

Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Customer Journey Guide



Introduction

The City of Wolverhampton Council has made a commitment to reducing the city's energy impact as part of Our Climate Change Commitment.

To assist homeowners in reducing their energy, the Council are working in partnership with Marches Energy Agency, to deliver a scheme so that homeowners in the city can receive fully funded energy upgrades to their properties.

Homeowners could be entitled to a variety of upgrades such as insulation and heating. Eligible households could receive fully funded energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, double glazing, heating and more.

These upgrades will help reduce your energy bills, lower your carbon footprint, and make your home more comfortable and healthier.



Step 1: Applications

The scheme is for **owner-occupiers** who meet the following eligibility:

- Home using **off-gas heating**, where heating is not provided by mains gas, such as electric heating systems, oil, LPF or solid fuel.
- Households with a combined **income of no more than £36,000**, before deductions/housing costs and where benefits are counted towards this figure
- Your home has an **EPC rating of D, E, F or G**. If you are unsure of your EPC rating, you will be helped with this. If your home has an EPC, it can be found here: <https://gov.uk/find-energy-certificate>

If you think you meet the eligibility criteria, please complete our online form by scanning the QR Code, visiting our webpage or by contacting Marches Energy Agency.

Call: **0800 677 1307** (Mon-Fri: 9am to 5pm)

Email: blackcountry@mea.org.uk

Visit: <https://wolverhampton.gov.uk/green-grants>



Step 2: Eligibility check and home assessment

1



Application

Your application will be managed by **Marches Energy Agency**, who will guide you through the process from start to finish.

2



Eligibility checks

Your eligibility will be confirmed by Marches Energy Agency. You will be provided with a list of documentation to provide to prove your eligibility. **This may include financial details.**

3



Contact

After eligibility checks have been completed Marches Energy Agency will contact you to **confirm the outcome.**

4



Home assessment

If eligibility is confirmed, you will be contacted by a Retrofit Assessor to arrange a detailed assessment of your home, **this can take up to 3 hours and photographs will need to be taken.**

Home energy assessment

The home assessment, also known as a **retrofit assessment**, will evaluate your home to create a whole house plan and outline every energy-related upgrade that could be undertaken to improve your home. The assessment could **take up to 3 hours to complete.**

As detailed in step 4 of the customer journey, further technical surveys will be carried out at a later stage to confirm what upgrades are suitable for your home.

Step 3: Home assessment report and agreement

Home assessment feedback

- An **email or letter** will be sent to you outlining every energy-related upgrade that could be undertaken to improve your home. **The upgrades being considered for funding through this scheme will be detailed in the letter.**
- The suggested upgrade(s) will take into account the scheme rules including a **fabric first approach** where insulation and ventilation upgrades will be considered first, and which upgrades will provide the biggest benefits.
- You **may not receive all upgrades** suggested in your assessment, as the scheme must adhere to rules outlined by the funder, The Department of Security & Net Zero (DESZN).

You can choose whether to move forward with the proposals that have been suggested. Please note, declining an upgrade, such as ventilation may impact your eligibility for the remaining upgrades that have been proposed.

Homeowner agreement

Along with the email or letter confirming the proposed upgrades, a homeowner agreement will be provided for you to review, sign and return. Please ensure you read all the T&Cs.



Step 4: Suitability and technical surveys

Once upgrades have been proposed and accepted, we must now check your home is suitable to receive the proposed upgrades.

Technical survey

A qualified installer working on the scheme will contact you to organise a survey to ensure your home is suitable to install the recommended upgrade(s). A technical survey allows the installer to assess your home and ensure the measure is suitable for your home. The installer will be able to explain the upgrade in more detail at this point and you can ask any questions you may have. You will be informed of any disruptions associated with getting the works you are offered completed. You may have **more than one technical survey and more than one installer**, depending on what upgrade(s) have been recommended and **the process may take a while to complete**.

It is important to note, your home **may not be suitable** for installation of the recommended upgrade(s) upon completion of the technical survey(s). For example, if you have been recommended insulation upgrades, but the required **ventilation** is not suitable or is declined, the offer for insulation may have to be withdrawn.

Funding approval

Our funding provider will check the application to ensure it meets the requirements of the scheme. You will be contacted if there are any issues obtaining funding approval.

Step 5: Installation of measures

Installation

- **Agree date:** Each installer will book in a provision date for installation (subject to obtaining funder approval). You will be contacted if the dates or installation are subject to change.

You will be informed if there is anything you need to know prior to works commencing e.g., electric temporary switched off. You will also be informed how long works are likely to take.

Please note each upgrade may require a separate installer.

- **Preparation:** You may be asked to make preparations before the work starts, such as moving furniture or ensuring your pets are appropriately secured. Please let your installer know if you are unable to complete these preparatory works. Please also refer to the T&Cs in your homeowner agreement.
- **Possible noise and disruption:** The installer will always do their best to keep disruption to a minimum. However, work may be noisy and disruptive for the duration of the work. Please refer to the T&Cs in your homeowner agreement.

