

Energy Efficiency Works and COVID-19 Guidance

Version 1 (01/07/2020)

Introduction

This document outlines guidance and procedures regarding energy efficiency works managed by the Energy & Sustainability section of The Highland Council. This guidance is produced in line with current government advice on non-essential construction work.¹

The programmes covered by this guidance includes (but is not limited to): [Energy Efficient Scotland Area Based Scheme](#) and [ECO Flexible Eligibility](#). Both schemes are run in partnership with E.ON Energy Installation Service (E.ON).

The Highland Council's energy efficiency schemes will be delivered in accordance with existing and forthcoming guidance on preventing the spread of COVID 19. This will be relevant to how households are engaged through this scheme and arrangements in place to ensure that measures are installed safely. Arrangements for the assessment of eligibility for the scheme will adhere to social distancing guidelines. The Council will only make declarations of eligibility, where it believes that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the public and those involved in installing measures. Where a member of the household is medically or voluntarily shielding or is in regular contact with someone at extremely high risk of severe illness, The Highland Council will not support installation of measures until it is safe to do so. Furthermore, measures will not be installed where a household is isolating due to possible infection with COVID 19 until it is safe to do so.

The Scottish Government's 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): construction sector guidance' can be viewed [here](#) and Construction Scotland Restart Plan can be viewed [here](#). The phased approach to non-essential construction restart is outlined in Figure 1 below. Currently the Scottish Government has advised that work on the Energy Efficient Scotland programmes and ECO Flex can restart where appropriate and safe to do so in line with the current phase.

For further information please contact ees-abs@highland.gov.uk.

¹ This guidance was first published on 01/07/2020



- Phase 0 – Planning
- Phase 1 – COVID-19 pre-start site preparation
- Phase 2 – Soft start (only where physical distancing can be maintained)
- Phase 3 – Steady state (only where physical distancing can be maintained)
- Phase 4 – Steady state (where physical distancing can be maintained and/or with PPE use)
- Phase 5 – Increasing density / productivity

Figure 1: Construction Scotland Restart Plan Phases

Sign up to Schemes

Changes have been made to every stage of the customer journey to reduce risk to both householders and contractors working on these programmes.

Timescales may be increased throughout the customer journey due to the current situation.

The Highland Council takes the protection of personal data seriously and will limit the amount of personal data which is passed to E.ON and their agents to a minimum. Households may be eligible for the ECO Flex scheme due to personal circumstances which they may not want to disclose to contractors (i.e. medical conditions). When confirming eligibility for this scheme we only ask households to confirm they meet the eligibility criteria, we do not require households to submit details to ourselves or E.ON. However, we would strongly encourage households which are shielding or isolating to disclose this to E.ON at the earliest possible stage. This will allow Eon to take steps to ensure the household is protected throughout the process.

Currently a surveyor will be required to gain access to your property to undertake a technical survey to confirm suitability for programme, determine works required and provide a design specification. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including gloves, facemask and eye protection, will be used by surveyors entering the property. They will also require the householder to be in a different room to them, surveyors will wipe down all surveys they touch with antibacterial wipes/ spray.

Virtual surveys are currently being trialled, however these are currently not ready to be rolled out to the wider programme.

Households Paused in March

Households which have previously signed up to the area-based scheme will be carried forward and works to these properties will be prioritised when works restart. When this will be will depend on several factors including the location of the home, the householder's current stage in the customer journey and whether anyone in the home is shielding or self-isolating.

If someone in the home is shielding, then works will remain paused until the Scottish Government announces changes to its advice on shielding.

Other households will be contacted to confirm they still wish to proceed with works.

Risk Assessments

Updated risk assessments are required for all contractors working on The Highland Council programmes. These risk assessments will reflect current government and industry advice on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on construction sites. These must be adhered to by all contractors working on programmes run by The Highland Council.

Adjustment to Measures

Measures which may be undertaken in the above schemes are:

- cavity wall insulation
- external wall insulation
- loft insulation
- first time central heating (air source heat pumps).

Currently not all these measures will restart at the same time. External wall insulation will be the first measure to restart, followed by cavity wall insulation and first time central heating.

Safety on Site



Recommencement of works will only take place where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

All contractors will follow the processes and procedures set out in their risk assessments and method statements. These will comply with current government advice on social distancing and hygiene.

Currently preparations are being made to restart works which can be done without accessing the home (see 'Adjustment to Measures for more information). Work will not restart on homes where the occupants are currently shielding.

Additional signage will be present on site before works begin and during the installation process. These signs will communicate to workers and the public health and safety measures which should be observed e.g. 2 meters social distancing.

The number of contractors on site will be limited and they should adhere to social distancing guidelines. Please note, some crews may co-habit together while working together, allowing for relaxation of rules surrounding social distancing within the crew. Contractors will still adhere to social distancing guidance for those outwith their households. Households will be advised in advance if the work crew assigned to their property falls into this category.

Government advice on hygiene should also be followed on site. All contractors will be issued with appropriate PPE which they will wear on site in accordance with Risk Assessments. As noted above, additional PPE will be worn if workers required access into the home. Examples of PPE on site can include: hand washing facilities, gloves, masks, etc.

At this Phase workmen should not enter the property, unless this has been previously agreed with the site supervisor and householder.

