

## **City of Edinburgh Council free insulation offer** **Frequently Asked Questions for householders**

### **1 How do I get free loft and cavity wall insulation?**

It's easy to get in touch via the Home Energy Scotland Hotline. Just call free on **0800 512 012** or text '**WARM**' to **81025** or email [freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk](mailto:freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk) and an advisor will call you back.

If you're calling from a mobile you can dial **0300 456 2655** to be charged at local network rates.

When you contact the Hotline an advisor will arrange for your property to be surveyed (on a free, no-obligation basis) to see if it needs insulation

### **2 What else can I do if my home isn't suitable for insulation?**

As well as free home insulation the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre can provide expert advice on reducing household energy bills and home improvements that will help to do that. The advice centre can:

- Refer you for a benefit and tax credit check – some households discover they can claim up to £1500 extra a year
- Offer impartial advice about getting the best deal on your energy costs, and advise you about eligibility for discounts from your supplier
- Check if you qualify for other grants and offers to help make your home energy efficient
- Signpost or refer you to other local services (e.g. from your local council) that might also help you save

### **3 My home has already been insulated – can I claim back the cost or get a rebate on my council tax?**

Rebates and retrospective grants are not available as part of this offer. The free insulation offer does not apply to properties that have already been insulated through previous schemes. Nor does it apply where DIY insulation has been installed. Even if insulation doesn't come free of charge it can save hundreds of pounds a year on heating costs, so chances are you made a worthwhile investment if you had to pay to have it installed.

#### **4 I'm working – will I definitely qualify for free insulation?**

The good news is that all private tenants and homeowners are eligible and there are no criteria to meet. The only condition is that your home must be suitable for the type of insulation on offer, and if you're a tenant you must get permission from your landlord. See below for further information.

#### **5 I'm a private tenant – how do I access the scheme?**

Private tenants can access the offer in exactly the same way as homeowners – the only difference is you'll need to get permission from your landlord or letting agent, and provide evidence of this at the survey stage. If a landlord or agent wants to find out more prior to giving consent they should be referred to the freephone number 0800 512 012 for general information.

#### **6 I'm a private landlord – how do I access the scheme?**

Private landlords can access the offer too, and should call free on 0800 512 012 to arrange a free no-obligation survey on the property. You should ensure that the tenant or another party is able to be present at the property for the survey and should check with your advisor whether any other advice and support may be available for your tenant too.

#### **7 What about blocks of flats?**

Flats can have the insulation if they are of suitable construction and if occupants consent to having the work done.

If you're only looking for loft insulation and not cavity wall insulation then normally only occupants in the top floor need to consent. If they are tenants they will also need permission from their landlord (see point 5)

If you need cavity wall insulation too then occupants need to provide information and consent to the advice centre. The insulation must be installed from the ground floor to the roof. Each property is funded individually through the free insulation offer, so you must have the consent of any neighbours above/below before any work can go ahead.

We have a form and a specific process that we will explain to the occupants when they contact us. We will do everything we can to make the process as quick and simple as possible, with the cooperation of those involved. For more information on this process please contact the advice centre on **0800 512 012** or email [freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk](mailto:freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk)

#### **8 Is there any support for council or housing association tenants?**

Public sector tenants cannot access free home insulation via this offer; however there are other types of support available. The advice centre can provide impartial energy efficiency advice, benefit and tax credit checks, advice on getting the best deal from energy suppliers and in some cases access to third

party support through other organisations. Tenants are encouraged to contact the advice centre – see point 1 for full contact details

### **9 What type of insulation is offered under the scheme?**

The type of material used to insulate properties will be confirmed at the point of survey. The offer only covers the cost of insulation supplied by the contracted installer; no grant funding is available if the householder wishes to use an alternative material and no retrospective funding is available if a householder has already had their property insulated.

### **10 I got a letter in 2010 or 2011 about free insulation but didn't get round to getting it done. Am I too late?**

Even if you have been offered free insulation before you can still access the offer, as it's available throughout your local authority area.

### **11 The cavity is there for a reason. Won't insulation stop the building from being able to breathe? I'm worried about condensation and dampness.**

The easiest way to check whether your home is suitable for cavity wall insulation is to have a survey carried out by the installer.

Homes built from about 1920 onward (particularly built from traditional brick, more common elsewhere in the UK than in Scotland) were usually built with two 'skins' of brick, leaving an air cavity between the two skins. The purpose of the cavity was reducing the risk of moisture breaching the wall from outside to the internal wall surface.

