



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Home Energy Conservation Act 2023 report

Guidance for Local Authorities in England on
the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA)
reports for 2023



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Contents

Guidance HECA 2023	4
Headline & Overview	4
Communication	4
Social Housing Decarbonisation	5
Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards	5
Green Home Finance	5
Fuel Poverty	5
Government Funded Schemes	5
Smart Metering	5
HECA 2023 Reporting Requirements	6
HECA 2023	7

Guidance HECA 2023

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all local authorities (LAs) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy performance 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 Energy Security and Net Zero uses data submitted 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 the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 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 29th February 2024 when the next reports are due, and to provide guidance on completing returns. The survey will continue to be centred around a series of questions and direct information points. The reports will continue to be submitted through Microsoft forms.

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 GDPR <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>. DESNZ 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.

The 2023 report template is divided by sections to capture information on a range of key themes as follows:

Headline & Overview

What main strategy and schemes LA's currently have to promote carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency, stakeholders involved and impact at a societal and economic level.

Communication

How LAs engage stakeholders to promote awareness of energy efficiency. Green Local Supply Chain.

How LAs engage local businesses in the promotion of energy savings products and the societal benefits alongside any local economic impact this might have.

Social Housing Decarbonisation

What actions LAs and Social Housing partners have taken to install energy efficiency measures.

Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

How LAs enforce and promote awareness of the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards that came into force in April 2018 and April 2020

Green Home Finance

Leveraging private finance to promote energy efficiency.

Fuel Poverty

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

Government Funded Schemes

LA participation in schemes such as LAD, HUG and ECO.

Smart Metering

How LAs promote awareness and uptake of smart metering.

The report template will also contain a final free text section to allow local authorities to describe any addition activities which they feel are relevant and which deserve reporting.

HECA 2023 Reporting Requirements

As in 2021, LAs will again be asked to populate their HECA Report online with materials submitted via the Microsoft Forms platform in 2023. 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 HECAReport@beis.gov.uk stating their Local Authorities name and that they wish to receive a HECA 2023 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 manner 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.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero 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. DESNZ will also continue to evaluate how this approach can be further improved in future reporting years.

HECA 2023

Introductory Questions

- Name of Local Authority: Sandwell Council
- Type of Local Authority: Metropolitan Borough
- Name, job title and email address of official submitting report: Mark Taylor, Strategic Energy Manager, mark_taylor@sandwell.gov.uk

Headline and Overview

Q1. Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic properties?

- Yes

Q2. If yes, please provide a link.

Please find link to the Council's Climate Change Strategy (including Action Plan).

<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/39/climate-change-strategy>
<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/40/climate-change-action-plan>

In addition, please find link to the West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy, first published November 2018:

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/documents/environment-energy/wmca-regional-energy-strategy/>

Q3. If no, are you planning to develop one, and in what timeframe? N/A

- Yes, within 1 year
- Yes, within 2 years
- Yes, within 3 years+
- No development plans

Q4. In the last 2 years, what has been the cost (or estimated cost) of your energy efficiency and/or carbon reduction initiatives, schemes and services? Please consider the total cost of running and administering the scheme(s). Please input 0 if no schemes or initiatives has been implemented.

Salaries and overheads for teams responsible for delivering the schemes described above are catered for within the Council's existing spend profile. However, for SHDF wave 2.1 part of the administration and ancillaries' budget is being used to pay for Council services. The Administration and Ancillaries budget for wave 2.1 is £897k, it is estimated that circa £370k of the budget is attributed to staff.

No additional grants are currently being received to administer works.

Q5. Which, if any, of the following outcomes have been achieved through your energy efficiency and/or carbon initiatives, schemes and services? Please select all that apply.

- Energy savings,
- Carbon savings,
- Job creation
- Increased business competitiveness
- Alleviation of fuel poverty
- Improved health outcomes
- None of the above
- Other - please specify: Improved social awareness of net zero targets

Consumer Advice and Information

Q6. Do you provide or promote any advisory services to consumers on how to save energy?

