

Launch of Home Upgrade Grant with EDF Energy

Briefing Note No. 24-16

Service : *Climate*
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In 2023, Wiltshire Council was successful in securing more than £1.7m Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG 2) funding, which will help go towards increasing the energy efficiency of existing housing in the county. It will be spent on retrofitting up to 86 Wiltshire homes by March 2025, supporting the council's ambition for the county to be carbon neutral by 2030.

On 12 December, procurement of a contractor was approved as part of the Cabinet Key Decision paper and EDF Energy has been awarded the contract.

The government announced the funding on 22 March 2023 as part of a £1.8bn funding package (see [Govt press release](#)). Wiltshire Council was listed as a successful authority (see [Govt press release](#)). The Wiltshire Communications team issued two press releases on the confirmation that the council had been [successful in securing government funding](#), and when [cabinet approved](#) to seek to work with a specialist provider on the project. There will be a summary of this funding in the annual climate update to Cabinet and Council.

What is HUG 2?

The [Home Upgrade Grant](#): Phase 2 (HUG 2) is a grant funding scheme launched by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to help local authorities provide energy efficiency upgrades and clean heating systems to low-income households.

The scheme targets the worst performing homes in terms of energy performance (energy performance certificate bands D-G) without mains gas central heating in England, with 60% of funding ringfenced for rural local authorities. A key focus of the scheme is to phase out the use of fossil fuel heating and make progress towards the UK's 2050 Net Zero commitment. It will also support improved household health and wellbeing by reducing the number of cold homes and play a key role in the government's wider programme of green retrofit.

Relevance to the council's business plan

This funding will support the following business plan missions and guiding themes by reducing carbon emissions, stimulating the green economy and tackling the health issues associated with fuel poverty:

- The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy, and enriched lives
- Our local economy thrives and is supported by a skilled workforce

- We lead the way in how councils and counties mitigate the climate challenges ahead
- Tackling inequalities.

How the scheme links with other council initiatives

This initiative will complement our [Home Energy Efficiency Programme](#) for retrofitting council homes and the Warm and Safe advice service.

To deliver the grant funded measures a new retrofit team has been recruited, including a Retrofit Development Manager post funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a Compliance Officer and Climate Technician. The team have procured the services of a managing agent, EDF Energy, who will deliver the energy efficiency measures to eligible homes. Wiltshire Council has started communication of the grant opportunity with residents of Wiltshire and EDF launched their communications and marketing activities on 19 June.

This funding builds on the success of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS 1b). In 2021 the council was successful in securing almost £550,000, which was used to improve 90 of its least energy efficient council homes.

What type of retrofit measures will be funded?

A whole house retrofit takes each house in its own right and considers the fabric, the heating and hot water requirements, ventilation, and the people living in the property to establish the correct measures to implement for that individual property.

Some of the measures deployed to retrofit a property include:

- Energy efficiency measures such as wall and loft insulation
- Low-carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps
- Smart measures such as smart heating controls
- Ventilation

Who is the funding for?

Off-gas domestic properties that are either:

- a) Owner-occupied by those on a low income (defined as having an annual gross household income of less than £36,000) who will not be required to contribute to the costs of upgrade
- b) Private landlords who own four or fewer rental properties and have low-income tenants. Landlords are required to make a minimum contribution of one third towards the total cost of works, in line with the scheme's cost caps.

Progress achieved:

A contract has been awarded to EDF Energy to market the scheme, generate and verify leads, verify household eligibility, provide specialist retrofit roles including PAS 2035 certified assessors, designers and coordinators. EDF Energy will also coordinate and manage installers and sub-contractors, manage the customer journey, carry out installations and ensure compliance and scheme reporting.

There is a pipeline of applicants who have been verified for low income and the HUG team will continue to work in partnership with the Wiltshire Council Communications team to attract further applicants through upcoming marketing campaigns. The HUG team has set

up a [webpage](#) to provide further information about the scheme and a link to the online eligibility checker. There is an independent auditor in place to assess the quality of installations and certifications.

Next steps in the programme:

EDF Energy will soon begin contacting applicants to book in their property assessment and start design work for the installation of recommended energy efficiency measures.

Continue promotion of the scheme, including raising awareness of the eligibility criteria, to ensure we have a good supply of interested households that fit the target group for the grant and to help ensure that we can maximise delivery within the available funding.