

The Highland Council

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| Agenda Item | 5. |
| Report No | CCC/20/23 |

Committee: Climate Change

Date: 5 December 2023

Report Title: Raising awareness of external funded opportunities

Report By: Interim Depute Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This paper provides an overview of current external funding opportunities the Council is currently engaged with for Highland residents (owner occupier, private rented and social properties).

1.2 Outline eligibility for:

- Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS)
- SSE Renewable grant
- Energy Company Obligation (ECO4)
- ECO4 Flexible eligibility (ECO4 Flex)
- Great British Insulation Scheme Flexible eligibility (GBIS Flex)

See Appendix 1.

1.3 To provide an overview of the Council's marketing and engagement activities for the EES:ABS programme.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **note** the contents of this report.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** – Change & Energy Team has a dedicated team to manage and coordinate the delivery of externally funded works, costs associated with the team are covered by external funding.

There is no cost implication to the Council, however there are cost saving benefits.

The team has experience delivering multi-measure contracts and energy efficiency improvements to homes throughout the Highland region. Together with extensive experience applying for and securing external funding to undertake energy efficiency works, and associated monitoring, reporting and management requirements of funding providers.

Continuing to work with the Housing section, seeking opportunities to align the delivery of the EES:ABS programme and ECO4 funding with Housing Capital plans.

Delivering collaborated area based programmes across all tenures, achieving best value and tackling fuel poverty in the region. Maximising funding opportunities for the Council by leveraging available government grants and funding from private sector.

3.2 **Legal** – There are no legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – External funding is targeted at households classed as fuel & extreme fuel poor and is available Highland wide.

Significant external grant funding is available to install energy efficiency measures which will:

- improve properties Energy Performance (EPC) rating
- reduce carbon footprint
- potentially reduce heating costs

Highland faces some of the highest levels of fuel and extreme fuel poverty across the region compared to the Scottish average¹.

71% of householders in receipt of EES:ABS grant funding were classed as extreme fuel poor, 31% of extreme fuel poor households received energy efficiency improvements.

Given the level of fuel poverty in the region, the Council must continually review external funding opportunities and consider ways to maximise funding opportunities to support householders to benefit from extensive upgrades to their homes (subject to eligibility and survey). Upgrades will improve properties' EPC rating and should also support households to reach compliance with Scottish Government standards and contribute towards achieving Net Zero.

It is the Council's intention to offer whole house retrofit (where technically feasible), taking the 'fabric first' approach.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – External funding for domestic properties supports the delivery of energy efficiency measures to enable Highland households to reduce their carbon footprint and support the Council in achieving Net Zero.

3.5 **Risk** – Householder signup remains an issue for externally funded programmes in the region. To mitigate this risk the Council has increased marketing of the EES:ABS programme for 2023/24 and continues to work closely with Home Energy Scotland and installers to provide support across the region.

One in three households in Scotland are in fuel poverty, this is across all tenures, and while funding is available to support those meeting eligibility requirements, there continues to be households falling through the cracks. The Council must look at all

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2021/02/scottish-house-condition-survey-local-authority-analyses-2017-2019/documents/scottish-house-condition-survey-2017-2019-local-authority-tables/scottish-house-condition-survey-2017-2019-local-authority-tables/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-house-condition-survey-2017-2019-local-authority-tables.pdf>

external funding opportunities available to deliver energy efficiency measures to private and social properties.

The team is currently reviewing external funding opportunities which can align and expand on the work delivered under the EES:ABS programme across all tenures. Supporting the Council's objective to tackle fuel poverty and assist in a Just Transition for all.

3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – no risks outlined in this report.

3.7 **Gaelic** – There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. **Current external funding opportunities**

4.1 Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS) is funded by the Scottish Government and is designed to tackle fuel poverty by improving domestic energy efficiency. Funding is available to Highland owner occupiers and private rented tenants in Council Tax bands A – D. A [pre-qualification](#) form has been created on Microsoft Forms to allow householders to assess their eligibility for EES:ABS funding and will direct those who are not eligible to Home Energy Scotland for free impartial advice and support.

