

## One thing we have learnt this week- energy company obligation problems

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Problems that is with the energy company obligation (ECO) have

come to light this week. One way to enable the poorest to cope with high energy prices is give them cheaper energy but also make their homes more energy efficient. We all do this in the UK through our fuel bills. The energy company obligation is administered by the big energy companies (below 100,000 customers you are exempt\*). They run it and decide who applies for help gets what. They put insulation in etc. but also put in new boilers. The problem is one I had thought about until this week. New boilers go wrong and those with them cannot afford to have them repaired. This is leading to vulnerable people being put at risk. The energy company obligation maybe administered by energy companies but the pot is controlled by the government. Due to sensitivity over bills this pot of money has been cut, hence the problem. Bizarrely the installation of smart meters is making it the issue even worse. Engineers who turn up to fit them and find a problem with the boilers have to turn them off. Either the fund needs increasing or priorities need changing otherwise people could die this winter. Writing as someone whose boiler is on the way out I understand the importance of this issue. Neil \*One problem is that this a disincentive for companies to grow beyond this limit. This limits competition.

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