EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO THE

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEME (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2005

2005 No. 1530

1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 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) Regulations 2005, if in force, will implement the changes to the Warm Front Scheme in England announced in the "Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action", published in November last year.

3. Matters of interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instrument (JCSI)

3. 1 The new legislation will make provisions for the following changes to the Warm Front Scheme in England:

- Increase the grant maxima from its current levels of £1,500 and £2,500 to £2,700 for all eligible households and £4,000 where oil central heating has been recommended
- Offer central heating to all eligible households
- Allow applicants who have previously benefited for the Scheme to apply for further assistance
- Allow applicants to receive measures up to the grant maximum available to them over a period of time
- Update the cut-off point for eligibility for Child and Working Tax Credits

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 The instrument applies to England only.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 Not applicable

7. Policy Background

7.1 Warm Front is the Government's main programme for tackling fuel poverty in the private sector in England. Originally launched as the new Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, it was re-branded in February 2001 as Warm Front.

7.2 Warm Front provides insulation and heating measures to eligible households in receipt of "passport" benefits. Following an application, an assessment is carried out to establish whether the applicant is eligible for assistance. If eligibility is confirmed, a survey is arranged and measures are recommended and installed in the applicant's property.

7.3 In June 2003, the NAO examined the targeting, eligibility and measures offered under Warm Front and made a number of recommendations to improve its impact i.e provide Benefits Entitlement Checks to applicants not eligible for the Scheme, direct assistance to the least energy efficient properties etc. Previous to the NAO, Warm Front was also reviewed by Defra's internal policy review team who made similar recommendations.

7.4 As a result of these reviews and following a Public Accounts Committee hearing, in November last year we published the **"Fuel Poverty in England: The Government's Plan for Action"**, where we outlined how we are planning to meet our fuel poverty statutory targets to eliminate fuel poverty by 2016 and within this target to eliminate fuel poverty within vulnerable groups by 2010.

8. Impact

8.1 The instrument has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies therefore a Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared.

9. Contact

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