The SSE Renewable grant provides additional funds to reduce/ remove the requirement for a household contribution and to allow multiple measures to be delivered. Designed to support owner occupier and private rented tenants in extreme fuel poverty receiving energy efficiency improvements funded under EES:ABS or ECO4 Flex.

The Scottish Government and SSE Renewable grants are available to owner occupiers and private rented tenants (subject to eligibility), grant funding cannot be used to cover installation costs for social properties (either Council or registered landlord).

The Council can use a proportion of the EES:ABS grant administration funding to cover enabling costs (i.e. planning, surveys, scaffolding and staff costs) for improvements to Council properties when aligned with the EES:ABS programme delivered within the Climate Change & Energy Team.

4.2 Energy Company Obligation (ECO) has several funding streams including:

- ECO4 Help to Heat Group
- ECO4 Flex
- GBIS Flex

The Council is responsible for publishing the [Statement of Intent](#) for ECO4 Flex and GBIS Flex, determine a mechanism for approving installers and act as a 3rd party signatory.

Appendix 1 outlines eligibility for ECO4 Help to Heat Group, ECO4 Flex and GBIS Flex.

Like EES:ABS, ECO4 is designed to target fuel poor householders. ECO4 targets:

- Lower Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rated properties
- Households on specified benefits
- Lower income households

- People with health conditions which are impacted by living in a cold home.

ECO4 funding is available to social properties with a SAP rating E-G, to part fund the energy efficiency improvements including insulation, heating upgrades and solar PV.

Where innovative solutions are identified, ECO funding will cover social properties with SAP rating D. Innovative solutions attract funding uplifts.

ECO4 funding takes the whole house retrofit approach, focusing on fabric first, proposed works must meet a minimum requirement.

Minimum requirement means improving the energy efficiency rating of SAP band D and E properties to at least a band C, and band F and G properties to at least a band D. This increases the number of measures installed per property and the savings for the household and reduces the need for future upgrades to properties.

5. Marketing & Engagement

- 5.1 In conjunction with Corporate Communications, the team has undertaken a rebranding of all marketing material for the 2023/24 EES:ABS programme, examples in Appendix 2.

A marketing strategy for the 2023/24 has been produced by the Climate Change & Energy Team outlining various activities to raise awareness of the programme and provide further information, see Appendix 3.

2023/24 Marketing includes:

- Direct mailouts
- Social media
- Community events
- Promotional video
- Press releases

The team has held 3 community engagement events to date for the 2023/24 EES:ABS programme, Home Energy Scotland, Allenergy and the Contractor were also in attendance for the events to answer any queries.

- 5.2 At the request of the Scottish Government, a member of the EES:ABS delivery team was invited to present at the Scottish Government EES:ABS officers day in November.

The presentation covered Highland Council's approach to marketing and engagement of the EES:ABS programme across the region to share with other Local Authorities the material we created along with our approach.

- 5.3 Presently the Council is not involved in marketing of ECO4 or GBIS schemes. Marketing for these schemes is undertaken by installers.

For ECO4 Flex and GBIS Flex, the Council provides approved installers with a verification letter which they can include alongside their marketing letter for the Flex schemes.

Designation: Interim Depute Chief Executive

Date: 24/11/2023

Author: Isla MacMillan, Project Manager

Background Papers:

