

About this consultation

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on extending the Warm Home Discount Scheme (WHD). Age UK has seen first-hand over the first nine scheme years, how valuable the rebate has been to millions of older people. T

Initiatives¹, our network has been able to provide income maximisation sessions, energy advice, and energy efficiency installations that allow older people to stay warm and well at home. We estimate that our Industry Initiative funded programmes have identified approximately £170 million in unclaimed benefits. As we enter the winter of Scheme Year (SY) 10, the importance of the extending the financial and other assistance provided through WHD funding is even more significant given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are fully supportive of the proposal to extend the WHD into SY11 (2021/2022). Whilst the scope of the consultation is not to consider h

addition, suppliers should also be offering customers payment matching, debt write-off, and promote Fuel Direct² and supplier administered energy grant schemes.

7. Do you agree that the restriction on providing financial assistance to Core Group and Broader Group recipients should be removed?

We do not support the proposal as we believe it should be incumbent on suppliers to identify more

10. Do you agree that, in addition to energy advice, advice about the benefits of smart meters should be provided, so far as is reasonably practicable, to every customer benefiting from an Industry Initiative?

We support the inclusion of advice about the benefits of smart meters. The pandemic has shown the benefits of using smart data in monitoring usage and potential rationing and disconnecting. It has also allowed users of Smart Prepay to have their meters credited remotely if there are logistical or other difficulties for them topping up. However, the smart meter roll-out is a separately funded programme and it is important that advice on its benefits does not take precedence over other equally important energy advice. Suppliers should allow partners delivering Industry Initiatives to be flexible and use their knowledge and expertise to provide advice most relevant to the circumstances of clients. We also note the challenges of providing in-person advice at present and possible delays to the smart installation programme due to lockdown.

11. Do you agree that businesses installing and repairing boilers and central heating systems under the WHD Industry Initiatives should be TrustMark registered from 1 April 2021? Please provide reasons for your answer.

12. Do you agree that the installations of boilers, in high risk properties, and central heating systems in all homes, should be installed in accordance with PAS 2030:2019 and PAS 2035: 2019 from 1 April 2021? Please provide reasons for your answer.

We support the above proposals to bring WHD Industry Initiatives in line with the requirements of ECO and the Green Homes Grant Scheme for installers to be TrustMark registered and installed in accordance with PAS 2030:2019 and PAS 2035.

13. Do you agree with the introduction of technical monitoring for boilers and central heating systems installed or repaired under WHD from 1 April 2021? Please provide reasons for your answer

We agree with principle of the proposal, but it will be costly and is not proportionate. While it would clearly be useful to know whether an installation has been completed to the required standards,