When this design was first put into use there were very few materials available to use as a safe method of insulating these cavities, as many options would merely cause a 'moisture bridge', meaning moisture could travel from the outer wall, via the insulation material onto the inner wall, increasing the risk of dampness or condensation.

Modern insulation materials have been developed that bypass this problem by being 'breathable' and preventing moisture bridging.

There are some 'horror stories' of defective installations and insulation giving rise to moisture problems within a property, and the Energy Saving Trust therefore recommends that any property be fully surveyed by an accredited contractor prior to any insulation being installed. All installations through the free insulation offer come with a [25 year guarantee](#) from CIGA, approved by the British Board of Agreement.

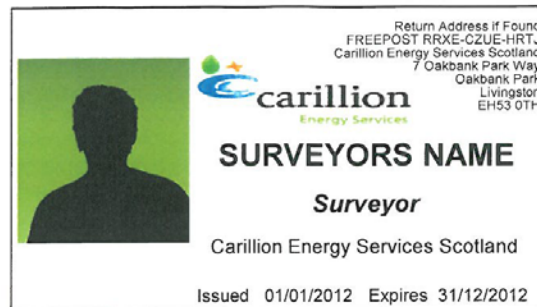
Some properties should not be insulated, and you may find that your home isn't suitable because of a construction issue or because it's highly exposed to the elements and/or liable to flooding. Another main reason why houses develop condensation or damp after being insulated is that they are insufficiently

ventilated – e.g. air isn't allowed to circulate within the home. Regular 'airing' can help prevent problems. Talk to your surveyor if you have any concerns, or speak to an energy advisor on 0800 512 012.

## **12 Who is the company doing the work?**

The company appointed to carry out the work is Carillion (formerly EAGA). Carillion were among a number of installers invited to apply for the contract, and were appointed following a rigorous selection process.

If an insulation surveyor calls at your home and claims to be working for this scheme they should carry Carillion ID badges, which we advise you to check. If you have any concerns you can call the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre to check with an advisor.



## **13 What if I need other work done to get the insulation fitted? Will it still be free?**

The unique thing about this offer is that it covers the whole cost of getting the job done. If you need additional work to accommodate the insulation in your home (e.g. scaffolding, loft-hatch installation or widening, or additional ventilation) the cost will be covered under the offer. If you want to know more please contact us.

## **14 Only my extension needs cavity wall insulation – can I get this free?**

Yes, you can get cavity wall insulation in your extension free through this scheme, even if the other walls in your property are not suitable for insulation.

## **15 Less than 50% of my loft needs insulation – can I get this free?**

No, free insulation is only available when more than 50% of the loft is to be insulated.

## **16 I have attic rooms so I only need insulation in the eaves – can I get this free?**

No, only standard insulation measures are covered by the free insulation offer. However, our Energy Advisor can advise you on the DIY options for this or you can ask an installation company to provide you with a no obligation quote for the work.

**17 I had loft insulation done before, but they left gaps around the loft hatch can these be re-done for free?**

No, this would not be covered under the free insulation offer. However, our Energy Advisor can advise you on how to install low cost draught-proofing around your loft hatch.

**18 I use my loft for storage: can I get loft insulation?**

If your loft can be cleared then you can still have free loft insulation, however this will mean you will have to find a different way of storing your possessions once the work has been done.

If you really want to use your loft for storage after insulating it, you could consider installing a platform for storage – it would need to be secured to the joists and raised above the loft insulation so it doesn't squash the insulation, as that makes it less effective. A joiner could do this type of work for you.

**19 What do I do if I'm not entirely happy with the survey or installation?**

In the first instance please contact the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre by calling the Home Energy Scotland Hotline on 0800 512 012 or emailing us at [advice@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk](mailto:advice@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk) . We can investigate issues relating to the survey for you and work with the installer to resolve the situation. If you're unhappy with the installation we can arrange for an independent quality inspection and then work with you and the installer to ensure any necessary remedial work is undertaken.

**20 How long after the survey will the insulation get installed?**

The installer will carry out installations within four weeks of the survey, although they will aim to do so within two weeks in most cases.

**Here's a reminder of all the different ways to contact the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre:**

- Call the Home Energy Scotland Hotline on **0800 512 012** free from a landline
- Call the Home Energy Scotland Hotline on **0300 456 2655** from a mobile to be charged at local network rates.
- Text **WARM** to **81025** and we'll call you back
- Email us at [freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk](mailto:freeinsulation@se.energysavingscotland.org.uk)