

Energy Company Obligation Help to Heat Merton Statement of Intent on Flexible Eligibility



Local authority: Merton Council

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URL: <https://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/sustainability-climate/energy.htm>

1) Introduction

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

We wish to make it clear that the final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from energy saving improvements rests with obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. Inclusion in a Declaration issued by us to a supplier will not guarantee installation of measures. The final decision will depend on i) the survey carried out by suppliers' contractors and installation costs calculated, ii) the energy savings that can be achieved for a property, and iii) whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets. Where funding is available from within the local authority to enable works to take place, for example through local carbon offset funds, this will be considered.

This Statement of Intent is intended to support a partnership with the London Borough of Islington, who will sign declarations on our behalf.

2) How Merton Council intends to identify eligible households

We will identify households that may benefit from FE in a number of ways:

a) *Identifying fuel poverty*

We will rely on targeted means of identifying those most in need.

- i. Where the legal use of data allows, we will identify those living in private sector and in receipt of the relevant means-tested benefits
- ii. We will cross-reference data on income with data that we can hold or access on Energy Performance Certificates and on the private rented sector
- iii. Low income households living in energy inefficient housing will be identified in the private rented sector through enforcement activity under the Housing Act 2004
- iv. Individuals in fuel poverty will be identified through the extensive fuel poverty referral network, SHINE London (see Section 4)
- v. Particular efforts will be made to reach low income households in older dwellings
- vi. We will combine data on prepayment meters with tenure data
- vii. We will promote the scheme to low income council leaseholders

b) *Identifying low income and vulnerability to cold*

SHINE London (see Section 4) provides an effective means of identifying vulnerable household through a large and well-established referral network. Through this network we intend to continue targeting those households containing people with the characteristics below. These are aligned with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes.

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

The presence of some of these diseases will not in itself mean that someone is extremely vulnerable but a scoring matrix has been developed to weight certain characteristics and referrals from health and social care services will be given more weight. Health and social care teams working with the above groups will continue to be engaged.

c) *Solid wall insulation "in-fill" projects*

SHINE London will support households to take advantage of "in-fill" projects where the minimum number of vulnerable households is met.

3) Governance

a) *Responsible officer*

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

Job title: Energy Policy & Advice Manager, London Borough of Islington

Telephone: 020 7527 2121

Email: contact@shine-london.org.uk

4) Referrals and delivery

a) Referral network

The Seasonal Health Interventions Network London (SHINE London) was established in January 2017 and had assisted over 1,000 vulnerable households across London by May 2017. Residents are either referred by third parties such as local health, social care, housing services and voluntary sector organisations or can refer themselves.

Telephone: 0300 555 0195

Email: contact@shine-london.org.uk

Online: www.shine-London.org.uk

Declarations will be passed to suppliers/contractors through secure data transfer. In turn they will be expected to provide information on the outcomes of these, including the nature and date of works completed.

5) Evidence, monitoring and reporting

- a) Anonymised data on the characteristics of households reached through FE will be reviewed and reported to an appointed Merton Council officer on a quarterly basis
- b) The data above will include details of households assessed, how many were deemed eligible and ineligible, and how many received heating and insulation improvements
- c) All households for whom Declarations were made will be contacted by SHINE London after three months to review their experience of the process
- d) The two-stage approval process for Declarations, case review process and Merton Council officer review will act to deter, prevent and detect fraud.

6) Signature



Chris Lee

Director of Environment & Regeneration

Merton Council