

Policy on Discretionary Community Grant Giving East Herts Council

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of giving grants is to support community and voluntary groups, clubs and registered charities whose work enhances the quality of life for residents in East Herts, especially those who are vulnerable and senior citizens and helps the Council take forward its corporate priorities in people, place and prosperity at the very local level.
- 1.2 Grant giving also supports many ambitions in the East Herts Together Sustainable Community Strategy (2009-2024) and objectives in the new East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013-2018). (See Appendix 1 for outcomes expected.)
- 1.3 Grants are provided so that the Council can actively improve opportunities for communities and bring about positive change. Communities are defined as a geographical community such as a village or a community of interest such as older people with transport difficulties. Communities are defined by the common needs and circumstances of people within them, not just their common location.
- 1.4 Grant giving also contributes to the new “Here to Help” philosophy of the Council as well as facilitating its role as a community leader.
- 1.5 Current areas of funding are:
 - Support for volunteers who are delivering services/activities for the benefit of people (Community Activities Grants)
 - Community-led projects that improve well-used public facilities/community assets. (Community Capital Grants)
 - Sporting and artistic excellence for young people aged 11 to 18 (Performance to Excellence)
 - Online giving - free subscription to Localgiving.com, a not-for-profit fundraising website

- Activities for children and young people over the summer holiday (Summer Activities Fund)
- Community-led projects that protect and improve the green environment (Local Environmental Action Fund - LEAF)
- Health and Wellbeing Small Community Grants Fund - projects which help people make sustained lifestyle behaviour change

1.6 Note: LEAF grants are administered by Environmental Coordinator and not through Engagement and Partnerships Team.

1.7 For up-to-date information on active funding areas, go to www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants

2.0 Eligibility criteria

2.1.1 Council grants are available to voluntary and community organisations in East Hertfordshire or those serving a significant number of residents in the East Herts district council area, which is defined as Buntingford, Hertford, Bishop’s Stortford, Ware, Sawbridgeworth and the surrounding villages.

2.1.2 Eligible organisations includes parish councils, voluntary/community groups, sports clubs, societies, charities, youth organisations, environmental trusts and community interest companies, social enterprises. Statutory organisations are not eligible.

2.3 Small businesses or commercial organisations are not eligible to apply to the community grants programme. These organisations may want to approach the Council’s economic development team.

2.4 To be eligible for a grant, organisations must meet agreed minimum criteria. They must:

- Have a voluntary management committee in place (at least 3 unrelated individuals)
- Have a constitution/set of governing rules in place

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- Be financially viable and show evidence of properly managed accounts.
- Have a bank account in their own name.
- Have an open-door membership policy with services that are accessible to people from all backgrounds (Equal Opportunities).
- Not already be in receipt of a grant from the same type of Council scheme. Organisations are only eligible to apply for one grant in each financial year (i.e. if you get a £500 Community Activities grant then that excludes another grant of the same type until the following year)
- Be affiliated with Active East Herts Community Sports Network (Sports Clubs).
- Have an endorsement for the project/activity from the appropriate local ward Councillor.
- Have approached their Parish/Town Council for alternative funding.
- Have one-third the cost of the project in hand at the time of application (capital projects only).
- Have permission by the owner to improve the building or outdoor space.
- Have already applied for planning permission (if required)

- 2.5 Applications from church halls may only be made where the halls are used for physical recreation, cultural, social and community benefit.
- 2.6 Applications from pre-schools that are registered charities may be accepted as these are not considered to be part of the educational establishment. Schools, as statutory organisations, are not eligible to apply.
- 2.7 Organisations applying for a **Summer Activities Grant** must be properly insured with appropriate Health and Safety policies, Risk Assessment and Child Protection Policies in place. These must be submitted with the application.
- 2.8 Registered charities are encouraged to be members of a relevant advice and infrastructure bodies such as the Community Voluntary Services for Broxbourne and East Herts (CVSBEH) or the East Herts Village Hall and Community Buildings Network. This ensures that groups

are aware of best practice and know where to get the necessary support and guidance.

