



Emergency Central Heating Offer

IMPACT REPORT
2017 - 2018

Hello...



Since Warm Front ended in 2013 there hasn't been an effective large-scale national service in place to help vulnerable households to repair or replace a broken gas boiler. Support through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) has been dependent on location and property type, rather than household need, and has dwindled to the point that there is usually a significant funding gap that most fuel poor households would be hard pressed to fill. Some local authorities and charities provide small-scale services, but even then there may be a delay of several months before work takes place.

Last autumn the AgilityEco team decided to tackle this problem with ECHO: the Emergency Central Heating Offer. We developed and piloted ECHO as an emergency solution to help vulnerable homes who found themselves without heat and hot water due to boiler breakdown.

Our track record in delivering a wide variety of energy efficiency and heating projects, especially our flagship LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) service, meant we were ideally placed to deliver such a scheme. Thanks to very generous Warm Home Discount (WHD) Industry Initiative funding from six energy suppliers, we set to work getting a service ready for winter.

Just four months later we have intervened in almost 400 emergency situations, repairing or replacing boilers and heating controls quickly – without cost to residents. 78% of these households were part of the Affordable Warmth Group (in receipt of HHCRO benefits), with the remainder eligible using the local authority Flexible Eligibility criteria. Thanks to our national network of contractors and the support of dedicated referral partners, we successfully allocated over £950,000 of WHD funds. The benefit to cost ratio was over 5:1, achieving outstanding value for money. More importantly, the end result for the households supported has been life changing – even life saving.

Client feedback has been tremendous, with an overall satisfaction score of 94%. Stringent quality assurance has ensured that all installation work has been carried out to a very high standard.

The success of the ECHO pilot means we are planning to expand the scheme from mid-2018 onwards. We are seeking significant additional funding to offer support to eligible households across the whole country. We are also hoping to spend a percentage of these funds outside of the winter period, meaning we can offer help to the most vulnerable households as soon as they need it.

Jon Kimber

AgilityEco



ECHO highlights



397

TOTAL NUMBER OF
ECHO BOILER REPAIRS
& REPLACEMENTS



LIFETIME BILL SAVINGS FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS

£4,926,868



LIFETIME CARBON SAVINGS

19,215t



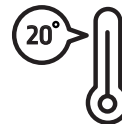
BENEFIT TO COST RATIO

5:1 EVERY £1 SPENT ON ECHO,
RESULTED IN A £5.10 BENEFIT
FOR THE HOUSEHOLDER



85%

OF PEOPLE HELPED BY ECHO
HAD A HEALTH CONDITION
EXACERBATED BY THE COLD



68%

OF PEOPLE HAD
VULNERABILITY REQUIRING
EXTRA HEATING

Eligibility Breakdown



281

NUMBER OF HHCR -
QUALIFYING HOUSEHOLDS



116

NUMBER OF
HOUSEHOLDS QUALIFYING
UNDER 'LA FLEX' CRITERIA

Emergency Support for the Fuel Poor and Vulnerable

AgilityEco created the ECHO scheme to offer free emergency assistance to vulnerable households to repair or replace their broken or condemned boilers during the Warm Home Discount (WHD) Scheme Year 7 (i.e. winter 2017-18).

Earlier in the year our partners who work directly with fuel poor and vulnerable families had told us that there would be significant numbers of their clients whose health and wellbeing would be 'at risk' due to a boiler breakdown. Fuel poor households, in particular owner-occupiers, often have ageing and poorly maintained boilers, with little or no savings available to repair or replace them.

Whilst some households may be supported in repairing or replacing their system through Energy Company Obligation (ECO) or local authority funding sources, most homeowners will have no access to grant funding at all because of where they live. Even those that are ECO eligible might still face a shortfall of more than £1,000. Applying for charitable trust funding could be an option but the timescales involved would likely leave vulnerable households without effective heating or hot water for significant periods.

