

Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 - Customer FAQs

www.actionsurrey.org/funding/HUG2

What is the project?

The Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2) is a government-funded grant scheme providing energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating to low-income households living in **off-gas grid** homes in England. Residents need to physically be living at the property. HUG2 builds upon the previous phase (HUG1) and aims to deliver progress towards the statutory fuel poverty target for England. The project seeks to progress the UK's target to reach Net Zero by 2050, by supporting the phase-out of off-gas grid fossil fuels and transition to low-carbon heating systems. HUG2 is being run by Action Surrey on behalf THE 11 Boroughs & Districts across Surrey. Funding for this project is provided by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

What is Action Surrey?

An impartial energy advice service set up by Surrey's local authorities and Surrey County Council to help residents make their homes more efficient and save money on their energy bills. Action Surrey has a network of trusted installers.

Action Surrey is managed by ThamesWey Sustainable Communities, a company wholly owned by Woking Borough Council.

How much funding is available and is the customer expected to pay anything?

Funding for off-gas properties varies on a sliding scale between £3,000 and £38,000, based on archetype and wall type property characteristics*. The available funding is determined by distinct average cost caps for 'energy efficiency' and 'clean heat' measures (Tables 1 and 2). There are no financial contribution or deposits expected from owner-occupiers. Funding can not be used for refurbishments or repairs.

Table 1: HUG2 Funding Scale for Energy Efficiency measures by archetype and wall type

Energy Efficiency cost cap		
Archetype	Cavity Wall	Solid Wall
Flat	£8,000	£15,000
Mid-terrace		
End of terrace/semi/detached	£12,000	£24,000

Table 2: HUG2 Funding Scale for Clean Heat measures by archetype and wall type

Clean Heat cost cap (Air Source Heat Pumps)	
Archetype	Amount
Flat	£14,000
Mid-terrace	
End of terrace/semi/detached	

*Funding allocated is dependent on survey results, viability of installation and value for money, and is at the discretion of ThamesWey Sustainable Communities Ltd. Properties are not automatically entitled to a specific funding amount, it is entirely dependent on the works that are viable and the associated costs.

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What about the private rented sector – do landlords need to pay anything?

For private rented sector properties, tenants must meet the low income criteria and the landlord will be required to contribute at least one third of the cost of upgrades, up to the cost cap for a dwelling type (see tables 3 and 4). This means that the maximum level of subsidy a landlord can receive is equivalent to two-thirds of the subsidy received by an owner occupier in a dwelling of the same building archetype and wall type. If the total cost of works exceeds the values in Tables 1 and 2, additional landlord contribution will be required.

Table 3: HUG2 Private-rented landlord minimum cost expectations for energy efficiency measures, by archetype and wall type

Energy efficiency cost cap: private rented						
Archetype	Cavity Wall			Solid Wall		
	Grant	Landlord Contribution	Total	Grant	Landlord Contribution	Total
Flat						
Mid-terrace	£5,333	£2,667	£8,000	£10,000	£5,000	£15,000
End terrace/semi/detached	£8,000	£4,000	£12,000	£16,000	£8,000	£24,000

Table 4: HUG2 Private-rented landlord minimum cost expectations for clean heat measures, by archetype and wall type

Clean heat cost cap: private rented			
Archetype	Amount		
	Grant	Landlord Contribution	Total
Flat	£9,333	£4,667	£14,000
Mid-terrace			
End terrace/semi/detached	£9,333	£4,667	£14,000

Where a privately rented property is EPC F or G rated, landlords will need to prove compliance with existing Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). Where this cannot be evidenced, funding will not be approved. **Please note, from 1st April 2023, the continuation to lease a property rated EPC F or G is a breach of these standards.**

Landlords must declare that they have not received subsidy over the Minimal Financial Assistance limit of £315,000 (including the value of HUG2 support to be given, and any previous assistance given to the landlords over the current and previous 2 financial years).

Landlords with a portfolio of more than four houses will **not** be eligible for HUG2.

Shared ownership properties where the scheme owner is liable for building upgrades will follow the same process as a private landlord, including financial contribution amounts.

