

4.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding replacements installed as part of the Energy Efficiency Scheme launched in 2009:

What is the total number of heating boiler replacements that have been installed as part of the Energy Efficiency Scheme launched in 2009, and what is the cost for each household application and the full total cost for such provision?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

The Energy Efficiency Service began to offer heating system reviews for domestic properties in December 2010 to eligible low-income clients. Since that time, 193 new gas or oil-fired boilers and electric flow boilers have been installed. Since that time also a total of £910,095.42 has been spent on this part of the programme, delivering boiler replacements along with the necessary associated heating system measures, for example flues, room thermostats, time clocks, pipe lagging, and thermostatic radiator valves. The average cost per installation is £4,715.51.

4.2.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I thank the Minister for his answer. Could I ask that the Minister give me that in writing, if it is possible? My supplementary is: have all these households been low income, can he confirm that, and they have not been given to some people who are very wealthy?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

The eligibility scheme is governed by my officers, and I am told that one has to pass an eligibility test of low income in order to be eligible for the work to be undertaken. I will check with the file and see if there are any of the applications that the Deputy is suggesting might have escaped the net.

4.2.2 Deputy J.H. Young:

Since his election as Minister and inheriting this Energy Efficiency Service from his predecessor, can he advise the Assembly whether he has had reason to have any concerns over the administration or the value for money or independent checking of these expenditures under this scheme?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Not at present.

4.2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Will the Minister consider seeking to expand the Energy Efficiency Scheme to encompass more households and seek fiscal stimulus funding in order to do so?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

This Minister would certainly like to see the service expanded to those households who could afford the work in their own right. This Minister has mixed views as to whether or not the work should be financed by the Exchequer.

4.2.4 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Would the Minister like to say what work has been done to assess the effect on bills for the householders? Have their bills gone down for the same amount of heating?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Reports have been written and I am quite happy to send the Senator a copy to that effect.

4.2.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

Can the Minister describe the key features of the low-income test administered by Planning?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Broadly speaking, an eligible person has to be above a certain age and to have less than a certain sum of money of disposable income, in line with the ordinary eligibility tests, which follow for States housing.

4.2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I wonder if the word “certain” could be defined; certain age and certain income?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

I will send the Deputy chapter and verse, because I do not wish to use disparaging kind of comments or adjectives about how old you have to be or indeed how poor.

4.2.7 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John:

Of the number installations of new boilers, *et cetera*, could the Minister give us the efficiency ratings overall on the boilers that were removed and the ratings on them now that they have been installed and we have new units?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

I understand the Constable’s interest in this matter and, if he does wish to vet the work, then I am quite happy to pass him some of those confidential details.

4.2.8 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

In reply to one of the questions, the Minister said the eligibility for low incomes was on par with the Housing Department. We have one at Health; there is a great scheme at Social Security, which is the only one in law. Would the Minister not agree it is about time we became in step and there be one test? They might be varied at the corners, but everybody should be tested the same, does the Minister not agree?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

The Minister does agree and will do everything in his powers to encourage activity in that regard.

4.2.9 Deputy J.H. Young:

Would the Minister agree to publish a full report on the workings of this scheme and the benefits and costs of it, considering that the last report was published by his predecessor in January 2011?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Yes.

4.2.10 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I wonder if the Minister could tell us the certain age at which the department deems a boiler it is removing to be non-efficient? Is there any limit? Are, for example, boilers that are relatively new being removed?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

I think it relates to the efficiency criteria that the Constable of St. John was determining. There is no specific age. You can be clapped-out or decrepit at an earlier age than some others. [Laughter]

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think for future purposes, Minister, perhaps you would find another expression than “clapped-out”.

4.2.11 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I want a supplementary. Does the Minister's department keep statistics of the age of boilers, because it is going to surprise people that, for want of a better phrase, very young boilers are being removed indiscriminately? **[Laughter]**

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

I am sure those statistics or details do exist within the department and, as I said, if any Members are wanting to be apprised of those details then I am happy, under whatever conditions, to make them available.

4.2.12 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I thought "clapped-out and dilapidated" summed up the Deputy completely, but that is just a personal view. What I would like from the Minister, and I have to say this is not a criticism, because I think he is doing a good job, but why is it that he is putting himself in a position to take flak for perhaps his predecessor, because can he confirm that there has been at least one incident where the department have had to fork out tens of thousands of pounds to repair damage apparently caused in this scheme, which was no damage at all, it just was not sorted out properly by the people administrating it?

Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

As the Deputy knows, the ministerial position carries on indefinitely and is independent perhaps in some people's eyes of the person who is undertaking the job. A personal comment, yes, perhaps there are certain things that perhaps one's predecessors might well have done that I do not particularly endorse or share as much enthusiasm for but, that said, what has been started generally has to be finished and has to be finished under the conditions under which those schemes were set up.