Step 6: Completion of works

Completion and warranties

- Final checks will be made to ensure the installation has been completed to the standards we expect. **Please raise any outstanding issues or questions you have.**
- You will be provided with a **handover pack**, containing items like warranties, completion certificates, user manuals and general guidance.
- You will be asked to complete a **customer satisfaction survey** on the scheme. This could be up to a month after you installation is complete. This ensures you have had time to experience the installation in use. We will use this information to improve the service we provide in future.
- An updated **Energy Performance Assessment** will be carried out at your home, this is to confirm the new Energy Performance Certificate band for your home.
- You may be asked to participate in long-term performance monitoring for the measure's installed at your home, if chosen, this will be optional.

Compliments, complaints and feedback

We ask that all compliments, complaints and feedback are submitted via email to: blackcountry@mea.org.uk

Our partner's **Marches Energy Agency** will liaise with homeowners for the duration of the scheme, where Marches Energy Agency cannot find a resolution, this will then be escalated to **City of Wolverhampton Council**.



Ventilation

The importance of good ventilation in your home

Many day-to-day activities generate moisture and odours in the house. This could result from cooking, showering, drying laundry, or just having pets around the house. A good ventilation system would get rid of the stale and bad air in your house and replace it with good indoor air quality. **As part of HUG funding, we are required to review the ventilation in your home, if ventilation upgrades are required these must be undertaken before we can install any recommended energy efficiency measures.**

Assessing the ventilation system in your home

This will require a check to see if there is adequate background ventilation, usually provided by trickle vents or passive vents in certain rooms. We will need to see there is adequate air flow, by checking the undercuts of the doors in your habitable rooms and see if the wet rooms such as the kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room have an extraction system. Following this assessment, we will make recommendations, in line with Approved Building Regulations, for improving the ventilation system in your house - especially if this is required because of the improvements in the house that we may make to your property.

Improving the ventilation in your home

Our priority is to make the home warmer and therefore hopefully reduce your energy bills and improve your long-term health. To determine what work, we can carry out on your house we will undertake an assessment of your property to see where improvements can be made. If the improvements to your home involve any insulation or improved windows and doors, this will make your house more airtight than it is currently. If your home becomes more airtight then we must review and, if necessary, upgrade the ventilation system in your house.

A new ventilation strategy for your home

It is important that you understand and agree the ventilation improvements suggested for your home. We will carry out these ventilation improvements at no cost to you, **ventilation improvements must be undertaken before we can proceed to install other measures recommended for your home.**

Please also see further information provided by our Delivery Partner, Surefire.

Important information regarding the ventilation of your home

Dear Resident,

Please take the time to read through this important information. During the programme of improvements to your home a compulsory measure of ventilation will form part of the improvement to ensure there is adequate air movement around your home,

This information is for homes now fitted with:

- Mechanical extract fans within the window aperture of kitchen windows.
- Trickle ventilation installed within the confines of your New Window installations.

See opposite requirements around maintaining good ventilation and the risks if these requirements aren't followed:

Please see following pictures of Mechanical/Electrical Ventilation System and Window Trickle Vents, fitted to all windows.



✘
Ventilation on window in closed position

✔
Ventilation on window in open position

✔
Mechanical fan in kitchen

✔ On ✘ Off
Mechanical fan isolation switch



- DO NOT cover up any operational ventilators, these must be always kept clear, covering these will create a risk of damage to your home and your health.
- Regularly open windows to allow for air flow to avoid an excessive build-up of water vapour and moisture within the confines of your home, especially during the colder months.
- Always keep Window Trickle Vents open.
- Do not block up any gaps beneath the doors with draught excluders etc.
- Be aware that drying clothing within the property will cause condensation to occur.
- Always resist the urge to keep all windows closed during winter months, allow for a small opening to maintain a good internal climate.
- Always keep mechanical window extractor switched on and running.
- Failure to observe the above could lead to damp and mould.

Further details around condensation and ventilation

Condensation

- In the home, this natural water content is increased by normal day to day living. For example, activity that generates steam such as cooking, bathing, showers, washing, boiling a kettle and even breathing.
- The water vapour remains undetectable while floating in warm air, but upon contact with cold surfaces, windows, mirrors, tiles etc, condensation occurs, and the vapour can turn to water droplets.
- In traditional houses the escape of this water vapour is allowed through natural ventilation - open flues of coal fires, air bricks and ill-fitting windows and doors.
- The work to your home will have a positive impact on the warmth of your surroundings and reduce your energy usage, however it does come with possible risk of trapped water and increased condensation. The use of fitted ventilation is crucial to prevent these issues.

