

Statement of Intent for ECO4 and Great British Insulation Scheme.

Walsall Council ECO4 and Great British Insulation Scheme Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Local Authority name: Walsall Council

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This statement sets out Walsall Council's flexible eligibility criteria for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) and Great British Insulation schemes which run until 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 Great British Insulation Scheme will support the ECO4 scheme in the delivery of predominantly single measures targeted at a wider range of 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" and "Great British Insulation Scheme Flex".

Please Note: ECO Flex 4 and Home Upgrade Grant Round 2

Walsall Council has secured an allocation of Home Upgrade Grant Round 2 (HUGS 2) to help fuel poor households in the borough with a range of retro-fit work (insulation, micro-energy generation, heating upgrades) where the household does not have gas as a principal form of heating (usually not gas central heating in their home). The Council is committed as part of its Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA Action Plan - [Walsall HECA report on fuel poverty | Walsall Council](#) July 2023) to maximising the amount of this time-limited funding that can be attracted and spent within the borough to tackle fuel poverty. As a result of the above the Council asks, until further notice, that

1. ECO Flex contractors and ECO funders bring any of these households to the attention of the Housing Energy Team via email to: energyefficiency@walsall.gov.uk using in their email title the reference **HUGS 2 property referral**.
2. The council will then liaise with the household to determine whether they would be eligible for HUGS 2.
3. Where the household is not eligible for HUGS 2 the council will advise both the household and the ECO contractor. In these situations, the ECO contractor can pursue ECO Flex 4 assistance for the household if they meet the relevant published criteria.

Please note the council will not ordinarily approve any ECO Flex 4 'request' / application where HUGS 2 would in the Council's opinion offer a better option for the household / borough. The decision to approve or not any ECO Flex 'request' / application rests solely with the council.

Statement of Intent

The Council is publishing this Statement of Intent (SoI), on the **9 August 2023** to confirm that each of the households declared will adhere to at least one of the four available routes outlined below. The Council will use all of the following routes:

Route 1: Owner-occupied and private rented sector households with 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 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 .
Proxy 2) A person living at the premises is entitled to a Council Tax reduction on the grounds of low-income.
Proxy 3) A person living at the premises is considered to be vulnerable to the cold under the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance NG6: Recommendation 2, for a reason other than their low-income ^{2*}
Proxy 4) A child living at the premises is eligible for free school meals, due to low-income ³
Proxy 5) A person living at the premises is supported by a scheme established by the Council that is named and described within their Statement of Intent and established to support people living on a low-income and considered vulnerable to the cold under NICE Guideline NG6. As at 9 August 2023 the council does not have a named scheme
Proxy 6) A household referred to the LA for support by their energy supplier or Citizens Advice because they have been identified as struggling to pay their electricity and/or gas bills.
Proxy 7) [Please note, proxy 7 is for supplier owned debt data and is listed here for information only]. Households identified through energy supplier debt data. This route enables obligated suppliers to use their own debt data to identify either non pre-payment meter households (non-PPM), or pre-payment meter households (PPM)*.

¹ Published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>. The deciles are published in "File 7: all ranks, deciles and scores for the indices of deprivation, and population denominators".

² <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6/chapter/1-Recommendations#recommendation-2-ensure-there-is-a-singlepointofcontact-health-and-housing-referral-service-for>

³ Under section 512ZB(4) of the Education Act 1996 or section 53 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

- a. **Non-PPM customers:** These are customers who have been in debt for more than 13 weeks ending with the day on which the declaration is made, and are in a debt repayment plan with their energy supplier or repaying their fuel debt through 3rd party deductions.
- b. **PPM customers:** Suppliers may also identify PPM households who:
 - have either self-disconnected or received supplier Discretionary/Friendly credit within the last 13 weeks ending with the day on which the declaration is made; or
 - are in a debt repayment plan with their energy supplier; or
 - repaying their fuel debt through 3rd party deductions.*

* Note proxies 1 and 3 cannot be used together.

* Proxy 7 cannot be used in combination with proxy 5 or proxy 6.

Route 3: Owner-occupied and private rented sector households that have been identified by either a person registered in the General Practitioner Register, an NHS Foundation Trust, or an NHS Trust as vulnerable, with an occupant whose health conditions may be adversely affected by living in a cold home. These health conditions must be cardiovascular, respiratory, immunosuppressed, or limited mobility related.

Route 4 [applicable to ECO4 Flex only]: Owner-occupied and private rented sector households that are referred under Route 4: Bespoke Targeting. Suppliers and LAs can submit an application to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero where they have identified new methods to identify low-income and vulnerable households. Applications need to demonstrate a number of factors, including that the proposed methodology is more effective at identify households in fuel poverty than the criterion offered under Routes 1 and 2.

Scheme eligibility

All potentially eligible households should apply through Walsall Council or one of their approved ECO / Great British Insulation Scheme installers, if a list of approved installers is available, to see if they can either benefit from the scheme or be assessed for eligibility under any other relevant programme.

ECO 4 Fee for administration

Walsall Council in line with national guidance and rules has set a fee for the administration, ongoing review and co-ordination of ECO 4 Schemes. The fee levels have been agreed by the

council and are listed below for 2023/24. The council reserves the right to review these fee levels in Qtr 4 2023/24 and may increase them for 2024/25.

Contractors are expected at application stage to submit a itemised quotation for the works that they propose at each dwelling. This will be reviewed by the council and an invoice raised to the contractor for the value of whichever is the higher*:

- 2% of the quoted cost of the works where they cost in excess of £5,000 per dwelling or
- £100 per dwelling where the works cost less than £5,000.

Payment: This is payable by the ECO 4 Contractor direct to Walsall Council by BACS payment and an invoice will be raised by the council. Failure to make payment of this fee will invalidate any approval of the specific ECO 4 Application and a contractor will therefore be undertaking works at their sole financial risk in these cases. Please note the council has the right not to consider applications from contractors where they have failed to make prompt payment of previous invoices. where an application is submitted without this payment having been made.

Contractors cannot charge households for this fee – the contractor must meet the fee in full themselves.

*Exceptions to the above will only be given by the Home Energy Team Manager where it is considered by them to be appropriate for the benefit of the specific scheme that is being proposed.

Fee income generated from this fee are to be used at the discretion of the council to off-set costs associated with support of direct staffing and related revenue related to the (HECA) Action Plan.

Signing:

An LA officer (not a 3rd party working on behalf of an LA) will be responsible for checking, and verifying evidence, and issuing declarations. For any general enquiries relating to this SoI please contact:

Name: Mark England

Job Title: Project Officer – Housing Energy

Telephone: 07826 859 014 **Email:** markengland@walsall.gov.uk

CEO or dedicated responsible person mandatory signature.

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

The Council will administer Great British Insulation Scheme Flex according to the Electricity and Gas (Energy Company Obligation) Order 2023 (ECO4A Order).

The CEO/ dedicated responsible person of the Council will oversee the process of identifying eligible households under ECO Flex and Great British Insulation Scheme 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 Walsall Council for the purposes of ECO4 Flex or Great British Insulation Scheme 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: Sally Rowe

Job Title: Executive Director Childrens Services

Date of signature: 09 August 2023