- Yes

Q7. If yes, please select all that apply;

- Local Authority website
- Local advisory service
- 'Find ways to save energy in your home' (formerly Simple Energy Advice) gov.uk website
- 'Find ways to save energy in your home' gov.uk phonenumber
- Leaflets
- Social media
- Local energy hubs
- Other- please specify: Energy advice is available in the following ways:

For residents:

- <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/energy>
- Energy switching service is available via our website.
- The Council Healthy Homes Officer advises vulnerable residents how to manage energy within their homes.
- LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership). The Council work with LEAP to provide a free energy advice and income maximisation scheme, Funded by the Warm Homes Discount Initiative and managed in partnership with AgilityEco, this project provides services to eligible households.
- Warmer Homes West Midlands. The Council work with Warmer Homes West Midlands who provide advice and support for householders requiring more comprehensive assistance and guidance.

For businesses:

- Working with the LEP and Combined Authority, we've helped to shape a Regional Energy Strategy for the West Midlands <https://www.energycapital.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/A-Regional-Energy-Strategy-for-the-West-Midlands-FINAL.pdf>

Local Retrofit Supply Chain

Q8. Have you conducted any assessment or analysis to understand the existing capacity in your local supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050?

- No

Q9. If you answered yes to question 8, please summarise any specific bottlenecks (or provide a link if this information has been published).

- N/A

Q10. Which, if any, of the following actions are you taking to upskill and/or grow your local retrofit installer supply chain? Please select all that apply.

- Supporting training provision at local training providers
- Supporting FE colleges to improve facilities or train trainers or otherwise enable better delivery of retrofit training.
- Providing installer networking opportunities or other business support for growing companies.
- Careers advice or similar involving local businesses doing schools outreach to encourage young people into the sector.
- None of the above
- Other (please state)

Q11. Do you provide advice for your residents and small businesses about how to pick an installer business or how to avoid being mis-sold inappropriate improvements?

- Yes

Q12. Has there been any Trading Standards activity against energy efficiency or home retrofit businesses in your area due to mis-selling or otherwise poorly advising consumers about retrofit measures?

- Yes – there has been action taken on a regular basis
- Yes – but rarely
- No – resourcing constraints have curtailed potential activity
- No – we are not aware of any issues

Q13. If you received funding under Local Authority Delivery, Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, did availability of PAS 2030:2019 or MCS certified and TrustMark registered supply chain affect your ability to deliver?

- Yes

Q14. If you answered yes to question 13 please can you tell us, which parts of the supply chain were particularly affected (please select all that apply)?

- Installers of insulation
- Installers of windows/doors
- Installers of heat pumps
- Retrofit assessors
- Retrofit coordinators
- All of the above
- Other (please state)

Q15. If you answered yes to question 13 please can you tell us, what actions did you take to overcome those barriers (please select all that apply)?

- Marketing to drive supply chain interest
- Use of frameworks or a local DPS to reach more businesses
- Supporting training and upskilling more generally
- Using a main contractor and requiring them to source suitably certified supply chain (either through contracting or training up their own staff)
- Delivering in-house e.g. by upskilling existing social housing maintenance teams, directly employing retrofit coordinators etc
- Other (please state)

Social Housing Decarbonisation

Q16. Did you apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1?

- Yes, and successful in securing funding
- Yes, and not successful in securing funding
- No
- Don't know

Q17. Which, if any, of the following motivated you to apply for SHDF Wave 2.1? Please select all that apply.

- Financial support for retrofit
- Technical support for retrofit
- Tenant needs
- Expectations of future energy performance regulations
- Other

Q18. Which, if any, of the following barriers prevented you from applying to SHDF Wave 2.1?

- Application window too short
- Too much information needed at application
- Don't own enough stock
- Not enough capability
- Too Costly
- Retrofit work is not a priority
- Not enough information
- Don't know
- Other – please tell us what prevented you applying

Q19. Have you carried out/planned to carry out any retrofit work in absence of SHDF funding?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q20. If yes, how is this funded/how would this be funded?

- Internal funding
- Funding from other Government schemes
- Other: ECO3

- Don't know

Q21. If no, what is/are the main reason(s) for not planning to carry out any retrofit work?
Please select all that apply.

- Lack of funding
- Lack of internal resource
- Lack of capacity
- Lack of technical support
- Retrofit work is not a priority
- Other
- Don't know

Q22. How many of your social housing partners are you aware applied for the SHDF?

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council was part of consortium bid as part of West Midlands Combined Authority.

Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) Regulations

Q23. Do you enforce the PRS MEES Regulations in domestic tenancies?

- Yes

Q24. Do you use the PRS MEES Exemption Register?

- No

Q25. Are you aware of the PRS MEES draft toolkit for supporting local authorities?