Working together with six energy suppliers we created ECHO as the no-cost, fast acting solution. We secured around £957,000 from six funders, who also referred in some of their own vulnerable customers. The remainder of the households supported were identified by local authorities and specialist energy agencies. In particular, Energy Projects Plus in Merseyside & Cheshire and Act On Energy in the West Midlands referred clients from the beginning of the service and worked to support and develop the ECHO process.

AgilityEco and our sister-company Bierce managed the customer journey, confirmed eligibility and instructed contractors to undertake repair work (if possible) or to replace a boiler within a fixed time period.

Repairs and replacements were provided by a network of five accredited contractors who were selected using a tough tender process and offered tremendous value for money coupled with excellent service. Between them ECHO was able to cover nearly the whole of the Britain



and deliver effective interventions in a timely manner.

The ECHO service opened for referrals in December 2017 and closed in late March 2018, and ultimately the available funds were sufficient to help just under 400 households repair or replace their broken heating systems.

Households were confirmed as eligible through three routes:

- Being eligible for the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) aka 'Help to Heat'. 281 of the households met this criteria, which was checked using the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) data matching service provided by the Energy Saving Trust.
- Meeting criteria set out in the Statement of Intent (SoI) for their Local Authority (if available). 96 households received a declaration from their local authority.
- A further 20 households were confirmed to meet the government 'LA Flex' guidance.

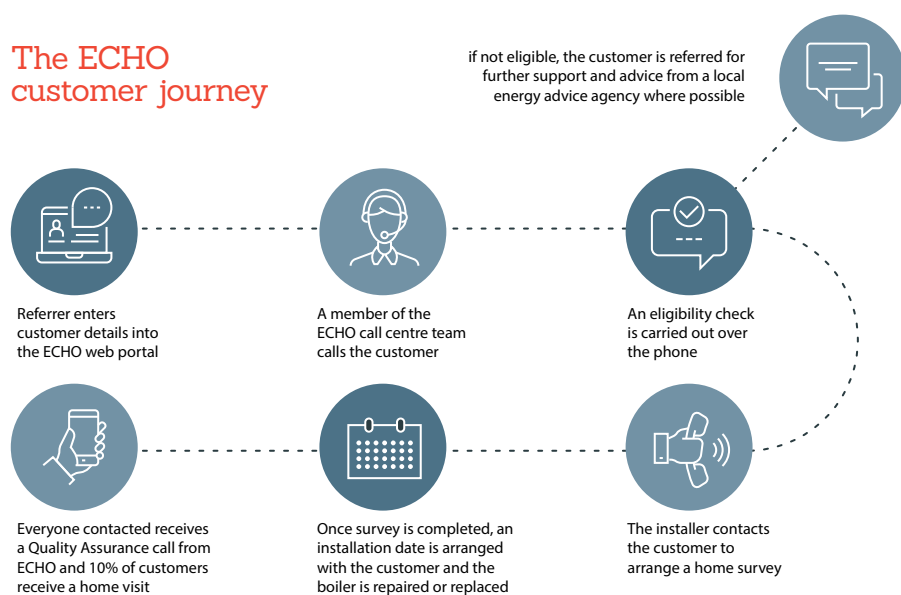


Once referrals were made and eligibility confirmed, the ECHO service aimed to repair or replace faulty boilers within seven working days. Whilst it was designed as a 'repair first' scheme to achieve the maximum value for money, in practice the nature of the households supported and the age and poor state of their boilers meant that a replacement was required in all but a handful of cases. A repair in these circumstances would have been costly and would potentially have exposed the household to another breakdown within a short period of time.

As part of the process, the contractor completed a thorough suite of documentation based on the ECO methodology. However, no ECO funding was claimed as required under the Warm Home Discount legislation, and all installations were fully funded by ECHO.

Following the intervention every household received a follow-up call from us to check their satisfaction and confidence in using their new system. Quality Assurance inspections were undertaken on 10% of interventions to guarantee quality. After a year a further follow-up will remind the household to get their boiler serviced and where possible to promote relevant affordable warmth schemes.

