



St Helens Borough Council - HECA Report 2023

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all local authorities (LAs) in England to submit reports to the Secretary of State of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy performance 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. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero uses data submitted to inform policy thinking on energy efficiency, and to build an ongoing picture of local and national energy efficiency policy delivery.

The 2023 report template is divided by sections to capture information on a range of key themes as follows:

- **Headline & Overview**

What main strategy and schemes LA's currently have to promote carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency, stakeholders involved and impact at a societal and economic level.

- **Communication**

How LAs engage stakeholders to promote awareness of energy efficiency. Green Local Supply Chain.

How LAs engage local businesses in the promotion of energy savings products and the societal benefits alongside any local economic impact this might have.

- **Social Housing Decarbonisation**

What actions LAs and Social Housing partners have taken to install energy efficiency measures.

- **Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards**

How LAs enforce and promote awareness of the PRS Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards that came into force in April 2018 and April 2020

- **Green Home Finance**

Leveraging private finance to promote energy efficiency.

- **Fuel Poverty**

How LAs identify those in fuel poverty and any initiatives used to address this.

- **Government Funded Schemes**

LA participation in schemes such as LAD, HUG and ECO.

- **Smart Metering**

How LAs promote awareness and uptake of smart metering.

St Helens Borough Council - HECA Report 2023 Question Responses

| Heading | Question/Response Options | St Helens Borough Council Response | Further explanation (as required) |
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| Introductory Questions | Name of Local Authority | St Helens Borough Council | |
| | Type of Local Authority | Metropolitan Borough Council | |
| | Name, job title and email address of official submitting report. | Chris Birkett Affordable Warmth Project Officer chrisbirkett@sthelens.gov.uk | |
| Headline and Overview | Q1. Does your Local Authority have a current strategy on carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency for domestic properties? | Yes | St Helens Borough Council currently has a fuel poverty strategy which includes for the delivery of energy efficiency measures on domestic properties. St Helens Borough Council has also developed a Climate Response Plan which affirms the Council's commitment to a net |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes /No | | <p>zero by 2040 vision and sets out some of the immediate actions we are proposing to take. It highlights the breadth and scale of the challenge facing us and how the entire borough of St Helens must come together to collectively act and tackle the climate emergency facing us all. We have also developed a more detailed action plan to show the specific steps that we will take to edge closer to the net zero vision.</p> <p>In addition to St Helens Borough Council's strategies, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) outlined the City Region's route to achieving net zero carbon by 2040 in the Pathway to Net Zero.</p> |
| | <p>Q2. If yes, please provide a link.</p> | <p>Fuel Poverty Strategy - https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/housing/energy-efficiency/sthelens-council-home-energy-conservation-act-heca-report/ Climate Response Plan – https://netzero.sthelens.gov.uk/media/ebhp4pvc/st-helens-climate-response-plan.pdf Climate Action Plan – https://netzero.sthelens.gov.uk/media/wy1ascsj/appendix-a.pdf LCRCA Pathway to Net Zero - https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/pathway-to-net-zero</p> | |
| | <p>Q3. If no, are you planning to develop one, and in what timeframe?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, within 1 year • Yes, within 2 years | <p>N/A</p> | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, within 3 years+ • No development plans | | |
| | <p>Q4. In the last 2 years, what has been the cost (or estimated cost) of your energy efficiency, and/or carbon reduction initiatives, schemes and services? Please consider the total cost of running and administering the scheme(s). Please input 0 if no schemes or initiatives has been implemented.</p> | <p>2021/22 Energy Efficiency *Revenue Costs - £104k Capital (St Helens Borough Council & LCRCA Grant Schemes) - £1.2Million</p> <p>2022/23 Energy Efficiency Revenue Costs - £111k **Capital (St Helens Borough Council & LCRCA Grant Schemes) - £3.8Million</p> | <p>*Revenue costs include 3 full time Energy Efficiency staff costs and annual costs for Energy Projects Plus – Save Energy Advice Line. **Capital costs include St Helens Borough Council’s Heating and Insulation schemes and the LCRCA Retrofit Programmes, which include: 2021/22 - Local Authority Delivery 2 (LAD 2) 2022/23 - Sustainable Warmth Fund (LAD 3 & Home Upgrade Grant 1 (HUG 1))</p> |
| | <p>Q5. Which, if any, of the following outcomes have been achieved through your energy efficiency and/or carbon initiatives, schemes and services? Please select all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy savings, • Carbon savings, • Job creation • Increased business competitiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy savings • Carbon savings • Job creation • Increased business competitiveness • Alleviation of fuel poverty • Improved health outcomes | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleviation of fuel poverty • Improved health outcomes • None of the above • Other - please specify. | | |
| Consumer Advice and Information | <p>Q6. Do you provide or promote any advisory services to consumers on how to save energy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Yes/No) | Yes | |
| | <p>Q7. If yes, please select all that apply;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority website • Local advisory service • 'Find ways to save energy in your home' (formerly Simple Energy Advice) gov.uk website • 'Find ways to save energy in your home' gov.uk phonenumber • Leaflets • Social media • Local energy hubs • Other- please specify | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority website • Local advisory service • 'Find ways to save energy in your home' (formerly Simple Energy Advice) gov.uk website • Leaflets • Social media | <p>As well as promoting a variety of advice / information sources such as National Energy Action, Energy Saving Trust and GOV.UK webpages through the Council's Energy Efficiency webpage (https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/saveenergy) and social media accounts. St Helens Borough Council also commission Energy Projects Plus's Save Energy Advice Line.</p> |