2.10 All applications must be submitted by the advertised deadline and include all the required paperwork. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned. The paperwork required depends on the amount of grant being requested and type of programme being applied to. A full list of required documents is listed here:

- A copy of the local group’s own constitution (set of rules) or link to it on the group’s website. It is sufficient for registered charities to provide their Charity Commission number. Organisations requesting £200 or less are exempt.
- Endorsement from East Herts Ward Councillor who represents the ward where the project is to take place
- Copy of organisation’s bank statements – current and savings (a budget spreadsheet is not sufficient)
- Copies of appropriate Health and Safety policies and Child Protection Policy (currently Summer Activities only)
- Detailed breakdown of estimated income and expenditure for current financial year 1 April to 31 March (Large Community Capital only.)
- A copy of your organisation’s latest income and expenditure accounts. The Council requires applicants to provide accounts that have been assessed by an independent person not connected to your organisation. This person does not have to be an accountant. (Large Community Capital only.)
- Evidence of your consultation process and feedback. (Small and large Community Capital only.)
- Two quotes or estimates of the proposed work. (Large Community Capital only.)

2.11 Organisations applying for a **Community Activities Grant** must be proposing activities that are properly insured with appropriate Health and Safety polices, Risk Assessment and Child Protection Policies in place. Organisations that work with children must submit a copy of their child protection policy.

2.12 East Herts Councilors can apply for a Community Activities grant to organise community engagement events. These are events that involve people and inspire them to get involved and volunteer in East Hertfordshire such as:

- Promoting and building support for a proposed capital project
- Bringing people together to discuss key issues affecting the local area

2.13 The Community Activities pot normally prioritises grass roots community /voluntary groups and charities that have little capacity to generate income or fund raise.

2.14 It is recommended that organisations apply well before they plan to spend the money. The Council will not fund projects that have already started (Para 4.0)

2.15 Service organisations continue to be eligible to apply to hold social events for Senior Citizens from November to January as long as they apply in partnership with the beneficiary organisation, if reasonably possible. The Council’s priority is: parties that would not happen without Council support, parties where an informational talk is happening, and parties that take place on days where most people are with families.

3.0 Priorities for funding

3.1 The Council has limited funds so it will only grant-aid projects that take contribute to objectives within its corporate priorities of people, place and prosperity and whether the proposed project will have a real benefit (bring about a positive change) and/or make a real difference to people living or working in East Herts.

3.2 Council priorities for grant giving are:

- Small, local voluntary groups in the East Herts district area.
- Groups that have little capacity to generate income or raise funds (financial need).
- Groups where Council support would have significant impact

- Projects that are targeted at vulnerable children or adults and will specifically help improve opportunities for this community. Note: projects that are more general may still receive funding if they show that people in this situation will benefit alongside the general population.
- Projects in identified disadvantaged areas of East Herts. Note: projects that are more general may still receive funding if they show that vulnerable groups will benefit alongside the general population.
- Applications from groups that have not applied for a Council grant before
- Projects in rural areas where there is little or no New Homes Bonus (capital only).

3.3 As all five towns and some of the larger villages have been passed significant funds through the building of new houses, the Council’s policy is to first fund capital projects in the rural areas. Projects in the towns may be considered later in the year if the budget is unspent.

3.4 Community Activity Grants can be awarded to projects in both towns and parishes.

4.0 What the Council will not fund under this programme

- Fundraising activities that are about redistributing the grant to any other group or persons
- Projects promoting religious or political beliefs
- Projects that are not value for money
- VAT that can be claimed back
- Public engagement events where there is a fee to attend
- Negative campaigns
- Projects/activities that have already happened before the Council has assessed the application and made a decision
- Annual General Meetings or regular committee meetings
- Projects that the Council consider to be the responsibility of another statutory body such as activities delivered during the school day as part of the curriculum.
- Projects that would go ahead without Council funding

- Projects submitted by organisations that appear to have an excess or surplus of capital or revenue monies.
- Medical equipment
- Commercial organisations or any group that exists to make a profit
- Projects involving the repair and restoration of churches
- Any on-going revenue costs
- Recoverable VAT
- Projects that are routine/annual maintenance (capital application)
- Projects that the Council considers to be the responsibility of another statutory body (e.g. projects on school grounds that are part of the curriculum)
- Projects submitted by organisations that appear to have an excess or surplus of capital or revenue monies