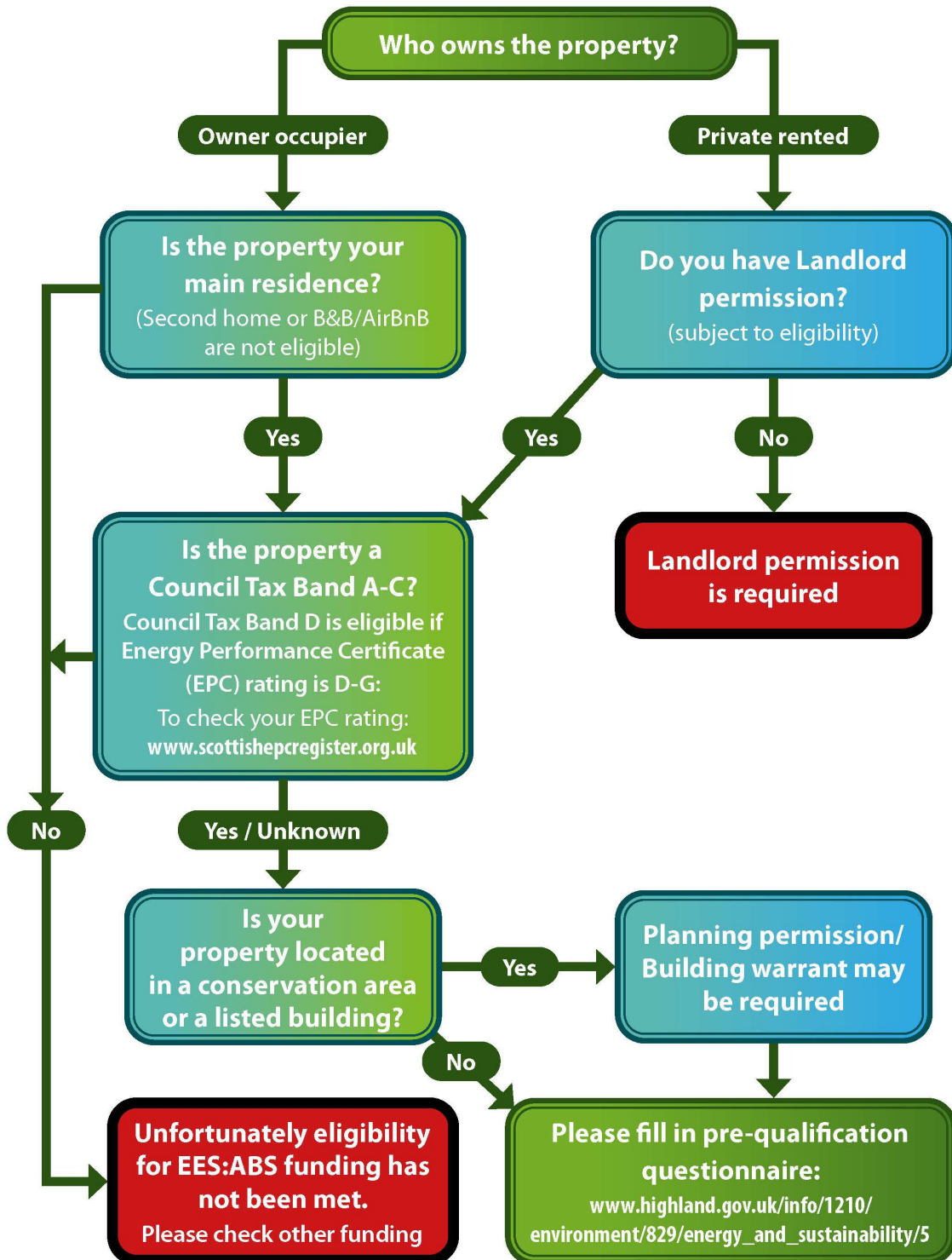
Appendix 1 – EES:ABS, ECO4 and ECO4 Flex & GBIS Flex eligibility route map

