

# Vale of White Horse District Council

## Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

### INTRODUCTION

Vale of White Horse District Council is committed to supporting those in fuel poverty. Working with the National Energy Foundation, all the other Oxfordshire local authorities and other local organisations the Council has formed the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network. The network is administered by the National Energy Foundation and provides a cross-referral partnership between organisations working with vulnerable people, and specifically aims to assist those residents at risk of fuel poverty, or impaired health as a result of living in a cold and/or damp home. Vale of White Horse District Council sees Flexible Eligibility as a perfect fit with the Network's aims and is happy to support its use to provide energy efficiency home improvements to residents in the district.

### HOW THE LOCAL AUTHORITY INTENDS TO IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS

Vale of White Horse District Council believes that certain sectors of society are particularly susceptible to the cold. These people may be on low incomes, yet not sufficiently low as to be eligible for benefits. Previous Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding streams have overlooked these residents and we hope to be able to provide support for them under Flexible Eligibility.

Eligible households will be those on a low income, as defined below, **and** who meet a second eligibility criteria.

#### First Eligibility Criteria

Low income will be assessed against the values in the table below. Please note that these values may change from time to time.

Household composition		Gross annual household income	Monthly household income equivalent
1 adult	and no children	£16,500	£1,375
	and 1 child	£21,750	£1,813
	and 2 children	£27,000	£2,250
	and three children	£32,250	£2,688
	and four or more children	£37,500	£3,125
2 adults	and no children	£24,750	£2,063
	and 1 child	£30,000	£2,500
	and 2 children	£35,250	£2,938
	and three children	£40,500	£3,375
	and four or more children	£45,750	£3,813

## Second eligibility criteria

Eligible households will be those on a low income, as defined above, **and** who meet one of the second eligibility criteria listed below.

### HEALTH

Health can be a major factor in how much heat is required in a property. Therefore health criteria will be important in assessing flexible eligibility.

*A household with a full-time resident who has one of the following long term and chronic health conditions:*

- *Cardiovascular disease*
- *Respiratory disease*
- *Cancer (any)*
- *Diabetes*
- *A substantial and permanent disability and is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payment*

### AGE

Age can also be a factor in how much heat is required to achieve affordable warmth, with older residents being particularly adversely affected.

*A household with a full time resident who is an adult aged 60 or over.*

### PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Vale of White Horse District Council is also aware that some homes have characteristics which mean that they inevitably have high energy consumption. Very inefficient properties which have not already been upgraded are, therefore, likely to be occupied by people on low incomes who also have high costs.

*A household where an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) has been completed and the property has an EPC banding of F or G.*

### AFFORDABLE WARMTH NETWORK

As part of the Affordable Warmth Network Vale of White Horse District Council's residents may be eligible for additional grants or support from time to time. A final eligibility criteria is therefore:

*Any household, where residents are on a low income and where a full time resident is also confirmed as eligible via the Affordable Warmth Network Helpline 0800 107 0044.*

Vale of White Horse District Council would like to support the installation of solid wall insulation in the region. We will therefore agree to complete declarations for those households not in fuel poverty who fulfil the in-fill criteria as defined by the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

## GOVERNANCE

Vale of White Horse District Council will work with the National Energy Foundation and our partners in the Affordable Warmth Network to promote energy efficiency advice and the installation of energy efficiency measures to support those in fuel poverty in the region. The National Energy Foundation will assess eligibility against the above low income high cost criteria and will complete relevant declarations of eligible households on the Council's behalf.

Cynthia Sullivan will sign off declarations and will audit three per cent of applications to ensure compliance with these criteria.

Position	Named individual	Responsibilities
Acting Chief Executive	Mark Stone	Signatory for Statement of Intent
Affordable Warmth Network contact	Cynthia Sullivan	Checking eligibility. Signing Local Authority Declarations. Auditing three per cent applications.
Affordable Warmth Network project oversight	Gabby Mallett	Managing referral process. Assessing eligibility and amending criteria as necessary.
Affordable Warmth Network project manager	Matt Neal	Collating information, confirming eligibility, completing basic declaration forms.

## REFERRALS

Any Vale of White Horse District Council resident who believes that they may be eligible for help under flexible eligibility should contact the National Energy Foundation through the Affordable Warmth Network's helpline on 0800 107 0044. The National Energy Foundation will be able to check your eligibility status and will ask for relevant supporting documentation. They will also be able to refer you to a relevant assessor or installer to take the process further.

**However, being eligible is not a guarantee that measures will be installed.** A final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from a grant for energy saving improvements under this strand of ECO will be made by the obligated energy suppliers or their agents/contractors.

Inclusion in a Declaration issued by the Council will not guarantee installation of measures.

## EVIDENCE, MONITORING AND REPORTING

The National Energy Foundation will confirm eligibility on behalf of the Council.

- a) Eligible residents will need to confirm both their income and their secondary eligibility criteria. Written proof of each will be required.
- b) The National Energy Foundation will report on a quarterly basis to Vale of White Horse District Council on which measures have been installed and their value. Should a customer contribution be required this will also be reported.
- c) Vale of White Horse District Council will audit three per cent of applications on a quarterly basis to help prevent and detect fraud.

Please note that these reporting and monitoring procedures may be updated from time to time as a process of continual improvement.

## DATA PROTECTION

Vale of White Horse District Council is committed to working within the bounds of the Data Protection Act 1998. This act requires the Council to respect principles of fair processing when handling personal information. The Act also guarantees individuals certain rights in relation to the processing of their data, including the right of access to personal records processed by the Council.

Personal and sensitive data will be held by the National Energy Foundation on a secure database.

All enquirers will be asked to confirm their consent to that data being processed in order to seek an installation of a qualifying ECO measure at their property. Anonymised data will also be used for monitoring purposes.

Personal and sensitive data which confirms eligibility may also be passed back to Vale of White Horse District Council to prove eligibility status.

Both the National Energy Foundation and Vale of White Horse District Council Data Protection Policy Statements are available on request.

## SIGNATURE



Mark Stone, Acting Chief Executive

Date	14 August 2017
Version number	1
Web address	<a href="http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/managing-your-home/improving-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-grants">http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/housing/managing-your-home/improving-energy-efficiency/energy-saving-grants</a>

