



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Home Energy Conservation Act 2021 Reports

Guidance to Local Authorities in England on
the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)
Reports for 2021

January 2021



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Introduction

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all local authorities (LAs) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation within that LA's area. This covers measures to improve properties in the owner-occupier, private rented sector, and social rented sector. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) uses data submitted through these returns to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.

This guidance document is issued by BEIS in accordance with the Secretary of State's powers under section 4 of the Act. It is to alert LAs of updates to the HECA reporting framework in advance of 31 May 2021 when the next reports are due, and to provide guidance on completing returns. The refreshed online reporting system used in 2019 successfully boosted the number of responses from 151 (2017) to 219 (2019). After a review of the 2019 process, it has been decided that the reports will continue to be submitted online and will continue to be centred around a series of questions and direct information points. The reports will now be submitted through Microsoft Forms. Details on how to request access to Microsoft Forms is in the 'Submission of HECA 2021 Report' section of this guidance.

Following the principles of open data, the department may publish anonymous information in an open data format to allow wider access and interpretation of the data by relevant key stakeholders, while ensuring that such publication complies with the terms of UK General Data Protection Regulations¹. BEIS will consider the value of publishing a summary report of the responses submitted by Local Authorities that highlights key themes and any evidence of common best practices displayed by respondents.

HECA 2021 Reporting Requirements

The reporting template is divided into sections of structured questions to capture information on a range of key themes:

Headline & Overview

The main strategies LAs have to promote carbon reduction and energy efficiency, the stakeholders they work with and the impact these strategies have.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>

Communication

How LAs engage stakeholders (including consumers and businesses) to promote awareness of energy efficiency.

Green Local Supply Chain

How LAs assess the capacity of local supply chains that support home retrofit and energy saving measures and how LAs are planning to grow this capacity.

Social Housing

Measures LAs have taken to improve the energy efficiency of Social Housing.

Private Rental Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

How LAs enforce and promote awareness of the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards² that came into force in April 2018.

Financial Support for Energy Efficiency

Financial programmes used by LAs to promote energy efficiency.

Fuel Poverty

How LAs identify those in fuel poverty and any initiatives used to address this.

Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery

How LAs have interacted with the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

How LAs are using ECO to help those in fuel poor households.

Smart Metering

How LAs promote awareness and uptake of smart metering

All questions are optional but, responses to all are highly encouraged. At the end of the structured questions sections, a final free response section invites authorities to provide information on any additional activities they undertake which they feel may be of interest to Government's energy efficiency and fuel poverty teams.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2015/9780111128350/contents>

Submission of HECA 2021 Reports

Having previously piloted the submission of reports via a digital platform, LAs will again be asked to populate their HECA Report online with materials submitted via the Microsoft Forms platform in 2021. No other reporting material or submissions will be required.

LAs will be sent a link to the Microsoft Forms survey when requested. To request the survey, the person responsible for completing the HECA report within the LA should email HECARreport@beis.gov.uk stating their Local Authorities name and that they wish to receive a HECA 2021 report link. Microsoft Forms does not allow respondents to save their responses and return at a later date. As such, we advise that respondents use the table of questions below to formulate their responses before opening the survey.

LAs continue to be required to publish their responses, and they can do this in whichever form they wish, so long as the published report contains relevant information submitted via the digital platform. It is not necessary for LAs to publish all the information submitted via the digital platform.

BEIS will consider if this approach continues to prove effective and supports the engagement and compliance of a greater number of authorities than in previous years. BEIS will also continue to evaluate how this approach can be further improved for the 2023 reporting year.

HECA Report 2021 Questions

Note: All questions have a 4000-character limit (Approx. 500 words)

Introductory Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of Local Authority• Type of Local Authority• Name, job title and email address of official submitting report
Headline and Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic or non-domestic properties?• If yes, please provide a link• If no, are you planning to develop one• What scheme(s) is your Local Authority planning to implement in support of energy saving/carbon reduction in residential accommodation properties in the next two years?

- What has been, or will be, the cost(s) of running and administering the scheme(s), such as the value of grants and other support made available, plus any other costs incurred (such as administration) as desired.
- What businesses, charities, third sector organisations or other stakeholders do you work with to deliver the scheme(s)?
- What has been, or will be, the outcome of the scheme(s)? These outcomes could include energy savings, carbon savings, economic impacts such as job creation and/or increased business competitiveness or societal impacts such as alleviation of fuel poverty and/or improved health outcomes etc.

Communications

- Does your Local Authority provide any advisory services to customers on how to save energy?
- If yes, please briefly outline how this is undertaken.
- How do you communicate or encourage energy saving amongst domestic consumers and/or local businesses?

Local Green Supply Chain

- Have you made any assessment, or undertaken any analysis of the existing capacity in your local energy efficiency retrofit supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050? If Yes, please summarise the outcomes.
- What actions are you taking, if any, to upskill and/or grow the local energy efficiency installer supply chain? This could include the facilitation of training, and local installer networking opportunities.
- What actions are you taking, if any, to promote energy efficiency and the installer supply chain to consumers, and encourage households to consider energy retrofit?
- If no action is taking place in either of these two areas, please let us know of any barriers you have encountered.
- How effectively is your LA able to engage (Trustmark/PAS2035/PAS2030 certified) installers?
- Do you have any plans to develop policies or initiatives in this space over the next five years as part of supporting your local decarbonisation efforts?

Social Housing

- What action, if any, has your LA taken to install energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures in social housing? Have these been installed to a satisfactory quality? What actions (if any) have your social housing partners taken?
- Do you have easy access to the information/knowledge within your organisation that you would expect to need for social housing retrofit projects? (e.g. stock condition; property data; approach to procurement; alignment with existing internal maintenance/upgrade plans; tenant engagement and management plans; costings)
- If no, would it be easy/difficult to obtain this information?
- Have you experienced any challenges to retrofit, including during any previous government schemes you have taken part in (e.g. supply chain, funding, tenant cooperation, mixed tenure, split incentive, policy clarity, etc)? Please provide some detail. Have social housing partners reported any challenges to retrofit?
- How does your LA currently/how will your LA in future plan to go about identifying suitable housing stock and measures for retrofit? How do social housing partners identify suitable stock? By the same measures or via a different method?
- What considerations would make you more or less likely to apply for government funding? If known, what is the opinion of your social housing partners?
- To what extent are social housing tenants willing or unwilling to undergo retrofit, and what are the barriers and facilitators to their participation? If known, is this the same opinion across all social housing tenants or is it different with HA and ALMO tenants?
- Does the approach to retrofit change for leaseholders in mixed tenure blocks? What encourages them to co-operate?

Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

- Is your authority aware of the PRS Minimum Efficiency Standards regulations requiring private rentals in England and Wales to meet a minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E as of April 2020, unless a valid exemption applies?
- Which team within your authority is responsible for, leading on enforcement of the PRS minimum standard? Please provide the contact details of the person leading this team.
- What method or methods does your authority use to communicate with landlords and tenants about the standards and other related issues?
- What barriers, if any, does your local authority face enforcing these regulations (e.g. identifying non-compliant properties/landlords, budgeting/resourcing, any legal issues)?
- Do you directly target landlords of EPC F and G rated properties to enforce these regulations? If yes, how? If no, please explain.

Financial Support for Energy Efficiency

Where possible, please set out your answers to the following questions by tenure (owner occupied, privately rented, or social housing).

- What financial programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency or energy saving? If applicable please outline the budget (and % of the budget that is used), where such funding is sourced and where it is targeted.
- What future investment for energy efficiency or low carbon heat measures do you have planned, and when are these investments planned for?

Fuel Poverty

- Does your Local Authority have a Fuel Poverty Strategy?
- What steps have you taken to identify residents/properties in fuel poverty? What blockers, if any, have there been in identifying households in fuel poverty?
- How does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?
- Please highlight any fuel poverty issues specific to your area.
- What measures or initiatives have you taken to promote fuel cost reduction for those in fuel poverty? Include information on partnerships with local businesses or energy providers you have.

Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery

Of the £2bn Green Homes Grant scheme introduced in summer 2020, £500m was assigned for Local Authority Delivery (LAD). LAD enables Local Authorities to bid for grant funding to support low income households in their area with energy efficiency and low carbon heating upgrades. £200m was made available through Local Authority grant competitions in 2020, known as phases 1A and 1B and £300m was allocated under Phase 2 between the five regional Local Energy Hubs.

- Has your Local Authority Participated in GHG: LAD?
 - If yes, please indicate which phase you participated in and briefly outline the project.
 - If no, please indicate what barriers prevented you from participation in the scheme.
- Would your Local Authority be in a position to manage the delivery of upgrades through a scheme such as LAD in 2022?
 - If yes, please indicate the anticipated number of homes that could be upgraded per year.
 - If no, please indicate what barriers would prevent you from delivering upgrades in your area.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on energy suppliers aimed at helping households cut their energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by installing energy saving measures. Following the Spring 2018 consultation, the Government set out in its response that ECO3 will fully focus on Affordable Warmth – low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households.

The ECO “Local Authority flexible eligibility” (LA Flex) programme allows LAs to make declarations determining that certain households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes and vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, are referred to ECO obligated suppliers for support under the Affordable Warmth element of ECO.

LAs involved in the LA Flex programme are required to issue a Statement of Intent that they are going to identify households as eligible, and the criteria they are going to use; and a declaration that the LA has been consulted on the installation of measures in a home.

- Has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility? (Y/N)

Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail:

- How many declarations were issued for low income vulnerable households?
- How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households?
- How many declarations were issued for in-fill?
- What is the highest income cap published in your Sol?
- If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason have you given?
- Do you charge for declarations to be signed? If so, please state how much?

Smart Metering

- Please provide a brief statement outlining your current or planned approach to promote smart meter take up and supporting residents to achieve benefits.
- Please provide further information on activities relating to smart metering, including but not limited to:
 - a. Integrating approaches to delivering energy efficiency improvements in residential accommodation
 - b. Arranging for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises
 - c. Using social landlords to promote smart meter uptake
 - d. Including smart meters in landlord licencing schemes
 - e. Supporting residents who have had appliances condemned for safety reasons
 - f. Other supporting activities

Future Schemes and Wider Incentives

- Please outline any further schemes or wider initiatives not covered above that your local authority has carried out or is planning to undertake to improve energy efficiency in residential accommodation.

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