Appendix 2 – EES:ABS Marketing & Engagement

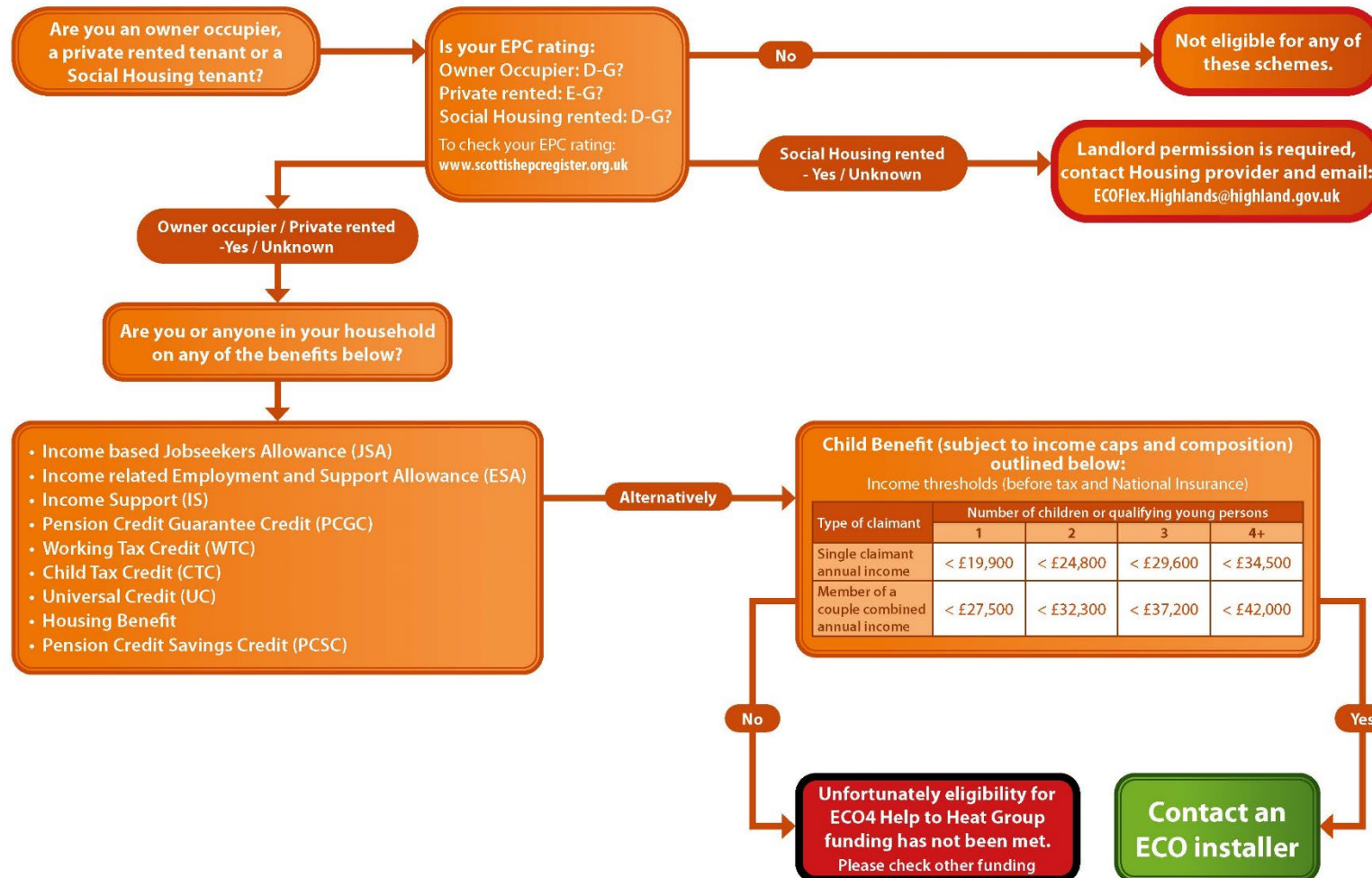
Appendix 3 – EES:ABS Marketing & Engagement strategy

