



Warm Front
Frequently Asked Questions

This document contains a wide variety of questions and answers relating to the Warm Front scheme. This is a version controlled document and will be regularly updated and expanded. The most up to date version is always available via your local networker.

In order to make finding appropriate answers easier, we have tried to group these questions: Firstly, to those relating to the customer journey through Warm Front, and then into categories outside of this process.

If you have any specific questions not answered here, please contact your local networker who will be able to source an answer, and then include it in the next update of this document.

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Referral Stage

How long will it be before a Warm Front survey is done?

We work towards a maximum of 21 working days after referral is received. As of June 2008 the average time taken from referral to survey was 4.6 working days across England.

What if a client who calls to apply for the Scheme is not eligible?

If the client lives in social housing and is in receipt of certain benefits (similar to Warm Front benefits) then we offer them the Domestic Grant Insulation Scheme (Scottish and Southern) which is for cavity wall insulation, virgin loft insulation, and a hot water tank jacket. If the client is in owner occupied or privately rented housing they are automatically offered a Benefit Entitlement Check and referred back to Warm Front should they successfully claim a qualifying benefit. All non-qualifying clients are referred to the Energy Saving Trust for Energy Saving Advice and possible access to local schemes.

I am having difficulty with making a portal referral – who do I contact?

The eaga IT team on 0191 247 3999 for technical problems, or the Networking team on 0800 316 0093 for other queries.

What do the status' on portal actually mean?

The following are the main status' we use for referrals.

Data Incomplete: Where details are missing from a referral, (e.g. tenure, landlord details, benefits), can be set at the time of the referral or at a later date if a query comes up.

Data Complete – Eligible: The referral has been created and the client is eligible, but an assessor has not been allocated yet.

Data Complete – Not Eligible: The referral is complete but the client is not eligible.

Assessor Allocated: An Assessor has been allocated to the referral.

Survey Complete – Eligible: Used when a survey is complete and the assessor has seen proof of benefits, but before any work is allocated.

Measures Allocated: The recommended work has been allocated to an installer.

Complete: Used when the work on the referral has been completed and paid for.

Individual Job Statuses

Allocated: Work allocated to the installer but not yet done.

Installed: Work done but not yet paid for.

Complete: Work completed and paid for.

What if the customer has already applied to Warm Front, but is returning for further works?

If the previous application was prior to June 2005 (the first phase of Warm Front), create the referral as normal. If the previous application was after this date, do not create a new referral, but contact the Call Centre to reactivate the previous application.

Are any social tenants eligible for the scheme?

The scheme is designed for owner occupiers or private tenants only. However, there are a few occasions where social tenants may be eligible. If a housing association tenant has any part ownership of the property, they would be treated as an owner occupier. Also, some in properties such as Alms Houses are also eligible for the grant as private tenants.

Do you do works for people in mobile homes or house boats?

If the householder is eligible, yes, although the range of the possible works is often limited.

Survey Stage

What proof of eligibility is required?

There are a variety of documents that can be used as proof of eligibility. The Warm Front assessor will clarify before or at the assessment stage what is appropriate in each specific case.

Who decides what I get?

The independent Warm Front Assessor will use the scheme rules to identify what measures the property is eligible for. They are not in a position to definitively identify if the measure is technically possible or not.

What if the client decides not to have the work done and then changes their mind?

A client can tell an assessor that they don't, for example, want loft insulation done as they can't clear their loft. If the client then calls 6 months later to say they have changed their mind then work can be allocated as long as the survey results show that it is required. If the client cancels work after it has been allocated to an installer, this work can be re-activated at any time, provided there is sufficient money left in the grant.

Installation Stage

On what basis were heating and insulation contractors awarded the Warm Front Contract?

The contractor appointments were made in accordance with OJEU rules. A pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) was issued to all companies that had expressed an interest in tendering for an appointment. The PQQ requested contractors to supply evidence to satisfy our requirements in each of the following areas.

- Health and Safety
- Insurance Details
- Qualifications and Memberships
- Insolvency Information
- Professional Conduct Information
- Social Security and Taxation Information
- Organisation Details
- Financial Details
- Technical Capacities
- Quality Management
- Training
- Customer Care
- Environmental and Waste Management

The PQQ's were all assessed and scored against a standard scoring table and those that achieved at least the minimum required assessment score were sent the Invitation To Tender (ITT) requesting their prices. The prices tendered were all assessed to identify those that offered the most economically advantageous prices. The prices tendered by eaga's in-house companies were deliberately removed from the price assessment process so that they did not influence the prices that were arrived at for the appointments offered. The most economically advantageous prices were harmonised by area or region using the number of prices that eaga decided were most advantageous for the scheme. For example, for gas heating the average of the three lowest prices tendered in an area was used to arrive at the harmonised price in that area. The harmonised prices were offered to all contractors offering an appointment, including eaga's in-house companies.