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| <p>Local Retrofit Supply Chain</p> | <p>Q8. Have you conducted any assessment or analysis to understand the existing capacity in your local supply chain to support the decarbonisation of buildings by 2050?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (yes/no) | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Completed by the LCRCA as part of the delivery of a number of Retrofit Programmes across the Liverpool City Region.</p> |
| | <p>Q9. If you answered yes to question 8, please summarise any specific bottlenecks (or provide a link if this information has been published)</p> | <p>No supply chain 'bottlenecks' have been identified that have impeded the delivery of the LCRCA retrofit programmes undertaken.</p> <p>However, it is recognised to meet net zero targets across the region a growth in PAS2035 retrofit skills is required. This includes retrofit assessment, co-ordination, and installation.</p> <p>The LCRCA captured this in the Green Jobs & Skills Plan 2022 - https://api.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/LCR-Green-Jobs-Skills-Plan-.pdf</p> | |

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| | <p>Q10. Which, if any, of the following actions are you taking to upskill and/or grow your local retrofit installer supply chain? Please select all that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting training provision at local training providers • Supporting FE colleges to improve facilities or train trainers or otherwise enable better delivery of retrofit training. • Providing installer networking opportunities or other business support for growing companies. • Careers advice or similar involving local businesses doing schools outreach to encourage young people into the sector. • None of the above • Other (please state) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting training provision at local training providers • Providing installer networking opportunities or other business support for growing companies. | <p>LCRCA Skills Bootcamps - Green Skills training courses including Retrofit and Domestic Energy Assessment and Renewable Energy (including heat pumps, EV charging, electrical). Funded by DfE (https://lcrbemore.co.uk/skillsbootcamps/);</p> <p>Sustainable Warmth Fund, Solar together and HUG2 contractor market engagement events. Engaged with contractors through Trustmark register;</p> <p>LCR Low Carbon Homes Retrofit Summits - Yearly online events for networking and awareness raising</p> |
| | <p>Q11. Do you provide advice for your residents and small businesses about how to pick an installer business or how</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>DESNZ has funded the Local Energy Advice Demonstrators (LEAD), which is overseen regionally by the Northwest Net Zero Hub. These provide in-person energy advice to residents. Energy Projects Plus (EPP) is</p> |

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| | <p>to avoid being mis-sold inappropriate improvements? • (yes/no)</p> | | <p>fulfilling this function in the LCR via the Retrofit Buddies scheme https://www.localenergynw.org/page/local-energy-advice-demonstrators</p> |
| | <p>Q12. Has there been any Trading Standards activity against energy efficiency or home retrofit businesses in your area due to mis-selling or otherwise poorly advising consumers about retrofit measures? • Yes – there has been action taken on a regular basis • Yes – but rarely • No – resourcing constraints have curtailed potential activity • No – we are not aware of any issues</p> | <p>• No – we are not aware of any issues</p> | |
| | <p>Q13. If you received funding under Local Authority Delivery, Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, did availability of PAS 2030:2019 or MCS certified and TrustMark registered supply chain affect your</p> | <p>No</p> | |

