

Energy Company Obligation: ECO 3 2018 - 22

Local Authority Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

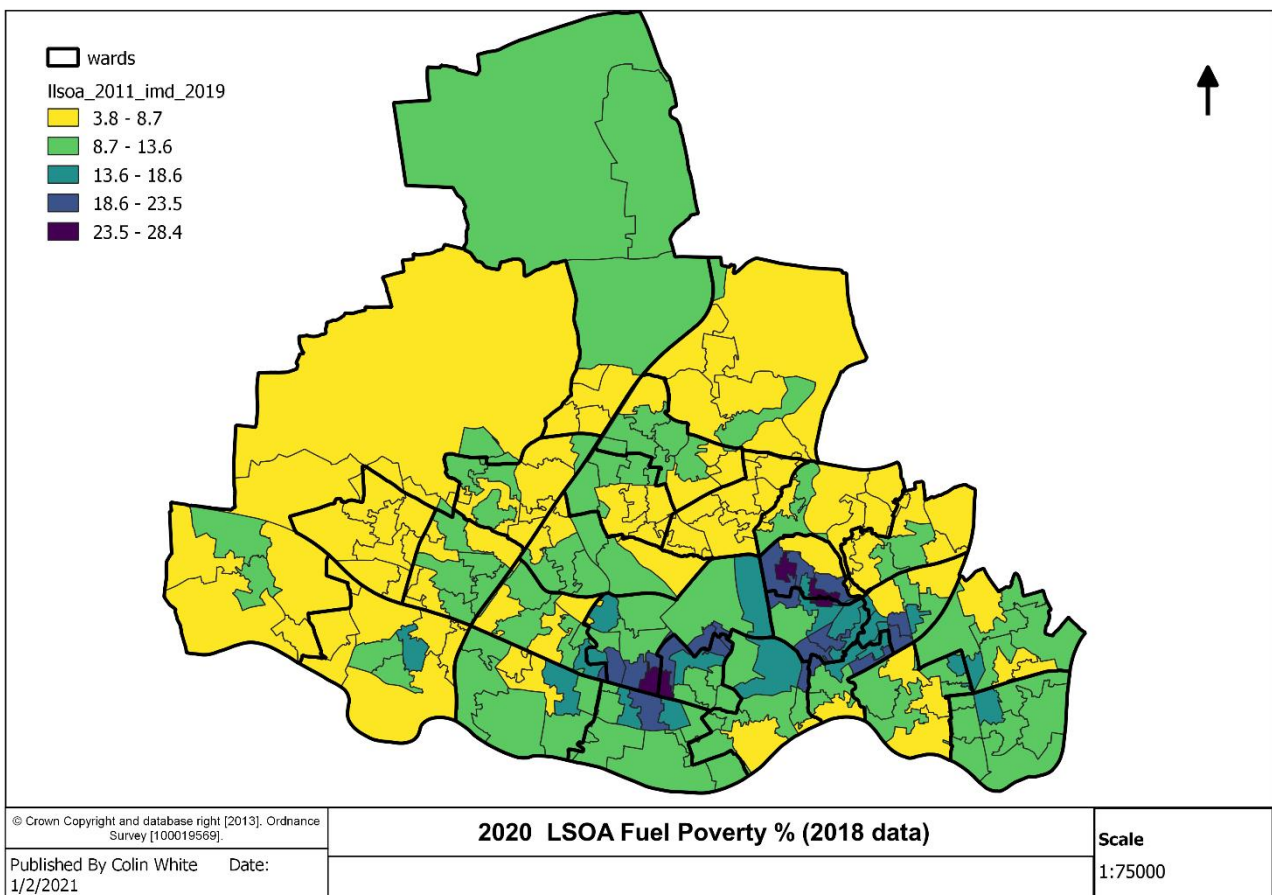
Local authority: Newcastle City Council

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URL: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/environment-and-waste/energy-services/energy-reports>

1) Introduction

Newcastle City Council (NCC) uses Flexible Eligibility for the purpose of reducing fuel poverty in the city. Under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Regulations local authorities can set their own criteria for eligibility for funding for domestic energy efficiency measures, aimed at helping residents most likely to be in fuel poverty.



