

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Report for Gosport Borough Council 2017 - 2019

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 ('HECA') requires all 326 local authorities ('LA's) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency 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. BEIS uses data submitted through LAs HECA returns to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.

Gosport Borough Council are dedicated to improve the energy efficiency in Gosport homes by offering a number of schemes and financial assistance to all tenure types, to help reduce fuel poverty in the borough and also reduce our carbon emissions concurrently.

Gosport Borough Council's Energy Efficiency Schemes

Since 2017 the authority has implemented a number of support mechanisms and schemes for those in residential accommodation, as part of our partnership with Portsmouth City Council.

In chronological order:

Gosport Borough Council branded Energy Switching Website: GBC has its own energy switching branded website, using the Uswitch search engine, to promote energy switching to local residents through the use of an Ofgem accredited website: <https://www.ukpower.co.uk/wl/gosport>

LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership): As part of GBC's partnership with Portsmouth City Council, GBC have implemented, through project management company Agility Eco, a free home energy visit service available to all tenure types since early 2017. The service offers help with energy switching, free small energy saving measures (e.g. LED lightbulbs and draft-proofing), energy saving advice and onward referrals to organisations such as IncomeMAX and Hampshire Fire & Rescue service. www.applyforleap.org.uk

Warmer Homes: GBC is part of a consortium of 9 local authorities in the South & South East which provide free gas central heating through the Warmer Homes scheme, alongside partner Agility Eco. The scheme is available to all tenure types and provides a fully funded gas central heating installation, and free gas connection to the property, if required. This typically equates to around £6000 of fully funded work per property. www.warmerhomes.org.uk

ECHO (Emergency Central Heating Offer): As part of our partnership with Portsmouth City Council, GBC offers a free gas boiler replacement scheme to eligible homeowners during the winter period (October - March). The scheme provides a free gas boiler replacement to owner occupiers who are in an emergency 'no heat' situation and unable to afford a repair or replacement. www.emergencyheating.org.uk

GBC plan to continue the implementation of the current schemes: Local Energy Advice Partnership, Warmer Homes and the Emergency Central Heating Offer to all residential accommodation within the PO1 - PO13 postcodes. In partnership with Portsmouth City Council, the authority plans to offer more schemes and initiatives based on successful awards of any future funding and in response to the funding available through ECO (Energy Company Obligation) over the next two years.

Energy Efficiency Scheme Funding

The schemes utilise various sources of funding to provide their free services and fully funded measures:

LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership): Funded through the Warm Homes Discount Industry Initiatives scheme. Funding is allocated per local authority area based on local housing numbers and expected level of referrals to the scheme and the funding is available all year round.

Warmer Homes: Together with their partner AgilityEco, the lead authority Portsmouth City Council has been successful in attracting £4.65m from the Warm Homes Fund, which has been established by National Grid, and is being administered by Affordable Warmth Solutions CIC. There's also a further £2.8m to be brought to the

project from other energy efficiency funding streams such as ECO, bringing the total amount to £7.4 million.

ECHO (Emergency Central Heating Offer): Funded through the Warm Homes Discount Industry Initiatives scheme. Funding is available to eligible owner occupiers in the PO1 - PO13 postcodes over the specified winter period each year.

Working in Partnership in the borough

The schemes are delivered through the local authority and we utilise our own teams, charities and third sector organisations to promote the scheme and encourage them to make referrals to all our current schemes.

Examples of such organisations include Citizens Advice Gosport, Age UK, and Gosport Voluntary Action. Internal local authority teams include departments such as Housing Services and Environmental Health.

Energy Efficiency Scheme Outcomes

Through the LEAP scheme we have had the following successes across the past two years:

- Grand total of savings and new income to date: £668,077.54 across the PO1 - PO13 postcode area. This is the total for bill savings following energy saving advice and bill savings for installed measures over 10 years. The income is based on new income increase over one year.
- The scheme has had 140 referrals into LEAP from the GBC area since the beginning of 2017 and this has resulted in over 60 home visits so far.
- A number of these residents have been referred to IncomeMAX (free independent money advice service), with some having new income identified and subsequently had income increased.
- A number of properties have had onward referrals made for HHSRS and fire safety hazards in the home.

Since the beginning of the Warmer Homes schemes we have had over 25 referrals in the Gosport Borough Council area for fully funded gas central heating.

Through the last two winter periods (October - March), the ECHO scheme has installed 5 fully funded boiler replacements into vulnerable owner-occupier households in the Gosport Borough Council area.

Local Communications Strategy

GBC provide an advisory service to domestic residents through LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership). As part of the scheme, our home advisors offer energy saving advice and assistance with energy switching, as well as advice for funding for larger energy efficiency measures such as insulation.

We promote our schemes through a variety of channels. For example, promotion through our social and private resident magazines and through our official social media channels. We also have information on our website about the schemes which we have available to residents.

Local Green Supply Chains

The local authority promotes the use of energy efficient products amongst consumers primarily through the LEAP scheme. We provide free energy saving products to our domestic residents through the LEAP scheme. Examples include LED lightbulbs, radiator reflector panels, draft-proofing, cylinder jackets, TV standby plugs and chimney balloons.

Fuel Poverty

We have used a combination of EPC data and working with external organisations and charities to identify properties/residents that are at risk of or living in fuel poverty. This includes targeting households with low EPC ratings of E, F & G through targeted mailings and promoting our schemes through face-to-face staff in a number of established organisations within the borough.

We promote fuel cost reduction through our available schemes. Through our LEAP & Warmer Homes schemes we offer a number of free energy saving measures and offer help with fuel switching. Through Warmer Homes by installing gas central heating, we are helping to reduce the fuel costs of those with electric heating or those who have gas fire/gas heaters.

Our partner Portsmouth City Council partners with company Agility Eco to provide project management of the schemes, in particular Warmer Homes. The Warmer Homes scheme is run as part of a consortium of nine local authorities in the south & south east. Many of the larger energy providers provide funding for the LEAP & ECHO schemes through the Warm Homes Discount Industry Initiatives scheme. The Warmer Homes scheme delivers through a number of partner suppliers who are managed by Agility Eco.

The Energy Company Obligation

The local authority participates in the ECO Flexible Eligibility programme and has published our Statement of Intent in line with ECO 3. Our statement of intent can be found here: <https://www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/housing/energy-efficiency/>

Our ECO Flexible Eligibility criteria have allowed many more of our vulnerable residents to access ECO funding. By opening up the criteria beyond means-tested benefits only, the local authority has been able to assist with a higher number of funding related queries and utilise ECO flex towards the financial assistance as part of our schemes. For example the Warmer Homes scheme has over 240 applications across the PO1 - PO13 postcodes, from which 155 have been eligible under our ECO flexible eligibility criteria.

Future Schemes & Wider Initiatives

The authority now utilises a variety of sources of funding to offer financial assistance for a large number of measures to all tenure types within the borough. As part of our partnership with Portsmouth City Council we will be able to offer new schemes in the future, based on funding availability and the introduction of new energy saving technologies.