



## **Energy Company Obligation: Help to Heat**

### **Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent**

**Local authority:** Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC)

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**URL:** [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/Housing/HousingGrants/HeatandSaveScheme.aspx](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/Housing/HousingGrants/HeatandSaveScheme.aspx)

#### **1) Introduction**

RCTCBC welcomes the introduction of Flexible Eligibility (FE) and intends to utilise it for the purposes of reducing fuel poverty in the borough. This statement sets out RCTCBC's flexible eligibility criteria for the ECO Help to Heat Programme April 2017 – September 2018.

Addressing this issue is a priority for the Local Authority and over the past 10 years RCTCBC has enabled many interventions and services to help mitigate the impacts of fuel poverty for residents. This has been documented and prioritised through various strategic delivery plans and we continue to work with partners to provide or enable services which mitigate the impact of fuel poverty and create warmer homes, improve property conditions and improve the health and well-being of residents living in the borough.

In identifying households as eligible under flexible eligibility RCTCBC is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will seek the consent of households to including them in a Declaration. The Council will issue regular Declarations to its Delivery Partner setting out those households that are eligible. The Delivery Partner will pass this information onto the ECO supplier through the ECO application process.

It should be noted that the final decision on whether any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements rests with obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. Inclusion in a Declaration of Eligibility issued by the Council to a supplier will not guarantee installation of measures. Whilst this approach has been taken to maximise the potential for funding the final decision will depend on the following;

- I. Identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat
- II. The Surveys carried out and installation costs calculated
- III. The supplier's assessment of the cost-effectiveness of installing measures in relation to achieving its obligation
- IV. Whether the supplier has achieved their targets or requires further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets (this will affect the amount of funding available through the scheme)
- V. The energy savings that can be achieved for a property.



RCTCBC expects any obligated energy supplier, or contractor working on their behalf, comply with the Data Protection Act and to fully follow Ofgem requirements for the Energy Company Obligation Help to Heat. They would also need to act in accordance with industry best practice in relation to consumer care and quality standards of any works that may take place.

## 2) How RCTCBC intends to identify eligible households

RCTCBC will specifically target areas of known low incomes (as defined within the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation) and/or areas with homes with poor energy performance (from available EPC data). Information will be publicly made available for residents to self refer into the scheme through marketing and website updates. Details of how we will identify solid wall properties as eligible for insulation under the 'in-fill' category is also outlined below.

Subject to availability of resources within the Council and the legal use of data the Council will target those most in need having regard to BEIS guidance on targeting, including:

- i. Those living in the private sector and in receipt of the relevant means-tested benefits and/or on a low income
- ii. We will cross-reference data on income with data that we hold or can access on Energy Performance Certificates, prepayment meters, expenditure on fuel, housing type/age/condition, heating type
- iii. Low income households living in energy inefficient housing will be identified in the private rented sector through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004
- iv. Working with partners to engage and reach vulnerable and hard to reach households
- v. Use of the Council's Energy Services Hub referrals and role of frontline Energy Advisors
- vi. *Identifying fuel poverty*

This will help the local authority identify households that would benefit from the installation of measures under Flexible Eligibility as follows:

- Those that are living in fuel poverty
- Those that are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home
- Those that would benefit from in-fill for the purposes of solid wall insulation

RCTCBC will identify households that meet the ECO flexibility criteria through the following;

**Stage 1 Households who meet the low income threshold and**

**Stage 2 Households that face high energy costs or are vulnerable to the effects of a cold home**

**Or those that benefit from in-fill for the purposes of solid wall insulation**



### **STAGE 1 - Identifying low income households**

The Council will use the table issued in the guidance for identifying the low income households (BEIS April 2017 ECO flex Guidance) as detailed below;

<b>Table 1 – Income thresholds broadly consistent with those used under the Low Income High Costs indicator (2014)<sup>23</sup> inflated to represent 2017/18 prices Household composition</b>	<b>Annual household income</b>	<b>Monthly household income Equivalent</b>
<b>1 adult (18 years and over)</b>	£8,900	£740
and 1 child	£11,700	£980
and 2 children	£14,400	£1,200
and three children	£17,300	£1,440
and four or more children	£20,100	£1,680
<b>2 adults (18 years and over)</b>	£14,600	£1,220
and 1 child	£17,400	£1,450
and 2 children	£20,200	£1,680
and three children	£23,100	£1,930
and four or more children	£25,700	£2,140

Using the responses to the following questions, the household income threshold level will be determined;

**Question 1 – How many people over the age of 18 normally live in your property, including yourself?**

**Question 2 – How many people under the age of 18 normally live in your property?**

**Question 3 – After paying rent or mortgage how much income your household usually have left each month?**

The income threshold will be determined based on the relevant household composition thresholds on the specified table less the household's rent/mortgage costs.