Appendix 4 – EES:ABS information leaflet

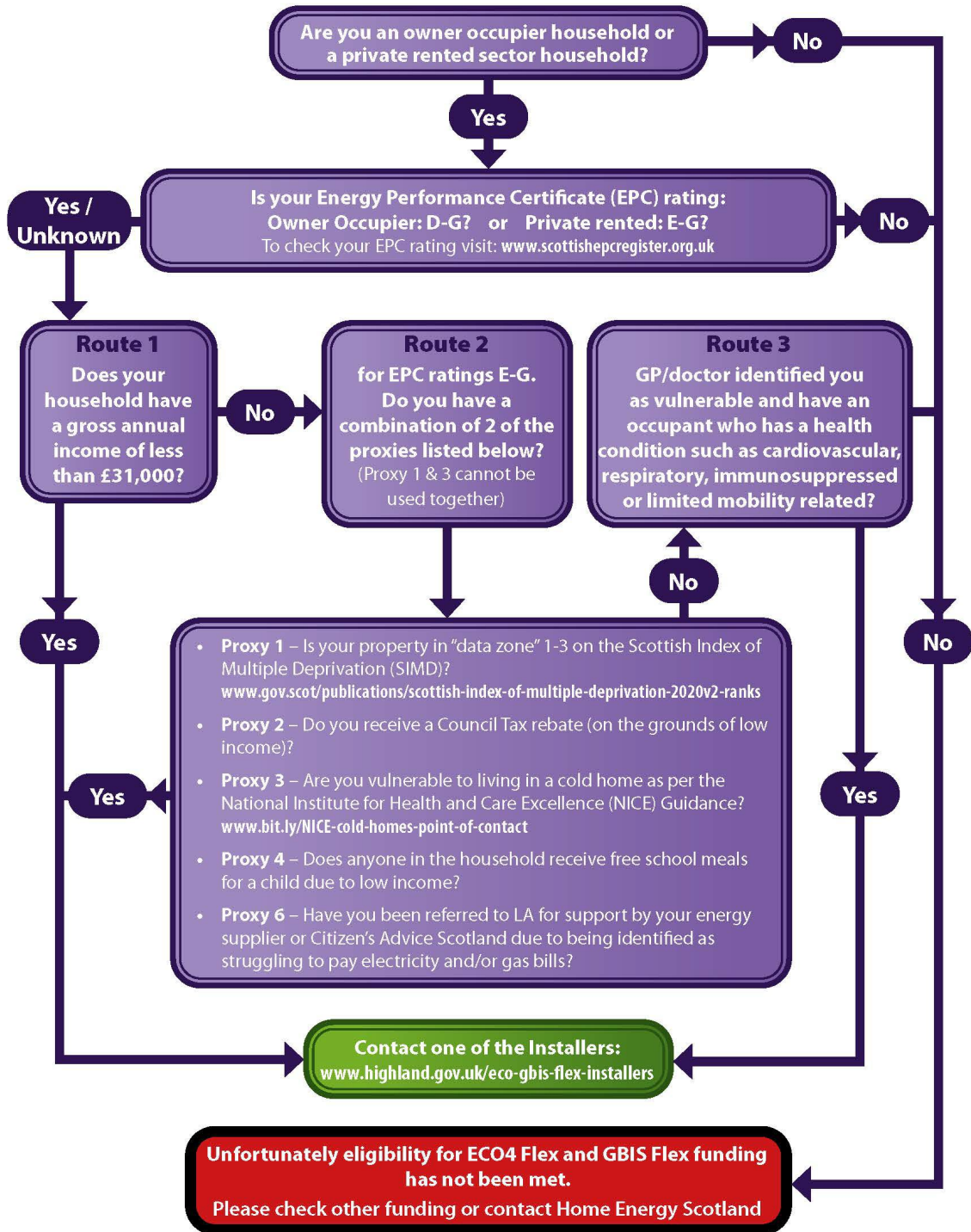
Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS) funding



Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) funding eligibility route map



Energy Company Obligation Flex (ECO4 Flex) and Great British Insulation Scheme Flex (GBIS Flex) funding



Appendix 2 – EES:ABS Marketing & Engagement



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energyefficientscotland

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

an efficient home is a warmer home

www.highland.gov.uk/energyefficientscotland

HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

This graphic features a green and blue background with a white house icon and a line-art illustration of a village at the bottom. The text is centered and uses a clean, sans-serif font.



www.highland.gov.uk/
energyefficientscotland

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

The EES:ABS programme provides significant Scottish Government grant funding to Highland residents offering energy efficiency measures which can lower the fuel costs and improve living conditions for the household. (Focus being 'fabric first' then heating).

Eligibility Criteria:

- Your property is Council Tax band A, B or C (D is eligible where your Energy Performance Certificate is D, E, F or G).
- Your home is either owned by you or privately rented - it must be your main residence and cannot be a second home or B&B.

Scan the QR code or visit the website below, to find out more information about the scheme and fill in the contact form to apply.

Subject to survey and eligibility criteria

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HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND

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This graphic includes a QR code with a 'b' logo in the center, a line-art illustration of a village, and the same text and logos as the top graphic. The background is white with a light blue and green border.

