



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund

Guidance for Local Authorities in Great
Britain



© Crown copyright 2023

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: businessgrantfunds@beis.gov.uk

Contents

Contents	3
1 Introduction	5
1.1 Rationale	5
1.2 Role of Local Authorities	6
1.3 Scam awareness	6
1.4 Scheme Timescales	7
2 Legal and Regulatory Framework	8
2.1 Legal Basis	8
2.2 Subsidy Control Considerations	8
2.3 Data Sharing and Data Privacy	8
2.4 Searchlight Data	9
3 Communicating the scheme	10
4 Providing the Grant to Local Authorities	11
4.1 Principles	11
4.2 The Grant Payment	11
4.3 Payment Reconciliation	11
5 Providing the support payment to eligible households	13
5.1 General principles	13
5.2 Eligibility Criteria	13
5.3 Households Eligible for AFP Alternative Fund	14
5.4 Eligible Households on Business Premises	15
5.5 Households in Non-permanent Accommodation	15
5.6 Exclusions to the AFP Alternative Fund	16
6 Application process	17
7 Role of Department for Energy Security and Net Zero	18
7.1 Application portal, Assisted Digital contact centre and application management portal	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7.2 Initial Verification Checks	19
7.3 Forwarding Applications to the local authority	20
8 Role of Local Authorities	21
8.1 Data access and management	21

8.2	Local Authority Pre- and Post- Payment Assurance _____	21
8.3	Local authority checks _____	22
8.4	Insufficient evidence _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8.5	Application decision _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9	Fraud and error _____	30
10	Assurance _____	32
10.1	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero post payment assurance _____	32
10.2	Debt Recovery _____	33
11	Monitoring and reporting requirements _____	34
11.1	Monitoring and Reporting _____	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Annex A: Minimum Assurance Criteria to be Evidenced by Local Authorities _____		35
Annex B: Public Sector Equality Duty _____		41
Annex C: Legal Gateway that allows LAs to access DWP’s Searchlight data for the purposes of the AFP Alternative Fund administration, but only for applications where there is a qualifying DWP benefit claim _____		42
Annex D: Contact details _____		43
DESNZ Error! Bookmark not defined.		
Assisted Digital Call Centre _____		43

1 Introduction

- 1.0.1 This Guidance is provided by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (“the Department”) to support local authorities to deliver the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) Alternative Fund payments to eligible households.
- 1.0.2 Households should visit [the scheme application page] for more information on the AFP Alternative Fund. Information on wider energy support schemes can be found at <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk>.
- 1.0.3 Beware of scams. Most eligible households will automatically be provided with an AFP. Households will never be asked to apply for AFP Alternative Fund payments by email or text.
- 1.0.4 The government will never provide a link to reach the online application portal. Instead, this can be found by searching for “Apply for energy bill support if you do not get it automatically” into the GOV.UK webpage search bar, or through an online search engine.

1.1 Rationale

- 1.1.1 The Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) provides a payment of £200 for households that use alternative fuels – such as heating oil, biomass and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) – as the main source of heating. For households in Great Britain, the main part of this scheme is being delivered through domestic electricity suppliers in one instalment in February. The vast majority of eligible households will receive the AFP automatically through their electricity supplier. However, there will be a small number of households that will be required to apply to the scheme due to the method used to target payments and because some households will not have a direct relationship with an electricity supplier. The Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund (AFP Alternative Fund) was set up to provide the payment to these households.
- 1.1.2 Individuals will need to apply for the AFP Alternative Fund via a Gov.UK portal. Local authorities will be responsible for distributing support payments to eligible applicants.
- 1.0.5 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero expects eligible households to include those without a direct relationship to an energy supplier, such as park home residents and some housing association tenants. The AFP Alternative Fund is expected to reach a significant number of vulnerable people. **No household will be eligible for both the AFP payment and an AFP Alternative Fund payment.**

1.2 Role of Local Authorities

- 1.2.1 This Guidance is provided by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to support local authorities to deliver the AFP Alternative Fund to eligible households.
- 1.2.2 Households wishing to apply for an AFP Alternative Fund payment should search for “apply for energy bill support if you do not get it automatically” on Gov.UK and follow the instructions there. All applications must be made via this central application route. No applications from other routes can be accepted or processed.
- 1.2.3 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero will then perform a number of verification and eligibility checks, before passing applications onto local authorities to perform some final checks and distribute payments. The Department will reimburse local authorities for the cost of making the AFP Alternative Fund payments through grants under section 13 of the Energy Prices Act 2022.
- 1.2.4 While the AFP Alternative Fund is available across the United Kingdom, this guidance applies only to the scheme delivered by local authorities in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales).
- 1.2.5 No support payments made by a local authority outside of the above scheme start and end dates (outlined in the table below) will be considered as eligible expenditure by the Department regardless of the reason. Should a local authority choose to make a support payment outside of these dates it will be responsible for funding the payment.
- 1.2.6 When dealing with applications for funding, local authorities are encouraged to adopt the following principles as needed:
- use the eligibility criteria guidance and principles in this document to verify those who are eligible, taking into account a wide range of information
 - work together with other local authorities and, where appropriate, organisations such as charities that support local vulnerable people.

1.3 Scam awareness

- 1.3.1 The Department is ensuring that scam awareness messaging is prominent in public communications. This includes highlighting the differences between the main AFP scheme, which is delivered automatically without the need for an application, and the Alternative Fund, where individuals have to actively make an application to receive the payment. The Department is working with relevant stakeholder groups to cascade messaging about how AFP Alternative Fund works and advise consumers how to respond when faced with a scam. If a local authority is approached by an applicant or other about a potential scam then please report details to the scheme using the contact details in Annex D and the following advice should be provided:

- “If you have received a scam message in relation to the AFP Alternative Fund please report it. It is very important that this is reported promptly. Please send a screen shot of the message to report@phishing.gov.uk so that action can be taken. Forward text messages to 7726, and report websites via the National Cyber Security Centre at <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/report-scam-website>.”

1.4 Scheme Timescales

Key dates	
Scheme 'go live'	6 March 2023
Scheme closes to new applications	31 May 2023
Final date for payments to be posted in the local authority financial system	30 June 2023
Final date for payments to be defrayed from the local authority bank account	7 July 2023
Final date for scheme reconciliation data to be sent by a local authority to the Department	31 July 2023

1.4.1 Further details on the AFP can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-help-energy-bills/alternative-fuels>

2 Legal and Regulatory Framework

2.1 Legal Basis

- 2.1.1 The AFP Alternative Fund is underpinned by the Energy Prices Act 2022. That Act allows for the government to issue support for energy costs (section 13) and enables government to empower delivery partners to provide the support to recipients (section 15). The Act, and subsequent regulations, also provide for delivery of the funding through local authorities in Great Britain (see also Annex D). The Energy Prices (Designated Domestic Energy Price Reduction Schemes for Great Britain and Designated Bodies) Regulations 2022 (also in force) extends this designation to all district councils in England.
- 2.1.2 The support is intended to help households with their energy costs. The funds should not be used for any economic undertaking.
- 2.1.3 The Department has confirmation from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that receiving AFP Alternative Fund does not affect people's ability to claim other benefits, as well as confirmation from the Home Office that those with No Recourse to Public Funds can be recipients.

