

## HECA Questions

### **1) Is this a progress report or a further report?**

We envisage that this would be a progress report commenting on progress from 2015 and also looking ahead considering the questions raised in the guidance (see paragraphs 3.1 -3.22).

### **2) Do you want us to include a reflection of what was in the 2015 report and what we have done?**

Yes, HECA reports are required every two years and this year's reporting period follows progress from 2015.

### **3) Flexible eligibility, is there anything firm about the proposals?**

The final policy on flexible eligibility is included in the Government response to the ECO: Help to Heat consultation which was published in January 2017:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/586260/ECO\\_Help\\_to\\_Heat\\_Government\\_response\\_FINAL\\_26\\_Jan\\_17.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586260/ECO_Help_to_Heat_Government_response_FINAL_26_Jan_17.pdf)

### **4) You've asked for a statement of intent within our HECA reports around Flexible Eligibility as guidance on this has not yet been published, will we be able to update our reports with this statement after 31st March 2017?**

Including the statement of intent in HECA is optional, it can be included there or it can be stand-alone. BEIS is developing guidance on Sols – and is currently seeking comments from key stakeholders, aiming to publish in early March. Guidance will not be statutory. The key mandatory information to include in a statement of intent are the criteria that LAs will be using to identify households living in fuel poverty, or living on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home, and whether they are acting on behalf of other LAs. LAs have discretion over any other contents they may wish to include in the statement of intent (eg referral routes, governance structures, nominated officer who will sign the declarations).

It is expected that Local Authorities can update their reports to include new information if appropriate. See s.5(1) (a) of the Act.

**5) When is the proposal and guidance on flexible eligibility going to be published?**

Policy is published, see above. The guidance will be published in mid-March.

**6) Is this an update on existing guidance, or a full re-write?**

This is an update on existing guidance since March 2013. In refreshing the guidance, there is also an opportunity for us to include guidance that will help achieve shared objectives for new policies and programmes (e.g. ECO flexibility and Smart Meters) through the new BEIS. This is not a full rewrite as the legal obligation on local authorities to report under HECA remains the same.

**7) Part 1 Context, page 5 and 6 – Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations has the target of raising as many fuel poor households to EPC Band C by 2030 and interim milestones of Band E by 2020 and Band D by 2025. Apart from Private Sector housing, there isn't another reference to the EPC bands, despite the target in the Fuel Poverty Strategy for England: does BEIS plan to measure improvements in EPC banding and if so how and will this data be freely accessible to LAs so we can include in our HECA report?**

The fuel poverty target and interim milestones for 2020, 2025 and 2030 are to improve as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable to an energy efficiency rating of a Band E, Band D and Band C respectively. Whilst based upon the same methodology as EPC's, this energy efficiency rating is a bespoke methodology, the Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER).

More detail on FPEER is available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/332236/fpeer\\_methodology.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332236/fpeer_methodology.pdf)

Data is collected on an annual basis as part of the English Housing Survey, this data is used to publish the annual fuel poverty statistics which are publically available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-statistics>. Experimental sub-regional fuel poverty statistics are also published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fuel-poverty-sub-regional-statistics>. BEIS does not currently have plans to collect household level information on improvements to EPC's for the purposes on monitoring fuel poverty.

**8) LEPs are down as a stakeholder in the HECA guidance, what relationship do you think we need to have with them as Local Authorities?**

A Local Enterprise Partnership is a partnership between local authorities and businesses for a given economic geography. There are 38 LEPs in England, which together cover the whole country. Each LEP is responsible for determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs. Their role includes developing a Strategic Economic Plan for their area, coordinating Local Growth Deals with government, and allocating European Structural Investment Funds. Local authorities will need to have a strong relationship with the LEP or LEPs of which they are a member, for example working together on economic development, business support, and funding for local projects.

**9) Across the LEPs, ERDF, struggled to spend low carbon funds. Are HECA reports going to be used for LEPs to support LAs?**

This is possible, although the HECA report is intended to be an internal document. We envisage that HECA reports will encourage a joined up approach on policy formation and can help us understand the priorities of Authorities in different areas relating to energy. It will also be useful for our Local Energy Team and assist colleagues in their discussions with Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

**10) What happens if LAs don't submit HECA reports?**

Failure to produce a report will mean the Authority is in breach of its duty under section 2 of the Act. Where an Authorities' further report or progress reports are not received by the set dates, the Secretary of State may write to the Authority's Chief Executive seeking advice on when it is expected and any reasons for the delay.

**11) Are we able to find out how many smart meters have been installed in a specific county?**

At present we are not able to supply you with this information – our data is currently published at national level. We are exploring options for publishing updated geographical data but do not have a timeframe for this. As an alternative you could approach energy suppliers which other geographical entities have done for e.g. City of London for this data.

**12) Is BEIS going to publish a list of reports, and if so where?**

HECA reports must be published by the local authority. You can normally expect to find the reports on their websites.

**13) We used to get feedback on the HECA reports, but no feedback was given in 2015. Will there be feedback this time?**

We do not plan to provide specific detailed feedback on the HECA reports this year, however there may be a possibility for ad hoc feedback on individual reports. This is not guaranteed however. Local Authorities may find it useful to contact us on what feedback they believe would be useful for them.

**14) Does the information in the previous guidance still apply; including getting it signed off by the Chief Executive? (This helped to raise the profile of the HECA report corporately)**

Yes, this is an update of the existing guidance not a re-write, so the information in the previous guidance still applies with regards to the structure of the Act itself and the structure and format of HECA reports, including sign-off by the Chief Executive. The updated guidance focuses on any new information to include in the reports since March 2013.

**15) Is the HECA report for internal reporting rather than an external facing public document for BEIS?**

The HECA report is more for internal reporting. The information from reports will be used by policy teams within BEIS to aid understanding of the current impacts of their policies and consider the future direction of travel.

**16) If you did provide feedback, it could be on the achievements from the last report, rather than what the ambitions are in the current report?**

It is possible that any feedback could be tailored to the needs of individual Local Authorities.

**17) Is BEIS ambition to make HECA more important?**

We believe that HECA is important in itself. The reports provide good information for action at local level.

**18) Will there be any funding going into HECA?**

We cannot determine whether there will be any funding for HECA directly at this point. However there are other schemes with additional funding where HECA can play an important role (ECO: Help to Heat).

**19) A lot of links (to HECA reports) on council websites are broken, hard to find, etc. Is BEIS going to request links are kept live for the duration of the report?**

No the responsibility is on the local authority. If the link is broken then councils should be able to provide the report if asked.