

Local Authority Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility – Statement of Intent (first time central heating: Gibson Court, Boughton Nottinghamshire NG22 9JE)

Newark & Sherwood District Council

1. Name of the local authority: Newark & Sherwood District Council
2. Date of publication: 23rd November 2021
3. Published at <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/energyadvice/>

1) Introduction

This 7th Statement of Intent (SOI), together with SOIs published on 20th July 2021, 5th May 2020, 18th December 2019, 16th October 2018, 13th February 2018 and 20th July 2017, sets out how households in the District of Newark & Sherwood will be declared to be eligible for assistance under Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility funding.

The focus of this SOI is to support the installation of mains gas and first time central heating for 15 low income households living in Gibson Court Boughton, Nottinghamshire.

This SOI directly targets Gibson Court (a former commercial building converted into 15 electrically-heated residential flats some years ago) as residents are struggling to achieve affordable warmth. Boughton is an ex-coalfield community and one of the Council's most deprived wards.

These one bedroom dwellings are occupied by low income tenants (many living on means-tested benefits) who do not currently enjoy the benefits of gas central heating as each flat is heated via old fashioned electric storage heaters/water heating on Economy 7. Beneficiaries have been identified via the Council's Senior Environmental Health Officer and are all deemed to be living on a low income with high heating costs; making them vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

In all cases, the final decision on whether any individual household can benefit from energy saving improvements will be made by the obligated supplier (Energy Company) or their agent/contractors. The signing off of a Declaration by Newark & Sherwood District Council for a supplier will not guarantee installation of measures or fully funded works, as the final decision will depend on the following:

- i) Confirmation the gas connections can be undertaken free of charge under Ofgem's Fuel Poor Network Extension Scheme (FPNES);
- ii) A survey carried out by the ECO agent/contractor and installation costs calculated;
- iii) The energy savings that can be achieved for a property;
- iv) Whether suppliers have achieved their targets or require further measures to meet their obligated ECO targets.

2) How Newark & Sherwood District Council has identified eligible households

The Energy & Home Support Team worked in collaboration with the Council's Senior Environmental Health Officer to identify 15 vulnerable households who could benefit significantly from mains gas connections and first time gas central heating under the Warm Homes Fund scheme.

Gibson Court has been specifically targeted for support as the 15 privately rented flats (numbers 1 to 16, excluding number 13) are currently electrically heated via a mix of old, inflexible storage heaters and direct-acting electric heaters (mains gas is not an option open to tenants/the landlord currently). This type of heating is expensive to run and, as a result, tenants say they use it very little; significantly contributing to the cold, damp and mold issues.

The Council plans to work in partnership with Affordable Warm Solutions (who undertake Fuel Poor connections on behalf of Cadent) and the landlord so that arrangements can be made for mains gas connections and full gas central heating systems to be fitted by a suitably qualified Gas Safe Registered installer.

Homes not connected to the gas grid which use old style electric storage heaters and/or direct-acting electric heaters are notoriously expensive to run. Tenants at Gibson Court have frequently complained about this, with many admitting they try not to use their heating for fear of high electricity bills they cannot afford.

Installing mains gas/first time gas central heating is a costly home energy improvement measure but, currently, the Council can support landlords (as well as private individuals) by triggering grant funding to enable such measures. For this reason, the Council is focusing resources in this area and is working in co-operation with the landlord who will also be expected to make a £7,500 contribution towards the heating installation costs.

The Council retains the right to use its discretion in cases where the stated eligibility criteria are not fully met but where withholding support would leave a household particularly vulnerable.

These criteria will be kept under review in relation to level of referrals made, delivery of installed measures and the practices of other authorities.

3) Governance

The Declaration of households meeting the Council's flexible eligibility criteria under this SOI will be signed off on behalf of Newark & Sherwood District Council by Helen Richmond, Energy and Home Support Officer.

Before any declaration can be signed off, the contractor must self-certify that they are accredited to the standards required by Ofgem to undertake ECO-funded energy efficiency improvement works.

4) Marketing & Referrals

Newark & Sherwood District Council will work with the landlord, Affordable Warmth Solutions and the installer to communicate the offer to the 15 eligible households: 1 to 16 Gibson Court (excluding 13).

As all 15 tenants are privately renting, written permission will be required from the landlord prior to the commencement of any survey or works, and the landlord will be required to provide current EPCs and to make an up-front contribution of £500 per property towards the cost of the central heating installation works.

5) Evidence, monitoring and reporting

Newark & Sherwood District Council will use its discretion to decide whether any auditing is required to confirm eligibility under this Statement of Intent. If auditing is undertaken, eligibility of claimants will be assessed by a random sample of households on a post-installation basis.

6) Signature

Name: Sanjiv Kohli

Position: Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

Signed:



Date: 23rd November 2021