



Darlington Council ECO4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Local Authority name: Darlington Council

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This statement sets out Darlington Council's flexible eligibility criteria for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme 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 helping to meet the Government's fuel poverty and net zero commitments. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a government energy efficiency scheme. Its aim is to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of homes occupied by low income, fuel poor and vulnerable households.

The flexible approach for Local Authorities (LAs) to identifying fuel poor and vulnerable households who may benefit from heating and energy saving measures is referred to as "ECO4 Flex".

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.

The Council is publishing this Statement of Intent (SoI), on the 07/02/23 to confirm that each of the households declared will adhere to at least one of the four available routes outlined below:

Route 1: SAP bands D-G households with an income less than £31,000. This cap applies irrespective of the property size, composition, or region.

Route 2: SAP bands E-G households that meet a combination of two of the following proxies:

- **Proxy 1)** Homes in England in Lower-layer Super Output Area 1-3 (LSOA)1 , or homes in Welsh provision LSOA 1-3 on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019² , or the Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2020, published by the Scottish Government³
- **Proxy 2)** Household receiving a Council Tax rebate (rebates based on low income only, excludes single person rebates).
- **Proxy 3)** Household vulnerable to living in a cold home as identified in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance. Only one from the list can be used, excludes the proxy 'low income'.
- **Proxy 4)** A householder receiving free school meals due to low-income.
- **Proxy 5)** A householder supported by a LA run scheme, that has been named and described by the LA as supporting low income and vulnerable households for the purposes of NICE Guideline.
- **Proxy 6)** A household referred to the LA for support by their energy supplier or Citizen's Advice or Citizen's Advice Scotland, because they have been identified as struggling to pay their electricity and gas bills.

* Note proxies 1 and 5 cannot be used together.

Route 3: SAP bands D-G households that have been identified by their doctor or GP as lowincome and vulnerable, with an occupant whose health conditions may be impacted further by living in a cold home. These health conditions may be cardiovascular, respiratory, immunosuppressed, or limited mobility related.

This is because the Council has identified a positive correlation between households who suffer from long-term health conditions and living off a low-income, with living in poorly insulated homes.

Route 4: SAP band D-G households that are referred under Route 4: Bespoke Targeting. Suppliers and LAs can submit an application to BEIS where they have identified a low income and vulnerable household, who are not already eligible under the exiting routes.

This statement sets out Darlington Council's flexible eligibility criteria for the ECO: Help to Heat programme April 2018 until the scheme finishes. It aims to support households living in Darlington who are most likely to experience fuel poverty and those vulnerable to the effects of a cold home.

Darlington Council welcomes the introduction of Flexible Eligibility and intends to utilise it for the purposes of reducing fuel poverty within the bay. The Council has worked for many years to improve homes across Darlington with the aim of increasing energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.

It should be noted that the final decision on whether any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements or heating 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
- iii) whether the supplier has achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets.

Darlington Council expects that energy suppliers or agents of energy suppliers involved in flexible eligibility surveys and works identified will comply with the Data Protection Act in accordance with Ofgem requirements, will act in accordance with industry best practice in relation to consumer care and quality standards and will comply fully with the requirements set out in The Electricity and Gas (Energy Company Obligation) Order 2018.

Practices associated with cold calling must be undertaken appropriately and sensitively. Companies and individuals must not falsely represent their association with Darlington Council and must not use the Darlington Council logo on paperwork unless formally agreed. Homes displaying 'No Cold Call' signage must not be engaged with.

At initial engagement with prospective clients, representatives must confirm who they are, which company they are working for, and whether that company has been subcontracted by another company or will be selling on householder details.

A list of completed works must be submitted to Darlington Council monthly 4 confirming the client's name and property address, what works have been completed, impact of improvement on energy rating and any financial details including any costs met by client. The administration charge levied by Darlington Council in providing the declaration necessary for clients to access the ECO Flexible Eligibility Scheme is £50. This charge must be paid by the energy supplier or their agent and may NOT under any circumstances, be passed on to the client receiving assistance via the scheme. Billing will be monthly.

Failure to pay a monthly bill may lead to declarations associated with the Energy Company being refused.

Darlington Council reserves the right to waiver administration costs where it is working in partnership with an Energy Company or its representatives.

Declaration and evidence check confirmation

All potentially eligible households should apply through an energy agent or one of their approved ECO installers to ensure that they can either benefit from the scheme or be assessed for eligibility under any other relevant programme.

The officer below will be responsible for checking and verifying declarations and associated evidence submitted on behalf of the local authority:

Name: Lynsey Stead

Job Title: Project Officer – Energy Efficiency

Telephone: 01325 406414

Email: lynsey.stead@darlington.gov.uk

CEO or dedicated responsible person mandatory signature

Darlington Council will administer the scheme according to BEIS' ECO4 Order and will identify eligible households via Ofgem's application process. The Director of Community & Customer Services of the Council will oversee the process of identifying eligible households under ECO4 Flex.

The eligibility information will be stored securely in line with the Council's data protection policy, Information Commissioner's Office Data Sharing Code, and BEIS guidance.

Signature:

Name: Christine Booth

Job Title: Private Sector Housing Manager

Date of signature: 07/02/2023

For any general enquires relating to this Statement of Intent, please contact lynsey.stead@darlington.gov.uk