



## Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

### Energy Company Obligation: Help to Heat

#### Colchester Borough Council

**Name of the lead local Authority :** Colchester Borough Council

**Date of publication:** 28/10/19

**Version number:**05

**Website location:** <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=energy-efficiency&id=KA-01429>

#### 1 Introduction

Fuel Poverty can cause vulnerable and low-income households to live in cold, unhealthy homes that are expensive to keep warm and increase levels of debt. Colchester Borough Council welcomes the Local Authority Flexible Eligibility powers for Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Affordable Warmth grant funding to help address this issue.

With the ECO 3 Amendment Order, the ECO scheme has been extended to run until March 2022. Under the ECO scheme extension, energy suppliers will be able to achieve up to 25% of their Affordable Warmth obligation by installing energy saving measures in households declared eligible by Local Authorities. This new mechanism, also known as Flexible Eligibility, allows Local Authorities to make declarations determining that certain households meet the eligibility criteria for a measure under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO. This Statement of Intent (SOI) sets out how households in the borough of Colchester will be declared to be eligible for ECO Flex.

Colchester Borough Council is committed to addressing issues of fuel poverty and energy efficiency. The ECO Flex scheme will allow Colchester Borough Council, through its partners, to provide affordable warmth assistance to fuel poor and low-income households that are vulnerable to the effects of the cold. Further details about Flexible Eligibility are set out in the Government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO): Help to Heat<sup>1</sup> consultation response document.

There are 105 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Colchester, with fourteen being in the 25% most deprived areas in England and four of them being amongst the most deprived 10%.

7.8% of these households are classified as being in fuel poverty with of higher than the overall 7.5% figure for Essex County. The Councils Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report published in 2017 showed that 13% of Colchester households are not on the gas grid.

In addition, the borough, although comparable with the national average, has substantial excess winter deaths and figures. (17.7%)

Colchester Borough Council runs a Warm Homes Project which works in partnership with suppliers of home heating and insulation measures to deliver cost effective home and energy saving improvement solutions to residents of the borough. Information of which is available on its website. It is these partners that will deliver the councils LA Flex Scheme.

#### 2. Flexible Eligibility

ECO Flexible Eligibility funding is available to private sector households, including owner occupiers and private tenants.

- Owner Occupied premises where household is in Fuel Poverty (FP) or a Low Income and Vulnerable to the Cold (LIVC);
- A to E Private rented premises, where household is in FP or a LIVC, but installation measures is not the replacement or repair of a boiler, electric storage heater or central heating system that has broken down;
- F, G or unrated private rented premises, where household is FP or LIVC and installation measure is only solid wall insulation or a renewable heating measure;

- EPC Band F and G Private Rented Properties are not eligible under LA Flex, except for solid wall insulation or renewable heating measures as landlords are responsible for meeting these standards under the Domestic Minimum Standards.

### Data protection

Colchester Borough Council expects 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. These are covered in a separate memorandum of understanding between the Councils and the obligated party.

### Identification of eligibility

Colchester Borough Council will identify households that may benefit from Flexible Eligibility in a number of ways:

Households must fit one or more of the following:

- Living in fuel poverty (FP)
- Low income and vulnerability to cold (LIVC)

These qualifying values will be kept under review, in relation to levels of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the practices of other authorities. Set out below are the criteria for both living in fuel poverty, and low income and vulnerability to cold.

#### a) Criteria for identifying 'Living in Fuel Poverty'

Households will be considered at risk of fuel poverty if they are determined to be a 'low-income household, living in a high cost home in relation to energy use'.

#### • Low Income

Total income of a household, after tax and other deductions, that is available for spending or saving.

Household composition	Annual household income after tax and other deductions
Single person (18 years and over)	£9,300
Single person & 1 child	£12,200
Single person & 2 children	£15,000
Single person & 3 children	£18,000
Single person & 4 + children	£21,000
2 adults	£15,200
2 adults & 1 child	£18,200
2 adults & 2 children	£21,100
2 adults & 3 children	£24,100
2 adults and 4 + children	£26,800

- If a household has an income under these thresholds, then it will be identified as being 'Low Income'

#### • High Cost

- Property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E, F or G
- EPC rating of D; and 1 characteristic of Fuel Poverty\*

- \* Child under 16 resident in the household.  
 Vulnerable elderly over age 85.  
 Living in a 'hard to treat' home, property has solid walls, non-standard cavity walls, system built walls, is off the gas network, or has no loft.

**b) Criteria for identifying Low Income and Vulnerability to Cold**

• **Low income**

Will be characterised as above

• **Vulnerable to the cold**

The Council will target households containing people with the following characteristics, which reflect the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline NG6 on 'Excess winter deaths and illness and health risks associated with by cold homes'. Specifically, these have one or more members who are:

- People with cardiovascular conditions
- People with respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
- People with mental health conditions
- People with dementia
- People with disabilities
- People who are terminally ill
- People with suppressed immune systems (e.g. from cancer treatment or HIV)
- People who move in and out of homelessness
- People with addictions
- People who have attended hospital due to a fall
- People with Neurobiological and related conditions (e.g. Fibromyalgia, ME)
- Haemoglobinopathies (e.g. sickle cell disease, thalassaemia)
- Children under 5
- Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (if living in private tenure)

**3 Priority areas**

Priority will be given to households located within Lower Super Output Areas with an Index of Multiple Deprivation score of less than 25% as there is likely to be a high incidence of fuel poverty. These areas include

Ward	LSOA
Greenstead	Magnolia Salary Brook North Sycamore Forest Eastern Approaches North
Old Heath and the Hythe	Barnhall Speedwell
St Anne's and St John's	St Anne's Estate
New Town and Christchurch	Paxman New Town North
Shrub End	Iceni Square Rayner Road
Berechurch	Monkwick
Castle	Castle Central

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 any works that may help reduce fuel poverty. The final decision will depend on:

- Identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat
- The supplier's assessment of the cost effectiveness of installing measures in relation to achieving its obligation
- Whether the supplier has achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their Energy Obligation targets.

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

<b>3.</b>	<b>Referrals</b>
	Colchester Borough Council will ensure appropriate referral processes are in place while maintaining the protection of personal data. Colchester Borough Council will work with partner agencies to determine those that may be vulnerable due to living in a cold home, suffering from a qualifying medical condition.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Evidence, monitoring and reporting</b>
	Colchester Borough Council will record key information including the number of referrals made and the number of funded installations delivered for reporting both to BEIS and future Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Reports.

**5. Governance**

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

**Lucie Breadman**  
Assistant Director (Communities)  
Colchester Borough Council

Signature: 

Declarations will be signed on behalf of Colchester Borough Council by:

Name: Jon Parsons  
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Signature: 