Social housing can only make up 10% of homes in the total project for each financial year, and a 50% landlord contribution is required in each case. In addition these properties will be considered as part of in

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infill, where in the same row of house there are existing owner occupier or private rented simultaneously getting works done under the HUG2 grant.

Can I just have solar panels or an air source heat pump?

Eligible households can receive funding towards the cost of Solar Photovoltaics (PV), Solar Thermal (Hot Water) systems, and Air Source Heat Pumps, provided that the property has appropriate levels of insulation. If the required levels of insulation do not exist, funding will first be used to insulate the home. This is mandatory for all funding applications to meet the conditions of the grant. The viability of air source heat pumps will be considered following survey as to whether it is an appropriate replacement for the current heating system.

Please note: If a property has received any funded measures under the preceding HUG1 phase, measures that can be funded under this phase will be restricted.

How long is the funding available for?

Installations **must be complete before the 31st March 2025**. Works carried out after this date will be ineligible for funding, unless an official extension is granted by DESNZ.

How do I contact Action Surrey?

Contact us either by phone **0800 783 2503**, by email at info@actionsurrey.org, or complete an online enquiry form on the Action Surrey website - www.actionsurrey.org/enquiries. Advisors can assist if you are unsure about your eligibility or documentation to provide. *Please note that the team cannot determine eligibility over the phone.*

What documents are customers required to sign/provide?

Before installation:

1. Application form completed in full and signed customer commitment section.
2. Evidence of income/benefits declared in the application form to evidence eligibility.

Note: if residing in an auto-eligible postcode area, this will not be required.

3. Proof of Address.

After installation:

4. Customer Completion Certificate

How do I apply?

The application form can be downloaded from our website here: www.actionsurrey.org/improve/HUG2

Submit this through the customer portal on our website: <http://www.actionsurrey.org/>, or by email to info@actionsurrey.org, along with supporting evidence, as indicated on the form.

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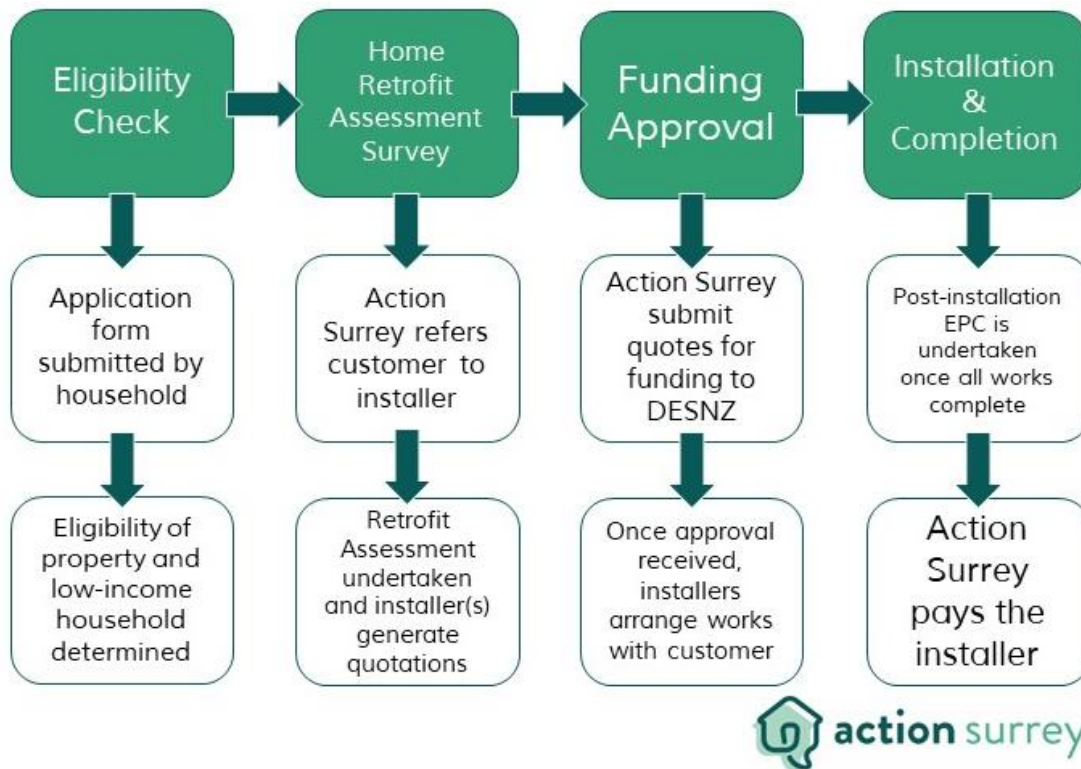
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What is the Process?