The number of companies involved in this process was as follows.

- 685 companies registered an interest in tendering for Warm Front 2 and were sent the PQQ.
- 281 companies returned the PQQ.
- 152 companies passed the PQQ and were sent the ITT.

- 151 companies returned the ITT.
- 116 companies were finally appointed at the end of the tender process in 2005.
- 17 additional appointments were made in March 2006 to provide additional capacity following the increase in funding announced in December 2005.
- Further appointments have been made on an individual area basis to deal with specific capacity problems in those areas.

Can I use an alternative installer?

The work must be done by a Warm Front contractor to set specifications. Clients may not gain an alternative quote and access the £2,700 contribution to pay an installer not contracted to complete Warm Front work. The Warm Front process ensures consistency and quality of work completed, upholds high health and safety standards and reduces timelines between survey and installation stage. An installer outside of the scheme would not always be able to work to the same specified standards or materials and would also not include the 2 annual services as provided by Warm Front. Warm Front prices are harmonised, so that, irrespective of the level of complexity of the work, the job has a set price for each installer area. Each part of the works, such as replacing the boiler, installing heating controls or a powerflush all have a set price.

Who decides who the Warm Front contractors are?

The Warm Front contractors were all appointed following the OJEU tender process detailed above. They were selected by eaga's tender assessment team, comprising of three senior managers, and the process and the proposed appointments were all vetted by eaga's executive management prior to appointments being offered.

Why can eaga use their in-house installers (Iguana and eaga homes, previously Millfold) on the scheme?

eaga's successful bid to manage the Warm Front Scheme was as main contractor, not Scheme Manager. This means that, legally, eaga would be entitled to carry out 100% of the works through its own in-house subsidiaries should they wish. However, to maintain a sustainable supply chain and continue good relationships in the industry, eaga agreed with Defra that in-house installers would only carry out a proportion of the work. This allows eaga to rigidly control and maintain the highest possible quality standards for those installers, and ensures they can act as installer of last resort, where other installers are unable or unwilling to accept a particular job. It is important to note that no eaga contractors were involved in the process of setting tender prices. The commitment given to Defra was that other installers would set the market rate and eaga's in-house contractors would operate at this independently set and verified rate.

How long are the Warm Front installers contracted to the scheme for?

The current contracts with the Warm Front installers expire at the end of May 2009. New contracts will have to be negotiated by this point at the latest. We are currently reviewing all the pricing structures to see if these will also be going back out to full tender.

Can I recommend an Installer for the Scheme?

We are always happy to accept approaches from companies for appointments. If there is no requirement for additional capacity at that time we will retain the company details and they will be contacted. If there is a need for additional capacity in an area they wish to work in or when we go out to open tender for appointments. Companies wishing to be considered for an appointment should send their details to our Contracts Manager at Eaga House.

Who decides what I get?

The assessment will have determined what measures the property is eligible for. The allocated installers will carry further technical surveys, if required. In the case of a gas central heating installation, for example, the installer will discuss with the client the location of the boiler and radiators.

How long will it take to get work installed?

For insulation works, Defra's agreed contractual guidelines are that this should take no more than 40 working days after assessment. The average for 07/08 was 27 days.

For heating works, Defra's agreed contractual guidelines are that this should take no more than 120 working days after assessment. The average for 07/08 was 67 working days.

Why do you use contractors who are based a long distance away from the job?

We use many contractors, from very large to small. Although all of the correspondence lists the company's main address as a contact, they will often have locally based offices, and usually use locally based engineers. Irrespective of the distance travelled by the engineers, the price is the same.

Why do you remove / decommission back boilers?

Back boilers can no longer be installed following changes to building regulations. A gas back boiler that can be safely disconnected will be left in situ. If there is an associated gas fire, where possible this will be left working. If it is a solid fuel back boiler, health and safety guidance means we need to remove the appliance fully.

Client Contributions

What happens when the heating work recommended comes to more than the value of the grant?

If the cost of the heating work still comes to more than the grant maxima then customers are asked to make a financial contribution. If the customer is unable to do this, we suggest that they approach their local authority, who may be able to give them assistance.

How many jobs require a customer contribution?

Around 18% of all Warm Front jobs since June 2005 have required a contribution. Currently, around 60% of all heating jobs require a contribution, either because of previous spend under the first phase of Warm Front (heating or insulation), or because the work has extra factors, such as requiring a new gas supply, or an extended flue kit, or significant replacements and alterations to the old system. Currently the average cost of a new or replacement gas heating job is around £2,500.

How do I get hold of a customer contribution breakdown?

