



ECO Flexible Eligibility

Statement of Intent

- 1) Torrige District Council
- 2) 1st September 2017
- 3) Version 1
- 4) Publication on website: <http://www.torrige.gov.uk/article/11066/Energy-efficiency-advice>

1) Introduction

Torrige District Council (TDC) welcomes the introduction of the flexible eligibility part of ECO, and will utilise it to help residents in fuel poverty or at risk from cold related ill health in the district. This Statement of Intent sets out how households will be assessed and declared eligible for ECO, in accordance with guidelines provided by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). This scheme is part of the government's Affordable Warmth Programme. In providing this statement we will contribute to the council's priorities to provide stronger, safer, healthier communities and for TDC to be an effective and customer focused council.

Fuel poverty rates are significant across Devon, with many households experiencing high cost and poor quality housing. This is recognised in the Devon Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019 and addressing this issue is one of the goals for the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board¹.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment local profile for Torrige shows a fuel poverty rate for Torrige higher than the national and regional average².

TDC is working to tackle poor housing and fuel poverty in the District through a combination of intervention, support and signposting.

Where possible we will continue to collaborate with other Devon authorities to develop effective partnership working and consistency across the county.

¹ <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/strategies/>

² <http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/profiles/district/>

Meeting the flexible eligibility criteria does not guarantee the installation of measures. The final decision is made by the energy suppliers or their agents/ contractors and will depend on:

- 1) The survey carried out by suppliers agents/contractors and installation costs calculated
- 2) The energy savings that can be achieved for a property
- 3) Whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their ECO targets.

2) How the LA intends to identify eligible households

ECO Flexibility assistance is only available to private tenure households.

In order to be eligible for this funding, a household must fit one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Living in fuel poverty, but not in receipt of benefits (“fuel poverty”)
- b) Low income and vulnerability to cold (“LIVC”)
- c) Solid Wall Insulation (SWI) “in-fill”

Torrige District Council will keep these criteria under review in relation to levels of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the developing practices of other authorities. This council seeks to maximise take up of the scheme for residents who fall within the criteria of need, within the statutory parameters of the arrangements.

2(a) Criteria for identifying households in fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is defined as living with low income but high heating costs. Two elements will be assessed to determine eligibility:

- i) For the ‘low income’ portion of this indicator, evidence will be sought that a member of the household is in receipt of an income related benefit in the first instance (housing benefit, council tax reduction/support [other than single person discount], child tax credit, working tax credit or universal credit). If no one in the household meets this criteria then the assessment agency will use income thresholds, as set out in the BEIS guidance for ECO Flexibility Eligibility document³. Should a household have an income under these thresholds, depending in composition, then it will be identified as being ‘low income’.
- ii) For the ‘high cost’ portion of this indicator, eligible households will be identified as those that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of ‘E’ or lower. Where an EPC is not available for the property, a score of 80 or above will be deemed to be ‘high cost’:³

Question	Response	Score
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	0
	2	10
	3	30
	4	50
	5 or more	70
Are energy payments made by direct debit?	Yes	0
	No	15
Property Type	Semi detached	15
	Terrace	10
	Flat	10
	Detached	15
	Park Home	50
Was the home built before 1964?	Yes	30
	No	0
What is the main heating fuel?	Mains gas	0
	Electricity	30
	Other	15
	Heating system broken	30
Is there evidence of damp in the home?	Yes	30
	No	0

2 (b) Criteria for identifying low income and vulnerability to cold (LIVC)

Three elements will be used to assess eligibility under this criteria:

- 1) 'Low income' portion of this identifier as set out under the previous section for 'fuel poverty'
- 2) 'High heating cost' as set out under the previous section for 'fuel poverty'

- 3) Vulnerability to cold will be assessed by suitable documentary proof of any condition recognised under the NICE guidelines and quality statement for the health risks associated with cold homes⁴. These are:
- a. people with cardiovascular conditions
 - b. people with respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
 - c. people with mental health conditions
 - d. people with disabilities
 - e. older people (65 and older)
 - f. households with young children (from new-born to school age)
 - g. pregnant women
 - h. People who move in and out of homelessness
 - i. Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (living in private tenure)

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

2 (c) Criteria for Solid wall Insulation (SWI) “in-fill” projects

To facilitate SWI projects in a locality, solid wall homes (i.e. no cavity wall) which are not ‘fuel poor’ will be eligible for Flexible ECO funding, where they are co-located with a minimum percentage of households assessed to be fuel poor or LIVC.

The criteria for this will be:

- Semi detached houses/bungalows and buildings with 2 premises – at least 50% of properties in an SWI project must be FP or LIVC
- Same terrace – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must be FP or LIVC
- Same building – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must be FP or LIVC
- Adjacent properties – at least 66% of properties in an SWI project must be FP or LIVC.
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3) Acting on behalf of another local authority.

This declaration is made solely for Torridge District Council, and TDC are not acting on behalf of any other local authority.

4) Joint statement of intent

This declaration is made solely for Torridge District Council, and TDC are currently not part of any joint SOI or common criteria arrangement. This will be kept under review.

⁴ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/chapter/1-Recommendations>

5) Governance

The Housing Renewal team at Torridge District Council will liaise with residents and ECO providers to produce the required declaration forms. The Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager will be responsible for signing local authority declarations on behalf of TDC.

6) Referrals

TDC expects referrals for Flexible Eligibility may come from:

1. Self referrals from residents
2. Other Council departments
3. Social care or health organisations
4. ECO providers, installers or agents

7) Evidence, monitoring and reporting

The data collected from residents will be suitable and sufficient to confirm their eligibility. This will include:

1. Name, address and contact details
2. Benefit details
3. Property type
4. Heating type, fuel and issues.

Records will be kept of all households targeted, referred and in receipt of any measure. All information will be kept in such a way to maintain the protection of personal data.

Current guidance encourages ECO suppliers to keep the relevant Local Authority informed of all measures installed on the basis of LA declarations made. Where ECO providers are operating within the district, the content and frequency of reporting will be agreed with that supplier. This will allow TDC to report to BEIS and include relevant information in any future Home Energy Conservation Reports.

Suitable checks and enquiries will be made to prevent and detect fraud including official letters on health conditions and DWP support.

8) Signature



Jenny Wallace
Head of Paid Service