5.0 Assessment process

- 5.1 All community applications are first verified to ensure they meet eligibility criteria (paragraph 2.0 – 2.4) and have submitted all the required paperwork (paragraph 2.10). Applications submitted to the **Summer Activities Fund** are verified by Community Voluntary Services (CVS) for Broxbourne and East Herts which administers this fund.
- 5.2 Applications for **capital** projects costing under £2,000 are subjected to a “light touch” assessment. This means Officers consider whether basic eligibility criteria (Para 2.0, Para 4.0) are met, whether the proposed project is a priority (Para 3.0) and whether the project will have a real benefit (bring about positive change) and /or make a difference to people living and working in East Herts.
- 5.3 Applications to the **Summer Activities Fund** are assessed by a Panel that includes the Executive Member for Health Housing and Community Services. The Panel considers the degree to which applications meet agreed fund criteria stated in the Terms and Conditions. This panel has delegated authority and applications are not sent to the Director for sign off.

- 5.4 Applications for **capital** projects costing more than £2,000 are assessed by Finance Officer who considers: financial viability and whether the application has provided evidence of properly managed accounts.
- 5.4 An officer panel including the finance officer, contract services and engagement and partnership officers, assess applications on secondary criteria listed below and the degree to which the project:
- Helps the council achieve one of its corporate aims in people, place and prosperity and the outcomes listed in Appendix 1. Is it a good fit?
 - Targets or supports those experiencing rural or other geographic disadvantage, providing benefits to people in this situation
 - Is a new application by an organisation that has not received Council funding in the recent past
 - Has the support of the wider community and is a solution to an identified problem (consultation)
 - Is led by volunteers
 - Targets or supports vulnerable people and provides benefits to people in this situation. Vulnerable people include: frail elderly, unemployed, people with learning or physical disabilities, children/young people, people that are under-represented in East Herts.
 - Is realistic and achievable within one year of the grant being offered.
 - Reduces carbon emissions by installation of energy efficiency measures (Applicants that own buildings only)
 - Is in an area with significant amount of New Homes Bonus money
- 5.5 The Officer grant panel submits its recommendations to the Executive Member with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing. Once this support has been obtained, applications are passed to the Director of Customer and Community Services. The exception to this is the Summer Activities Fund where the Executive Member has been involved in the assessment process.
- 5.5 Decisions and an conditional award is usually made within six to eight weeks of the closing date.

6.0 Award and payment of grants

6.1 Capital awards are made conditionally and require that successful applicants agree to certain responsibilities, stated in the Terms and Conditions.

6.2 For smaller revenue grants (maximum grant £500), the minimum criterion is that groups:

- Acknowledge the financial support of East Herts Council in any publicity and report back to the Council after a year on outcomes.
- Submit photos of the grant-funded project (with appropriate consent) and information on achievements.

6.3 For larger capital projects, successful applicants are required to sign and return a Grant Acceptance Form – agreeing to the conditions in 6.2 plus the following:

- Agreeing to have the name of their group and contact included in the Council’s consultation database and participating in any public consultation.
- Providing information on their project to be included in any publicity that the Council produces (as and when requested)
- Monitoring and evaluating the project and submitting an Evaluation Form after the project has been completed, detailing whether the activity met its original aims, what difference was made and outcomes (expected or unexpected).
- Notifying us immediately if the project can not go ahead

6.4 Payment for Community Activity Grants (revenue) will be made immediately, prior to the activity taking place.

6.4 Payment for capital building projects or items of equipment, is not released in advance of the project being completed.

6.5 Currently, both small and large capital projects must be completed and requests for the grant must be made within **one** year of the grant award letter.

- 6.6 Successful applicants are required to provide evidence of actual spend on the project (such as invoices/receipts) when requesting payment as well as submitting a Grant Claim. Payment of a grant will not be made based on submission of a purchase order.
- 6.7 For projects costing up to £16,000, the Council may fund up to 50% of project costs. The maximum grant is £8,000. This means if the actual project expenditure is less than the estimated cost, the grant will be reduced accordingly.

For example :

If the **estimated** project cost on the application is £18,000 and we offer a grant of up to £8,000, we are offering funding for up to 50% of your **estimate**.