- Yes, and I've used it
- Yes, but I haven't used it
- No

Q26. In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you engaged with in respect to enforcement of the PRS MEES Regulations?

- 3

Q27. In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you found to be non-compliant?

- 3

Q28. In the last 2 years, how many non-compliant properties have been improved to EPC Band E after you have engaged with them?

- 3

Q29. How many compliance notices have you issued in the past 2 years for non-compliance of the PRS MEES Regulations?

- None

Green Home Finance

Q30. What programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency improvements for those who are able to pay? Please provide links to any relevant online materials.

None

Q31. Do you take any steps to raise awareness of the availability of private financing options (such as green mortgages) to fund retrofit works?

- Yes
- No, but we have plans to do this in the future
- No

Please include links to any relevant online materials: [N/A](#)

Q32. Do you refer homeowners interested in energy efficiency to retail lenders offering green finance products?

- Yes
- No, but we have plans to do this in the future
- No

Fuel Poverty

Q33. Does your Local Authority have a Fuel Poverty Strategy?

- No

Q34 How do you identify fuel poor households? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.

- Used local data sets on energy efficiency/housing
- Used local data sets on household income
- Campaigns to encourage potential households to reach out
- Other - Used local data sets on energy efficiency/housing, e.g Parity software.
- [option to provide additional information]

Q35. What actions are you taking to reduce fuel poverty in your area? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.

- Delivery of government wide schemes such as the Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Actions to increase financial support to low income or vulnerable households. Warmer Homes West Midlands/LEAP.
- Other - The Council has a ECO3 LA Flex scheme. The Council has a comprehensive energy website <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/energy> that signposts residents to help and information regarding both energy efficiency and income maximisation. We also have a Healthy Homes Officer who works across all tenures.

Q36. Does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?

- Yes
- If yes, please can you explain how it does this? Addressing fuel poverty is one of the key underlying outcomes of our Climate Change Action Plan, with particular reference to retrofit. <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/file/40/climate-change-action-plan>
- If no, is this something you might consider doing or are there barriers to doing this?

Local Authority Delivery

Q37. If your local authority did not apply for funding from the Local Authority Delivery scheme, please indicate which barrier(s) prevented you from applying.

- lack of capacity
- lack of capability
- lack of awareness
- other – please specify

Q38. Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for on-gas properties?

- Yes.

Q39. If no, please specify what is lacking.

Home Upgrade Grant

Q40. If your local authority did not apply for funding from the Home Upgrade Grant, please indicate which barrier(s) prevented you from applying.

- lack of capacity
- lack of capability
- lack of awareness
- other – please specify

Q41. Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for off-gas properties?

- Yes

Q42. If no, please specify what is lacking.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

Q43. Did your local authority have a published Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO3, during 2022?

- Yes

Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail during the course of 2022:

Q44. How many declarations were issued for low-income vulnerable households during ECO3? 953

Q45. How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households under ECO3? 856

Q46. How many declarations were issued for in-fill under ECO3? 14

Q47. What was the highest income cap published in your Sol? £27,200

Q48. If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason did you give? N/A

Q49. Did you charge for declarations to be signed?

- No

Q50. If so, please state how much and how you decided on this figure. N/A

Q51. ECO4 commenced in July 2022, has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO4?

- No

Q52. If 'No' are there any specific barriers preventing you, from publishing and participating in the scheme?

- Lack of clarity around delivery of the scheme.

Q53a. Do you directly engage with energy suppliers either for ECO Flex(or other domestic energy efficiency schemes?

- No

Q54b. If yes, please provide the name of the scheme and indicate whether this is an LA, Supplier, DESNZ or other organisational run scheme (please specify)

Q55. Which route(s) do you envisage submitting referrals through under ECO4 Flex? Select all that apply.

- All four routes available
- Route 1
- Route 2
- Route 3
- Route 4

Smart Metering

The following questions refer to smart metering advice. Please provide any additional details where possible.

Q56a. Do you provide smart metering advice when implementing energy efficiency improvements (including through grant schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation and the Home Upgrade Grant) in residential accommodation?

- No

Q57b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

We are actively installing smart meters in empty properties as part of the service operated by Energy Angels to ensure continuation of supply to void properties.

Q58a. Do you encourage landlords to promote smart meter uptake, e.g., landlord licensing schemes.

- No

Q59b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

There is no legal obligation to install smart meters to properties under current legislation.

Q60a. Do you arrange for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises?

- Yes

Q61b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this.

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