



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**AQW 26425/11-15**

Mr Steven Agnew  
Green Party  
North Down

Tabled Date: 27/09/2013  
Answered On Date: 07/10/2013  
Priority Written: No

**Question:**

To ask the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of whether subsidies for biomass disincentivises energy efficiency; and if so, what measures can be taken to combat this.

**Answer:**

My Department is very keen to promote energy efficiency alongside incentives for renewable heat technologies, such as biomass, as it is widely recognised that energy efficiency measures can be the most cost effective method for reducing energy bills. Indeed my Department has sought to promote positive energy efficiency behaviours through the EnergyWise campaign. In designing the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) DETI has included energy efficiency assumptions that will ensure that the tariffs are most appropriate and most beneficial for those that have already carried out energy efficiency improvements in their homes. In addition, by proposing to 'deem' payments there is a further incentive for those installing biomass under the future domestic RHI to be as efficient as possible. In addition, the existing Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme does however have prescriptive eligibility requirements regarding loft and cavity wall insulation. Again, within the existing RHI for commercial premises it is assumed that the installation of a biomass boiler, or another renewable technology, would be the final action taken by a business seeking to become 'low-carbon', with the costs involved in installing renewable heating much greater than those involved with simple energy efficiency measures