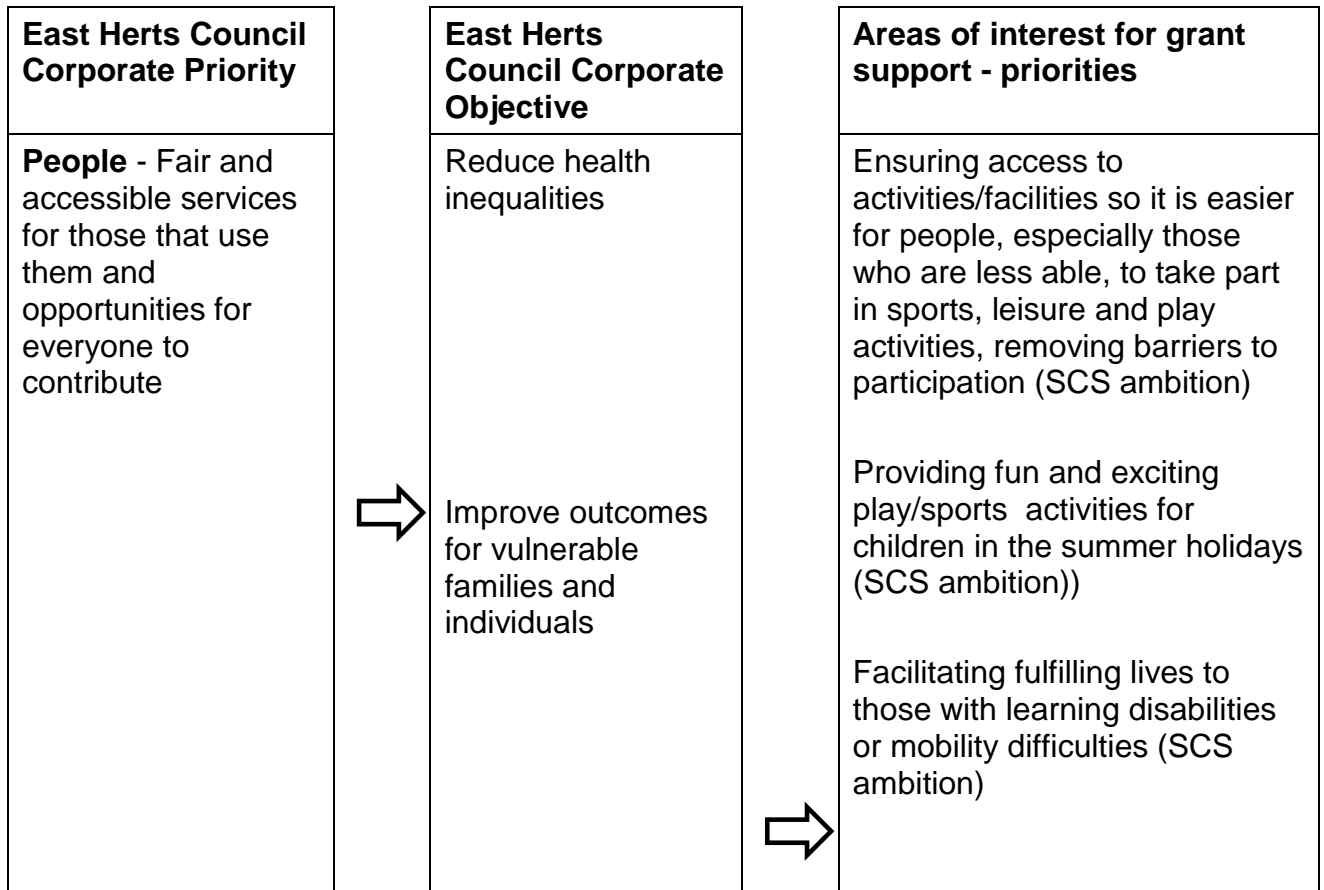
Once your project is complete and the total cost is **actually** lower ie £16,000, then our funding would be reduced by the same percentage, 50% of the **actual** cost, ie £8,000.

