

Cumberland Council Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Introduction

This statement sets out Cumberland Council's (The Council's) flexible eligibility criteria for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme which runs from April 2022-March 2026. The ECO4 scheme will focus on supporting low income and vulnerable households.

The scheme will improve the least energy efficient homes by providing funding for insulation and heating measures, helping to meet the Government's fuel poverty and net zero commitments.

The flexible approach for Local Authorities (LAs) to identify fuel poor and vulnerable households who may benefit from heating and energy saving measures is referred to as "ECO4 Flex". LAs can only use certain targeting routes under ECO4 Flex which is a change from previous versions of this scheme that is intended to ensure that only low income and vulnerable households are supported.

The Council welcomes the introduction of the ECO4 Flex eligibility routes as it helps The Council achieve its plans to improve the homes of those in fuel poverty or vulnerable to the cold. ECO4 Flex sits well with the vision set out in the Cumberland Council 2023-27 Plan¹ of "...enabling positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, prosperity and the environment" and the priority of "putting health and wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do".

Routes of eligibility

The Council is publishing the Statement of Intent (SOI) on the 8th May 2024 to confirm that each of the households declared will adhere to at least one of the four available routes outlined below:

Route 1: Owner-occupied and private rented sector households with SAP band of D-G and a gross annual income less than £31,000. This cap applies irrespective of the property size, composition, or region.

Route 2: Owner-occupied and private rented sector households with SAP band of E-G and which meet a combination of **two** of the following proxies:

- **Proxy 1:** Homes in England located in Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) deciles 1-3 on the English Indices of Deprivation (IMD) 2019².
- **Proxy 2:** Householders receiving Council Tax Reduction on the ground of low-income (excludes single person discount and medical exemptions).
- **Proxy 3:** Householders vulnerable to living in a cold home as identified in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance³. Only one from the list can be used, excludes the group 'people on a low income'.
- **Proxy 4:** A child in the household is receiving free school meals due to low-income.
- **Proxy 5:** Householders referred to the LA for support by Citizen's Advice because they have been identified as struggling to pay their electricity and/or gas bills.
- **Proxy 6:** Households identified through energy supplier debt data.

Note: Proxies 1 and 3 cannot be used in combination with each other.
Proxies 5 and 6 cannot be used in combination with each other.

Route 3: Owner-occupied and private rented sector households with SAP band of D-G where a resident has been identified by their GP, NHS Foundation Trust, or NHS Trust as vulnerable, with an occupant whose health conditions may be adversely affected by living in a cold home. These health conditions may be cardiovascular, respiratory, immunosuppressed, or limited mobility related.⁴

Route 4: (Not used at present) Owner-occupied and private rented sector households that are referred under Route 4: Bespoke Targeting. Suppliers and LAs can submit an application to DESNZ where they have identified a low income and vulnerable household, who are not already eligible under the existing routes.

Applications and evidence checking

It is recommended that potentially eligible households apply for ECO via an Obligated Energy Supplier⁵. Obligated Energy Suppliers work with third-party installers to deliver the scheme and it is up to the energy suppliers to determine which measures they choose to fund, the level of funding they provide and the installer they choose to work with.

Installers refer ECO4 Flex applications to The Council for eligibility verification⁶. Prospective installers must be onboarded by The Council and agree to pay the associated administration fees.

The Council's housing teams will be responsible for checking, and verifying evidence, and issuing declarations.

For any general enquiries relating to this Statement of Intent, please contact:
housing.energy@cumberland.gov.uk

CEO or dedicated responsible person mandatory signature

Cumberland Council will administer the ECO4 Flex scheme according to the Electricity and Gas (Energy Company Obligation) Order 2022 (ECO4 Order).

The CEO or dedicated responsible person of The Council will oversee the process of identifying eligible households under ECO Flex. The Council will notify Ofgem of households that declarations have been issued for via the declaration notification template.

All personal data collected or processed by The Council for the purposes of ECO4 Flex will be processed and stored in accordance with: The Council's obligations under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, The Council's data protection policy, the Information Commissioner's Office Data Sharing Code and other guidance, and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero guidance.

Signature: 

Name: Chris Jones-King

Job Title: Director of Adult Social Care and Housing

Date of Signature: 8 May 2024

Notes

1. Link to Cumberland Plan:
<https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/your-council/council-documents/council-plan>
2. Link to English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>
3. Link to NICE guidance:
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/chapter/1-Recommendations#recommendation-4-identify-people-at-risk-of-ill-health-from-living-in-a-cold-home>

Summary of relevant section of guidance (accessed 28/03/2024, if the NICE guidance is updated after publication of this SOI then the most recent version of the published NICE guidance will be used to determine eligibility).

[From NICE guideline NG6.2] In this guideline, the term vulnerable refers to a number of different groups including:

- people with cardiovascular conditions
- people with respiratory conditions (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
- people with mental health conditions
- people with disabilities
- older people (65 and older)
- households with young children (from new-born to school age)
- pregnant women

4. Link to NHS Referral Letter template for medical professionals:
<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/Great%20British%20Insulation%20Scheme%20and%20ECO4%20Flex%20NHS%20referral%20letter%20template%20V1.0.docx>
5. Link to Ofgem website Obligated Energy Supplier contact page:
<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/energy-company-obligation-eco/contacts-guidance-and-resources/eco-supplier-contact-details>
6. The Council reserves the right not to accept referrals from contractors who do not hold the appropriate insurances and/or accreditations. Referrals may also be refused based on a contractor's performance, for example, if frequent complaints are received about the service or installation provided, or if the service level agreement is not adhered to.