

# Community Energy Efficiency Toolkit

## Advice surgeries and public advice

### Useful for:

- People on low incomes
- People in fuel poverty
- Elderly people
- People for whom there is a language barrier
- Most other audiences
- Visually impaired people

### Benefits of this approach

People respond better to face-to-face advice than remote advice (such as leaflets or calls) alone. Many groups use public advice stands and talks to groups to raise awareness and drive uptake of deeper engagement activities. They can raise visibility of energy advisers among a target audience, making advice surgeries useful as a precursor to home visits. If people bring energy bills with them they can receive accurate, tailored advice.

This activity can be delivered by volunteers, although a reasonable level of knowledge about energy efficiency is required. Due to time and resource-intensity funding may be required to deliver a good service.

### Success factors

Under Big Lottery's Communities Living Sustainably programme there were two general approaches to delivering advice surgeries:

- 1- Delivering surgeries in public places and events likely to be frequented by target audiences
- 2- Delivering surgeries to specifically-targeted groups.

### Tips:

- hold surgeries at existing events to save organisational and marketing time
- encourage event partners (hosts) to do as much of the publicity as possible to make use of their established relationship with their audience and save you time
- run and promote a series of events at the same time or in close proximity to one another.

Access an overview of how other communities have delivered home energy advice visits.

### Challenges/things to consider

Advice surgeries can be resource intensive to arrange and deliver. Some groups find it 'very difficult to reach the required numbers. A lot of time and effort goes in to organising them and delivering'. One community group estimated the staff resource needed for each event as:

- Deliver event- 2 hrs
- Travel & set up- 2 hrs
- Marketing-4-10hrs

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The public are often wary of anyone trying to catch their attention in a public place, so uptake of public advice sessions can be low and dispiriting. For this reason arranging to give talks to particular interest groups at their own established meetings can be a better use of time.

As surgeries are usually one-off interactions it is hard to gauge impact of the advice on customers. Their value can be increased by using them to promote other services offered by your group.

## Useful partnerships

- Citizen's Advice Bureaux and debt management agencies.
- Registered Social Landlords.
- Faiths4Change
- Local authorities and District Councils
- Support organisations (such as Age UK) and service providers to target audiences