

SAP 35 assistance

Purpose

'SAP 35 Assistance' was introduced to improve the energy efficiency of poor performing homes occupied by vulnerable and elderly households.

The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy, issued in November 2001, detailed targets to eradicate fuel poverty across England, as far as reasonably practicable in vulnerable households by 2010 and in all households by 2016.

NI 187 - Tackling fuel poverty - percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low and high energy efficiency rating.

National Indicator (NI) 187 was introduced in 2008/09 and measures the proportion of households on income related benefits for whom an energy assessment of their housing has been carried out, living in homes with (a) low energy efficiency and (b) high energy efficiency.

What is SAP?

The energy efficiency of a house can be measured using the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP). The procedure calculates a number between 1 and 100, low numbers generally indicate a house that has low levels of insulation and an inefficient heating system, whereas numbers closer to 100 indicate a very energy efficient house. SAP is the government's recommended system for energy rating of dwellings. SAP is being used as a proxy for fuel poverty in households of people claiming income based benefits, given the link between income poverty and fuel poverty.

Information recently provided by the Building Research Establishment (BRE), based on outputs from the 2001 census, indicates that 20% of private stock in Wiltshire has a SAP rating of less than 35, which is 5% higher than the national figure. This is likely to be as a result of a higher proportion of properties being off the gas main, and housing stock that is generally older with solid walls.

What assistance is available?

We will give assistance to treat properties with a SAP rating below 35 to give a rating increased by at least 10 (over SAP 65 if achievable). The maximum grant available is £15,000. Where possible we will expect to combine this grant with external funding and a combination of treatment that would fully utilize the different options available for funding.

Wiltshire Council is committed to improving the energy efficiency of housing within the county. Warm, energy efficient homes have been proved to improve health and the living environment and to reduce social exclusion. The council will be actively promoting energy efficiency and addressing fuel poverty in partnership with other organisations and through a variety of schemes.

Who can apply?

All owner occupiers and tenants, licensees and occupiers who have an owner's interest or lease agreement or trust agreement specifying repairs responsibility for the works required can apply, provided that the applicant receives any of the following benefits:

- housing benefit (must be in receipt of a disability benefit, have school-age children or be over 60 years old)
- council tax benefit (must be in receipt of a disability benefit, have school age children, be over 60 years old or suffer from severe mental health problems that make work impossible)
- income support (must be in receipt of a disability benefit, have school age children or suffer from severe mental health problems that make work impossible)
- income-based job seekers allowance (must be in receipt of a disability benefit or have school age children)
- working tax credit which includes a disability element where the entitled person has a relevant annual income of less than £15,050
- child tax credit where the entitled person has a relevant annual income of less than £15,050
- pension credit
- either disabled living allowance, or attendance, or war disablement or industrial injuries benefit or learning difficulties, or suffer from severe mental health problems that make work impossible, of over 60 where it is shown that over 10% of their income is spent on fuel.

Are there any conditions attached to the assistance?

The purpose of this grant is to make homes occupied by vulnerable people more energy efficient. It is important to us that assistance is used for this purpose. There are a number of conditions to ensure that the right work is carried out and that the work benefits the people it is intended for.

Are there any other forms of assistance available?

Yes there are. There are a number of organisations offering assistance with heating and thermal insulation aimed at helping vulnerable tenants. We also have other forms of assistance available. We would be happy to talk to you about these.

Contact details

Contact Wiltshire Council Customer Services on **0300 456 0100** and ask for Private Sector Housing.