



# Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

## **Energy Efficiency and Insulation**

Thank you for contacting me about energy efficiency and insulation.

All households should be able to invest in energy efficiency improvements so I am encouraged that there is a range of programmes designed to support people in different kinds of housing and location.

Households struggling with their bills are eligible for insulation measures, including solid wall insulation, through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. Homeowners and those in privately rented homes who are on specific benefits may also be eligible for help with heating improvements, including oil-fired boiler replacements, through ECO Affordable Warmth.

I welcome the fact that over 1.6 million homes have benefited from energy efficiency measures since 2013, and a further 1 million homes will be insulated by 2020. A greater focus of this support for low income households will be on working families, and a proportion of the funding for rural areas will continue to be ringfenced.

A consultation has recently been carried out on the ECO scheme and plans have been announced to extend it to September 2018. The scheme's eligibility will also be extended to social housing tenants in EPC bands E, F and G, with local authorities able to help match people with energy suppliers. Suppliers will be required to install a minimum 21,000 solid wall insulations per year, and there will be continuing protection for the delivery of energy efficiency measures in rural areas.

I also welcome the introduction of regulation for enforcing minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector, which will come into force from April 2018. At the same time, the rolling out of the smart meter scheme will help consumers understand and take control of their energy use.

I am aware of the particular challenges faced by those not on the gas grid and action is being taken to look at the best ways to help. An important part of this is the £25m Central Heating Fund, which will fund the installation of first time central heating systems in low income homes which are in this position.

The Renewable Heat Incentive programme supports the installation of renewable heating systems and is primarily designed to offer off-gas households affordable heating alternatives. It compensates for the additional costs of replacing an oil boiler with a renewable heating system.

Different energy suppliers may have different funding offers through their installers so it is important to shop around for the best quote. Ofgem, which administers the scheme, provides further information about ECO for consumers on its website, including contact details for the energy suppliers. Those needing independent advice in these matters can contact the Government-funded Energy Saving Advice Service. The number to call is 0300 123 1234.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP