

Additional webchat questions

Hello. Am I right in thinking that the funding for Cheaper Energy Together will be awarded to new, innovative schemes? - e.g. if we were to be joining another council that has already set up a collective switching scheme, we would not qualify for funding? Or could we make a bid to e.g. do research and promotions in our area, even if joining in with an up-and-running switch? Thanks

Helen Sankey

Given the linkage between fuel poverty and the aims of Cheaper Energy Together can we focus our efforts over the three month window on developing a pilot model?

Ross Weddle

Re: Collective switching. Can the funding be used to kick start a project? Does the percentage of funding depend on the scope of the project and the potential impact on the area?

Sian Walkey

Which have run a collective switchin scheme. Is there any possibility of linking projects with such an established scheme, in order to benefit from increased collective purchasing power?

Michael Beaven

Answer: If you are considering linking or joining a scheme with an existing one, your bid should demonstrate how the proposals will build on and complement existing actions. Funding cannot be used to replace funding for an existing project. It can, however, be used to extend the geographical coverage, scope or scale of an existing project.

Hi, re: Collective Purchasing and Switching, we anticipate using DECC support to test the viability of our proposed business model, ensure contractual/procurement processes are robust and ultimately ensure we have a marketable product at 31st March. In the event we find through this process that the business model doesn't stack up, is 'don't proceed' an acceptable (albeit unwelcome) result for you?

Simon Winch

For Collective Switching / Purchasing Schemes, will you consider bids from LA's towards the costs of specialist external advice to develop a business case?

Guest

In Cheaper Energy Together, would items such as promotional vehicles be eligible for funding, eg a bus that toured local communities?

Charlotte Russell

Answer: We do not want to be too prescriptive about the sorts of activities which can be funded through the fund. Your bid, however, should demonstrate how the proposals will deliver value for money against the stated objectives and criteria , which has a large weighting in favour of engagement with vulnerable consumers. Funding could be used for contractual and procurement processes, specialist external advice and a vehicle for marketing

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and advertising of the scheme, but you will need to set out the full range of the costs and benefits that will result from the investment.

I am aware that Community Buildings are looking at extending Collective Buying into Cheaper Energy Together. As Community Buildings are community hubs would they be eligible for funding to demonstrate the benefits?

Ross Weddle

I live in a rural part of northern England I would like to submit a community based bid from local parish council, for collective energy switching do we need sign off from the Council? I don't want to compete with them but I feel the community based model is most suitable to this rural area.

Guest

Local Authorities and eligible third party sector organisations are invited to bid for funds to develop collective purchasing/switching funds. Third party sector organisations can bid separately from local authorities.

Eligible third sector organisations must be legally constituted organisations and includes Charities, Parish Councils, Community Interest Companies, Community Co-operatives and Community Benefit Societies, Voluntary Associations, Development Trusts, Faith Groups, Registered Social Landlords. Funding will not be available for commercial activity.

13/11/2012 10:22	charlotte russell	From the perspective of smaller, third sector organisations, the cash flow implications are quite a challenge. I wondered whether you have considered mechanisms to address this?
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13/11/2012 10:33	Bernie	The comment that payments will be made in arrears is a disincentive to voluntary and charitable sector groups who might not hold large capital sums at year end and who wish to bid into the collective switching tranche. Plus can you clarify the payment in arrears period is it 30 days or more than this?
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Answer: For the Cheaper Energy Together fund, DECC would be willing to discuss the timing of payments and ways to prevent cash flow problems to small organisations. This would be on the basis of demonstrating a clear operational requirement and would need to be discussed on a case-by case basis with the bidder.

13/11/2012 10:28	Paul Black	In our Cheaper Energy Together bid we are focusing on bidding for funds for discrete activities within a larger
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		project. The activities and their planned outcomes will be delivered by the deadline but that will also have a legacy element leading to a sustainable business model. Are we able to include capital costs which will both enable the immediate pre-April activity but also can be used subsequently by the larger project?
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13/11/2012 10:12	charlotte russell	Cornwall Together is aiming for an ambitious engagement programme with members right across Cornwall, building on the success of our initial phase. To get the maximum benefit and social impact we would like to be able to work with people to train them as advisors/advocates. Is there any scope to fund a training budget that can then be used over a longer period, if the appropriate levels of financial accountability were assured?
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13/11/2012 10:36	charlotte russell	Like Hugh Clear Hill, we are aiming for a hard to reach and geographically dispersed population. The value for money element of the Cheaper Energy Together fund would be enhanced if it offered people skills and job prospects which are not necessarily an option in a 10 to 12 week delivery programme, although it can still offer people paid work on a short term basis.
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Answer: For the Cheaper Energy Together fund, DECC is unable to provide funding for activities that take place after the 31 March 2013 therefore all activity must be completed by that date.

13/11/2012 10:20	Louise Woollen	Just to clarify on the point raised about the exclusion of commercial activity from the cheaper energy together fund. Does this mean that a bid would not be allowed if a private sector partner is involved in delivery of the project, even if no funding applies
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		to this activity?
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Answer: DECC funding cannot be used to support commercial activity however we will consider bids that have private sector partners. Bidders must comply with State Aid rules.

13/11/2012 10:36	Guest	What KPI's / success criteria would you want to see included in cheaper energy together bids? will these then form the targets targets for an offer of funding?
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Answer: We have not yet specified the full set of data we would like to collect from the successful schemes though this is likely to include numbers of consumers switching, demographic information and savings they are expected to make. The application form has requested information on the customers the scheme is expected to engage with but has not set targets for this.

13/11/2012 10:47	Julie Evans	London Borough of Bexley - Our priority in Bexley will be to support as many people in fuel poverty as possible to switch to cheaper energy tariffs. For some this may be collective switching, but for others a tailored, individual service to switch to a better tariff may be more appropriate. Can this all be covered under the "Cheaper Energy Together" bid or would we need to include the individual support and switching in our Fuel Poverty bid?
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Answer: In the Cheaper Energy Together fund we will consider bids that propose individual switching advice so long as this was in conjunction with an offer to take part in a collective switching or purchasing scheme, which is the main purpose of the fund.

13/11/2012 11:02	Julie Evans	We are considering making an individual bid for collective switching along with a collective bid with other
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		London councils. Is it permitted to make both bids or would it damage our chances of success?
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Answer: You can be involved in both a collective and individual application. The key thing to think about in preparing your bid will be to demonstrate how the bids are distinct with no overlaps – obviously we'll need assurance that we're not making multiple grants for the same projects.

10:10	Bernie	Emily/Ngaio, you indicate all elements have to be delivered by the 31st.. Is this impossible, as a person in-bound on the last day of March date at 16.55 who required support for a fixed measure could take 2 months plus to apply then to spend.
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Answer: Hi Bernie. I wanted to answer this question from a Fuel Poverty Fund perspective. We will need measures to be installed by the 31st of March, as we would not be able to provide funding for any measures installed after this date. We recognise that there is a lag time between identifying households in need of support and the installation of measures; this is something that you will need to factor in when designing a timetable for your proposal. Thanks. Emily

10:20	Dionne Jones	Is there a limit on the amount of revenue grant available for the Fuel Poverty Fund?
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Answer: Hi Dionne, we just want to clarify the answer we gave to your question, which focused on size of bids rather than the revenue portion of bids. There is a limited amount of programme (revenue) grant available overall, but we aren't putting a cap on the percentage of a bid that can be programme and/or capital. Bids will be considered on a case by case basis, so we just ask you to be clear about the level and type of funding you are looking for, and your justification for its use in delivering the fund's objectives. Thank you. Emily