- 6.8 For projects costing over £2,000, payment of the grant will be made following a site visit to confirm the satisfactory completion of the work (or purchase of equipment) in accordance with the specifications submitted.
- 6.9 Payment will be made by bank automated transfer (BACS).
- 6.10 The Council acknowledges that sometimes projects do not always go to plan and that things change. Groups wishing to dispose of buildings or equipment that are the recipient of a capital grant will be required to seek the consent of District Council to the disposal. The Council reserves the right to require repayment of the grant, in full, immediately following the disposal of the building or facility.
- 7.0 Monitoring and publicity
- 7.1 Since 2010, successful applicants have been required to submit a monitoring form detailing the outcomes of a capital grants project.

- 7.2 Monitoring forms are distributed at time of the capital Grant Claim and are expected back within 3 months. Due to limited resources, there is no formal monitoring of small revenue grants or follow up on the long-term outcomes of the grant.
- 7.3 Monitoring of Summer Activities is conducted by the CVSBEH and all applicants are expected to complete a formal monitoring form. A report is submitted to the Council in October and discussed with the Executive Member for Health Housing and Community Services.
- 7.4 Monitoring information is reported to the Council’s Community Scrutiny Committee (previously twice yearly now once year) and regularly in the Members Information Bulletin.
- 7.5 Availability of community grants is promoted through the Council’s website, social media services, articles in LINK magazine and stakeholder partners such as the CVSBEH, Active East Herts Community Sports Network, Hertfordshire County Council and Herts Community Foundation. A presentation on grants is made annually to the Rural Parish Conference and at the Village Hall and Community Buildings Network.
- 7.6 Announcements are also sent via email to Parish Council Chairmen and Parish Clerks and groups on the Engagement and Partnerships’ database. East Herts Members are notified of grant deadlines and allocations through the Members’ Information Bulletin.
- 7.7 We aim to operate an open, equitable and transparent grants system. We consider grants on an individual basis and promise to give appropriate feedback. Please note, the Council has limited funds available so regrettably we will not be able to fund all the bids we receive. If you are unsuccessful this time and require additional information on other sources of funding, visit www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants and visit the External Funding page.

Appendix 1: EAST HERTS COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY GRANT PRIORITIES

Including ambitions from Everyone Matters – A sustainable community strategy for East Herts 2009-2014.



Essential Reference Paper "B"

**East Herts Council
Corporate Priority**

**East Herts
Council Corporate
Objective**

Increase
community
engagement

**Areas of interest for grant
support - priorities**

Supporting talented young
athletes and artists

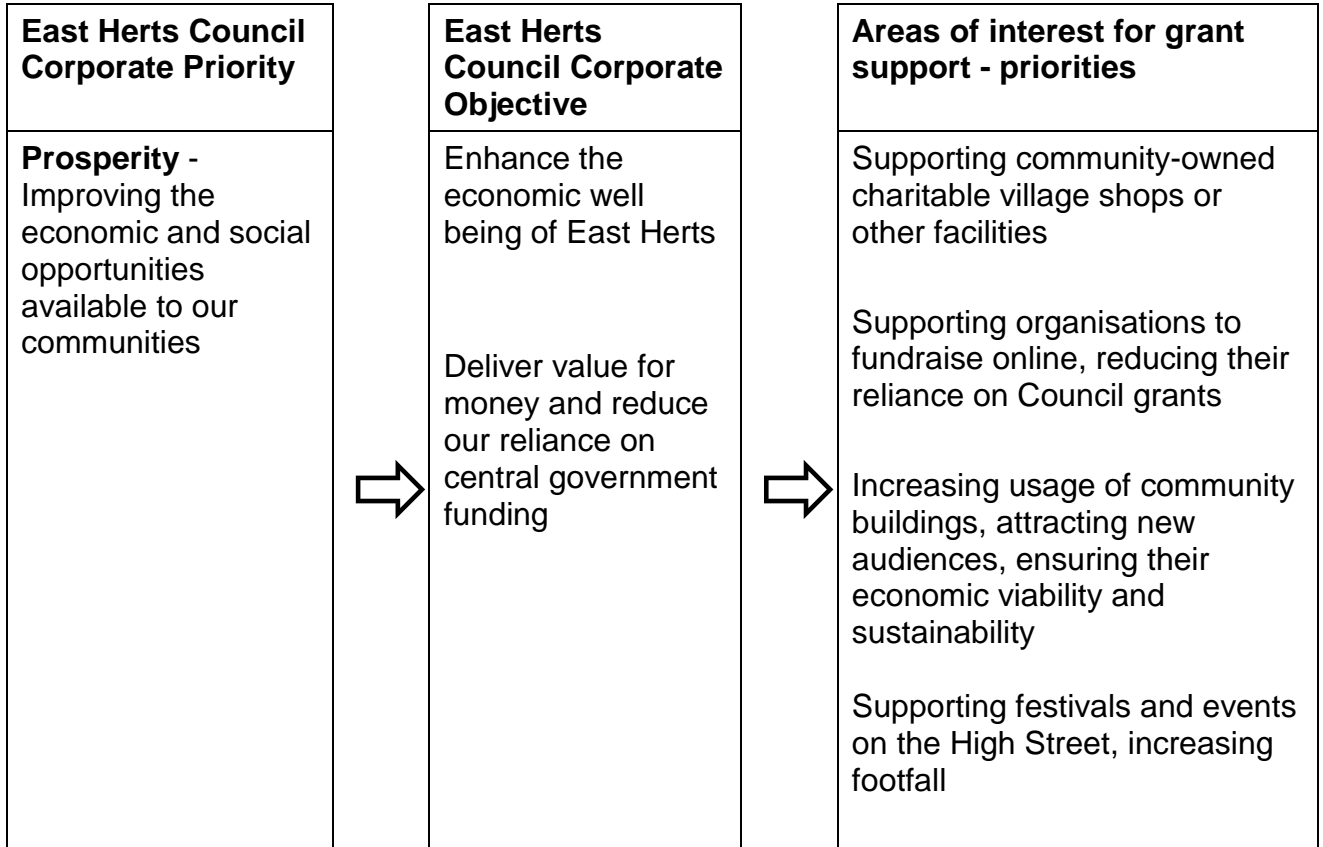
Encouraging projects where
people take
responsibility/interest for the
area around them, voicing their
concerns and seeking to solve
local problems by collaborating
with partners, working together
for a common purpose, social
connectedness