Although we are prevented by commercial confidentiality from providing an itemised and individually priced breakdown of the materials and the work, if someone would like to see more information about what the work actually entails, send a request through to stakeholderbreakdown@eaga.com.

How do we know that the price quoted is fair?

An independent review of the prices charged by Warm Front contractors was carried out at Defra's specific request by White Young Green. Their full reports are available for download from the Defra website link, or from your local networker. The headline figures were that when comparing work like for like, the Warm Front prices were lower than open market prices. In the case of gas central heating this was more than a third cheaper, in the case of oil heating it was 21% cheaper, for oil replacements it was 12% cheaper, and for gas replacements it was 11% cheaper.

Why is only one quote required?

The contractors have already gone through a full OJEU tendering process and the prices have been harmonised for each installer area (normally a number of local authorities) so contractors should arrive at the same cost for the same property. For example, for gas heating we took the average of the three lowest prices by area to determine the harmonised price structure. Our Material supply team assess all costs from Installers, checking the size of property and measures recommended. The parts list is also checked and ensures that all parts requested are installed in the property. If costs appear unreasonable they are challenged.

Have the Warm Front prices increased?

The prices negotiated in the original tendering process were set at the 2005 prices. Since then an annual government approved inflation increase has been applied in June for each type of work. However, the rising costs in this industry (particularly linked to copper and steel) have exceeded inflation by some margin. This further demonstrates that economies of scale are being achieved and value for money provided.

What does the labour part of the quote include?

The contribution letters break down into 3 areas of costs.

- 1 'Previous Spend' – this is money already committed under Warm Front (1 or 2) that has come out of the £2,700 (or £4,000) grant account.
- 2 'Materials' – these are physical items (such as boilers, radiators etc) that are ordered and provided through The Plumb Centre. This allows for economies of scale and bulk discount prices.
- 3 'Labour' – this is the installation cost of the works, made up of all the costs incurred by the installer (labour, ancillary parts, powerflushing, electrical bonding, scaffolding, etc)

Will the cost of insulation work be taken from the Warm Front grant?

When insulation measures are traded with energy suppliers under CERT, the cost of this work is not deducted from the available Warm Front grant funding. Eaga has agreements with all six main utility companies enabling us to 'trade' some insulation measures. This ensures that, should heating works be required at a later date, funding is still available to contribute towards the cost of such works.

What insulation works can be traded?

In general, the insulation measures that can be traded include:

- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Loft Insulation (where existing insulation is less than 60mm)
- Hot Water Tank Jackets

When insulation measures are traded, the cost of this work is not deducted from the available Warm Front grant funding available. We endeavour to trade all possible insulation, however, in some cases (due to the size of the property); the job may just be too expensive and therefore not cost effective. In these instances, the funding for this work will be deducted from the grant funding available.

NB: If Warm Front is unable to trade such "jobs", an independent installer would experience the same difficulty as the criteria for both parties are the same.

Warm Front for Private Tenants

What measure does Warm Front provide for Private Tenants?

Warm Front provides the same heating and insulation measures for private tenants as for owner occupiers with the general exception of heating repairs .

Can repairs be carried out on a private tenant's boiler?

Generally heating systems are the responsibility of the landlord, and so no repairs or replacements are done under Warm Front. However, if it can be shown that the tenant is legally responsible for the boiler, then we can offer a repair/replacement.

How do we know that the price quoted is fair?

Although we are prevented by commercial confidentiality from providing an itemised and individually priced breakdown of the materials and the work, if someone would like to see more information about what the work actually entails, send a request through to stakeholderbreakdown@eaga.com.

Why does the Landlord have to give permission for works to be carried out?

Although the Warm Front Scheme is designed to provide assistance for the private tenant, the building belongs to the landlord. In the case of private rented properties, we therefore require agreement from both the tenant and the landlord before we can proceed with any heating or insulation works.

What if the private landlord fails to give permission for the work to be carried out?

After the landlord has had 28 days to respond to a request to allow work to be carried out, they are written to again, confirming that unless we hear from them we will be passing details of the job to the local authority for potential regulatory action under Decent Homes. A letter is also sent to the tenant confirming the delay. If no communication is received after another 28 days, an e-mail is sent to the relevant local authority giving details of the job.

Do the Private Landlords have to agree to any terms and conditions?

The letter to the landlord confirms that the landlord should not increase the rent due to the work being installed by Warm Front. In the case of insulation this is for one year, and in the case of heating, this is for two years. This does not supersede any pre-arranged or regular annual rent increases.

Inspection stage

What percentage of the work is quality inspected?

100% of all gas, oil and solid fuel heating works are inspected and 5% of electric heating works and insulation works are inspected. All inspections are carried out by qualified, independent Warm Front Inspectors.

How quickly is the heating inspection carried out?