The below images illustrate the EES:ABS prequalification form, the second image details signposting provided to those not eligible for the programme.

Please complete this form to determine eligibility for the EES:ABS programme. The form will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. If you experience any issues completing the form, please email EES-ABS@highland.gov.uk.

* Required

Section 1: Contact details



1

Full name *

Enter your answer

2

Email address *

10

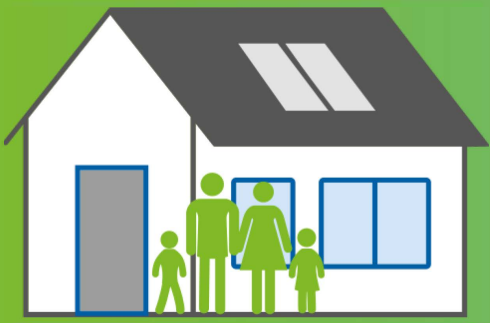
Unfortunately, to be eligible for this scheme, properties must be Council Tax band A-C or D where EPC is D, E, F or G. Or someone in the property has a health condition impacted by living in a cold home.

Home Energy Scotland funded by the Scottish Government, provides impartial advice to homeowners and tenants on saving energy and keeping warm at home. They can also check eligibility for funding options including Scottish Government grants and interest free loans for energy efficiency improvements and renewable heating systems.

You can call Home Energy Scotland free on **0808 808 2282**. *

Appendix 3 – EES:ABS Marketing & Engagement strategy

| Task Name | Start | Finish |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| EES:ABS 23/24 Marketing & Engagement Strategy | Thu 23/02/23 | Sun 31/03/24 |
| Planning & Creation | | |
| Create new EES:ABS logo | Wed 15/03/23 | Fri 14/04/23 |
| Create QR code(s) | Mon 03/07/23 | Fri 28/07/23 |
| Creation of social media template | Mon 27/03/23 | Fri 28/07/23 |
| Updated HC letter template | Fri 14/04/23 | Mon 05/06/23 |
| Create postcards & Slogan | Mon 26/06/23 | Fri 30/06/23 |
| Re-branded event merchandise | Tue 16/05/23 | Thu 29/06/23 |
| Event banner | Mon 04/09/23 | Thu 21/09/23 |
| Digital promotion | | |
| Updates to Highland Council website | Mon 03/04/23 | Mon 04/12/23 |
| Social media campaign: | | |
| - Facebook promoted posts | Tue 21/03/23 | Fri 28/07/23 |
| - Facebook events | Mon 28/08/23 | Wed 27/09/23 |
| Animation video | Mon 11/09/23 | Thu 30/11/23 |
| Targeted approach | | |
| Direct mailout | Mon 26/06/23 | Fri 14/07/23 |
| Community engagement events | Wed 06/09/23 | Wed 27/09/23 |
| Postcard mailout | Thu 23/02/23 | Thu 23/02/23 |
| Engagement events | | |
| Beauly | Wed 06/09/23 | Wed 06/09/23 |
| Strathpeffer | Wed 13/09/23 | Wed 13/09/23 |
| Caol | Thu 28/09/23 | Thu 28/09/23 |
| Monitoring & Evaluation | Mon 04/09/23 | Sun 31/03/24 |



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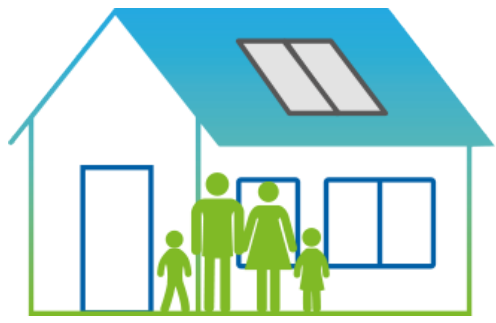
an efficient home is a warmer home



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Background

The Scottish Government has awarded The Highland Council significant grant funding to deliver a Highland Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS).

EES:ABS grant funding is available to Highland homeowners and private rented tenants (subject to eligibility and survey) to make energy efficiency upgrades including insulation, installation of an air source heat pump or solar panel with battery storage to make homes more energy efficient and reduce running costs.