*This establishes whether the household's income, after housing costs is above or below the low income threshold.*

If households are determined to have a lower income than what is specified on the income threshold table then they will move on to STAGE 2 of the assessment which is to determine whether they have high costs (in relation to energy) or are considered to be vulnerable to living in a cold home.



## STAGE 2

### 1. Households with high costs

Households that meet the low income criteria will also be assessed to determine whether they have high energy costs from the home they live in. This will be determined as follows;

- a. Households living in homes with an Energy Performance (EPC) certificate in bands E, F or G or
- b. Households that score above '50' (fifty) on the following scoring criteria

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SCORE
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	10
	2	20
	3	30
	4	40
	5	50
	6 +	60
What type of house is it?	Detached	30
	Semi- detached	20
	Mid terrace	10
	End terrace	20
	Flat	20
	Bungalow	30
Are energy payments made by direct debit	Yes	0
	No	10
Was the house built before 1964 or system built?	Yes	20
	No	0
What is the main fuel type?	Gas	0
	Electricity	20
	Other	20
Is the property a park home?	Yes	20
	No	0
Is the household an excessive energy user (as per Ofgem guidance over 23,000 kWh of gas or 5,100 kWh of electric)	Yes	10
	No	0

High energy users are defined as those households who use more than 23,000 kWh of gas and more than 5,100 kWh of electric as per Ofgem's Factsheet 96 dated 18.1.11 'Typical domestic energy consumption figures'.

### 2. Identifying low income and vulnerability to cold

Households that have been identified as having low income as per STAGE 1 will be assessed to determine whether they have certain characteristics that would define that as being 'vulnerable to cold' regardless of wheth

RCTCBC will target households containing people with characteristics reflected within the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes as follows;



- i. Aged over 60, and particularly those over 75
- ii. Children under 5 and pregnant mothers
- iii. Respiratory disease (COPD, asthma)
- iv. Cardiovascular disease (e.g. ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease)
- v. Moderate to severe mental illness (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- vi. Substance misusers
- vii. Dementia
- viii. Neurobiological and related diseases (e.g. fibromyalgia, ME)
- ix. Terminal illness - Cancer
- x. Limited mobility
- xi. Haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia)
- xii. Severe learning disabilities
- xiii. Autoimmune and immunodeficiency diseases (e.g. lupus, MS, diabetes, HIV)

### **Solid wall insulation “in-fill” projects**

Where potential works have been identified households will be supported to take advantage of funding for solid wall insulation under “in-fill” category as set out in the BEIS guidance issued April 2017.

### **3) Governance**

*Responsible officer*

The officer below will be responsible for signing Declarations on behalf of the local authority.

Job title: Housing Energy Efficiency Officer

Telephone: 01443 444511

Email: [c.lyn.williams@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:c.lyn.williams@rctcbc.gov.uk)

Other local governance will include anonymous checking from another Officer to verify that households are being referred in accordance with agreed intention. There may also be other Audits from the council’s internal Audit team in accordance with normal grant auditing of the Council’s Capital Housing Programme