2.2 Subsidy Control Considerations

- 2.2.1 For the subsidy control rules to be engaged, various tests must be met one of which is that support from a public authority must be given to an economic actor, which means, a person or company placing goods or services on a market.
- 2.2.2 AFP Alternative Fund is intended to be delivered to households across Great Britain through local authorities. Unlike AFP or other energy bills schemes recently announced by HM Government, no businesses will be involved in either delivering or receiving this support.
- 2.2.3 Therefore, the Department does not consider there to be subsidy control issues for AFP Alternative Fund.

2.3 Data Sharing and Data Privacy

- 2.3.1 Local authorities, the Department and contracted organisations will share personal and non-personal data in the form of reporting data, necessary for the purpose of enabling monitoring and to enforce compliance. This data sharing is governed by a Data Sharing Agreement between the Department and local authorities.

-
- 2.3.2 The Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund data privacy notice is published online: <https://AFP.apply-for-energy-bill-alternative-funds.service.gov.uk/s/privacy>. It sets out how the Department will use the personal data collected from local authorities, consumers, contracted organisations and the rights of consumers. It is made with reference to Articles 13 and 14 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- 2.3.3 Local authorities must have appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Local authorities must make clear to applicants that this data will be shared with the Department.
- 2.3.4 Local authorities must ensure they meet the “Accountability” principle which makes it clear that they are responsible for complying with and demonstrating compliance with the UK GDPR. This includes keeping a record of processing activities under Article 30. For instance, records of any personal data breaches. Where the breach relates to the scheme, please notify the Department through the contact details in Annex D.
- 2.3.5 Applicants are advised that they may be contacted for research purposes, and that their data will be shared with the Department and appointed contractors for counter fraud, research and evaluation purposes. Their details will be held in a secure data system and they will not be contacted by any other third parties as a result. **All research is voluntary** and is not linked to the outcome of their application. They may withdraw their consent at any time if they change their mind. All contact details will be securely deleted from contractors’ systems after 2 years.

2.4 Searchlight Data

- 2.4.1 For the purposes of administering the scheme local authorities are permitted to utilise data held in DWP’s Searchlight data share, where there is a legitimate and proportionate case to do so. This can be for qualifying benefit claimants only, who will need to identify themselves as such during the application process.
- 2.4.2 Use of Searchlight is not mandatory, nor does it prohibit the use of other means to verify applications.

3 Communicating the scheme

- 3.1.1 Local authorities must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the support payment is funded by HM Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.
- 3.1.2 It is important to keep messaging consistent across the scheme. Local authorities should refer to the scheme as 'AFP Alternative Fund'. Any local communications concerning the scheme should include the need to make an application and provide guidance on how applicants can find the scheme on Gov.UK or through an internet search.
- 3.1.3 When publishing information on the scheme, local authorities should show due regard to the accessibility of the information to ensure different groups are reached.

4 Providing the Grant to Local Authorities

4.1 Principles

- 4.1.1 Where support payments have been provided to eligible recipients in line with this guidance and the scheme grant determination letter, the Department will reimburse local authorities for the cost of providing AFP Alternative Fund payments to eligible recipients.
- 4.1.2 Grant payments will be made under section 13 of the Energy Prices Act 2022.
- 4.1.3 All funds must be used for the sole purpose of providing AFP Alternative Fund to eligible customers.
- 4.1.4 New Burdens funding will be provided to local authorities to cover the expected reasonable additional costs associated with the implementation of the scheme.

4.2 The Grant Payment

- 4.2.1 The date that the initial grant payments will be made to local authorities will be confirmed shortly.
- 4.2.2 Funding allocations will be based on estimates by the Department of the number of eligible households in each local authority.
- 4.2.3 Local authorities will be provided with eighty percent of the estimated cost of funding in a lump sum payment.
- 4.2.4 As part of the end of scheme reconciliation process local authorities will be provided with a balancing figure for remittance or recovery payment, reflecting the final true cost of making payments under the scheme.

4.3 Payment Reconciliation

- 4.3.1 Following the deadline for defrayal of payment to individual applicants on the 7 July 2023, a final payment reconciliation will take place.
- 4.3.2 To enable the Department to complete the payment reconciliation, the local authority must submit the following detail to the Department via email no later than the 31 July 2023 (full instructions will be sent to the LAs no later than 31 May 2023):
 - An excel spreadsheet showing (a) the value of each individual support payment; (b) the Applicant Reference Number of the support payment (as detailed on Salesforce); (c) the date the individual support payment was posted in the local authority finance system; (d)

the date the individual support payment was defrayed from the local authority bank account.

- A written statement from the local authority's Section 151 Local Government Act / Section 95 Local Government (Scotland) Act Officer confirming the final payment date and amount.
- A word table confirming the documentation provided and detailing the reason for any discrepancy in the figures. It is expected that the values on the Section 151 / 95 letter will match the value on the grant payment list, if they do not match then the local authority is required to explain why.

4.3.3 Template documents for the above will be provided to all local authorities no later than the 31 May 2023.

4.3.4 The information provided will be used by the Department to fully reconcile actual AFP Alternative Fund payments made under the scheme against estimated allocations provided to suppliers. There will be a dialogue between the Department and local authorities if required to agree the final reconciled figures.

4.3.5 Following the completed reconciliation the Department will write to local authorities confirming:

- The total allocation of grant made to the local authority.
- The value of eligible AFP Alternative Fund payments delivered.
- The balancing figure for remittance or recovery.

4.3.6 Where a balance is due to local authorities the Department will aim for this to be paid to the local authority in full within 30 working days of the reconciliation notification.

4.3.7 Any undispersed funding resulting from monies which exceed the total sum of payments delivered will need to be returned to the Department in full within 30 working days of the receipt of the reconciliation notification. The notification will provide full details of how to make any payment.

5 Providing the support payment to eligible households

5.1 General principles

- 5.1.1 The primary principle of the AFP Alternative Fund scheme is to provide equivalent support to domestic households who have not automatically received or will not automatically receive AFP support through their energy supplier. This could be where a household is:
- a. not able to receive support through their electricity supplier as they do not have a direct relationship.
 - b. not receiving the support automatically due to the targeting method, either due to being in a postcode that has a sufficiently high number of electrically heated households or in a postcode on the gas grid but the household does not have a gas connection.
 - c. not receiving the support automatically for another reason.
- 5.1.2 The scheme targets households that use alternative fuels as their main source of heating and are responsible for paying for these fuels. This could be as part of a service charge, rent or other arrangement. Households who are not responsible for paying for their alternative fuel use are not in scope of the scheme.
- 5.1.3 In all cases the dwelling for which support is being claimed must be the sole or main residential address of the applicant. To be eligible for the scheme households must be able to provide sufficient proof of address to allow confirmation that the dwelling is their sole or main domestic residence.
- 5.1.4 Households must be resident at the eligible premises on the date they apply for the scheme.
- 5.1.5 Only one payment may be made per eligible domestic premises. Where an address comprises two or more separate eligible occupied domestic premises, each premises must demonstrate eligibility for an AFP Alternative Fund payment.
- 5.1.6 All eligible applicants must receive the payment in full. For example, the support payment cannot be used to offset council tax arrears.

