

South Norfolk Council

Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility

Statement of Intent

Date of publication: 3 April 2018

Version 2

Publication on website: <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/keeping-homes-warm>

Introduction

Improving the health and wellbeing of residents through prevention and early help is one of South Norfolk Council's priorities. The Council will utilise the flexible eligibility part of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to assist residents in fuel poverty and at risk from cold, using household income, and either energy costs or vulnerability to identify households eligible for the assistance.

Once a declaration has been authorised, the case will be passed onto an ECO provider and will then fall under standard ECO regulation. Meeting the flexible eligibility criteria does not guarantee the installation of measures, this rests with the obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. The final decision depends on

- i) the survey carried out by supplier's agents/contractors and installation costs calculated;
- ii) the energy savings that can be achieved for a property;
- iii) whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their ECO targets.

The Council will use the following methodology to identify eligible households.

SNC will use the following eligibility criteria to identify households that may benefit from the installation of measures under ECO Flexible Eligibility. To be eligible a household must live in private sector housing (owner occupiers or renting from a private landlord) and one from the low income criteria **(A)** AND either one from high costs **(B)** OR one from vulnerable to cold **(C)**.

(A) Low income

In receipt of any income related benefit:

- Housing benefit
- Council tax reduction/support (not single occupancy)
- Child tax credit - no income cap
- Working tax credit – no income cap
- Universal credit – no income cap
- Pension savings credit

Or

Households not in receipt of an income related benefit will be assessed using the income thresholds in Table 1. Table 1 refers to a household's disposable income after they have paid a mortgage or rent.

Table 1. Low income thresholds SNC will use to identify households eligible for ECO support

Household composition	Annual household income	Monthly household income equivalent
1 adult (18 years and over)	£8,900	£740
and 1 child	£11,700	£980
and 2 children	£14,400	£1,200
and 3 children	£17,300	£1,440
and 4+ children	£20,100	£1,680
2 adults (18 years and over)	£14,600	£1,220
and 1 child	£17,400	£1,450
and 2 children	£20,200	£1,680
and 3 children	£23,100	£1,930
And 4+ children	£25,700	£2,140

Or

If a resident is in receipt of State Pension a household will be assessed using the following income criteria:

- Where the household income consists of only one resident's income where more than 50% is from state pension and the resident has less than £10,000 in savings and investments.
- Where the household income consists of a resident and their partners income where more than 75% of their income is made up from state pension and the residents combined have no more than £20,000 in savings and investments.

(B) High costs

The resident is either:

- Living in a property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of F or G.
- If an EPC is not available a score of over 80 on the questionnaire below is required:

Questionnaire

Question	Response	Score
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	5
	2	10
	3	35
	4	55
	5	70
	6 +	80
Are energy payments made by direct debit?	Yes	0
	No	15
What type of house is it?	Semi detached	30
	Terrace	20
	Flat	15
	Detached	30
What is the tenure?	Private rented	15
	Owner occupier	0
Does the home use a boiler?	Yes	0
	No	15
Was the home built before 1964?	Yes	25
	No	0
What is the main fuel type?	Gas	0
	Electricity	30
	Other (LPG / Oil)	15
	Broken heating	15

(C) Vulnerability to cold

The resident:

- is in receipt of either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Incapacity Benefit or Attendance Allowance.

Or

- is aged 65 and over, or has a child/ren under 5 or is pregnant.

Or

- is on the Energy Companies' Priority Services register.

Or

- has a health or vulnerability condition that can be exacerbated by living in a cold home, with confirmation from one of the following:
 - letter from GP or hospital
 - Other medical professional
 - invitation for free flu jab for health reasons

Households eligible for Solid Wall Insulation “in-fill” projects

Due to the Solid Wall Grants provided through ECO being insufficient to enable a fuel poor household to afford solid wall insulation, South Norfolk Council will not be actively searching for in fill properties but will declare eligible properties if approached by a resident or ECO provider. Where a property doesn't meet the fuel poverty criteria they can be declared “in-fill” if they are:

- in the same terrace as; or
- in an immediately adjacent building to; or
- are in the same building as a household that does meet those criteria.

There are also minimum percentages of households that must apply:

Property type	Declaration requirements
Semi-detached or a building containing no more than two domestic properties	At least 1 of the 2 (50%) properties must have been declared as fuel poor and therefore be eligible for ECO
Any premises that are contained in the same building (e.g. flats), immediately adjacent buildings (e.g. neighbouring properties) or in the same terrace	At least 2 of the 3 (66%) properties must have been declared as fuel poor and therefore be eligible for ECO

Acting on behalf of another local authority

South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council currently have a shared energy service and the energy team will provide the central administration for flexible eligibility. The team will take referrals, process applications and liaise with ECO providers for both local authorities. Each declaration will be authorised by the assigned Officers within the local authority.

Joint statement of intent

Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council have both agreed to the same eligibility criteria.

Governance

The Policy & Partnerships Delivery Manager will be responsible for authorising declarations; in their absence it will be signed by a member of the Housing Standards team.

Referrals

The Council expects referrals for flexible eligibility to come from:

- 1) self-referrals from residents
- 2) referrals from other council teams or partner organisations
- 3) referrals from ECO providers or installers

Declarations will be passed to contractors through a secure data transfer. In turn they will be expected to provide information on the outcomes of the referrals.

Evidence, monitoring and reporting

The energy team will verify that a resident meets the eligibility criteria before processing a declaration. To evidence eligibility, the following information will be documented:

- Name, address and telephone number
- Property, heating type and measure required
- Official documents to support A, B or C criteria.

To prevent fraud, this information will be collected in the application form and residents will sign to declare all information is correct. Official benefit letters will be checked and if necessary will be verified internally with the benefits team. External sources will also be sought such as EPC data, gas grid maps and google street view to verify answers.

To monitor targeting pathways and promotion methods, applicants will be asked where they heard about the scheme.

Records will be kept of all households targeted, referred and the measure received.

Progress will be reported as part of the performance reports and service plans.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Dinneen', followed by a colon. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sandra Dinneen
Chief Executive Officer
South Norfolk Council

Date: 3 April 2018