EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEME (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2006

2006 No. 1953

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by Defra and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

This memorandum contains information for the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

2. Description

2.1 The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2006, if in force, will:

- Introduce provision for pensioner households not otherwise eligible for the Warm Front Scheme to receive a £300 contribution towards the provision, replacement or repair of a central heating system.
- revise the maximum levels for Working Tax Credit to £15,460 bringing them in line with other similar benefits
- amend the reference to civil partnerships to reflect changes in legislation

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory

3.1 None

4. Legislative Background

4.1 The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) are made under Section 15 of the Social Security Act 1990 and provide for the payment of grants to improve the energy efficiency of eligible households.

5. Extent

5.1 This instrument applies to England

6. European Convention on Human Rights

As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy background

7.1 In the December 2005 Pre-Budget announcement, the Chancellor pledged to provide £300 towards the cost of a central heating system for pensioner households not otherwise eligible for Warm Front. Since the pre-budget announcement, Defra have been working with Eaga Partnership (the Warm Front administrators) to develop an appropriate acceptable method of delivery for this new provision, within the framework of the Warm Front Scheme delivery mechanism.

7.2 Treasury Officials have recently endorsed the proposals for scheme delivery. The process, as designed, will provide eligible customers with a voucher worth £300 (redeemable against heating works carried out by a registered company). The onus will be put on the installer to cash in the voucher with Eaga Partnership Ltd, not the customer.

7.3 The regulatory amendments will introduce this new element of assistance.

7.4 The amendments also:

- revise the maximum levels for Working Tax Credit to £15,460 bringing them in line with other similar benefits
- amend the reference to civil partnerships to reflect changes in legislation

8. Impact

8.1 A Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies

9. Contact

Gisela Davis at the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.

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