5.2 Eligibility Criteria

- 5.2.1 To be eligible for AFP Alternative Fund applicants must meet the following criteria on the date of their application:

-
- The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residential address of the applicant.
 - The applicant or household is responsible for paying for the alternative fuel(s) used in the dwelling as the household's main source of heating and may, through these charges increasing, have the impact of increased alternative fuel costs passed on to them between 1 September 2022 and 31 May 2023.
 - The household has not or will not receive a payment through the main AFP scheme and has not received a payment through the AFP Alternative Fund, in whole or in part.
 - The household dwelling is not a business premises or other form of non-domestic premises, is used wholly or mainly for domestic purposes, with the exception of businesses whose main business activity is to provide long term residential accommodation (landlords etc). Only households, and not the businesses themselves, may apply for the AFP Alternative Fund.

5.2.2 These criteria apply to the address that is receiving payment. It is possible that an individual may move from an AFP-eligible address to an AFP Alternative Fund-eligible address. In this case, as long as the applicant meets the other eligibility criteria when applying to the AFP Alternative Fund, they will be considered to be eligible to receive the payment.

5.2.3 Local authorities should use their local knowledge and the definitions and criteria set out in this guidance to assist in making a decision on eligibility of a household for this scheme.

5.3 Households Eligible for AFP Alternative Fund

5.3.1 Provided they can provide sufficient proof of address and are not otherwise ineligible, households eligible for AFP Alternative Fund include:

- park home residents.
- housing association, social and private tenants, and leaseholders, supplied via a landlord with a commercial meter.
- households in house boats on residential moorings.
- households on a private electricity network, for example those supplied by a heat network.
- Off-grid households.
- traveller households on authorised sites.
- households in non-permanent/supported accommodation.

-
- 5.3.2 In some circumstances, households may have been paid in part under the main AFP scheme, but due to a change in circumstances (e.g. they had to move out of their own home and into non-permanent accommodation) are eligible to apply under the AFP Alternative Fund. Local authorities are not asked to check that change in circumstances, however they must still be otherwise eligible in order to apply.
- 5.3.3 Where one of these categories does not apply or where it is not materially clear whether a household falls into one of the eligible categories, the decisions on the eligibility of each household will be at the local authority's discretion, provided the treatment of the application is consistent with the scheme eligibility criteria set out in section 5.2.
- 5.3.4 If the premises contains more than one eligible household as defined in this guidance, each of the households will be eligible for the payment. This does not include houses in multiple occupation (HMO) as they would only be eligible for one payment for the whole property in line with main AFP scheme, rather than one payment per resident.

5.4 Eligible Households on Business Premises

- 5.4.1 All businesses and other non-domestic premises are excluded from directly receiving AFP Alternative Fund, except:
- Residents of businesses providing long term residential accommodation including landlords.
 - Farmers living in domestic farmhouses on a farm.
- 5.4.2 Where a small part of a domestic premises is used by a home-based business (for example a bedroom used as an office) this will not exclude a household as eligible, provided the other eligibility criteria have been met.

5.5 Households in non-permanent Accommodation

- 5.5.1 Households in non-permanent accommodation (e.g. temporary accommodation or holiday parks), where they are responsible for paying for alternative fuels, and have been resident for over one month prior to application, should be eligible subject to fulfilling other criteria. Households are asked to select if they live in temporary accommodation as part of the application process. Local authorities will need to confirm their status, including requesting evidence.
- 5.5.2 Where a local authority is aware that a household has already received an AFP Alternative Fund payment at a previous temporary address, the second application must be refused.

5.6 Exclusions to the AFP Alternative Fund

- 5.6.1 Premises that have a primary domestic electricity supply contract (or deemed contract) are eligible for funding through the main AFP scheme and are therefore excluded from receiving AFP Alternative Fund if they have done so or will do so. This includes:
- where a landlord rather than a tenant holds the domestic electricity supply contract, and therefore the landlord is eligible for the AFP payment (and should have passed the benefit through to their tenants).
 - premises who have previously received an AFP payment, including where a premises has multiple unrelated meter points which have been excluded from AFP eligibility.
- 5.6.2 Second or holiday homes are excluded from AFP Alternative Fund. The dwelling must be the sole or main residential address of the applicant.
- 5.6.3 The following groups are excluded from the scheme:
- Students living in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA).
 - Seasonal workers living in associated accommodation.
 - Service occupiers – such as security, building caretakers, property guardians.
 - Households living in a dwelling on a business premises, unless eligible as described in 5.4.
- 5.6.4 The following circumstances would also not be eligible:
- The individual submits an application that is not within the appropriate timescales (e.g. after it ends).
 - The applicant does not have a valid bank account (all Post Office card accounts (POCa) have been closed as of December 2022 so the applicant will not be supplying POca details).
 - Somebody else in the property has applied – duplicate application.
 - Address mismatch (e.g. wrong flat or house number).
 - Invented address or residents in address.
 - Duplicate application but with different bank account details.

6 Application process

- 6.1.0 An application process is required for all applicants for the AFP Alternative Fund payment. The application process for this scheme will be jointly administered by the Department and local authorities.
- 6.1.1 The Department has built a digital system using Salesforce to manage the application process. This will be accessed via an internet browser at [address]. The system will be used for:
- applicants to check their eligibility.
 - Applicants to apply.
 - applicants to upload documentation needed for evidence.
 - Local authorities to receive applications.
 - local authorities to access applicant information and related documentation.
 - local authorities to process applications, including uploading of further information gathered.
 - local authorities to provide data to the Department on the status of applications.
 - The Department and local authorities to share applicant information and data through the system.
 - local authorities to upload screenshots of evidence for assurance purposes.
- 6.1.2 At all stages of the application process, both the Department and local authorities must make clear to applicants that data may be shared between the organisations. The Department's privacy notice, setting out how the Department will handle personal data will be published as part of the application website.
- 6.1.3 The application process should enable local authorities to carry out the required checks (see section 8 "Role of Local Authorities") as well as to comply with the minimum data reporting requirements (see section 11 "Monitoring and Reporting Requirements").
- 6.1.4 The application process may be completed by a third-party where necessary, for example an individual with power of attorney can complete an application.
- 6.1.5 Applicants will not be able to re-access an application on the portal once it has been submitted. Therefore, they will not be able to change or add to their application once it is submitted. After submission, they will get a reference number through via email, if they did not provide an email address, they will get a notification by post produced through gov.notify.

7 Role of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

The Department is responsible for the scheme policy and design, administering the application process, conducting initial eligibility checks and scheme communications

7.1 Application portal, Assisted Digital contact centre and Application Management portal

7.1.0 The Department is responsible for administering the digital application systems and assisted digital call centre. All applications must be made through these routes and local authorities must not establish other routes for making an application.

