

Luton Borough Council Flexible Eligibility

Statement of Intent (Sol)

This statement sets out Luton Council's latest flexible eligibility criteria for the ECO 3 Flexible eligibility programme. It aims to identify households living in Luton who are most likely to experience fuel poverty and those on low income and vulnerable to the effects of a cold home.

1. What is flexible eligibility?

Local Authorities working with Energy suppliers obligated under Energy Company Obligation (ECO 3) have the opportunity to extend eligibility criteria for energy efficiency measures to households beyond the existing benefits criteria and not covered by existing schemes. This is referred to as Local Authority Flexibility Eligibility, and allows councils to set their own qualification criteria for households to meet.

This funding is only available for private owner occupiers and private rented tenants. Qualification for flexible eligibility within the Luton borough will be determined by the criteria listed below and will require a signed declaration by the property owner.

The funding is provided directly from the energy supplier to the household who is eligible under the criteria. Luton Council do not fund any measures but have developed the eligibility criteria to assist the greatest number of fuel poor homes within the borough.

2. Determining eligibility for the scheme

Luton Council has set its own key parameters to target and capture as many households within the borough that may benefit from the installation of measures under Flexible Eligibility. Installers who are currently delivering the work under the LA Flex scheme will use the eligibility criteria to identify households. Households in receipt of means tested benefit are eligible for ECO 3 funding instead of LA Flex support. Details of eligibility for different schemes are available on the Luton Council website.

- 1) Living in fuel poverty
- 2) Low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home

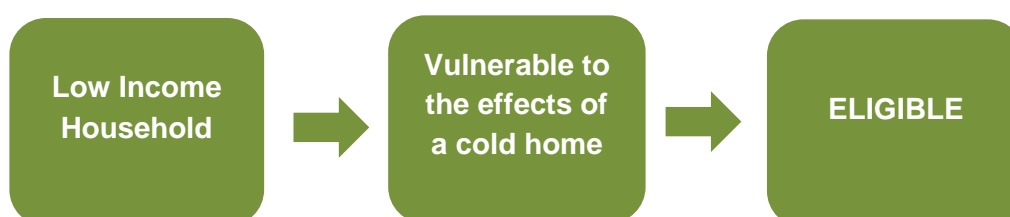
2.1 Eligibility Criteria

After demonstrating that households are not in receipt of means tested benefits, and are living in a private sector home, there are two routes to qualify for the LA Flex scheme in Luton borough.

Low income and high cost (LIHC) model



Low income and vulnerable to cold (LIVC) model



2.1.1 Low Income Eligibility

To be considered as a low income household, the householder must have a gross annual income of less than that shown in Table 1, based upon their current household size.

Table 1

Household Composition	Gross Annual Household Income	Monthly household income equivalent
1 Adult (18 years and over) no children	£16,500	£1,375
1 Adult and 1 Child	£21,750	£1,813
1 Adult and 2 Children	£27,000	£2,250
1 Adult and 3 Children	£32,250	£2,688
1 Adult and 4 or more Children	£37,500	£3,125
2 Adults (18 years and over) no children	£24,750	£2,063
2 Adults and 1 Child	£30,000	£2,500
2 Adults and 2 Children	£35,250	£2,938
2 Adults and 3 Children	£40,500	£3,375
2 Adults and 4 or more Children	£45,750	£3,813

2.1.2 High Cost eligibility

To qualify in the High Cost category, the property must have an 'energy performance certificate' (EPC) rating of E, F or G (where deemed as an accurate representation – that is to say, property has not drastically changed since surveyed).

2.1.3 Vulnerable Conditions eligibility

Luton Council will target households containing people with underlying health conditions and are reflected in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2015 guidance on excess winter deaths and illness caused by cold homes.

The NICE guideline 'Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes' states that a wide range of people are at greater risk to the cold. This is either because of a medical condition, such as heart disease; a disability that, for instance, stops people moving around to keep warm, or makes them more likely to develop chest infections, or personal circumstances, such as being unable to afford to keep warm enough.

Evidence to confirm any health condition is required in the form of a declaration from a health practitioner, clinic letter or specific medication.

Eligibility within this category will be dependent on proof of one of the following:

- pregnant (MAT B1 letter)
- has children aged under five (birth certificate)
- aged over 65 (birth certificate, driving licence, passport, medical letter)
- hospital admission due to a fall (Letter from a medical professional)

OR

- has a underlying health condition that can be exacerbated by the cold, such as
 - 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)

3. Declaration

Inclusion in a Declaration made by the local authority to a supplier will not guarantee installation of measures, as the final decision will depend on

- i) Survey carried out by supplier's agents / contractors and installation costs calculated
- ii) The energy savings that can be achieved for a property
- iii) Whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their ECO targets

The funding provided is dependent on the energy savings achieved and may not cover the full cost of the proposed measures, in which case households may have to make a contribution. Installers must be clear to the householder about any contribution the householder may need to make before commencing any works.

4. Final decision

The decision on whether a household receives a measure under flexible eligibility or other ECO funding streams will be made by the energy suppliers or their agents / contractors. Qualification in the Statement of Intent (Sol), or the Declaration by Luton Council will not guarantee installation of any measure, as the final decision will lie entirely with the energy supplier.

5. 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.

Luton Council intends to support households across the Luton borough where solid wall insulation for hard to treat homes may be technically feasible and would be permitted subject to Planning Permission being granted and would be eligible for funding support. The Flexible Eligibility powers also allow for homes, in these types of projects, that are not in fuel poverty or vulnerable to be funded. Non- fuel poor households eligible for solid wall insulation in-fill must be:

- a) In the same terrace or directly adjoin an eligible property
- b) In an immediately adjacent building to an eligible property, such as where an alleyway separates a row of terraces
- c) Or in the same building as an eligible property such as in a block of flats

At least 50% of all the properties must be eligible.

6. Governance

The Sol is delivered by Luton Council’s Housing Department, and will be overseen by the Luton Energy Committee (LEC) who manages Luton’s Energy Strategy. The Sol and eligibility criteria will be reviewed periodically.

This Sol is signed on behalf of Luton Council by Colin Moore, Service Director for Housing.

Declarations forms will be signed on behalf of Luton Council by Shabir Hussain, Domestic Energy Efficiency Manager, Housing Department, Population and Wellbeing.

7. Referrals and pathways to assistance

Luton Council will utilise existing pathways to provide direct assistance to identified households through the scheme.

Working with agencies and local projects, we’ll deliver a host of key provisions in to local, low income and vulnerable households through a referral-based network delivered through frontline practitioners, and a dedicated referral hub.


Households accessing the LA Flex scheme will be eligible for referral and assistance.

8. Evidence, monitoring and reporting

All homes accessing the local LA Flex scheme will be declared using the appropriate form (declaration form). The following will all be recorded and reported:

- household's composition
- condition
- referrals for assistance
- any associated outcomes including energy-related measures installed, demonstrated through an EPC assessment before and after works are completed.

We'll conduct satisfaction surveys on a sample of households accessing LA Flex assistance. These satisfaction surveys will be conducted post-installation. High levels of non-compliance or poor service delivery will trigger a review of processes and the council may refuse to provide a declaration to the contractor.



Signature:

Signed by: Colin Moone

Date: 28/05/21

Position: Service Director for Housing, Luton Council