The visit should take place within 28 days after an installer notifies us the job is complete. As of June 2008, in excess of 95% of jobs are inspected within 28 days.

What happens if the installation does not pass inspection?

If remedial work is identified, the installer has up to 28 days to get the works done. The work is then inspected again, and if it does not pass we will charge the installer for the inspection costs and can arrange for an alternative installer to rectify the job and charge the costs to the original installer.

Warranty and Aftercare

What guarantee is provided for the work done?

- Insulation work is guaranteed for one year by the installer. Cavity wall insulation also has a CIGA guarantee, which covers the work for 25 years (this is arranged by eaga after completion of the work).
- Heating - Electric storage heater work is guaranteed for one year by the installer and an additional year by the manufacturer.
- Gas wall heaters are covered for one year from the day of installation.
- Hot Water tanks are covered for one year from the day of installation.
- Replacement Boilers - all replacement boilers and gas central heating are covered for two years with the emergency breakdown service, and this includes two annual service visits.
- Oil heating is covered with a 2 year warranty with the installer and the boiler manufacturer.

Who is responsible for repairs under guarantee?

The installer is responsible for repairs for one year on new central heating systems, 30 days on replacement boilers, and three days on repairs. Outside of these times the customer is covered by the WarmSure warranty.

What do I do if a completed installation does not have remedial work rectified?

Firstly, contact the stakeholder enquiries team to identify if the quality inspection has taken place. If you feel that something passed inspection and there are outstanding issues please advise the stakeholder enquiries team who will investigate.

How does a Warm Front client know an inspection has been completed?

All boilers at the point of installation and inspection have a sticker placed upon them to confirm work has been completed. The sticker is dated and shows the relevant contact numbers in the event of a breakdown.

Enquiries and Complaints - Who do I contact within eaga?

Leaflet requests, Portal requests, Warm Front Team contact details

Networking Team
0800 316 0093
networking@eaga.com

Warm Front application enquiries (Stakeholder only)

Stakeholders Enquiries Team
0191 247 3822
StakeHolders.Enquiries@eaga.com

Applications (Clients)

Householders Enquiries Team
0800 316 2814
enquiry@eaga.com

Contracts Manager

installers@eaga.com

Technical enquiries

Technical.department@eaga.com

Leaflet requests

networking@eaga.com

To obtain a quotation breakdown or recalculation of VAT (Stakeholders only)

Client Contributions
stakeholderbreakdown@eaga.com

Warm Front Complaints (Stakeholders only)

0800 408 0392

Benefit Entitlement Check (BEC) Service

0800 072 9006

WarmSure Breakdown Line

0800 408 1437

WarmSure Annual Service Visit Enquiry Line

0800 408 1436

Web Addresses

www.warmfront.co.uk

www.eaga.com

Emails to Stakeholder Enquiries will be acknowledged by auto-response and will be answered within 1-2 working days.

Complaints

Complaints will be logged within 10 working days and investigated and responded to within 28 working days.

Networking Support

Why does Warm Front work with local authorities, local organisations and charities when it is a national government scheme?

There is not a single simple way of identifying and engaging with people in Fuel Poverty. In order to do this effectively and fairly, we recognised the importance of local partnerships and networks. As well as general promotion of the scheme, the local networks are especially vital in reaching those people who are 'hard to engage'. Often many eligible individuals need additional encouragement and support to take up help they are entitled to, like Warm Front, and this comes from individuals at these local organisations. Many of these local agencies are involved in promoting the Warm Front Scheme to their own customers and regularly refer potential Warm Front clients. An important role for the Networking team is to support and develop local partnerships to ensure the best service possible is provided to both local stakeholders and customers.

I would like to promote Warm Front in my area, who should I contact?

There is a team of networking staff called, Partnership Development Officers (PDO), based all across England. Each PDO is responsible for supporting and developing the networks in their local area, seeking new partners, generating referrals for Warm Front, providing a link to other Warm Front teams e.g. Customer Response or Installer Management, and reporting on local activities. Details of your local PDO or alternative appropriate support is available from the head office Networking Support Team on 0800 316 0093 or networking@eaga.com.

What reports and information about Warm Front can I get?

The networking team can provide details on a monthly basis of work installed by local authority area. They can also provide details of work installed on jobs referred via specific portal codes. Address specific property information, including SAP data, is provided annually to each local authority.

What literature is available on Warm Front?

We have literature and application forms in a range of languages and formats in order to reach all possible applicants and make the application process easy to understand.

The standard Warm Front leaflet explains the measures and process and includes an application form. It is available in a range of languages; English, Gujarati, Somali, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Greek, Hindi, Polish, and formats; brail, audio and, large print.

We also have four standard letter formats for contacting customers via post and posters available in A3 or A4 size.

To request literature please contact networking@eaga.com or call 0800 316 0093.