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| | <p>ability to deliver? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (yes/no) </p> | | |
| | <p>Q14. If you answered yes to question 13 please can you tell us, which parts of the supply chain were particularly affected (please select all that apply)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installers of insulation • Installers of windows/doors • Installers of heat pumps • Retrofit assessors • Retrofit coordinators • All of the above • Other (please state) | N/A | |
| | <p>Q15. If you answered yes to question 13 please can you tell us, what actions did you take to overcome those barriers (please select all that apply)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing to drive supply chain interest • Use of frameworks or a local DPS to reach more businesses • Supporting training and upskilling more generally | N/A | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a main contractor and requiring them to source suitably certified supply chain (either through contracting or training up their own staff) • Delivering in-house e.g. by upskilling existing social housing maintenance teams, directly employing retrofit coordinators etc • Other (please state) | | |
| Social Housing Decarbonisation | <p>Q16. Did you apply to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, and successful in securing funding • Yes, and not successful in securing funding • No • Don't know | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, and successful in securing funding | <p>Whilst St Helens Borough Council does not have any Social Housing the Council has worked in partnership with the LCRCA who have delivered government funded retrofit programmes such as the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG), and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in consortia with Registered Providers (RPs) of Social Housing.</p> |
| | <p>Q17. Which, if any, of the following motivated you to apply for SHDF Wave 2.1? Please select all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support for retrofit • Technical support for retrofit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support for retrofit | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant needs • Expectations of future energy performance regulations • Other – please tell us your motivation(s) for applying | | |
| | <p>Q18. Which, if any, of the following barriers prevented you from applying to SHDF Wave 2.1?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application window too short • Too much information needed at application • Don't own enough stock • Not enough capability • Too Costly • Retrofit work is not a priority • Not enough information • Don't know • Other – please tell us what prevented you applying | N/A | |

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| | <p>Q19, Have you carried out/planned to carry out any retrofit work in absence of SHDF funding?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Don't know | No / N/A | <p>St Helens Borough Council do not provide any social housing; therefore, have answered no to this question. Though the report and relevant questions have been discussed with Torus, the biggest provider of social housing in the borough. Torus have indicated that they have carried out or plan to carry out retrofit work in the absence of SHDF funding and that the work would be funded using internal funding.</p> |
| | <p>Q20. If yes, how is this funded/how would this be funded?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal funding • Funding from other Government schemes • Other • Don't know | N/A | See explanation to question 19. |
| | <p>Q21. If no, what is/are the main reason(s) for not planning to carry out any retrofit work? Please select all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding • Lack of internal resource • Lack of capacity • Lack of technical support • Retrofit work is not a priority | N/A | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other • Don't know | | |
| | Q22. How many of your social housing partners are you aware applied for the SHDF? | 2 | There were 2 social housing providers that applied for SHDF which initially covered properties within the borough. |
| Domestic Private Rented Sector (PRS) Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) Regulations | Q23. Do you enforce the PRS MEES Regulations in domestic tenancies? • (Yes/No) | Yes | |
| | Q24. Do you use the PRS MEES Exemption Register? • (Yes/No) | Yes | |
| | Q25. Are you aware of the PRS MEES draft toolkit for supporting local authorities? • Yes, and I've used it • Yes, but I haven't used it • No | • Yes, not used | |

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| | <p>Q26. In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you engaged with in respect to enforcement of the PRS MEES Regulations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please enter the amount /estimated amount. | 387 | Local data along with EPC data was used to identify properties likely to be in breach of the MEES regulations. Letters were sent to each of these properties to advise about the minimum standards and to make improvements if required. |
| | <p>Q27. In the past 2 years, how many domestic private rented properties have you found to be non-compliant?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please enter the amount /estimated amount. | 7 | From the mailout 7 landlords responded to advise they were making the necessary improvement and/or updating the EPC. |
| | <p>Q28. In the last 2 years, how many non-compliant properties have been improved to EPC Band E after you have engaged with them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please enter the amount /estimated amount. | 7 | From the mailout 7 landlords responded to advise they were making the necessary improvement and/or updating the EPC. |
| | <p>Q29. How many compliance notices have you issued in the past 2 years for non-compliance of the PRS MEES Regulations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please enter the amount /estimated amount. | Nil | Works have been completed by landlords on request. |