The Council has appointed Union Technical Services Limited as the contractor for the 2023/24 EES:ABS programme.

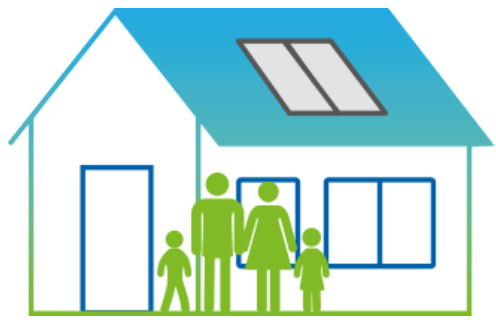
Union Technical will survey referred properties and outline all suitable energy efficiency measures which could be installed. Properties can receive a single measure or multiple measures.



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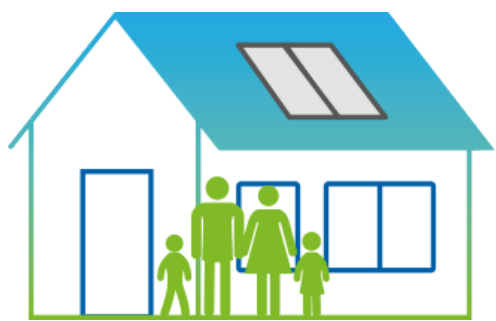
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Eligibility Criteria

- Your property is Council Tax Band A, B or C
- Band D may be eligible if EPC rating is D, E, F or G
- Your home is either owned by you or privately rented – must be your main residence and cannot be a second home, B&B or Airbnb
- If your property is in a conservation area or a listed building restrictions may apply

Subject to survey and eligibility criteria





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Contact information

- Email: EES-ABS@highland.gov.uk
- Scan the QR code or visit the Council website, to find out more information about the scheme and fill in the contact form to apply.

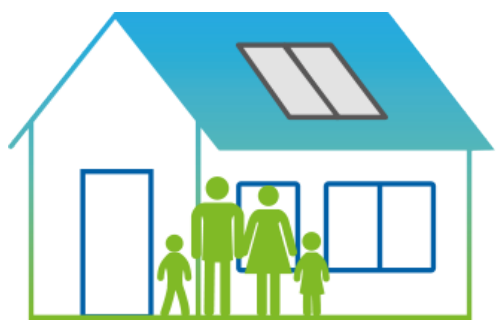


- You can call **Home Energy Scotland free on 0808 808 2282** for impartial energy advice, to discuss current available funding options and assess your eligibility for this scheme.

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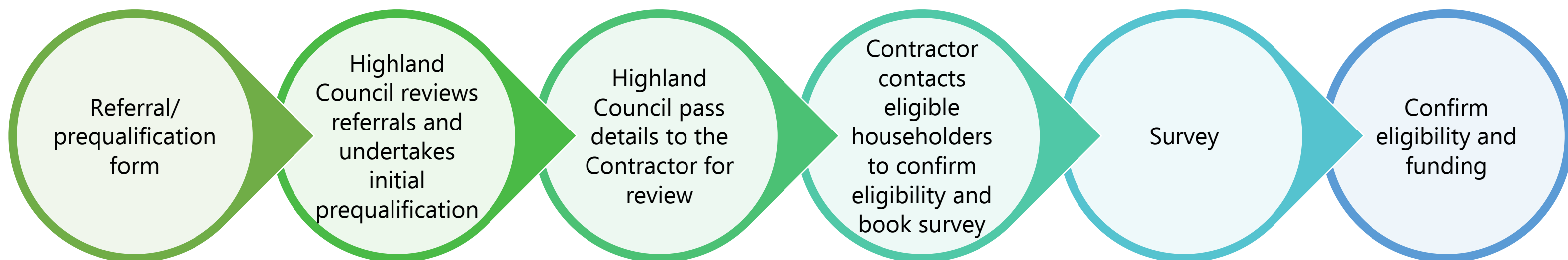


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Next steps/ process

The below diagram outlines the referral process



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