

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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NEW GREEN HOMES GRANT SCHEME TO HELP REDUCE ENERGY BILLS

Wokingham Borough Council continues to tackle fuel poverty across the borough with the launch of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme (GHG LAD2).

The scheme provides free grants to help residents on low incomes and who are living in low energy efficient properties to carry out a range of works to their home aimed at improving energy efficiency and lowering their fuel bills.

The improvements will also help lower local carbon emissions and support the council's vision for a carbon net zero Wokingham borough by 2030.

"The impact of Covid-19, along with the spiralling worldwide cost for energy and living, has had a massive impact on many of our residents" said Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions. "And it's often those who are most vulnerable, or on the lowest incomes who get hardest hit through no fault of their own.

"Schemes like the Green Homes Grant can make a massive difference for people who are struggling to make ends meet, with homes taking part often seeing an immediate reduction in the amount of energy they need to use to keep their homes safe and warm and, as such, lower costs.

"The grant covers a range of home improvements such as installing solid wall insulation, solar panels, or even air source heat pumps. It could also help cover the costs of double or triple glazing in homes which currently only have single glazing installed. This makes it the perfect counterpart to our Help to Heat scheme which has already helped more than 1,300 residents benefit from free or low cost loft and cavity wall insulation in their homes, with many more to come as the scheme continues to run into this year."

Letters are being sent out to households the council believes may qualify for the scheme to encourage them to apply, although other households are able to apply direct if they believe they may be eligible for GHG LAD2 support.

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In order to qualify for the GHG grant, resident's need to have a household income of below £30,000 and live in a property with a current energy performance rating (EPC) of E, F or G. Some D rated properties may also qualify depending on the work required.

Private landlords may also be able to qualify for partial grants if their property has an EPC of E, F or G and the resident living in the home meets the income criteria above and consents to a grant application being made. However, private landlords will need to fund at least a third of the costs themselves with total grant funding available capped at £5,000.

Residents and landlords who believe they might qualify need to apply via the Energy Trust's green homes grant scheme application form on their website at: <https://surveys.est.org.uk/s/GreenHomesGrantSchemeLAD>

Alternatively they can contact Warmworks, the council's managing agent for the scheme, on 0808 196 8255 for more information.

If eligible Warmworks will get in touch to discuss the next steps and arrange a survey of their home and recommend a package of improvements to make the home more energy efficient. Installation will be completed by an approved and trusted sub-contractor at no cost to householders for owner occupied property, provided all conditions are met.

Residents who do not meet the criteria for the GHG LAD2 scheme, may still be eligible for support with free or low-cost home insulation under the council's Help to Heat scheme. You can find out more information about this and how to apply on the council's website (www.wokingham.gov.uk and search 'energy saving').

Help is also available through the Household Support Fund, which the council is distributing through the local voluntary sector to help families and individuals who may be struggling to pay for basic living costs such as energy bills this winter. If you're feeling overwhelmed, please contact One Front Door so the team can assess your needs and help you find a way forward. You can use the form on their website, email:

contact@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk, or phone 0808 278 7958. The phone lines are open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

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Notes to editors:

For more information contact Gregor Murray, executive member for resident services, communications and emissions , at: gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk