

# **Energy Company Obligation (ECO): Help to Heat Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent**

Kent-wide scheme on behalf of the Kent and Medway  
Sustainable Energy Partnership

**Name of the local authority:** Medway Council

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## **1) Introduction**

This Statement of Intent (SOI) sets out how Medway Council intends to identify households who could be eligible for government's ECO: Help to Heat funding, in accordance with guidelines from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). This Scheme is part of the government's Affordable Warmth programme.

Medway Council welcome the introduction of the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility scheme and intend to utilise the scheme to direct a proportion of funding to residents who struggle to heat their home to a comfortable standard, or who have a specific condition which may make them more vulnerable to the effects of a cold home. Through this scheme Medway Council intend to reduce fuel poverty and minimise the health risks associated with living in a cold home.

Kent County Council works in partnership with 13 Local Authorities and wider strategic partners (from the health sector, private sector and energy sector) through a number of partnerships including the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership (KMSEP) and the Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership (KEEP).

Medway Council intend to work with approved contractors and obligated energy suppliers as part of the KMSEP's existing retrofitting framework and energy referral scheme called Warm Homes. Through the Warm Homes scheme Medway Council hope to utilise flexible eligibility alongside other local funding schemes where possible, to reduce the installation costs of energy measures for residents as much as possible.

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 Medway Council, to a supplier or contractor, will not guarantee installation of any measures, as the final decision will depend on:

- i) Identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat

- ii) The contractors or energy suppliers assessment of the energy savings that can be achieved for a property, and
- iii) Whether the supplier has achieved their targets or requires further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets.

In identifying households as eligible under Flexible Eligibility, Medway Council are seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will obtain consent from households before including them in a Declaration.

Medway Council expect any obligated energy supplier or contractor working on their behalf, to comply with the Data Protection Act, to fully follow Ofgem requirements for the Energy Company Obligation Help to Heat and 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 the LAs intend to identify eligible households**

ECO Flexible Eligibility Help to Heat funding is only available to private tenure households.

Medway Council will identify households that may benefit from flexible eligibility in a number of ways.

Subject to availability of resources within Medway Council and the legal use of data, private tenure households must fit one, or more of the following criteria:

- Living in fuel poverty but not in receipt of benefits
- Low income and vulnerability to cold (LIVC)

These criteria will be kept under review, in relation to levels of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the practices of other authorities.

### **A. Criteria for identifying 'living in Fuel Poverty, but not in receipt of benefits':**

For those living in private tenure, Fuel Poverty is assessed based on the National Government model of a household having high energy costs and a low income. The following ways of identifying Fuel Poverty will be assessed:

- If the household does not receive an income related benefit and has an income of £30,150 (after paying for rent/mortgage), then the household will be identified as 'low income'<sup>1</sup>
- The Council will cross reference data which we hold or can access to establish whether the household has high energy costs. Examples include:
  - Energy Performance Certificates (rated D, E, F & G)/SAP ratings, pre-payment meters, expenditure on fuel, the housing type/age/condition including Park Homes, levels of insulation in the property, heating type, whether the property has a working heating system)
- Low income households living in energy inefficient housing in the private rented sector will also be identified through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004.

### **B. Criteria for identifying 'low income and vulnerability to cold':**

Low income will be assessed by:

If the household does not receive an income related benefit and has an income of £30,150 (after paying for rent/mortgage), then the household will be identified as 'low income'.

To establish vulnerability to cold, Medway Council will target households containing people with the followings characteristics, which reflect the National Institute for Health and Care Excellences (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes. Specifically these are:

- Older people (aged over 60 and particularly those over 75)
- Young children (under 5)
- People with Respiratory conditions (e.g. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and childhood asthma)
- People with Cardiovascular conditions (e.g. ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease)
- People with mental health conditions (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- Pregnant women
- People with addictions (e.g. substance misusers)
- People who have attended hospital due to a fall
- People with dementia
- People with neurobiological and related conditions (e.g. fibromyalgia, ME)
- People with terminal illness

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<sup>1</sup> Source: a median net annual income threshold for Medway Council has been calculated from the ONS dataset 'Small area income estimates for middle layer super output areas, England and Wales', utilising [Net annual income \(equivalised\) after housing costs](#) data for Financial Year ending 2016.

- People with autoimmune & immune deficiency diseases (e.g. from cancer treatment, HIV, MS)
- People with disabilities
- Haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia)
- People with severe learning disabilities

Vulnerability to the cold will also be identified, by taking into account the living circumstances of the person, This includes:

- People who move in and out of homelessness
- Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (if living in private tenure)
- People living in Park Homes

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

Eligibility under the scheme means that you will be put forward for funding by your local council, however, this does not guarantee funding under government's ECO: Help to Heat funding. The final decision on whether you receive this funding will be made by the obligated energy supplier who provides this funding, or their contractors/delivery partners.

### **3) Referrals**

Medway Council will ensure appropriate referral processes are in place while maintaining the protection of personal data. This will include:

- Self-referrals by residents into partnership schemes (such as the Warm Homes scheme)
- Referrals from local authorities, on behalf of residents
- Identification of eligible households using housing stock conditions data, where held by Local Authorities. We will also work with partner agencies to determine those that may be vulnerable due to living in a cold home, and/or suffering from a qualifying medical condition.

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

Medway Council will record key information including the number of referrals made and the number of funded installations delivered for reporting to BEIS.

Medway Council will inform residents that they may be required to provide evidence of income and medical/health conditions at a later date, in order to deter fraudulent claims.

**5) Governance and Signatures**

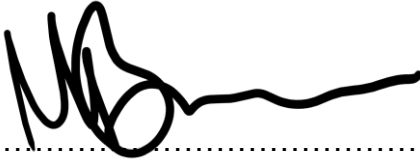
This Statement of Intent (SOI) is signed on behalf of Medway Council by:

Mark Breathwick

Head of Strategic Housing

Address: Medway Council Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham Kent ME4 4TR

Signature:



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Declarations will be signed on behalf of Medway Council by:

Paul Salter

Private Sector Housing & Adaptations Manager

Address: Medway Council Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham Kent ME4 4TR

Signature:



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