### **4) Referrals**

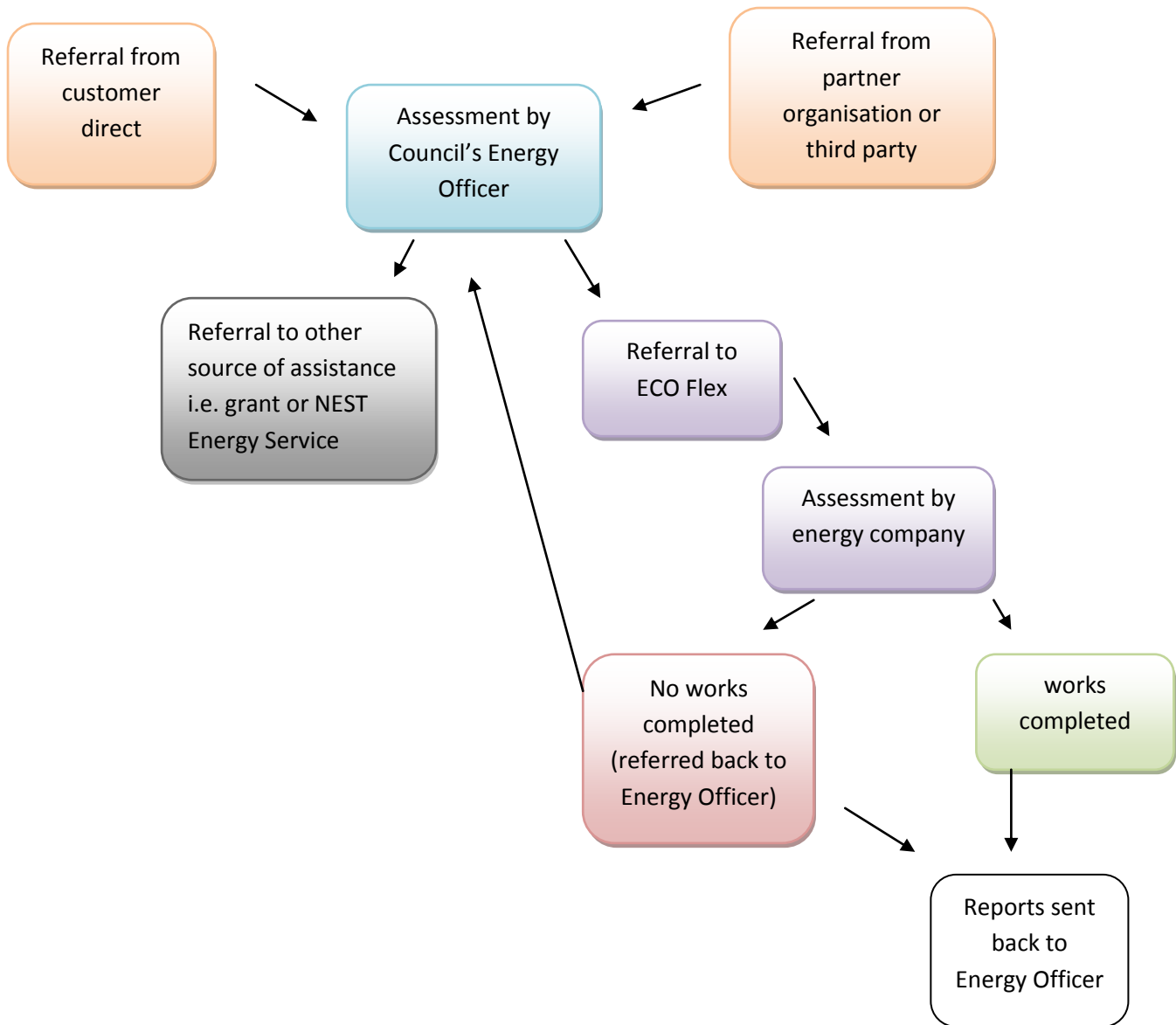
RCTCBC is already working with local primary care providers to market ‘Heat & Save’ energy efficiency advice and grant services to residents with health related conditions. We also work with Communities First Clusters areas and the Council’s over 55 forum. We also have existing close working relationships with Care & Repair agencies and other partners that are already directing referrals to the Housing Energy Officer for advice and assistance. Referrals from a third party would also include community groups or money savers projects, citizens advice services etc.



The Council is also developing links with secondary care provider to advertise the services and assistance available.

The Council as part of identifying 'fuel poor areas' at risk will also seek to obtain health data to help inform strategic decisions for targeting marketing and advertising to certain areas within the borough.

### Referral Pathways





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

- a. Anonymised data on the characteristics of households reached through FE will be reviewed.
- b. The data above will include details of households assessed, how many were deemed eligible and ineligible, and how many received heating and insulation improvements
- c. [All households for whom Declarations were made will be contacted within 3 months to confirm that measures have been installed

## **6) Signature**

Mr. Paul Mee

Service Director for Public Health & Protection

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council