7.1.1 The application system is accessed via an internet browser on Gov.UK. The system will be used for:

- Applicants to check their eligibility.
- Applicants to apply.
- applicants to upload receipt documentation that is needed for evidence of having purchased alternative fuels.

7.1.2 The Department is responsible for gathering application evidence related to bank details, address, and eligibility during the application stage of the scheme. The Department will not verify uploaded documentation before it is passed to local authorities.

7.1.3 For applicants without a Council Tax record, a scan or photograph of a physical document, or a digital copy of at least one of the following documents should have been uploaded by the householder to Salesforce:

- valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence)
- utility bill dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date (mobile phone bills and credit card statements are not accepted)
- benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months
- a current tenancy agreement - If an in-date agreement is not provided, local authorities should request written confirmation that the tenancy is current (e.g. an email from the landlord or Managing Estate Agent confirming the tenancy). Other relevant types of evidence, for example occupation certificates in Wales, could be used
- for permanent residents of a boat: a signed, dated (no earlier than 3-months before the application date) letter from a boat mooring provider that states the applicants name and address and that they live permanently on a long-term home mooring is also acceptable evidence.

-
- 7.1.4 Assisted digital phone support is available for applicants who are not able to make an online application. The freephone telephone number for the centre is 0808 175 3287. The contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 18.00.
- 7.1.5 The contact centre can, where required, support applicants through the application process, provide support with eligibility questions, complete the online form on behalf of the applicant and provide applicants with details on their application status. If evidence is required as part of these applications, this evidence will be sent (either electronically or by post) to the call centre, who will upload it to the case.
- 7.1.6 The application portal and call centre will close to new applicants at 23:59 on Wednesday 31 May 2023.
- 7.1.7 The digital application management system, Salesforce, will be used by the Department and local authorities to:
- manage all applications.
 - access applicant information and related documentation.
 - Process applications and manage checks.
 - report data.
 - provide assurance evidence.

7.2 Initial Verification Checks

- 7.2.0 The Department is responsible for conducting initial verification checks on all applications made and for retaining assurance evidence against these checks. The Department will conduct the following checks:
- check that the applicant has not been paid by the AFP main scheme.
 - check that the applicant is using a valid GB address.
 - check that the applicant is off the mains gas grid or is on the gas grid with no gas connection.
 - bank account verification.
 - checks that the applicant has not already applied for AFP Alternative Fund or has an application in progress.
- 7.2.1 In the small number of cases where bank account verification has not been possible, the Department will request alternative bank account evidence at the application stage.
- 7.2.2 Local authorities are not required to re-conduct the checks made by the Department.

7.3 Forwarding applications to the local authority

- 7.3.1 On a daily basis, applications which have passed the initial checks by the Department will be sent to the relevant local authority. This information will be available through the Salesforce system as a case management portal that would allow local authorities to see all applications for their area and update the central database in real time with progress. Local Authority Portal Guidance for local authority officials will be developed and provide a step-by-step guide for using the system. This is based on the user journey for local authority case workers and shows them, plus call centre staff, what screens they will see as they go through the process of logging in, viewing cases and moving cases along the built-in workflow. This is a more traditional user manual based on the specific set up the Department has for the project. The Local Authority Portal Guidance also includes links to general Salesforce content where appropriate.
- 7.3.2 Applications which have passed the Department's checks will be passed to local authorities to complete final eligibility checks and if appropriate process payment. The Department has designed the process with the aim of reducing to a minimum the number of occurrences where local authorities might be required to exercise discretion on issuing a payment.

7.4. Communicating the Application Status

- 7.4.1. Applicants who are deemed ineligible at the initial application stage will be informed by BEIS using gov.notify.
- 7.4.2. Once processed by local authorities, applicants will be informed in writing (paper or electronic) when an AFP Alternative Fund payment has been provided or when an application has been rejected. These notifications will be issued centrally by the Department using gov.notify. Information used to send these communications (successful, cancelled or rejected and the possible reasons why) will be supplied using the information that local authorities include in the Salesforce system, using the provided drop-down menu. It is important that local authorities ensure the system is kept up to date and a clear record of the basis for the local authority decision is uploaded. If the status is not correctly updated, this will prevent notifications being sent.

8 Role of Local Authorities

8.1.1 Local authorities in Great Britain are responsible for eligibility checks and payment processing.

8.2 Data Access and Management

8.2.1 Local authorities will manage access to and processing of applications through the Salesforce case management system. Full details of how local authority case workers will use this system are detailed in the Local Authority Portal Guidance issued to all participating authorities.

8.2.2 Local authorities will be able to download bank detail data for successful applications in the form of a .csv file from Salesforce. This is enabled to assist local authorities with managing payments to successful applicants.

8.2.3 No other information will be able to be downloaded from Salesforce.

8.3 Local Authority Pre- and Post- Payment Assurance

8.3.0 All local authorities are required to follow this guidance and conduct activity to provide assurance that all support payments have been paid out to eligible applicants in line with the eligibility conditions for this scheme.

8.3.1 Assurance checks must only consider eligibility at the point of award, any change in a recipient's circumstance after the support payment does not mean a payment was non-compliant or irregular.

8.3.2 The requirement to complete assurance on all support payments made by a local authority is set out in the Grant Determination Letter. The general principle also applies that local authorities are responsible and accountable for the lawful use of funds under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The Section 151 / 95 Officer within the local authority is required to exercise their duties in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance, ensuring their oversight of the proper administration of financial affairs within the local authority, including these support payments.

8.3.3 The process must cover the checks prior to support being paid, which are outlined in Section 5 "Providing the Support Payment to Eligible Households" section of this guidance, but also the post-payment assurance checking regime that the local authority will introduce to identify irregular payments which is outlined in the 'monitoring and reporting requirements' section in this guidance.

-
- 8.3.4 Where checks discover that payments have been made in error or have been claimed as a result of fraud, any initial recovery action will need to be undertaken by the local authority who should operate in line with the Debt Recovery Guidance being shared with local authorities.
- 8.3.5 The Section 151 / 95 Officer must also be satisfied that within their local authority appropriate action has been followed to reduce and challenge the risk of fraud. This includes managing the award of support payments in line with existing local authority policy. A Section 151 / 95 Officer Declaration confirming that the local authority has taken appropriate action in relation to subsidy control and fraud will be requested from all Local Authorities as part of the minimum assurance sample check completed by the Department.
- 8.3.6 Local authorities may want to use their own pre-payment assurance processes. Such processes must align with the scheme eligibility criteria and the evidence collected is either uploaded to Salesforce (recommended) or retained for 7 years for assurance purposes.

8.4 Local authority checks

- 8.4.0 Local authorities are responsible for completing the following checks on all applications.
- 8.4.1 All checks must be completed for each application.
- 8.4.2 Records of the checks made and their outcomes must be retained for all applications.
- 8.4.3 It should be noted that there is a distinction between cancelling and rejecting an application on Salesforce. If the application is cancelled, another application for the same address can be made, whereas if the application is rejected, the Department's duplicate check will not allow another application at the same address. The local authority portal guidance details when an application should be cancelled and when it should be rejected.
- 8.4.4 On receiving the initial application through Salesforce, a local authority is responsible for completing the following household eligibility checks prior to the award of the payment. All checks must be completed (regardless of outcome) by the local authority and a record of the result of these checks entered on Salesforce before a support payment can be made.

