



LOCAL ENERGY ADVICE DEMONSTRATOR



The NEY Net Zero Hub worked with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and other Net Zero Hubs to deliver a Local Energy Advice Demonstrator programme, funding innovative projects piloting new approaches to providing local in-person energy advice.

The aim of the pilots is to test various approaches to delivering in-person advice, with a particular focus on harder-to-treat properties and harder-to-reach consumer groups.

- Hard-to-treat buildings – the UK has the oldest building stock in Europe. In-person visits can better capture the complexities of these building types, which are harder to address through digital and telephone advice.
- Hard-to-reach communities – local, in-person advice may extend the service to certain residents such as the elderly, disengaged, those with limited internet access and minority ethnic groups.

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North East Combined Authority

The LEAD is a two year programme, aimed at trialling a range of approaches to delivering in-person advice on retrofit measures at a local level.

The North East Combined Authority delivered the LEAD programme alongside other retrofit services under the umbrella of Home Energy Advice North East, focussing on Hard to Treat and Hard to Reach homes across their seven Local Authority areas. They used a multichannel approach, including radio broadcasts and social media posts focussing on raising awareness to reach of over ten million impressions.

Policy Context

As a region, domestic is the 2nd largest emitter of CO₂, and with 80% of 2050's homes already being built, there is a need to retrofit 80,000 homes by 2027 to meet 2030 net zero targets. 56% of homes are below EPC C and there are 10.6% of people in fuel poverty in the North East.

Main Challenges

It's initially difficult to get consumers to engage and allow advisors into their homes, but once trust has been built, in-person advice is much better received than over the phone. It takes time to build a rapport with communities, which can sometimes be difficult given the short timescales of this project.

“We were so grateful to receive free, independent and helpful advice about our home. It can be difficult to know where to start, but our advisor was so helpful. This is an amazing service.” - Northumberland residents

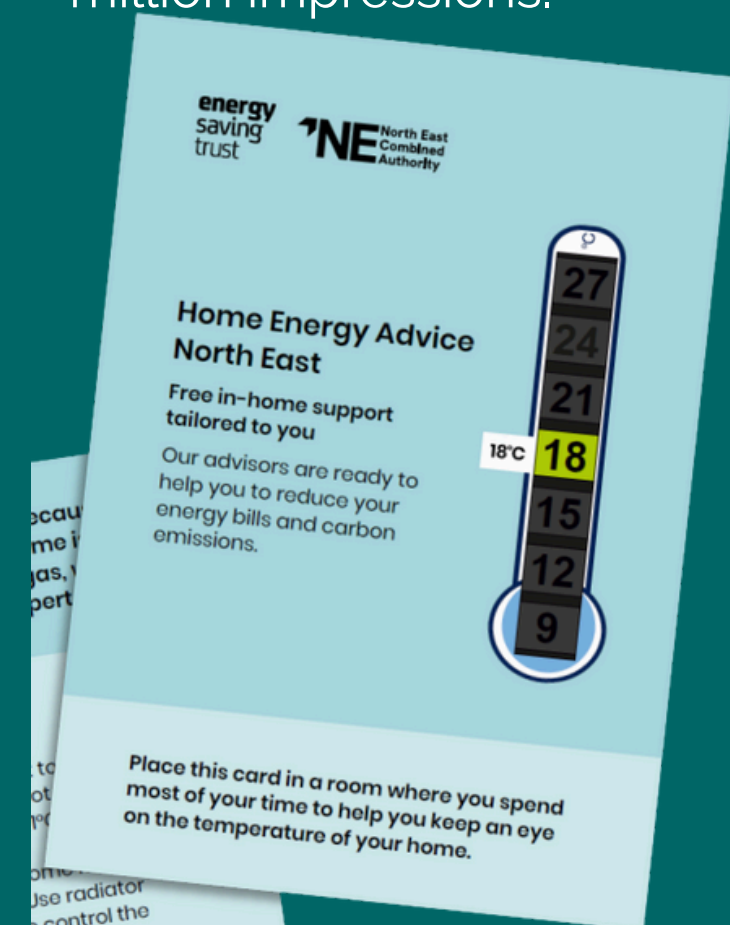
966 households given in person advice

441 measures installed

(by project closure)

