



**From: Judith Woodburn**

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Via email: [downeyh@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:downeyh@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Dear Henry,

## **INSULATION INSPECTION AND THE PROVISION OF INSULATION**

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 December 2021 in relation to Insulation Inspection and the provision of Insulation in Belfast.

When the Affordable Warmth Scheme was introduced in 2014 the income threshold was set at £20,000 per annum to include all social security benefits. By way of background, in 2013, following successful pilots in 2012, the Department held a public consultation and proposed that the household annual income level be set at a modest level in line with other Government programmes, such as the level of income for determining eligibility for free school meals which was £16,190 per annum at that time.



Most respondents to the consultation agreed that eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Scheme should be determined by household income and not just on social security benefit passports. However, many respondents felt that the income threshold proposed was too low.

Following additional research and engagement with stakeholders a further public consultation which closed in Feb 2018 was carried out. <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/changes-affordable-warmth-scheme>

That consultation proposed that the income threshold should be increased to £23,000 for households occupied by more than one person and reduced to £18,000 for single person households and that certain benefits, namely Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Carers' Allowance, should be removed from the calculation of income. Most respondents agreed that the disability benefits should be removed from the calculation of income but disagreed with lowering the income threshold to £18,000 for single person households. Following that the Minister approved an increase in the income threshold to £23,000 and the removal of disability benefits from the calculation of income. The changes to the eligibility criteria were implemented on 1 July 2021. The average annual income for successful applicants is around £16,000 and the Scheme is already oversubscribed with the current income threshold so there are no plans to increase it.

The Housing Executive's Cavity Wall Insulation Action Plan sets out their plans for addressing issues related to cavity wall insulation installations in its stock.

The Action Plan acknowledges that stock-wide CWI remediation/replacement will be necessary, but also notes that given the significant funding required for such a programme it can only be delivered when such funding becomes available, which at this time remains uncertain.



In the interim the Housing Executive will investigate and address CWI issues where they are having a detrimental impact on the structure of the dwelling and deliver a small annual programme to test a new CWI extraction/installation process that will be developed.

I trust that the information supplied will be of help to you.

Best Wishes,

Judith Woodburn

Housing Director