As electricity and gas prices continue to rise and incomes remain stagnant or decrease, more residents will be at risk of falling into fuel poverty unless the causes are addressed. Fuel poverty affects the most vulnerable residents in our communities and can have adverse impacts on their well-being.

An estimated 10.6% of Newcastle's households are defined as living in fuel poverty, i.e. having lower than average incomes with higher than average fuel costs, compared to 10.3% of English households. This means that in Newcastle almost 13,000 lower income households are paying over the national average for their energy bills. (Government statistics published by BEIS in June 2020)

The council has a long history of delivering practical programmes to help people to afford to heat their homes. Generally, this has been based on a three-pronged approach:

- improving the energy efficiency of all homes by offering insulation and central heating measures;
- supporting residents with energy efficiency and fuel debt advice, including income maximisation;
- offering support to switch to a cheaper supplier.

NCC has adopted a city-wide approach to implementing the Flexible Eligibility policy initiative within the Energy Company Obligation regulations, this Statement of Intent fits within this framework.

However, fitting the criteria within the Statement of Intent does not guarantee that any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements as the final decision on funding rests with the obligated energy suppliers and will depend on:

- the installation costs calculated;
- the energy savings that can be achieved for a property; and
- whether energy suppliers have achieved their ECO targets or require further measures to meet these targets.

In identifying households as eligible under Flexible Eligibility, NCC is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will seek the consent of households to including them in a Declaration. NCC expects any obligated energy supplier, delivery partner or contractor to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations, to fully follow Ofgem requirements for the ECO 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 Newcastle City Council intends to identify eligible households

Households are considered for Flexible Eligibility if they are at risk of living in fuel poverty (FP) or a low income household, with at least one household member vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home (LIVC.)

Subject to resources available within the council and the legal use of data, NCC will target those most in need having regard to BEIS guidance on targeting, including:-

- i. those households as identified in the private rented sector through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004;
- ii. those households identified as in need by the council's referral partners;
- iii. those households identified as in need by ECO suppliers or their agents.

a. Identifying 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.

Households need to meet the Low Income criteria and one of the High Cost criteria, based on the Government’s Fuel Poverty Strategy, March 2015.

| Criteria | Eligibility |
|------------|--|
| Low Income | Gross household income <£30,000/year |
| High Cost | Property EPC rating of E, F or G |
| | Property EPC rating of D; and Living in a hard to treat home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solid or non-standard cavity walls • no loft • system built construction • no central heating system |
| | Boiler broken down and/or beyond economical repair or has no gas central heating |

b. Identifying low income and vulnerability to cold

Households need to meet the Low Income criteria and one of the Vulnerable to Cold criteria, based on the Government’s Fuel Poverty Strategy, March 2015.

This reflects the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes.

| Criteria | Eligibility |
|--------------------|--|
| Low Income | Gross household income <£30,000/year |
| Vulnerable to Cold | Household member has a health condition made worse by cold, including but not limited to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic respiratory • cardio vascular • musculoskeletal illness • autoimmune deficiencies • cancer • poor mental health, |
| | Household member of a vulnerable age, either:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aged 70 or over • aged 16 and under |

c. Solid wall insulation “in-fill” projects

Where potential works have been identified households will be supported to take advantage of “in-fill” projects where the minimum number of vulnerable households is met.

d. No gas mains

Where potential works have been identified, the council will consider a postcode based approach on a case by case basis if the area falls in to the top 10 most deprived areas in the country based on indices of deprivation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

3) Governance

Responsible officer

The officer below will be responsible for signing Declarations on behalf of the local authority.

Name: Kate Coulthard

Job title: Energy Officer

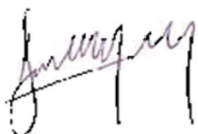
Telephone: 0191 278 3442

Email: kate.coulthard@newcastle.gov.uk

4) Evidence, monitoring and reporting

- a. Anonymised data on the characteristics of households reached through ECO Flexible Eligibility will be reviewed quarterly;
- b. The data will include details of households assessed, how many were deemed eligible and ineligible, and how many received heating and insulation improvements

5) Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Hall', written in a cursive style.

David Hall

Assistant Director of Operations & Regulatory Services