

Energy Company Obligation Help to Heat

Lewisham Statement of Intent on Flexible Eligibility



Local authority: Lewisham Council

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URL: <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/getinvolved/environment/energyefficiency/taking-the-lead/Pages/default.aspx>

1) Introduction

Lewisham Council welcomes the introduction of Flexible Eligibility (FE) and intends to utilise it for the purposes of reducing fuel poverty in the borough.

Fuel poverty is an important local priority and the Council will look to align work on 'Help to Heat' with existing work to support households vulnerable to living in a cold home.

The Council will look to work with energy suppliers and their partners delivering the Help to Heat obligation. 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 measures. The final decision will depend on i) identification of measures eligible under Help to Heat ii) the supplier's assessment of the cost-effectiveness of installing measures in relation to achieving its obligation, and iii) 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 Lewisham Council is seeking to enable residents to benefit from funding and will seek the consent of households to including them in a Declaration. Lewisham Council expects any obligated energy supplier, or contractor working on their behalf, 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.

2) How Lewisham Council intends to identify eligible households

Lewisham Council will identify households that may benefit from flexible eligibility in a number of ways:

a. Identifying fuel poverty

Subject to availability of resources within the Council, and the legal use of data, the Council will target those most in need having regard to BEIS guidance on targeting. This will identify households on a low income facing high energy costs to heat their home.

Low income households are defined as one or more of the following:

- i. Households with a net annual income after housing costs lower than the mean net annual income for Lewisham (equivalised, after housing costs)¹
- ii. Households in a lower super output area in the 30% most deprived nationally²

A household facing high energy costs is defined as one or more of the following:

- i. A household living in a home with an Energy Performance Certificate lower than band C
- ii. A household living in a home with a prepayment meter
- iii. A household where the main heating fuel is not gas

A household where at least one member of the household spends most of the day in the home

b. Identifying low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home

Subject to availability of resources within the Council, and the legal use of data, the Council will target those most in need having regard to BEIS guidance on targeting. Households that are deemed to be low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home are defined as:

- i. Households referred through Lewisham's Warm Homes Healthy People project³
- ii. A household with one or more occupants with the following characteristics reflecting the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes⁴

¹ Latest ONS data for Lewisham (2014) mean household income £26,274

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/articles/smallareamodelbasedincomeestimatesenglandandwales/financialyearending2014> latest data

² As defined in the Index of Multiple Deprivation <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

³ Lewisham's Warm Homes Healthy People project delivers home visits to households at risk of fuel poverty or living in a cold home. The visits offer:

- practical advice on how to stay warm in the home;
- access to the £140 warm homes discount;
- assistance with debt on energy bills;
- advice on switching tariff;
- draught-proofing and other energy saving measures;
- a free winter warming pack (blanket, gloves, mug, thermometer card);
- referrals on to other sources of help.

The project has been running in Lewisham since 2011/12 and has assisted over 2,000 homes in that time. The project is not advertised directly to residents. Instead, referrals are made by front line staff working with at-risk and vulnerable groups across adult social care, health, housing and advice services in public and third sector organisations.

⁴ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>

- Aged over 60, and particularly those over 75
- Children under 5 and pregnant mothers
- Respiratory disease (COPD, asthma)
- Cardiovascular disease (e.g. ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease)
- Moderate to severe mental illness (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder)
- Substance misusers
- Dementia
- Neurobiological and related diseases (e.g. fibromyalgia, ME)
- Cancer
- Limited mobility
- Haemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease, thalassaemia)
- Severe learning disabilities
- Autoimmune and immunodeficiency diseases (e.g. lupus, MS, diabetes, HIV)

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.

