Community Energy Efficiency Toolkit

Energy advice surgery delivery models
Based on the experience of 6 community projects funded by the Big Lottery’s Communities Living Sustainably programme.

Aims
- Promote home advice visit service and book appointments
- Encourage people to look at their energy use and costs
- Promote energy supplier switching
- Encourage uptake of energy efficiency measures

Target audiences
- Vulnerable/ low income
- Vulnerable elderly
- ‘Able-to-pay’ households:
  - People who are likely to be able to install measures
  - Homeowners considering refurbishment
- Non-English speakers
- People living in hard to treat homes

Partners to help reach the target audience(s):
- Local authority (Social Services, Health team, Libraries, Schools)
- Neighbourhood Councils
- Nursing homes/care homes/sheltered housing
- After school nurseries and young person’s projects
- Parent & toddler groups
- Clubs and associations (e.g. U3A, WI, residents’ associations)
- Registered Social Landlords (tenant’s groups)
- Transition groups
- Community environmental groups
- Non-English speaker support organisations - engage champions from those communities, e.g. Somali Women’s group, Arabic group, Orthodox Jewish group, Refugee Befriending

During advice surgery/discussion
- Interpret energy bills
- Explain using heating controls
- Explain energy supplier switching
- Run through basic energy efficiency measures and behaviours
- Introduce climate change/carbon literacy

Data collected
- Names & addresses (sometimes e-mail addresses)- advise customers on data protection.
- Pledges to carry out particular activities (e.g. turn off lights, shower instead of bath)

Things left with householder
- Power-down plugs
- Basic energy saving tips leaflets
- Energy supplier switching leaflets
- Energy saving bulbs
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Follow-up to check impact

- Gather visitor details and do a follow-up online questionnaire and phone call
- Offer to add them to newsletter list
- Carry out home advice visit, if arranged.

Examples

Sustainable Sunderland gave energy saving presentations to themed groups such as the Women’s Institute, MIND, lunch clubs and in care homes. Both CLS projects use this ‘trusted channel’ approach to reach their vulnerable target audience and publicise their home visit services.

One Planet Middlesbrough held public advice stands in public places such as the bus station, giving out energy saving light bulbs as incentives to attract customers. They also delivered one-to-one sessions in community venues, welfare and debt advice drop-in centres. The adviser went through an energy questionnaire with customers and arranged to do follow-up.

Sustain Eden ran drop-in sessions at various community venues including libraries. These provided general advice on reducing energy costs, including making tariff comparisons, giving out Warm Homes Discount leaflets and promoting their draught proofing service. The adviser used a tablet to do tariff comparisons and explain the next steps to enable the supplier switching process. Help was provided on interpreting energy bills and referrals are made to organisations like CAB and Age UK for those needing further support. Libraries can be good venues for advice surgeries, especially if they tell their customers the surgeries are coming and create a book display about energy.

Liverpool L8 Living Sustainably creates its own public space and general interest event through their Community Living Room approach. The ‘pop-up living room and kitchen’ appears where people already gather - events, sheltered accommodation, churches and community centres, and has been attracting local residents to ‘heat and eat’ together in a warm and welcoming environment.

Attendees make hot water bottle covers from old jumpers, draught excluders from old tights, and learn to knit and crochet as well as how to DIY draught-proof their own homes on a budget. L8 staff also give out tips and easy guides to becoming more energy efficient in the home as well as contacts for collective switching, information helplines and advice. They generate interest through holding themed events with old costumes from a costume company as giveaways, which they use as a hook.