

Voluntary redress consultation – MEA response

Question 1. Do you consider the funding split between the Main Fund, Innovation Fund and Decarbonisation Fund to be appropriate?

The main fund has been the most useful. We haven't applied for innovation fund – although we did inquire once, but there were lots of restrictions and no way forward emerged. The decarb fund I suspect could fund community activity many times over. There's a huge untapped pool of community activists who could do a lot with this. AS as eg we are looking at R11 for a 3-counties wide domestic retrofit fund to replace the failure of Govt policy that's thinking in decades to upskill local labour, get the detailing right o measures and alleviate cold homes and improve health

Question 2. Do you consider the proportionate funding split between vulnerable consumers and all energy consumers to be appropriate? i.e. 70% to vulnerable consumers and a total of 30% to all energy consumers.

Question 3. Should a fuel voucher fund remain a permanent feature of the overall Energy Redress Scheme, so that it can react quickly to specific crises?

Yes – crisis will remain beyond c19 easing and to be able to help a householder quickly has been very well received – but it's all just sticking plaster.

Question 4. If a fuel voucher fund is set up, what type of consumer should be eligible to apply for these vouchers? e.g. vulnerable consumers, pre-payment meter consumers.

Would be good to see a credit meter option in there too, but to have a real impact often requires £200-800 of debt to be whipped off to make a real impact. We have been able to use this approach occasionally through LA c19 crisis funds. It allows a slate to be whipped clean and a household to properly rebalance. If yes – in smaller numbers than PPM customers.

2. Widening the eligibility scope to other organisations

Question 5. What are your views on expanding the applicant scope beyond charities and organisations that partner with charities? If you think the scope should be expanded, do you have any suggestions for how eligibility should be defined? (e.g. what legal structures/status should qualify? Should there be other qualifying criteria?)

LAs are probably the best placed. Does that then set them up in competition with us as charities?

3. Experience of charities applying to the Energy Redress Scheme (this section is for charities which have applied to the Redress Scheme only)

Question 6. How did you find the application process?

Bit fiddly around cost per measure – but can see why that was needed – otherwise OK

Question 7. Did you have a good understanding of the eligibility criteria?

Yes

Question 8. Do you have any feedback on what would have made the process better?

No

4. Other feedback

Question 9. Should we consider any other areas regarding the Energy Redress Scheme? If so, please provide an outline explanation of your suggested area(s). If possible, please outline any associated benefits and costs with your suggestion(s).

Question 10. Do you have any other general comments or feedback you would like to provide?

The fund has really opened opportunities for us allowing new fuel poverty services to set up in areas where there has been no independent local and sustained fuel poverty service. For us this includes Telford and Wrekin where there has been no service for over 10 years, in the Black Country, and in Derby and Derbyshire. It has also done a huge amount to start properly addressing fuel poverty. As an eg in Shropshire – LA funding is £15k pa, funding recently secured under R10 is for £209k - and there are 16k hh in fuel poverty in the County. This also gives us stability to be supporting vulnerable hh in the c19 recovery tail

Longevity – we have used the funding to set up new services from scratch. This take time to recruit/ train and induct new staff, and to set up the networks and relationships that establish a new service. It would be great if this funding could therefore be for longer than 2 years – 3, even 4 would be ideal as this would allow local activity to bed in and really gain traction

And with all funding, there is really a risk of what happens afterwards. For Warmer Derby and Derbyshire we are now on our second round of funding til Jan 23. If no follow on voluntary redress, or the LA can't/ won't fund it, it all just gets switched off. As Director that feels like my job to ensure this doesn't happen