibility

The Council will identify eligible households through referrals made to the council by property owners and tenants, installers and energy companies’, the voluntary and community sector plus statutory partners.

8. Signature

Signed on behalf of Rushcliffe Borough Council



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Name..... Craig Taylor.....

Title...Community Development Manager...

Date.....09/01/18.....