Stage 1: Eligibility Check:

1. Fill out an application form. The team will review this and be in touch to confirm which documents we will require to support the application.
 - **You might live in an auto-eligible postcode area, which means you will not be required to submit income evidence. Check this first on our website: www.actionsurrey.org/improve/HUG2**
2. Action Surrey can explain the scheme and discuss the grant information if you wish to have further information. Contact the team at **0800 783 2503** or via the website.
3. Eligibility for funding is dependent on two aspects:

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- A) the current energy efficiency rating of your home: An Energy Performance Certificate rating of D, E, F or G.

FAQ - What do I do if my property does not have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or it is out of date?

If a property does not have a valid EPC (e.g. non-existent, expired, or inaccurate), the customer will need to have a pre-installation EPC carried out. If required, this will be carried out during the Retrofit Assessment. The property will only be referred for the Retrofit Assessment once financial eligibility has been fully verified.

AND

- B) household financial criteria: Applications must prove **one** of the following:
- A household occupant is in receipt of **means-tested benefits** (Table 5).
 - A **gross** annual **household** income of less than £36,000 **before** tax/NI deductions. Disability benefits may be discounted but will need to still provide proof of these.
 - A **gross** annual **household** income below £20,000 after housing costs deducted (annual mortgage, gas and electric energy bills and council tax payments).
 - Referral from a charity or public service (e.g. health/social care) where **low-income status has already been determined** by these services.

OR

- C) reside within an **automatically eligible postcode area** (IMD income decile 1-3).

Table 5: Means-tested benefits that auto-qualify a household's financial eligibility.

Universal Credit	Council Tax Reduction/Support Benefit (<u>not</u> Single Occupancy or other discount)
Income Related Employment & Support Allowance	Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance
Income Support	Housing Benefit
Pension Credit	Cold Weather Payment
Child Tax Credits	Working Tax Credits

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FAQ - How is the £36,000 income calculated?

- This is the total income for **all adults over 18 years of age** living in the property.
- Benefit payments, salaries, self-employed income, lodger rent payments, dividends, shares and investments are all income that counts towards the threshold, and must be declared accurately. Some disability benefits may be discounted but will still need to be provided.
- Where lodgers are present, rent paid is counted towards household income and the lodger must be listed on the application, but income they receive is not counted. A rental agreement must be provided.
- Other discounted adults whose income does not count include:
 - Full time university students.
 - Adult dependents residing in a property for care.
 - Those in prison.

Discounted adults must still be listed on the income declaration and evidence provided (e.g., student

4. Customers will be asked to provide the relevant evidence to qualify under the criteria:
- a) To qualify with means-tested benefits, receipt is evidenced by a valid, recent means-tested benefits letter/certificate. Online PDFs from official sources can be accepted provided they are shown in full and include the recipient's name, address and date.
 - b) To qualify under the income threshold of £36,000 gross annual income, the following must be provided where applicable:
 - 3 months of PAYE slips (more may be requested where pay is variable)
 - State pension letter and P60 pension statement(s)
 - Benefits certificate(s)
 - SA302 & Tax Overview (for self-employed income)
 - Rental agreement showing lodger payments
 - Dividends/investments statement

We may require bank statements where the above cannot be provided or nil income is declared.

- c) To qualify under the housing cost consideration criteria, the above documents must be provided to determine gross household income, in addition to a mortgage statement energy bills (Gas and electric only) and council tax bills, matching the address of the application.