(a) Duplicate Application Check

- 8.4.5 The local authority should carry out a duplicate check, to determine whether a previous application at the same address has been cancelled. This check can be performed by searching within the Salesforce system.
- 8.4.6 If the application is a duplicate of a cancelled case, you should use the comments field to link the two cases (by reference number). The information provided in both

applications should then be used to confirm identity and eligibility for payment. This is because, if you could not verify information, the Department has asked the applicant to reapply and provide further information to help provide a clearer picture on whether payment is appropriate or not.

(b) Address check

- 8.4.7 The address check must confirm that the applicant lives at the eligible property.
- 8.4.8 Local authorities may use their discretion to confirm a match where there is a small discrepancy between names (for example a clear abbreviation).
- 8.4.9 Where the applicant has put an incorrect answer to "describe where I live", but all other checks and information that the local authorities hold on them show that they are eligible, the local authority can proceed with verifying the application as this information is mainly used for monitoring. In all cases, local authorities must make a clear comment to explain the difference and the basis for the final decision on eligibility reached.
- 8.4.10 Where possible, the address check should validate the applicant's address against Council Tax records. Where local authorities hold council tax exemption certificates (or other evidence for such an exemption) for addresses, these could also be taken into account.
- 8.4.11 If an application is submitted where the applicant's name conflicts with the Council Tax records the local authority must cancel the application. The applicant will be notified the person on the council tax record should apply instead.
- 8.4.12 Where there is no council tax record for the property, local authorities must assess the address evidence that has been submitted by the applicant at the application stage.
- 8.4.13 For all applicants, a scan or photograph of a physical document, or a digital copy of at least one of the following documents should have been uploaded by the householder to Salesforce:
- valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence).
 - utility bill dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date (mobile phone bills and credit card statements are not accepted).
 - benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months.
 - a current tenancy agreement - If an in-date agreement is not provided, local authorities should request written confirmation that the tenancy is current (e.g. an email from the landlord or Managing Estate Agent confirming the tenancy). Other relevant types of evidence, for example occupation certificates in Wales, could be used. For permanent residents of a boat: a signed, dated (no earlier than 3-months before the application date) letter from a boat mooring provider that states the applicants name and address

and that they live permanently on a long-term home mooring is also acceptable evidence.

8.4.14 People living in purpose-built student (PBSA) accommodation are not eligible for the scheme. Local authorities should seek to identify all PBSA developments (private, university, otherwise owned) in their area and conduct an address check against these properties. Where a property is not included on this list the declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility.

8.4.15 If a local authority is aware that any application comes from any excluded premises or applicant (see section 5.6), for example where the address details indicate that the application is ineligible, the application must be rejected and treated as suspected fraud as per the process set out in section 9. If rejected, the comments box must be used to clearly state the reasons why.

8.4.16 If the applicant has selected that they live in non-permanent accommodation, local authorities must request proof that the household has been in residence for 1 continuous month (e.g. via confirmation from relevant housing authority), or if this information is not available can contact the applicant to ask for proof. This can be a temporary housing provider letter. The document must:

- be dated from the application date and no later than 1 month after
- confirm the name and address of the accommodation
- confirm the applicant name and address
- confirm the applicant has been resident for a minimum of 1 continuous month prior to the date of application.

8.4.17 For all applications any information which is relied on by a local authority must either be uploaded to Salesforce or retained by the local authority for 7 years and provided to government as and when requests for assurance sampling.

8.4.18 A statement detailing how the local authority completed the address check and why it is satisfied on eligibility. For all applications any information which is relied on by a local authority must either be uploaded to Salesforce or retained by the local authority for seven years and provided to government as and when requests are made for assurance sampling.

(c) Second home check

8.4.19 The AFP Alternative Fund support is only payable to householders on their primary residence – second or holiday homes are not eligible to receive this payment.

8.4.20 The Department accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home is a primary residence and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a home is the primary residence (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.

-
- 8.4.21 For any local authority that does record whether a home is the primary residence, then the local authority should complete a cross check to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes.
- 8.4.22 If at any stage in the future the local authority is made aware that property was not the primary resident of the application at the time of the application to AFP Alternative Fund, then this must be treated as suspected fraud and the process set out in section 9 (Fraud and error) of this guidance must be followed.
- 8.4.23 A statement detailing how the local authority completed the primary residence check and why it is satisfied on eligibility, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce, must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce system for assurance purposes.

(d) Empty Property

- 8.4.24 The AFP Alternative Fund support is only payable to properties that are occupied at the date of application – empty properties are therefore not eligible to receive a payment.
- 8.4.25 The Department accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home was occupied at the date of application and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a property is empty, or the property is known to the local authority to be empty (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.
- 8.4.26 For any local authority that does record whether a property is empty, then the local authority should complete a cross check to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes.
- 8.4.27 If at any stage in the future the local authority is made aware that property was empty at the time of the application to AFP Alternative Fund, then this must be treated as suspected fraud and the process set out in section 9 (Fraud and error) of this guidance must be followed.
- 8.4.28 A statement detailing how the local authority completed the empty property check and why it is satisfied on eligibility, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce, must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce system for assurance purposes.

(e) Bank account checks

- 8.4.29 Bank account checks will be conducted by the Department using Paypoint at the initial verification stage and local authorities are not required to conduct further digital bank account checks.
- 8.4.30 Local authorities must conduct a check on all applications to ensure that the name on the bank account matches the name on the application. This is required because

Paypoint verifies the banks details but not that the bank details align with the name on the application. Only bank accounts in the name of the applicant can be accepted currently. We understand that this may not be possible in some cases, for example where there is a local authority appointee. We are working to understand how the journey would look for these cases, and further guidance will be issued in due course. If you receive cases where the applicant name does not match the bank account, please place this on hold and inform your relationship manager of the case number. This will not count towards the 30 working days processing target.

- 8.4.31 In the case of a joint bank account the applicant name must match the name of at least one of the account holders.
- 8.4.32 Local authorities may use their discretion to confirm a match where there is a small discrepancy between names (for example a clear abbreviation).
- 8.4.33 In some cases, bank account details will not be verified at the application stage. In these cases the applicant is required to upload a bank statement to progress their application.
- 8.4.34 An application will not be shared with a local authority until requested evidence has been provided, and the data share will indicate that the bank account details remain unverified, and the local authority will carry out verification using the uploaded bank statement, including to confirm that this applicant has provided personal account details, rather than business account details.
- 8.4.35 In these cases the local authority must conduct the following verification checks on the uploaded bank statement:
- a. The bank statement was issued in the past three months.
 - b. the bank account is in the name of the applicant.
 - c. the bank account is personal and not a business account.
 - d. the account number and sort code match those inputted by the applicant.
- 8.4.36 For all applications local authorities may choose to use a bank account verification tool, such as Spotlight, if they wish to undertake further bank account checks. This is not mandated. If an application fails the additional verification it may be cancelled. If the result of this check is inconclusive, the bank statement check must be used as the source for confirmation.
- 8.4.37 If the bank details cannot be verified the application must be cancelled.
- 8.4.38 In all scenarios a statement detailing how the local authority completed the bank account check and why the eligibility decision was made must be submitted. Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from Spotlight), must be retained for assurance purposes.