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| Green Home Finance | <p>Q30. What programmes, if any, do you have to promote domestic energy efficiency improvements for those who are able to pay? Please provide links to any relevant online materials.</p> | <p>St Helens Borough Council has participated in Solar Together an able to pay group buying scheme for Solar PV & battery storage, there have been 572 registrations for quotes with deposits paid for 92 PV and 4 Battery storage. (Finance was not available through this scheme)</p> <p>https://solartogether.co.uk/st-helens/home</p> | |
| | <p>Q31. Do you take any steps to raise awareness of the availability of private financing options (such as green mortgages) to fund retrofit works?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No, but we have plans to do this in the future • No <p>Please include links to any relevant online materials.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes | <p>The LCRCA Invited the Green Financial Initiative to speak at the LCR Low Carbon Homes Retrofit Summit</p> |
| | <p>Q32. Do you refer homeowners interested in energy efficiency to retail lenders offering green finance products?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No, but we have plans to do this in the future • No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No | |
| Fuel Poverty | <p>Q33. Does your Local Authority have a Fuel</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes | |

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| | <p>Poverty Strategy? • (Yes/No)</p> | | |
| | <p>Q34 How do you identify fuel poor households? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used local data sets on energy efficiency/housing • Used local data sets on household income • Campaigns to encourage potential households to reach out • Other • [option to provide additional information] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used local data sets on energy efficiency/housing • Used local data sets on household income • Campaigns to encourage potential households to reach out • [option to provide additional information] - Due to data limitations and the relatively difficult way of assessing whether a household is fuel poor or not we target assistance to those households most at risk from cold related illness, those households on low incomes and vulnerable to cold. | |
| | <p>Q35. What actions are you taking to reduce fuel poverty in your area? Please select all that apply and provide additional information if possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of government wide schemes such as the Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. • Actions to increase financial support to low income or vulnerable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of government wide schemes such as the Home Upgrade Grant or Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. • Actions to increase financial support to low income or vulnerable households. • [option to provide additional information] - St Helens Borough Council work in partnership with the LCRC who bid for and deliver government funded retrofit programmes such as the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG), and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund in consortia with Registered Providers (RPs) of Social Housing. In addition to this, St Helens Borough Council's Affordable Warmth & Welfare Team undertake home visits to provide advice and support to help residents / people improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce energy bills to | |

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| | <p>households.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other • [option to provide additional information] | <p>help residents and people keep warm in the winter months.</p> <p>Support can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking receipt of all financial support available, for example: Warm Home Discount, Cost of Living Payments, Disability Cost of Living Payment, Pensioner Cost of Living Payment etc... • Household Support Fund – complete applications to fund – £500 towards energy bills to help heat your homes to an adequate level. • Benefit entitlement checks. • Priority Services Register – support in registering for the scheme with utility companies. • Emergency fund for housing related safety issues - boiler repairs, safety checks / gas servicing, leaks, toilet repairs etc... • Grant funding support / referrals for major measures such as replacement boilers, insulation measures etc... • Onward referrals to other sources of support. | |
| | <p>Q36. Does fuel poverty interlink with your local authority's overall Carbon Reduction Strategy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Yes/No) • If yes, please can you explain how it does this? • If no, is this something you might consider doing or are there barriers to doing this? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes <p>Grant assistance to improve the energy efficiency, and thereby reducing carbon emissions, are targeted at low income and vulnerable households most likely to be considered fuel poor.</p> | |

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| Local Authority Delivery | Q37. If your local authority did not apply for funding from the Local Authority Delivery scheme, please indicate which barrier(s) prevented you from applying. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of capacity • lack of capability • lack of awareness • other – please specify | N/A | Applied through LCRCA. |
| | Q38. Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for on-gas properties? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Yes/No) | Yes | |
| | Q39. If no, please specify what is lacking. | Whilst we would say that we do have access to good quality data in the main, there are some gaps and some issues with the completeness and accuracy of EPC data. | |
| Home Upgrade Grant | Q40. If your local authority did not apply for funding from the Home Upgrade Grant, please indicate which barrier(s) prevented you from applying. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of capacity • lack of capability • lack of awareness • other – please specify | N/A | Applied through LCRCA. |