Key Learnings

- Having advisors with local knowledge and using a local supply chain of smaller, more reliable suppliers has been well received.
- Timing is a very important factor as consumers circumstances are all different and can easily change.
- Tailored and ongoing advice made people more likely to go ahead with installations.
- It takes time to create positive outcomes, and ongoing support is still needed.
- The programme works best when working as a partnership.



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West Yorkshire Combined Authority

LEAD is a two year programme trialling new approaches to delivering in-person energy advice in 6 local areas

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Groundwork delivered two separate LEAD projects, with a large focus on collaboration between the two partners to identify barriers and deliver retrofit assessments to hard to treat households with low income and those with a low proficiency of English.

Policy Context

To achieve national targets, there is a need to retrofit 680,000 homes to a good level of thermal efficiency in West Yorkshire and only 47% of homes have an EPC of C or above. In 2021, around 168,000 households in West Yorkshire were in fuel poverty. It was believed that some communities were missing out on support because of low proficiency in English.

Main Challenges

Although a large amount of consumers first language was not English, this wasn't necessarily the biggest barrier as advisors can speak Punjabi. A main challenge is consumers understanding of the terminology such as EPC and what it actually means. Approximately 90% of the people that advisors have spoken to don't know what an EPC Rating is.

1352 households given in person advice

211 measures installed

(by projects by closure)

Key Learnings

- There is a domino effect of buy in in such close-knit communities. Once one person has trusted advisors and seen success and positives, this is spread around the community.
- Attending existing community group sessions has been to successfully engaging with consumers.
- The connection between advisors has been strong and collaborative working has been really positive.



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“The LEAD programme was a great experience for everyone involved.” Edrin, WYCA



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Groundwork Yorkshire

LEAD is a two year programme trialling new approaches to delivering in-person energy advice in 6 local areas

Groundwork and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority delivered two separate LEAD projects, with a large focus on collaboration between the two partners to identify barriers and deliver retrofit assessments to hard to treat households with low income and those with a low proficiency of English.

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“The LEAD programme provided us with an opportunity to work with residents to find out what information they wanted from a Retrofit assessment ” - Advisor, Groundwork

1663 households given in person advice

37 measures installed

(by projects by closure)

Key Learnings

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YES Energy Solutions

LEAD is a two year programme trialling new approaches to delivering in-person energy advice in six local areas

YES Energy Solutions is a Community Interest Company focused particularly on the digitally excluded, those on low-incomes, and ethnic minority groups in West Yorkshire. They provided hard-to-reach households with Net Zero Readiness Assessments as part of their holistic one-stop-shop service, offering consumers a range of advice in one place.

Policy Context

YES Energy operates nationwide, supporting over 11,000 customers last year. 12% of Yorkshire and the Humber residents are recorded as 'internet no-users' and 42% of people identifying as an ethnic minority are living in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in West Yorkshire.

Main Challenges

Sometimes consumers had reluctance for having advisors in their homes and to hand over high levels of personal data in required forms, but once a relationship was established, they were more engaged.

Advisors found that timing had a large impact on the success of engagement. Once consumers had put up their Christmas decorations for example, they were less likely to have a home visit.

816 households given in person advice

69 measures installed

(by project closure)

Key Learnings

- Using existing community groups as a gateway to individual advice encouraged engagement and trust.
- If the project was to run again, it would be beneficial to carry out increased desktop research to better identify demographics and those who are at risk of being constantly excluded.
- Improving the knowledge of local people has allowed them to develop their own understanding.