3) Governance

Responsible officer

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

Job title: Asset Management Planning Manager

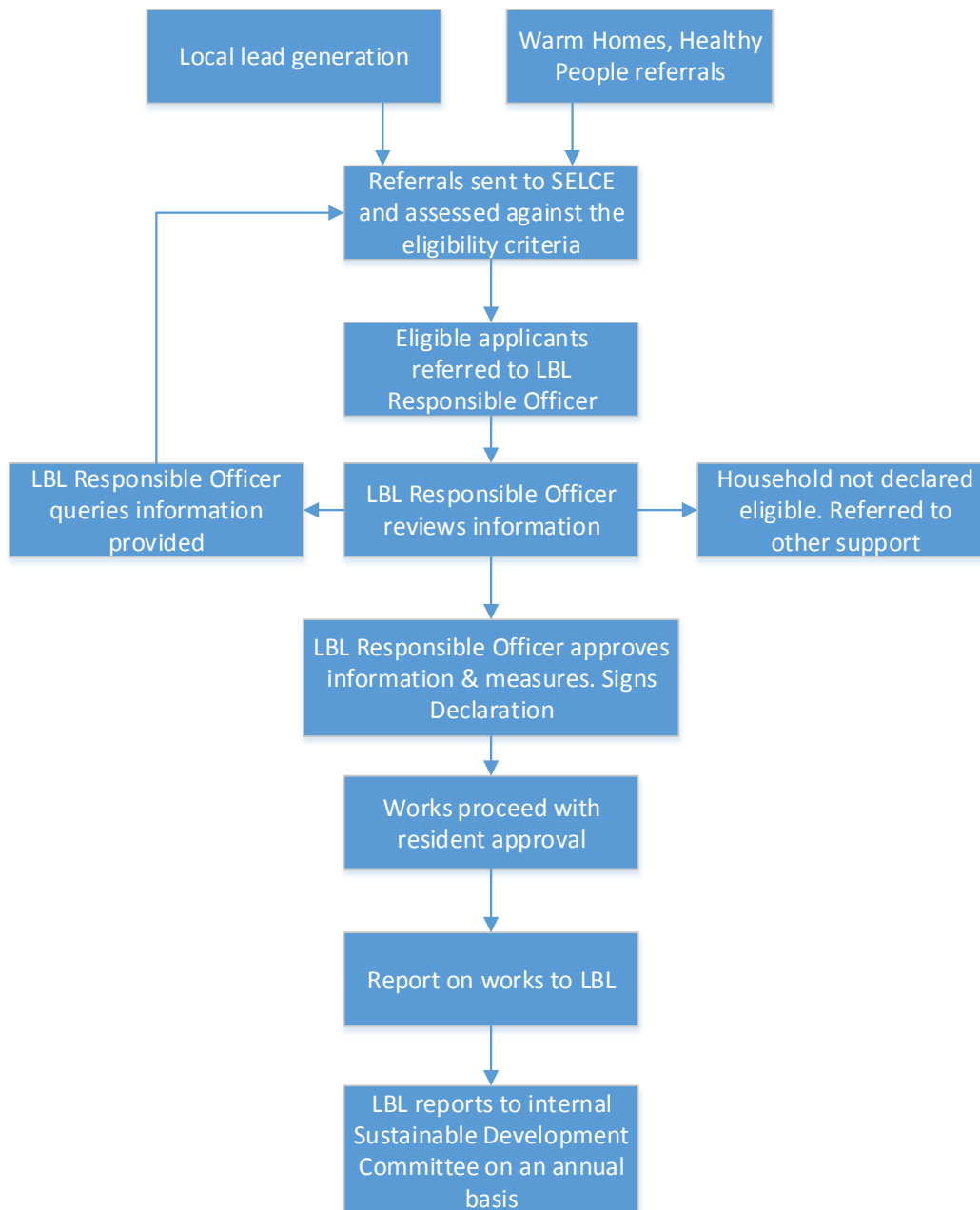
Telephone: 020 8314 6605

Email: martin.o'brien@lewisham.gov.uk

The Council’s Sustainable Development Select Committee will review the Council’s delivery on ‘Help to Heat’ flexible eligibility on an annual basis.

4) Referrals and delivery

Lewisham Council has established a partnership with South East London Community Energy⁵ that is intended to create a long-term sustainable local referral route for households eligible for energy company funded measures. This partnership will be the Council's main route for identifying and referring households to 'Help to Heat' obligated parties. Any individual or organisation seeking to use the flexible eligibility arrangements or the Council's endorsement in relation to 'Help to Heat' will be expected to use the partnership arrangements as the referral route, and should in the first instance contact the responsible officer identified above.



⁵ <http://selce.org.uk/>

5) Evidence, monitoring and reporting

- a. Anonymised data on the characteristics of households reached through flexible eligibility will be reviewed and reported to Lewisham's Sustainable Development Select Committee
- b. A copy of all declarations issued by Lewisham Council will be retained
- c. A record of evidence collected through the partnership with South East London Community Energy for meeting the criteria set out above in section 2abc will be retained
- d. A record of ECO funded measures installed through the partnership with South East London Community Energy will be retained
- e. Lewisham Council will provide a report to BEIS that reflects the reporting requirements suggested in the BEIS guidance on Flexible Eligibility.

The data above will be retained for the 3 year period recommended in the BEIS guidance, subject to any restrictions required by Lewisham's Information Management Team.

6) Signature

Janet Senior

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Executive Director for Regeneration and Resources

Lewisham Council