For sole occupiers: applications must be supported by a Council Tax Bill for 2023-24 as Proof of Address.

Utility bills can be used as proof of address where there is more than one adult residing in the property, or the property is situated in an auto-eligible postcode area.

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Land registry information must also match the application to prove owner-occupier status. By signing the customer commitment form, the customer is stating they are the named owner of the property and consent to a land registry check at any stage.

5. Existing Solar PV or Solar Thermal arrays cannot be repaired, replaced or extended. Existing loft insulation can be topped up if possible, but existing cavity wall or underfloor insulation cannot be extracted.
6. The dwelling must be situated within Surrey County¹
7. Action Surrey will confirm the customer's permission to pass their details on to an installer and/or surveyor.
8. As per government requirements, all customers will be provided with a Privacy Notice to explain the collection and usage of personal data. A copy of the Privacy Policy can be found on the Action Surrey website.
9. A signature is required on the application form (this can be electronically generated).

FAQ - How do I provide the relevant documentation?

Once an application form is received, the team will inform which documents are required to support the application. Documents will have to be provided either by email or post.

FAQ – I don't have use of a computer to go online, how do I provide the information to Action Surrey?

Action Surrey is happy for customers to ask a family member or friend to help with providing the documentation online. Alternatively, Action Surrey can arrange for paper copies of the relevant documents to be sent to the customer's address for completing and returning by post, with photocopies of evidence.

Postal documents must be returned to Action Surrey within 10 days. Action Surrey cannot accept liability for any documents lost or damaged in the post.

10. Should the customer be an employee or councillor of a Local Authority within Surrey, including Surrey County Council, an employee or director of ThamesWey Sustainable Communities, or a close family member of any of the aforementioned groups, this must be declared to Action Surrey prior to the acceptance of a grant.

¹ Properties within Surrey County must be within the following boroughs: Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Tandridge, Waverley and Woking.

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Stage 2: Home Retrofit Survey:

11. Once Action Surrey determines a customer's eligibility for the scheme, the customer will be referred to installer(s) on the network.
12. Following referral, the installer will contact the customer to arrange a date for a retrofit assessment appointment. This survey will be carried out by a qualified Retrofit Assessor. The installer is required to attempt contact with the customer a minimum of three times. If this is unsuccessful, the application may be cancelled.
13. Following the retrofit assessment, a Retrofit Co-ordinator will produce a plan of works for the property. Depending on the works suggested, further referrals may be made to other installers on the network for technical surveys. **Please note: For park homes, only a limited number of external wall insulation works can be funded.**
14. Following surveys, all quotations will be shared with Action Surrey to identify the amount of funding required. Other essential works will be detailed on the quote(s) and will be covered by the funding (where the funding limit is not exceeded).

Stage 3: Funding Approval:

15. Action Surrey will submit the proposed works and costings to DESNZ for funding approval.
16. Once approved by DESNZ, Action Surrey will contact the customer to confirm the quotation can be funded. The Installer is notified to arrange an installation date with the customer.
17. The installer(s) will carry out the works as detailed on the quote(s). Insulation will be installed prior to renewables (solar, air source heat pump) where feasible to do so.

FAQ – What access is required?

The installers will need to be able to access the loft to install loft insulation. The loft space will need to be sufficiently cleared **prior** to the installation. Where this is difficult for the homeowner, the installer may offer to assist at their discretion, however they will not be liable for any damage to items during this process.

Loft boarding may need to be raised and re-laid. The loft will need to be entirely cleared. Failure or refusal to clear a loft to enable loft insulation may result in subsequent measures being cancelled (e.g. renewables).

If installing Solar Thermal or an Air Source Heat Pump, space for a hot water tank is also required.

The roof must be in a safe and satisfactory condition for solar installations. The installer reserves the right to terminate installation at any point if the roof is deemed unsafe for installation.

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FAQ - Will I need planning permission?

In most cases, no – However, if you are to receive external wall insulation, solar panels or an air source heat pump and live in a conservation area or other local planning zone, please check with the relevant local authority prior to accepting the grant.

