

## **Wirral Council's HECA Progress Report 2023**

- **Name of Local Authority** - Wirral Council
- **Type of Local Authority** - Metropolitan Unitary
- **Name, job title and email address of official submitting report.** - Ed Kingsley, Principal Strategic Housing and Investment Officer, [edwardkingsley@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:edwardkingsley@wirral.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.**

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/consultation-new-cool-2-climate-change-strategy>

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

- N/A

**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.**

- £11,333,422.77

**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
- Alleviation of fuel poverty
- Improved health outcomes

### **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
- Other- please specify:

LCRCA Retrofit Your Home guide for residents (<https://api.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Retrofitting-guide.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?**

- Yes

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

- <https://api.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/LCR-Green-Jobs-Skills-Plan-.pdf>

**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**

- Other (please state)

LCRCA Skills Bootcamps - Green Skills training courses including Retrofit and Domestic Energy Assessment and Renewable Energy (including heat pumps, EV charging, electrical). Funded by DfE (<https://lcrbemore.co.uk/skillsbootcamps/>);

Sustainable Warmth Fund, Solar together and HUG2 contractor market engagement events. Engaged with contractors through Trustmark register;

LCR Low Carbon Homes Retrofit Summits - Yearly online events for networking and awareness raising

**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 – but rarely

**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?**

- No

**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)?**

- N/A

**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)?**

- N/A

### **Social Housing Decarbonisation**

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

- Yes, and successful in securing funding

**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

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

N/A

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

- No

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

- N/A

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

- N/A

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

- 3

### **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?**

- Yes

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

- Yes, but I haven't used it

**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?**

- 0

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

- 0

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

- 0

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

- 0.

### **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.**

- We fund a "Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency Programme", currently contracted to Energy Projects Plus, to provide telephone advice and home visits to people who require energy efficiency improvements.
- We link into the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator scheme locally - <https://www.epplus.org.uk/projects/retrofit-buddies/>
- We have worked across the Liverpool City Region with the Combined Authority and other local authorities to promote the Solar Together scheme - <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/housing/help-your-home/energy-efficiency/solar-panel-scheme-solar-together>. In Wirral, 2,822 households registered for the scheme, and 444 households progressed with installing PV and 19 with installing batteries

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

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

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

- 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.**

- Campaigns to encourage potential households to reach out
- Other:

We identify fuel poor households through our strong referral network of statutory and third sector organisations such as CAB, Age UK Wirral and the Council's Healthy Homes Team. Referrals are made to our fuel poverty advice partner Energy Projects Plus.

**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.
- Other: Wirral Council provided increased levels of funding towards agencies supporting fuel poor households during the COVID pandemic and since then in response to the "Cost of Living Crisis". Funding has been used to increase staffing levels to ensure fuel poor households are helped in a timely manner and can have quick access to fuel vouchers and other support such as emergency heating, particularly from the Households Support Fund.

**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?

The Strategy recognises that cutting energy demand through energy efficiency will also reduce bills, improve levels of comfort in our homes and businesses and help tackle fuel poverty too. Actions behind the target to improve as many homes as possible to EPC Band C by 2030 are focussed to prioritise fuel poor households.

### **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.**

- N/A

**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.**

- N/A

### **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.**

- N/A

**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?**

- 240

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

- 155

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

- 0

**Q47. What was the highest income cap published in your Sol?**

- The Liverpool City Region local authorities used the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Minimum Income Standard (MIS) with varied income across different household types. The highest MIS was for a household with 2 adults and 4 or more children and one of those children was aged 1 or under – this was £112,865. The vast majority of applicants however were pensioner households for which the MIS was £14,764 p.a. for single pensioner households and £20,965 p.a. for households with two pensioners.

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

- Incomes higher than £30k were rarely encountered and the vast majority of declarations were for pensioner households with low income caps. However the LAs believed that using the MIS made justifiable allowances for larger households with very young children where both parents were working, due to very high childcare costs.

**Q49. Did you charge for declarations to be signed?**

- No

**Q 50. 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?**

- Yes

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

- N/A

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

- No

**54b. 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)**

- N/A

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

- Route 1
- Route 2
- Route 3

### **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?**

- Yes

**Q57b.N/A**

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

- Yes

**Q59b.**

- N/A

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

- No

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

- We owned very few social housing premises during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years (around 30 properties) and have not had any vacancies. Should a vacancy arise, it would be difficult to arrange for the installation of a smart meter within the 28-day turnaround during which the property would be empty as requests for smart meters usually take longer than this. We can however place the request and see if installation could be possible within 28 days.