



DfC

Department
for Communities
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Changes to the Affordable Warmth Scheme

Public Consultation
November 2017

Annex A – Your responses to the Consultation

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Proposal 1

The Department proposes that one installer, managing the installation of all measures to the household, becomes the preferred delivery method.

How much do you agree with the proposal? (Please tick one option)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		x		

Comments:

Belfast City Council welcomes any moves to make this process simpler for the individuals applying for the scheme and more efficient and effective for Council itself in the administration of Building Regulation applications.

Belfast City Council would need to see more detail regarding how this would work in practical terms including the customer care elements, especially for vulnerable individuals, and in the coordination of the building control aspects.

Proposal 2

The Department proposes to raise the income threshold to £23,000 for households with more than one person and reducing it to £18,000 for all single person households.

How much do you agree with the proposal? (Please tick one option)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
X (increase to £23,000)				X (decrease to £18,000)

Comments

Belfast City Council are in agreement that a household with more than one person should benefit from a higher threshold based on the experience of engaging with households by the Affordable Warmth Team. This illustrates that individual's in households with more than one person are not benefiting from the scheme as they are over the remuneration eligibility criteria of £20,000. To note, a portion of these households have young children under 5 years of age.

Belfast City Council do not agree that the income for single person household should be reduced to £18,000. Again, the experience of the Affordable Warm Team in Belfast would indicate that reducing the threshold could disadvantage the individual, who bears all the financial responsibilities of the household. In addition, this may have an increased impact on older people.

Belfast City Council would request that if this proposal is to be adopted that further discussions are held with councils regarding those who have previously been considered or are currently being considered for the scheme.

Proposal 3

The Department proposes that Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance are removed from the calculation of income for the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

How much do you agree with the proposal? (Please tick one option)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
x				

Comments

Belfast City Council agree that Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance should be removed from the calculation of income for the scheme.

Belfast City Council acknowledge that people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, and therefore affected by the adverse impacts of fuel poverty including both physical and mental ill-health.

Belfast City Council would also support Pensioner Credit being excluded from income calculations.

Proposal 4

The Department proposes the removal of age-related and disability-related eligibility criteria from the boiler replacement element of the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

How much do you agree with the proposal? (Please tick one option)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
x				

Comments

Belfast City Council are in agreement that age-related and disability-related eligibility criteria should be removed as this would allow more households to become more energy efficient. From the individual's perspective it would simplify the application process.

Belfast City Council would like to note that it is important that age and disability criteria and the subsequent vulnerabilities are not overlooked where prioritising referrals is required.

Other Comments:

Are there any additional comments or suggestions you wish to make on the proposals in the consultation document?

Comments:

1. Belfast City Council would like to highlight the recent NISRA statistics that Belfast is home to half of NI's 100 most deprived areas and among the 100 most deprived areas, 50 are in Belfast City Council area. A review of the current funding arrangements for the scheme should be considered to ensure that these most deprived areas are supported by the scheme.
2. Belfast City Council would like to highlight that implementation of proposal 2, 3 and 4 would likely increase the number of households eligible for the scheme and therefore the self-referrals. Given the current funding arrangements this would have a significant impact on an already under-resourced team and impact the already lengthy waiting lists, therefore the funding of the councils teams need to be reviewed.
3. Belfast City Council would like the definition of income, on all communications channels, to be made clearer as it has been perceived in different ways by householders.
4. Belfast City Council would like to highlight the similarities of the Affordable Warmth Scheme and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Boiler Replacement Scheme and the possibility of reviewing how they work together.
5. Belfast City Council would like to suggest, as standard, the addition of a health section within the application form as there is a strong link between fuel poverty and health especially as a large proportion of individuals who have gone through the scheme are vulnerable be that due to age, abilities or physical and mental health.
6. Due to the length of processing time for Landlord applications, as Council Officers have to liaise with both the tenants and the Landlords, Belfast City Council would like this process to be reviewed.
7. Belfast City Council would like to propose that, after three years of the scheme, a review of the uptake of measures be carried out, which would evaluate the impact on the energy efficiency of the properties, the benefits to individuals living in the property and illustrate the overall success of the scheme over time.