(f) Receipting evidence

8.4.39 All applicants must provide evidence to demonstrate use of alternative fuels as their main heating source. This will require applicants to submit receipts to show the purchase of alternative fuels. Local authorities will be required to assess these receipts to ensure they meet the criteria required to receive payment.

8.4.40 A receipt must include:

- A clearly marked alternative fuel type (inc. heating oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), coal, wood and biomass). For details see Annex A.
- A date of purchase between September 2022 and the end of the application window (31 May 2023).
- If applicable, a delivery address which matches the address in the application.
- A clearly marked supplier name and address.
- Evidence of having purchased a minimum of £200 worth of fuel, across a maximum of two purchases (proven by the receipts).

8.4.41 We will not require that the name of the person who purchased the fuel and the name used to apply for AFP AF are the same, noting that we require the addresses to match. We will also not require any information on the quantity of fuel purchased, given the additional burden on LAs to work through costs for different types of fuel.

8.4.42 A statement detailing how the local authority completed the receipting evidence check and why it is satisfied on eligibility, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce system for assurance purposes.

8.5 Local Authority Correspondence with Applicants

8.5.1. The only correspondence undertaken by local authorities will be relating to checks that require further information from the applicant, e.g. bank account name does not match the name on the application form. Also, to confirm in each instance when an application from a household in non-permanent accommodation has been resident for at least 1 month.

8.5.2. The Department will provide a template for this correspondence and it will be issued using local authorities' own systems. The Salesforce system cannot be used for this.

(b) Appeals, Objections and Complaints

8.5.3 The scheme is designed to limit the discretion that local authorities are required to exercise. The application process will minimise applications from ineligible households.

An automated check against a database of AFP recipients will prevent those who have benefitted from that scheme from applying for the AFP Alternative Fund. Applications that pass this check and have confirmed they believe they are eligible through the Gov.UK portal will then be sent to local authorities.

- 8.5.4 Local authorities are required to make decisions based on the information they have to verify these applicants. The circumstances of individual applicants will vary and some judgement may be required in certain cases, such as where council tax information is not conclusive and additional proof of address must be supplied. The Department considers therefore that such ambiguous cases should be decided by local authorities.
- 8.5.5 Where there is uncertainty in relation to information passed to local authorities to support an application – for example, in relation to proof of address where council tax records are unclear – the local authority is responsible for seeking additional information to resolve the uncertainty. Where authorities make a judgement, the Department will support the decision reached.
- 8.5.6 Any applicant objections or queries that are related to local authority validation, will initially be directed to the call centre to try and resolve.
- 8.5.7 If the call centre receives a query about why someone has been rejected/cancelled, they will look into the case and provide the information to the applicant. They will have access to Salesforce to be able to do this check in real time. If someone wants to challenge that decision, they are told to contact their local authority.
- 8.5.8 Where a complaint is made to a local authority about how a decision is reached, that relates to a decision made by a local authority, this must be handled through the local authority's standard complaints procedures and timescales.
- 8.5.9 If someone is enquiring about why they have not been paid or when they will be paid, they will be told that they need to wait [6 weeks / 30 days] from making the application, then contact their local authority. There is no situation where the call centre will need to contact a local authority to pass on information or a complaint.
- 8.5.10 The Department is ultimately responsible for the overall policy of the scheme, and so any complaint submitted to a local authority regarding criteria and objectives of AFP Alternative Fund should be referred to the Department (notifying that complainant) via the contact details at Annex E.

(c) Providing the Payment to Eligible Applicants

- 8.5.11 All eligible customers must receive a single £200 AFP Alternative Fund payment – no pro-rated or other amount can be paid.
- 8.5.12 Local authorities should seek to ensure that eligible applicants receive payments within 30 working days of receiving the application from the Department.

-
- 8.5.13 In all cases payments must be posted in the local authority financial system by the scheme closing date of 30 June 2023 and defrayed out of the local authority bank account by close of play on 7 July 2023. Any payments made after these dates, no matter the reason why, will not be reimbursed by the Department.
- 8.5.14 The AFP Alternative Fund payment must be paid by the local authority by bank transfer to the eligible bank account as submitted by the applicant at the initial application stage and verified as part of the application process. Payments must not be made to any other account.
- 8.5.15 At least one person in each local authority will have access to download the payment details to use in your own payment systems. The report should be run as frequently as required. You should be aware that the report will only pick up items that have been tagged for payment for 24 hours or more. This is to prevent payments being missed or accidentally tagged as paid when they have not. Once you have completed the download, you must run the “payment management” task. This will automatically convert all those cases downloaded into “paid” on the system and trigger the notifications. You must not run this option until after the download.
- 8.5.16 If the payment fails, for example because the account has been closed, the application must be cancelled and the applicant will be told to reapply with different bank details.

9 Fraud and error

- 9.1.0 The government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Applicants found to be providing false information to gain support payments will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered, as may any payments paid in error.
- 9.1.1 Local authorities must ensure the safe administration of support payments and that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate against the risks of both fraud and payment error. In this respect, local authorities are required to supplement existing controls with the digital tools for the scheme to support efficient, appropriate and accurate support payment awards.
- 9.1.2 If, at any stage in the process, a local authority detects any actual or suspected fraud related to AFP Alternative Fund it must carry out the following minimum steps:
- It must investigate the fraud in line with its own anti-fraud procedures and may wish to pursue referral of the case to police, however referral is at the local authority's discretion
 - It must notify the Department of the actual or suspected fraud through Salesforce
 - It must instigate recovery of any grant paid in line with the AFP Alternative Fund Debt Recovery Guidance
- 9.1.3 Where local authorities identify that a fraudulent payment has been made the case record must be amended to record the following information:
- Payment Fraud: Type of fraud (Type of Fraud selections provided in dropdown)
 - Payment Fraud: £ amount
 - Fraud Money recovered: £ amount
- 9.1.4 Where local authorities identify that a payment has been made in error the case record must be amended to record the following information:
- Payment Error: Type of error.
 - Payment Error: £ amount.
 - Error Money recovered: £ amount.
- 9.1.5 As monies are recovered the local authority must update the record accordingly.
- 9.1.6 Debt recovery should not wait until the outcome of any fraud investigation unless the local authority is specifically advised not to pursue recovery by the Police. If the local authority is unable to recover a debt related to actual or suspected fraud, then this can

be referred to the Department in line with process set out in the Debt Recovery Guidance.

10 Assurance

10.1.0 Post payment assurance will be carried out by the Department to ensure the effective management of public money. The Department will undertake detailed assurance checks on a subset of payments to assess whether appropriate and robust processes were in place to complete the minimum assurance for operating the AFP Alternative Fund scheme.