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| | Q41. Does your local authority have access to good quality housing data for off-gas properties? • (Yes/No) | Yes | |
| | Q42. If no, please specify what is lacking. | Whilst we would say that we do have access to good quality data in the main, there are some gaps and some issues with the completeness and accuracy of EPC data. | |
| The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) | Q43. Did your local authority have a published Statement of Intent (SoI) for ECO flexibility eligibility under ECO3, during 2022? • (Yes/No) | Yes | |
| | Please answer the following questions to help us to understand LA Flex delivery in more detail during the course of 2022: | | DESNZ have confirmed this covers the period from 1st April 2021 to 30 th June 2022. |
| | Q44. How many declarations were issued for low-income vulnerable households during ECO3? | 33 | |
| | Q45. How many declarations were issued for Fuel Poor households under ECO3? | 30 | |
| | Q46. How many declarations were issued for in-fill under ECO3? | 0 | |

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| | Q47. What was the highest income cap published in your Sol? | There wasn't an income cap specified on the Sol, "low income" was determined by the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (www.minimumincome.org.uk) | |
| | Q48. If you have used an income over £30k gross, what reason did you give? | <p>The decision and reasoning to use the Minimum Income Standard and for not adopting table 1 in Annex 6 of the government guidance were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After analysis of the possible incomes of households in receipt of Help to Heat welfare benefits, excluding DLA, these households could all earn significantly more than those in table 1, Annex 6. Qualification would therefore be through Help to Heat, potentially leaving LA Flex redundant; 2. The use of the Minimum Income Standard is becoming more widespread amongst government bodies and organisations for determining low income; and 3. It is regularly updated to reflect changing living costs. 4. Unlike Help to Heat criteria, residents need an additional qualifying criterion (vulnerable to the cold or high heating costs) other than income. Therefore, the higher income levels are justified to reflect the further needs. | |
| | Q49. Did you charge for declarations to be signed? • Yes/No | • No | |
| | Q 50. If so, please state how much and how you decided on this figure. | N/A | |
| | Q51. ECO4 commenced in July 2022, has your local authority published a Statement of Intent (Sol) for ECO flexibility | • Yes | |

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| | eligibility under ECO4? • (Yes/No) | | |
| | Q52. If 'No' are there any specific barriers preventing you, from publishing and participating in the scheme? | N/A | |
| | Q53a. Do you directly engage with energy suppliers either for ECO Flex(or other domestic energy efficiency schemes? • (Yes/No) | • No | |
| | 54b. If yes, please provide the name of the scheme and indicate whether this is an LA, Supplier, DESNZ or other organisational run scheme (please specify) | N/A | |
| | Q55. Which route(s) do you envisage submitting referrals through under ECO4 Flex? Select all that apply. • All four routes available • Route 1 • Route 2 • Route 3 • Route 4 | • Route 1 • Route 2 • Route 3 | |

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| Smart Metering | The following questions refer to smart metering advice. Please provide any additional details where possible. | | |
| | Q56a. Do you provide smart metering advice when implementing energy efficiency improvements (including through grant schemes such as the Energy Company Obligation and the Home Upgrade Grant) in residential accommodation? • [Yes/No]. | • Yes | Via the LCRCAs retrofit schemes contractors are required to pass on information to residents under Green Homes Grants and leaflets are made available. |
| | Q57b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this. | N/A | |
| | Q58a. Do you encourage landlords to promote smart meter uptake, e.g., landlord licencing schemes. • [Yes/No]. | • No | |
| | Q59b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this. | Energy suppliers have binding targets to install smart meters, enforced by Ofgem, the energy regulator. There are currently no plans to encourage landlords to promote smart meter uptake. | |

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| | <p>Q60a. Do you arrange for smart meters to be installed by energy suppliers in vacant social housing premises?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Yes/No]. | N/A | |
| | <p>Q61b. If no, please explain why not, and what plans will be put in place to implement this</p> | N/A | <p>St Helens Borough Council do not provide any social housing, we have discussed this with the biggest social housing provider in the borough, Torus. They have advised that they only replace meters with smart meters if the meter has been tampered with, damaged or missing.</p> <p>Torus had a Void Care Contract with an energy company, however they found that delays in supply from the company generated significant delays in void turnarounds so took the decision to stop installations.</p> |