

South Gloucestershire Council ECO4 Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent

Publication Date: 8th November 2022

Version number: 6.1

Publication on website: 8th November 2022

Warm & Well is managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council.

This statement sets out South Gloucestershire Council's flexible eligibility criteria for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme from April 2022 – March 2026. This statement is based on draft ECO4 Ofgem guidance and will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect official guidance as and when it changes.

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 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".

It should be noted that the final decision on whether any individual household will benefit from energy saving improvements rests with obligated energy suppliers or their contractors. Inclusion in a Declaration of Eligibility issued by the local authority 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, and iii) whether the supplier has achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their Energy Company Obligation targets.

Warm & Well on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council will identify households that may benefit from flexible eligibility. The householder must be an Owner Occupier or Private Sector tenant.

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 **8th November 2022** to confirm that each of the households declared will adhere to at least one of the available routes outlined below.

Warm & Well will keep the criteria below under review, in relation to the number of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the practices of other authorities.

1) Eligibility Criteria

Route 1: SAP bands D-G households with a combined gross income less than £31,000 (from all sources of income, includes both non-means tested and means-tested benefits). 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 on the English Indices of Deprivation 2019
Proxy 2) Householders receiving a Council Tax reduction (based on low income only, excludes single person reduction).
Proxy 3) Householders 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 child living at the premises who is eligible for 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 to the cold under NICE Guideline NG6.
Proxy 6) A household referred to the LA for support by their energy supplier or Citizen's Advice, because they have been identified as struggling to pay their electricity and gas bills.

*Note: Proxies 1 and 3 cannot be used together.

Route 3: SAP bands D-G households that have been identified by their doctor or GP, NHS Foundation Trust or by NHS trust as vulnerable, with an occupant whose health conditions may be impacted further by living in a cold home. These health conditions may fall under one of the four umbrella conditions: cardiovascular, respiratory, immunosuppressed, or limited mobility related.

¹ [The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

2) Declaration and evidence check confirmation

All potentially eligible households should apply through South Gloucestershire Council's energy advice service Warm & Well, in partnership with Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) 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. Evidence will be required from all applicants.

Warm & Well will capture and store all relevant information during the initial enquiry to determine the relevant course of action for the household. Warm & Well will inform residents that they will be required to provide evidence (see Appendix I) and other information such as relevant health conditions to deter fraudulent claims.

Warm & Well will provide key information. The data above will include details of households assessed, how many were deemed eligible and ineligible, and how many received heating and insulation improvements.

All households for whom Declarations were made will be contacted three to six months post installation.

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

Name: Chris Gillett

Job Title: Team Leader, Private Sector Housing Team

Email: Chris.Gillett@southglos.gov.uk

3) CEO or dedicated responsible person mandatory signature

South Gloucestershire Council will administer the scheme according to BEIS' ECO4 Order and will identify eligible households via Ofgem's application process. The Private Sector Housing Team Leader 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: Dave Perry

Job Title: Chief Executive, South Gloucestershire Council

Date of signature: 7th November 2022

For general enquiries relating to this SOI, please contact
sara.ballpsh@southglos.gov.uk

Appendix I

ECO Flex Evidence

Route 1) *All evidence within the last 3 months*

- Tax returns
- Payslips
- Bank statement proving income payments
- P45 or P60 documentation with annual income visible

Route 2)

- Screenshot from LA confirming household is within LSOA area, supported by ONS data
- Copy of council tax reduction e.g. a photo, an email, a PDF with name and address; evidence of direct debit reduction payments or letter confirming payment from LA
- Signed referral letter from a Doctor/GP identifying that someone has 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, following NICE guidance.
- Signed letter from local coordinator/ local authority that proves the household was eligible for a LA-run scheme.
- Eligibility Checking Service (ECS), documentation showing eligibility for free school meals due to low-income provided by the Department for Education or from the school.
- Signed referral letter accompanied by proof of gas and electricity debt from the energy supplier or Citizen's Advice, showing that the household has been referred to the LA for utility bill support.

Route 3)

- Official letter signed by either an NHS Trust, NHS Trust Board or NHS Primary Care provider. This letter will need to state that the official signing the letter considers someone in the household to be suffering from a severe and/or long-term health condition that could be impacted by living in a cold home.