Supporting Members to hold
public meetings that engage
their constituents (SCS
ambition)

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East Herts Council Corporate Priority	East Herts Council Corporate Objective	Areas of interest for grant support - priorities
<p>Place - Safe and Clean</p>	<p>Maintain our parks, play areas and open spaces in good order</p> <p>Reduce anti social behaviour and the fear of crime</p>	<p>Enhancing East Herts character - built and natural environment (SCS ambition) such as providing new space and increasing facilities' usefulness</p> <p>Improving access to indoor/outdoor sports and leisure facilities, especially for vulnerable groups</p> <p>Ensuring that places and spaces are “fit-for-purpose” and provide pleasant places for all people in the area to meet up (especially those without access to a car) and participate in community events.</p> <p>Facilitating opportunities for people to feel connected with others, like they belong to their neighbourhood, and believing that people of different backgrounds get on well together (social cohesion)</p>

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**APPENDIX 2: GRANTS ASSESSMENT SCORE SHEET
Community Capital Scheme LARGE 2014/2015 (Note this is in
the process of being revised)**

Applicant:

Scores out of **26** if a building or **22** if an open space or equipment

Verification conducted and passed Eligibility criteria. Any comments or concerns?
Waiver agreed re 1/3 required at application. If yes, please explain?

Assessors are asked to evaluate to what degree the applicant meets the following secondary criteria. Guidance notes for assessors are on the back of this sheet.

Secondary Criteria	Score
Does the applicant's project address at least one Council or SCS priority (Q 1 & 2)	
Does the Project benefit local East Herts residents, making a difference to their lives (Q 3 & 4). (Q21 if a building)	
Does the project have the support and backing of its members or the wider community (Q 5)	
Is the project directed at vulnerable people – ie groups experiencing some type of deprivation, unemployment, income poverty, lack of housing, access to services (Q 6)	
Is the project directed at people living in an area of rural disadvantage (Q7)	
Are volunteers involved in the organisation. If so will this reduce costs. (Q 8)	

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Is the balance to be raised realistic to achieve within 1 year? (Q14g & Q16)	Yes / No
Is the applicant applying for the first time (Q 17)	
Has any NHB been awarded. If yes, how much ?	£
Is the applicant installing energy efficient measures (Q 22)	
TOTAL	