If you live in a park home, you may require permission from the park home site owner before having external wall insulation.

It may not be possible to fund improvements to listed buildings.

FAQ – What “other essential works” might be required?

- Prior to renewables being installed, viable insulation (e.g. loft, cavity wall, underfloor) must be installed first.
- Ventilation, such as mechanical extracts and trickle vents may be required. These are a requirement of the installers’ accreditation and are required for installations to comply with grant conditions. **Such ventilation measures are mandatory and refusal of these will result in the progress of the works being halted, and the customer may be liable for the cost of any works already installed.**

Disruption of any essential works will be minimal and far outweighed by long-term benefits.

Stage 4: Installation and Completion

18. Once works have been installed, the customer will be asked to complete a Customer Completion Certificate (example provided in appendix 1). Any reason for not returning the form must be identified to Action Surrey within the timeframe stated. Upon receipt of the certificate or elapse of the timeframe with no valid reason for not returning the form, Action Surrey will arrange payment of the cost of the work to the installer. The customer will not be required to pay any of the quoted costs to the installer, except where the customer has requested private works.

19. A post-installation EPC will be carried out (funded by the scheme) once all works on a property are completed. **This is required to assess the achieved savings from the scheme.**

FAQ – What happens if I am not happy with the work that has been done?

If there are any concerns regarding the works, customers should raise them directly with the installer. It is the installer’s responsibility to resolve any complaints received, in line with their complaints policy.

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved between the customer and the installer, the customer should file a complaints form with Action Surrey, who may choose to appoint an independent surveyor to help resolve a dispute if necessary. Payment to the installer will be withheld during this process and the decision of the surveyor will be final.

20. Guarantees will be provided by the installer for all measure installations. Where applicable, the Customer will receive instructions, handover, maintenance information, workmanship and manufacturer warranties, and an MCS certificate for renewables.

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21. Action Surrey will arrange payment to the installer for the works.
22. As part of the auditing and due diligence requirement for the project, a random selection of properties will be independently surveyed after/during installation of the works. Action Surrey is working with an independent surveying company to carry out these surveys and customers will be contacted if their property has been selected.
23. Customers may be asked to be a case study, allowing Action Surrey to quote the customer's feedback and allow/provide photographs to be taken of the installation process and finished installation. Action Surrey reserves the right to use this case study for promotional purposes subject to obligations imposed by the GDPR and DPA 2018.

Additional advice

Action Surrey will be available to answer customer questions throughout the process. Customers can also contact their local authority, or BEIS, for reassurance of the project's legitimacy.

Elmbridge Borough Council	01372 474474
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	01372 732000
Guildford Borough Council	01483 505050
Mole Valley District Council	01306 885001
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	01737 276000
Runnymede Borough Council	01932 838383
Spelthorne Borough Council	01784 451499
Surrey Heath Borough Council	01276 707100
Tandridge District Council	01883 722000
Waverley Borough Council	01483 523333
Woking Borough Council	01483 755855

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Appendix 1 - Customer Completion Certificate

I confirm that the works undertaken by the Installer have been completed to a satisfactory standard.

I understand that payment for the works is to be made pursuant to the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2) scheme.

I understand that I will be liable to pay for any additional works I request the installer to carry out that are not eligible for funding under this grant project.

I understand that in the event of complaint about the works I need to contact the Installer and not Action Surrey (ThamesWey Sustainable Communities Limited), whose role in this scheme is limited to referring a Customer to an Installer and distributing funding paid to it by the Government under the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 scheme.

I accept that I have no contractual relationship with ThamesWey Sustainable Communities Limited or Surrey County Council.

In the absence of receiving this signed form, or notification from the Customer that an ongoing query with the installer exists within 5 calendar days of completion, Action Surrey will make payment to the installer.

FULL NAME OF CUSTOMER:

.....

MEASURE(S) INSTALLED:

.....

FULL ADDRESS OF PROPERTY WHERE WORKS HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN:

.....

.....

.....

SIGNATURE:..... DATE.....

Feedback (optional):

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