10.1.1 For all AFP Alternative Fund payments made, at a minimum, local authorities must be able to evidence:

- the date the AFP Alternative Fund payment was made.
- the name of the bank account to which the AFP Alternative Fund was paid.

10.1.2 It is expected that evidence to support household eligibility checks completed by the local authority (detailed at 8.3 of this guidance) will have been uploaded to Salesforce at the point of application and/or checking. If it is not possible for a local authority to upload all evidence it has relied upon when completing its check (such as evidence from the Council Tax register) then the local authority must retain this for assurance checking.

10.1.3 The requirement to retain any evidence not uploaded to Salesforce applies to grant applications approved and rejected.

10.1.4 Local Authorities must retain all documentary evidence for a minimum of 7 years from the date of award of grant to evidence the award of grant and the assurance checks completed.

10.2 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero post payment assurance

10.2.0 The Department will undertake a sample review of Pre- and Post-Payment Assurance System (PPAS) on this grant scheme. The PPAS check will assess whether both the Department and the local authority had an appropriate and robust process in place to complete the minimum assurance checks at the two stages of application.

10.2.1 A subset of payments will be selected to be assured will cover different applicant types and will be chosen proportionally to the number of payments delivered by a local authority and the potential risk the Department identifies in the payments.

10.2.2 Local authorities will capture assurance evidence as they process each application. Checks on the selected PPAS samples will therefore be undertaken without routinely requesting further information from local authorities.

10.2.3 PPAS will not recomplete the assurance check for the local authority but if any issues are identified then these will be communicated back to the local authority with a recommendation that its assurance process is revisited to ensure compliance with scheme eligibility.

10.2.4 PPAS checks will be completed after a local authority has agreed a scheme reconciliation¹ with the Department and full detail² on providing the requested PPAS sample will be sent to the local authority following the issue of a Scheme Reconciliation Letter.

10.3 Debt Recovery

10.3.1 Where assurance checks discover that payments have been made in error, noncompliance, or have been claimed as a result of fraud, initial recovery action must be undertaken by the local authority. Local authorities must notify the Department of any error, noncompliance or fraud through Salesforce.

10.3.2 The Department has published Debt Recovery Guidance specific to the AFP Alternative Fund and this must be followed. All recovered funds must be notified to the Department within 30 working days of receipt in line with the process set out in the Debt Recovery Guidance.

10.3.3 A local authority must follow the Debt Recovery Guidance to demonstrate that it has acted in a reasonable and practicable manner in attempting to recover funds.

¹ The Department completes a reconciliation of actual spend by Local Authority against the funds paid to that Local Authority on the Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund grant.

² This will confirm the individual grants to be sampled, the detail to be submitted and the scheme specific Section 151 / 95 Officer Declaration.

11 Monitoring and reporting requirements

11.1.0 Use of the Salesforce application portal facilitates scheme monitoring and reporting and removes the need for local authorities to provide delivery reporting submissions to the Department. As part of the application process local authorities must input data to the application portal and the Department will undertake regular data collection directly from this source.

11.1.1 Data sharing and data privacy information is set out in section 2.3 of this guidance.

11.1.2 The Department will use scheme data to support monitoring, evaluation and assurance of the scheme. This includes providing high-level performance reports including summaries of the number of payments made and total amount spent. We do this for a number of different reasons, including:

- Accountability – to provide a clear and transparent basis for why this policy has been implemented, and its progress over time.
- Efficiency – ensuring that we are maximising the value delivered from this public spending and ensuring opportunities for analysis and learning for the future.
- Effectiveness – ensuring that policy makes a positive impact and understanding the context of when that happens.

11.1.3 By using the case management system local authorities should continuously maintain up to date records including on the following data fields:

- a. Open applications.
- b. Applications for payment.
- c. Closed applications.
- d. Application outcomes.
- e. Payment issue dates.

11.1.4 For reporting purposes, data should be up to date by 12 noon on a Monday for data processed the previous week, or Tuesday if the Monday is a public holiday.

Annex A: Minimum Assurance Criteria to be Evidenced by Local Authorities

The Department will have completed an initial assurance check on an application to verify that it was not eligible to receive a grant through the AFP main scheme prior to the local authority assurance checks

The Department will require data to confirm individual payment date as part of the scheme reconciliation, this will not be requested through or detailed on Salesforce

Beneficiary type	Minimum eligibility criteria to be evidenced by local authorities – evidence should already be uploaded to Salesforce by the applicant but if insufficient local authorities must obtain / upload appropriate evidence to satisfy all eligibility criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard residential houses (owner owned or mortgaged) • In a rented property • in a home that has a heat network, communal or district heating • in a residential park home • on a farm • in a caravan or mobile home 	<p>1. Duplicate application check</p> <p>The local authority must record that it does not have a record of a previous application matching the name and address of the case they are processing.</p> <p>If there is a previous application then the reference number must be added.</p> <p>2. Bank Account Checks (where necessary)</p> <p>An electronic bank account verification check is conducted by the Department at the point of application and if successful local authorities are not required to re-conduct this check.</p> <p>Where this initial check is unsuccessful the applicant is required as part of the application to upload a bank statement from the past three months – this will require checking by the local authority.</p> <p>The local authority check is to verify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bank account is personal and not a business account. • the bank account is in the name of the applicant. • the account number and sort code match those inputted by the applicant. <p>The local authority must confirm where required that the check has been completed.</p> <p>Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from Spotlight or any other digital tool used) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce.</p>

A statement detailing how the Council completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added.

3. Address Check

The local authority must verify that the applicant lives at the address as entered on Salesforce.

- the address must first be verified against the current Council Tax record
 - If the address can be verified against the Council Tax record then no further checks on the address are required but a copy of the Council Tax screenshot should be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce (*if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to the Department for checking if requested to support future audit*).
 - If an application is submitted where the applicant's name conflicts with the council tax records the local authority must cancel the application.
- If the address cannot be verified against the current Council Tax record then the local authority must assess the evidence that has been submitted at the application stage.

The address as recorded on at least **one** of the following documents must be verified by the local authority, and confirmed against the bank account address as recorded on Salesforce and verified by the Department:

- a valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence).
- a utility bill dated no earlier than 3-months before the application date.
- a benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months
- a current tenancy agreement.
- other relevant types of evidence, for example occupation certificates in Wales.

If address verification is not possible from either the Council Tax record or the documents uploaded as part of the application then the local authority must cancel the application. The applicant will be notified the person on the council tax record should apply instead.

Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from Spotlight or any other digital tool used) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce.

A statement detailing how the Council completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added.

4. Second home check

The Department accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home is a primary residence and unless

the local authority has a system in place which records whether a home is the primary residence (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.

For any local authority that does record whether a home is the primary residence, then the local authority should complete a cross check to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes. A statement detailing the additional check completed and why it answered the eligibility question, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce. (if the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to the Department for checking if requested to support future audit).

5. Empty Property

The Department accepts that for many local authorities there is no clear way to verify whether a home was occupied at the date of application and unless the local authority has a system in place which records whether a property is empty, or the property is known to the local authority to be empty (such as coding on the Council Tax system) then the self-declaration from the application can be accepted as confirmation of eligibility with no further check required by the local authority.