“The programme provided an opportunity for us to explore more face to face methods and opportunities, which will influence strategy going forward.” - Matt, YES Energy

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North Yorkshire Council

LEAD is a two year programme trialling new approaches to delivering in-person energy advice in six local areas

North Yorkshire Council worked with partner organisations and local community groups to help hard-to-reach residents improve their energy efficiency through a detailed energy plan, in person retrofit advice, and community engagement activities.

This project also provided funded training for local trade professionals, with courses for all parts of the retrofit supply chain.

Policy Context

North Yorkshire is the largest county in England but the population density is 77 people per square kilometre, compared with the national average of 432. 85% of the county's landscapes are classed as very rural or super-sparse, with 25% of the population aged 65 or over.

Key Challenges

As a council, advisors weren't allowed to door knock, so the project had to explore other options for engaging consumers. Letters were sent to households, outlining the project and encouraging consumers to engage.

A large proportion of consumer demographic were older people in retirement. This meant that it was sometimes more difficult to communicate the long term benefits of energy efficiency measures.

182 households given in person advice

27 measures installed

(by project closure)

Key Learnings

- There is a huge interest in retrofit amongst residents in the area and although back up areas were planned in case of lack of engagement, a waiting list needed to be established due to high demand.
- Consumers trusted advice coming from the Council as there is an existing strong relationship.

“Having training opportunities like this has allowed my team to stay up to date. The knowledge we have gained will be used on a day-to-day basis.” - Chris, Energi North East Ltd



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City of York Council

LEAD is a two year programme trialling new approaches to delivering in-person energy advice in six local areas

City of York Council focussed on hard to treat homes within designated conservation areas, in listed properties and also covered some homes on traveller sites. The project created strong partnerships to deliver meaningful advice.

The project created Home Energy Advice Packs to give households bespoke information on energy efficiency options.

Policy Context

Domestic buildings are the single largest carbon producing sector in York accounting for 31.8% of emissions. Reducing emissions from approximately 90,000 homes in the City of York is key in addressing the climate emergency. There are 11,700 homes in Conservation Areas in York, with over 6,000 of those having an EPC D or below.

Key Challenges

Focussing on conservation areas meant that homes were very dispersed, and with only two advisors, this often meant that delivering advice could take a long time. Some residents also had existing misinformed ideas about what was possible due to living in the conservation area.

‘I Like the fact that the advice is impartial’
- City of York resident.

**475 households given
in person advice**

50 measures installed

(by project closure)

Key Learnings

- Letterdrops with flyers were effective ways to engage customers as if they made contact with the team, they already had an established interest.
- Collaborative working with other groups such as York Travellers Trust and York Conservation Trust and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, was essential in engaging with different demographics.



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Efficiency North

LEAD is a two year programme trialling new approaches to delivering in-person energy advice in six local areas

Efficiency North aimed to provide a package of retrofit advice measures as well as maximise available funding opportunities for homeowners whose properties were originally purchased through the Right to Buy scheme.

The project sought to enable the resident/owner to be empowered to make informed retrofit decisions.

After discovering that housing stock data used was outdated, the project closed due to KPIs being out of scope.

Policy Context

Efficiency North empower and support communities within social housing to be more sustainable. They offer a range of support from energy advice to retrofit training.

Key Challenges

Receiving out of stock housing data meant that the initial proposal was unable to be delivered part way through delivery, affecting stakeholders. It was sometimes difficult to engage with consumers who had reluctance to have an advisor in their home but demonstrating an understanding of the needs of the community helped engagement.

21 households given in person advice

(by early project closure)

Key Learnings

- Accessing key consumers through community groups, schools, supermarkets and foodbanks created strong engagement and community trust.
- There is widespread lack of knowledge of energy efficiency terminology and understanding of EPCs and this project helped to overcome that.



“Everyone has been really helpful. Now we have our EPC and can move forward to improve things in our home” - Sheffield resident