

July 2019

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1) Introduction

Southampton has an estimated 12,700 households (approximately one in eight households) which, due to a combination of low household income, inefficient housing and high energy costs are living in fuel poverty¹. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of these households have young children, an older person or someone with a long-term illness or disability living there². Fuel poverty can affect people's mental and physical health and have serious impacts on their quality of life.

Southampton City Council is committed to supporting fuel poor households and has set a target of 1800 Council owned homes where energy efficiency measures have been installed by 2018/19³. The SCC Housing Strategy (2016-2025) is seeking to achieve good quality housing with 'number of households lifted out of fuel poverty' as an indicator of success.

To achieve this, the council intends to work with one or more energy suppliers (or installers) to secure ECO Affordable Warmth funding for home energy improvements in both private and social housing tenures as set out in the ECO Help to Heat regulations. This will contribute to a wider package of support for vulnerable, low income and fuel poor residents.

ECO Flexible Eligibility (FE), part of ECO Affordable Warmth, provides an opportunity for the council to further its commitment to fuel-poor homes, as well as working with health led services to support those vulnerable to the impact of cold homes, and extend the reach of solid wall insulation work in the city.

Whilst the council and its partners will endeavour to assist residents in accessing ECO funding it is important to note that the final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from energy saving improvements under ECO Affordable Warmth will be made by the energy suppliers, or their agents/contractors. Decisions will be based on:

- i) A survey carried out by suppliers agents/contractors and installation costs calculated,
- ii) The energy savings that can be achieved for a property, and
- iii) Whether suppliers have achieved their targets under ECO.

¹ DECC (2014) Sub-regional fuel poverty data: low income high costs indicator

² NEA (2016) Fuel Poverty Statistics

³ SCC (2017) Council Strategy Targets

2) Identifying eligible households

The Council will identify households that may benefit from FE measures in the following ways:

A. Fuel poverty (FP)

This approach will identify households with a low income and high energy costs:

1. *Low Income*

A household with a low income. Incomes must be equal or less than the relevant threshold in appendix 1.

2. *High Energy Costs*

A household with an EPC band of E, F or G. Where EPC data is unavailable a household will be asked 'Energy Cost' questions and scored to identify those likely to have high energy costs (appendix 2)

In addition hard to treat properties, of a non-standard construction, such as BISF and park homes, are likely to have higher energy costs.

B. Low income and vulnerable to the health effects of living in a cold home (LIVC)

This approach will identify households with low incomes and where an occupant is vulnerable to living in a cold home:

1. *Low Income*

A household with a low income. Incomes must be equal or less than the relevant threshold in appendix 1.

2. *Health and age vulnerabilities*

An occupant with at least one of the following vulnerabilities⁴:

- Chronic respiratory conditions incl. Asthma, COPD or TIA (a)
- Chronic circulatory conditions incl. heart disease, stroke, diabetes (b)
- Dementia, learning disabilities or mental ill-health (c);
- Aged 65+
- A person who is pregnant
- A child under 5 years old
- A child under 18 with a chronic health condition
- A person with a disability (registered or registerable)
- A person who is terminally ill
- A person with a suppressed immune system (e.g. from cancer treatment or HIV)
- A person with a degenerative musculoskeletal or neurological condition

⁴ NICE (2015) <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

The council will use its discretion to consider households who fall outside the 'low income and vulnerable to living in a cold home' category in exceptional circumstances.

C. Solid Wall Insulation "in-fill"

Alongside households classed as living fuel poverty (FP) or living on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home (LIVC) there are limited circumstances for other properties to be declared "in-fill". Eligibility of "in-fill" households will be based on the regulations set out under the ECO legislation as well as the discretion of the obligated suppliers and the Council.

3) Acting on behalf of another local authority

The Council will not currently issue declarations on behalf of another local authority.

4) Governance

Governance Officers responsible for signing "Local authority declarations" are Mitch Sanders (Service Director -Transactions & Universal Services), Rosie Zambra (Service Lead- Environment, Street Scene & Health) and Steven Hayes-Arter (Service Manager - HMO Licensing & Adaptations).

5) Referrals

The Council will identify eligible households through its affordable warmth project Southampton Healthy Homes. The project is supported by statutory, voluntary and health sector partners across the city to reach the most vulnerable in the community.

The Southampton Healthy Homes team can be reached by:

- Freephone – **0800 804 8601** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)
- Email – keepwarm@environmentcentre.com

6) Signature

Signed 

Name: Mitch Sanders, Service Director.

Date: 5th July 2019

Appendix 1: Low Income thresholds

The table below shows the income thresholds for identifying low income households. These thresholds refer to gross household income. A different threshold is provided for different types of household composition, reflecting that larger households require larger incomes in order to achieve the same standard of living as smaller ones.

Table 1: Income thresholds (gross) for low income household eligibility

Household Composition	Fuel poverty (FP)	Low income and vulnerable to living in a cold home (LIVC)
1 adult	£14,000	£16,100
And 1 child	£18,500	£21,275
And 2 children	£23,000	£26,450
And three children	£27,500	£31,625
And four or more children	£32,000	£36,800
2 adults	£21,000	£24,150
And 1 child	£25,500	£29,325
And 2 children	£30,000	£34,500
And three children	£34,500	£39,675
And four or more children	£39,000	£44,850

Appendix 2: High Energy Costs.

Where EPC data is unavailable a household will be asked a set of questions and scored developed by BEIS that aim to achieve a balance between simplicity and effective identification of high cost homes.

Table 2: Energy cost questions and scores for properties without an EPC

Question	Response	Score
Does at least one member of the household spend most of the day in the home?	Yes	1
	No	0
How many bedrooms are there in the home?	1	0
	2	6
	3	12
	4	21
	5 or more	27
What type of house is it?	Semi detached	10
	Detached	20
	Mid terrace	4
	End terrace	10
	Converted Flat	4
	Purpose built flat	0
	Bungalow	0
Year of construction	Post 2002	0
	1991-2002	3
	1981-1990	4
	1975-1980	7
	1965-1974	12
	1945-1964	13
	1919-1944	18
	1850-1918	24
	pre1850	27
What is the main fuel type?	Gas	0
	Electricity	20
	Other	5
Central heating	Yes –working	0
	other	11
Energy payments methods	Direct debit	0
	Pre-payment	6
	Standard credit	7
Fuel Poverty eligibility score => 25		