For any local authority that does record whether a property is empty, then the local authority should complete a cross check to verify the self-declaration and upload evidence of that check to Salesforce for future assurance purposes. A statement detailing the additional check completed and why it answered the eligibility question, along with copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce.

6. Evidence of Alternative Fuel Use - Receipt

A receipt must include:

- a. A clearly marked alternative fuel type

Fuel type	Other common names
Heating Oil	Fuel oil, Gas oil, 28 second heating oil, Kerosene, Paraffin

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)</td> <td>Propane, butane, bottled gas, compressed gas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wood (traditional logs)</td> <td>Logs, dry logs, timber, worked wood, wet wood*, coffee logs, wine logs, olive logs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Biomass</td> <td>Woodlets, wood pellets, briquettes, wood chips</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Coal*</td> <td>anthracite coal, semi-anthracite coal, low volatile steam coal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manufactured solid fuel</td> <td>Briquettes, Firelogs, Low smoke ('smokeless') fuel, Coke ³</td> </tr> </table> <p>b. A date of purchase between September 2022 and the end of the application window (May 2023).</p> <p>c. A delivery address which matches the address in the application, if applicable.</p> <p>d. A clearly marked supplier name and supplier address.</p> <p>e. Evidence of having purchased a minimum of £200 worth of fuel, across a maximum of two purchases (proven by the receipts).</p> <p>* Sales of wet wood (depending on the amount sold) and coal are illegal in England (with the sole exception being the Forest of Dean) from 1st May 2023. Therefore, all receipts must be dated to before this time. LAs should not accept sales following this date. <u>Please see guidance here.</u></p> <p>Please note that many of the main suppliers have since purchased smaller companies and retain their names to encourage brand loyalty locally. This is usually noted at the bottom of a company's web page.</p> <p>Customers may also buy heating oil from multiple different suppliers across the year, as they shop around for the best price.</p>	Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Propane, butane, bottled gas, compressed gas	Wood (traditional logs)	Logs, dry logs, timber, worked wood, wet wood*, coffee logs, wine logs, olive logs	Biomass	Woodlets, wood pellets, briquettes, wood chips	Coal*	anthracite coal, semi-anthracite coal, low volatile steam coal	Manufactured solid fuel	Briquettes, Firelogs, Low smoke ('smokeless') fuel, Coke ³
Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Propane, butane, bottled gas, compressed gas										
Wood (traditional logs)	Logs, dry logs, timber, worked wood, wet wood*, coffee logs, wine logs, olive logs										
Biomass	Woodlets, wood pellets, briquettes, wood chips										
Coal*	anthracite coal, semi-anthracite coal, low volatile steam coal										
Manufactured solid fuel	Briquettes, Firelogs, Low smoke ('smokeless') fuel, Coke ³										
On a boat	<p>Check 1, 2 and 6 as above</p> <p>1. Address Check –</p> <p>The local authority must verify that the applicant lives at the address as entered on Salesforce by completing <u>one</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a valid UK driving licence (provisional or full driving licence) 										

³ See <https://smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/fuels.php> for a list of these fuels alphabetical by brandname.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a benefits entitlement letter from within the last 6 months • a signed, dated (no earlier than 3-months before the application date) letter from a boat mooring provider that states the applicants name and address and that they live permanently on a long-term home mooring <p>Copies of any evidence relied upon that has not already been uploaded to Salesforce (such as a screenshot from the Council Tax records system) must be uploaded by the local authority to Salesforce. If the local authority is unable to upload the evidence then a record of the evidence must be retained in the local authority system for a minimum of 7 years and must be made available to the Department for checking if requested to support future audit.</p> <p>A statement detailing how the local authority completed the check and why it is satisfied on eligibility must be added.</p> <p>Checks 4-5 should be defaulted to “Yes”.</p>
<p>Temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Where a residence is known to be temporary accommodation this additional evidence should be provided for all applicants including those who can satisfy the evidence of name and address check.</p> <p>Evidence of residence for one continuous month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary housing provider letter. The document must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ be dated from no earlier than 3-months before the application date. ○ confirm the name and address of the accommodation. ○ Confirm the applicant name and address. ○ confirm the applicant has been resident for a minimum of one continuous month prior to the date of application.
<p>Eligible households on business premises</p>	<p>Evidence of eligibility</p> <p>Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the applicant is eligible against the following criteria. Acceptance of self-certification evidence will be at a local authority’s discretion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant is responsible for purchasing alternative fuels, as the household’s main source of energy. • The household dwelling is distinct and separate from any business premises that shares the supply. • The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residential address of the applicant (or the person who the applicant is applying on behalf of).
<p>Somewhere that does not fit into</p>	<p>Evidence of eligibility</p>

any of these categories	<p>Evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the applicant is eligible against the following criteria. Acceptance of self-certification evidence will be at a local authority's discretion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The applicant has purchased alternative fuels to heat their household.• The dwelling is used wholly or mainly for domestic purposes, and is not a business premises or other form of non-domestic premises.• The dwelling for which support is being claimed is the sole or main residential address of the applicant. <p>Evidence of name and address check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• address verified against council tax register.• or where this is not available, address was verified against one of the following documents. The document must clearly show the applicant name, address and date:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ full current UK driving licence (not a provisional driving licence).○ utility bill from the past 3 months (cannot be a mobile phone bill or credit card statement).○ bank statement from the past 3 months.○ current tenancy agreement. council tax exemption proof such as a bill or letter.
-------------------------	---

Annex B: Public Sector Equality Duty

As public bodies local authorities must consider equality in all decisions being made to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010, and publish information to show compliance with the PSED.

The aim of the PSED is to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

For the purposes of this scheme the Department has completed a PSED assessment, a copy of which can be sent out on request. Local authorities should consider PSED when developing any local delivery decisions but do not need to complete an assessment on the scheme.

Annex C: Legal Gateway that allows LAs to access DWP's Searchlight data for the purposes of the AFP Alternative Fund administration, but only for applications where there is a qualifying DWP benefit claim

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) lawyers have determined that the AFP Alternative Fund support payments can be classed as Local Welfare Provision, as defined in the Welfare Reform Act 2012. As such, and subject to local authority adherence to Data Protection legislation, local authority staff administering the AFP Alternative Fund can utilise data held in DWP Searchlight data share, where there is a legitimate and proportionate case to do so, and where the application relates to an individual with a qualifying DWP benefit claim who has identified themselves as such during the application process.

Annex D: Contact details

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

If you have any queries about the content of this guidance or the operation of the scheme, you can contact the Department at the Business Grants mailbox: businessgrantfunds@beis.gov.uk

Assisted Digital Call Centre

The freephone telephone number for the centre is 0808 175 3287. The contact centre is open Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 18.00.

The expectation is that the call centre can complete the online form using the applicant's details. If evidence is required as part of these applications, this evidence will be sent to the call centre, who will upload it to the case before it is passed to local authorities. This option is available for local authorities and support workers who are supporting those who are unable to apply themselves.