The ECHO customer journey



Helping vulnerable customers stay warm over winter

Mrs C was referred to ECHO by Bury Council. Along with a series of health conditions including fibromyalgia and Addison's disease, Mrs C receives child tax credit and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) as she is on a low income. She has a child aged 17 in full-time education. At the time of her referral, Mrs C had no heating or hot water. Her boiler was very old, with no new parts or recent repairs. The pilot light was out and it had started to leak water and other fluid.

The ECHO call centre immediately called Mrs C as soon as it received her details from Bury Council. Mrs C was a prime candidate for an emergency boiler replacement. The ECHO team put Mrs C directly in touch with one of the ECHO installers who arranged a home survey. The installers booked the installation date and arranged to fit the boiler within six working days of the referral from Bury Council.

"I'm so, so grateful and everyone in all departments have been wonderful. Roz at ECHO was very helpful and wonderful to talk to and the engineer was cheery and polite. I can't thank ECHO enough for having a warm home again and can't wait to have a hot bath."

Mrs C, Manchester



Mr P in Oxford is recovering from a liver transplant. His boiler broke down two weeks before he was referred to ECHO. Mr P struggles to stay warm due to his health conditions but his circumstances were dire during the cold snap (winter 2017-2018), making his particular situation quite urgent. The National Energy Foundation (NEF) in Milton Keynes referred Mr P to ECHO, determining he met the qualifying criteria for ECHO due to receiving income related ESA. The ECHO team arranged for Mr P to have a survey as soon as possible, with a new boiler being fitted within six working days.

"Thank you very much for sorting out my heating yesterday – I really appreciate it. Thanks also to the engineer as he was very efficient, polite, clean and tidy. I'm so pleased with how everything went."

Mr P, Oxford

"I'm over the moon. Just thrilled with how my boiler replacement went. I couldn't fault a thing. Liberty Gas came round, they were very polite and efficient and when the installer explained how to use the boiler, he was very clear and easy to understand."

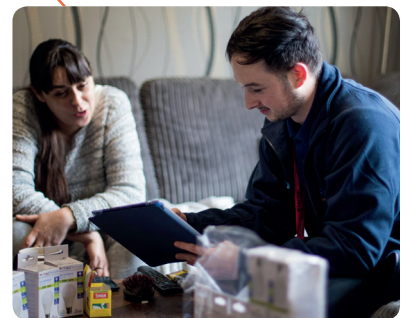
Mrs F, Liverpool

"The scheme has made such a big difference to my quality of life. Everyone's been so helpful and I can't praise Liberty Gas enough – they were so friendly. Absolutely no complaints."

Mr S, Bootle

"I'm delighted with my boiler replacement from PH Jones. Their amazing staff did a great job and left the house really clean. Before the boiler was installed my children had to have really quick showers as we didn't have hot water and now they are able to enjoy their bubble baths again. Really appreciate all the work and help provided by ECHO."

Mrs Q, Worcestershire



The Future for ECHO

ECHO is entirely funded through the Warm Home Discount (WHD) Industry Initiatives process. At the moment the future of the WHD scheme as a whole is being considered by government, and the future of Industry Initiatives looks positive. The government's draft proposals were consulted on in April 2018, and these included an expansion of the amount of funding available for the scheme and the possibility of multi-year initiatives.

With this in mind AgilityEco has ambitious plans to expand the size of ECHO during 2018 and beyond. Eventually we would like to offer ECHO to every area in the country that lacks an emergency boiler replacement scheme. We have found the most effective partnerships have been those with specialist energy agencies and proactive local authorities who have good links into their communities and can quickly identify and refer eligible households.

We would also like to make the scheme available before winter sets in. Some households need heating year-round to support medical needs, and households with a broken boiler may not have access to hot water. By repairing and replacing boilers outside of the main heating season it also avoids any delay in ensuring heating can be switched on by the most vulnerable households as soon as it's needed.



Meet the team



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CEO, AgilityEco
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