

**Energy Company Obligation: Help to Heat
Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent**

Local Authority: Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

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Introduction

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council will use the flexible eligibility (FE) part of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) to reduce fuel poverty in the Borough.

This Statement of Intent sets out how households will be declared to be eligible for ECO: Help to Heat funding. This scheme is part of the government's Affordable Warmth programme. This is in accordance with guidelines from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

It should be noted that the final decision on whether any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements rests with the obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. Inclusion in a Declaration of Eligibility issued by the Council to an ECO provider will not guarantee installation of works will proceed. The final decision will depend on:

- the survey carried out by supplier's agents/contractors and installation costs calculated
- the energy savings that can be achieved for a property
- whether the supplier has achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets.

In identifying households as eligible under Flexible Eligibility Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will obtain consent from households before including them in a Declaration.

Tonbridge & Malling 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 Council and the obligated party.

Identifying Eligible Households

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council will use a variety of methods to identify households with low income and vulnerable residents that may benefit from the installation of measures under ECO Flexible Eligibility. The scheme is only available for those who live in private housing (owner occupiers or renting from a private landlord)

The Council will cross reference data which it holds or can access on Energy Performance Certificates/SAP ratings, heating type, prepayment meters, expenditure on fuel, housing type/age/condition.

Low income households living in energy inefficient housing in the private rented sector may also be identified through Private Sector Housing enforcement activity.

In order to be eligible the resident must meet one of the following criteria and have high energy costs:

a. living in fuel poverty but not in receipt of benefits

Households not in receipt of income related benefit with an annual income of less than:

- £20,000 – one or two adult household (18 years and over), **OR**
- £30,000 - one or two adult (18 years and over) and child/ren household

after paying for rent and mortgage will be identified as 'low income'.

b. low income and vulnerability to cold

Low income

The resident is in receipt of any income related benefit listed below:

- Housing benefit
- Council tax reduction/support (other than single occupancy)
- Pension credit (savings credit)

Vulnerability to cold

The resident:

- Is on the Energy Companies' Priority Services Register
OR
- Has a disability blue badge
OR
- Has an invitation for free flu jab for health reasons
OR
- Core group Warm Home Discount recipient

Through this scheme the Council is looking to help/support households containing people with the following characteristics, which reflect the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes containing people **with any** of the following characteristics:

Health condition made worse by cold	Vulnerable to the cold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with cardiovascular conditions (ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease) • People with respiratory conditions (in particular chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and childhood asthma) • People with mental health conditions (eg. Schizophrenia, bipolar disorder) • People diagnosed with dementia • Neurobiological and related condition (eg fibromyalgia, ME) • People who are terminally ill • People with suppressed immune systems (eg from cancer treatment, HIV, MS) • People with disabilities • Haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia) • People with severe learning disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged over 60 and particularly those over 75 • Young children aged under 5 and/or pregnant women • People with addictions (eg substance misusers) • People who have attended hospital due to a fall in the last year • People who move in and out of homelessness • Recent immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees (if living in private tenure)

High Energy Costs:

Where no EPC exists the following questions will be asked that gather information similar to an EPC, which will help assess likelihood of a household having high energy costs:

Property with **at least one** of the following:

- 100mm or less loft insulation
- Unfilled cavity walls
- Uninsulated non cavity walls
- No working central heating
- The primary heating source for the home is not mains natural gas
- The home is a system built property
- The household uses a prepayment meter

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

Being eligible is no guarantee that measures will be installed. A final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from energy saving improvements under this strand of ECO will be made by the obligated suppliers or their agents/contractors.

As part of the Council's commitment to the Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council residents may be eligible to additional grants.

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

Referrals

The Council will ensure appropriate referral processes are in place while maintaining the protection of personal data. We will also work with partner agencies to determine those that may be vulnerable due to living in a cold home, suffering from a qualifying medical condition.

Evidence, monitoring and reporting

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council 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/email address
- Property, heating type and measure required
- Confirmation resident meets the criteria

To prevent fraud this information will be collected on the application form which residents sign to declare the information is correct. External sources will be sought such as EPC data and gas grid maps to verify answers.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council will also work with public health professionals to determine those residents that may be vulnerable to living in a cold home, having from a qualifying health condition.

Applicants will be asked where they heard about the scheme to monitor promotional methods etc are being effective.

The ECO providers will provide key information, including the number of referrals made and the number of funded installations delivered.

Tonbridge & Malling 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 Reports.

Governance

This Statement of Intent is signed on behalf of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council by:

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Telephone: 01732 876002
Email Julie.beilby@tmbc.gov.uk

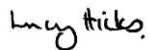
Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Beilby".

All declarations will be signed on behalf of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council by:

Lucy Hicks
Private Sector Housing Initiatives Officer
Telephone: 01732 876067
Email: lucy.hicks@tmbc.gov.uk

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy Hicks".