Heating

- Maintain some permanent heat in the house during the cold weather.

Ventilation

Provide natural ventilation whenever possible by:

- Opening a window
- Using installed ventilation and extraction units in all rooms. E.g. mechanical fans and window ventilation.
- Following the improvement works carried out to the envelope of your home, part of the requirement is that there must be a minimum 12mm air gap underneath any door where the room has some form of ventilation installed. Example, Window Trickle Ventilation, Mechanical Extractor Fan. This could include your living room, kitchen, bedrooms, bathroom and storage cupboard where ventilation has been installed. This is to allow air to circulate throughout your home. This air flow is to aid and help alleviate any potential issues around condensation.

Further details around condensation and ventilation

Circulation

- Water vapour will easily drift convection currents far from where originated.
- To ensure air flow in the vicinity of the windows, curtains should be a minimum of 150mm away from the window with suitable gaps, top and bottom to allow circulation.

Energy Saving Vapour Tracking System

- The fitted fan incorporates “Intelligent Vapour Tracking System“ this constantly monitors the humidity level.
- As humidity rises and falls the motor speed rises and falls in direct correlation automatically.
- The fan is fitted with a pull cord override for odour control if required by the user.

Low Energy Cost (enviro Vent)

- This fan achieves exceptional levels of energy use and is up to 80% more efficient than a traditional AC fan.

How much does the fitted fan cost to run?

- Energy costs as of: 6/1/23 0.28p per KWh
- Running on Trickle 22hrs per day = £3.94 pr annum
- Running on boost 2hrs per day = £8.05 per annum
- Combined cost per day £0.03p.
- For any questions or further information please contact your local RLO

Frequently asked questions

I don't meet the eligibility criteria, what are the next steps?

If you don't meet the eligibility criteria, we'll look for alternative funding schemes and let you know. However, you can check with your energy supplier or search for localised grants.

Alternatively, you can call our Marches Energy Agency for advice on **0800 677 1332** or email blackcountry@mea.org.uk.

What is an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) tell you how energy efficient a building is and give it a rating from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient). They'll tell you how costly it will be to heat and light your property, and what its carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be.

An EPC also includes information on what the energy efficiency rating could be if you made the recommended improvements and highlights cost effective ways to achieve a better rating.

If your home has an EPC, it can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate>

How much will the work cost?

The work will be fully funded. You will not be asked to pay for anything including application and surveys.

Who will carry out the work?

A TrustMark registered installer will undertake the work which will be overseen by City of Wolverhampton Council. Marches Energy Agency will remain an independent point of contact during the process.

Frequently asked questions

Will upgrades cause disruption or damage

Some energy efficiency upgrades may cause disruption to existing décor or finishings within your home, this is known as ‘necessary damage’ to enable installation of the upgrades. We recommend you review any contracts prior to installation of works to ensure you are aware of what the installer will make good, which may be limited to ‘unnecessary damage’ only and it will be the responsibility of the householder to put right any necessary damage. Installers may require homeowners to arrange for carpets or flooring to be lifted and areas to be cleared of furniture prior to works commencing. We also recommend the homeowner to have buildings and contents insurance in place.

Asbestos removal and structural repairs

Funding covers only the installation of upgrades and will not cover removal of asbestos or any remedial works to structural defects to your home that would be required to complete the upgrades. If either asbestos or structural defects are identified during the process, we will be unable to proceed with installation of measures and you will be advised accordingly.

What documentation will I need to provide as part of my application?

Once your application is submitted, Marches Energy Agency will check your eligibility, to ensure the scheme is delivered within Government guidelines. Marches Energy Agency will confirm in writing what documents they will be required to confirm your eligibility, such as:

- Proof of household income
- Proof of residency
- Proof of ownership

Will I get energy efficient upgrades if I meet the eligibility?

Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding and the installation of upgrades to your home. It is subject to funding availability and the outcomes of surveys that will be undertaken during the process.

Frequently asked questions

Why was my application declined?

To receive funding, City of Wolverhampton Council must follow strict guidelines set out by the Government, and sometimes eligibility is not clear until after surveys have been undertaken at your home.

Below are common reasons for unsuccessful applications:

Income too high

Household income is over £36,000 threshold set by the Government.

EPC rating too high

Properties rated A, B & C do not qualify under the scheme, we may not know your homes EPC until after the home assessment is complete.

Property unsuitable for upgrades

Not all homes are suitable for upgrades, although recommendations may be made for upgrades, until technical surveys are undertaken, we will not know if those upgrades are suitable for your home.

High costs

The Government has specified a maximum amount of grant per property. If the quotes for upgrades come back too high, we will not be able to proceed with your application. Unfortunately, the scheme does not allow owner-occupiers to top-up any shortfall in funding.



You can get this information in large print, braille,
audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155
or emailing translations@wolverhampton.gov.uk

wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 551155

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