

CASE STUDY – PARTNERSHIP WITH HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND



COMMUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION IS A PROJECT MANAGED BY EDINBURGH AND LoTHIANS REGIONAL EQUALITY COUNCIL (ELREC) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND.

ELREC is a charity which promotes equality of opportunity for all. Communities for Conservation is funded by the Climate Challenge Fund to engage with the Polish, South Asian, African, Chinese and Spanish communities in Edinburgh and the Lothians on topics and activities related to climate change.

Home Energy Scotland has supported ELREC since the Communities for Conservation project first applied for funding from the Climate Challenge Fund in 2014.



THE AIM OF THE PROJECT IS TO HELP RESIDENTS FROM A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES REDUCE THEIR ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CUT THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT AND WORRY LESS ABOUT THEIR BILLS.

Project Co-ordinator Jean-Matthieu Gaunand explains: “We offer home visit energy advice to help people reduce their energy consumption; we run community gardens where we grow organic food and teach food growing skills; we run a bicycle club which encourages people to cycle more; we deliver climate change training and workshops; and we organise large community events to raise awareness of climate change.”

ELREC’s advisors work within the South Asian, African, Chinese, Spanish and Polish communities to help residents reduce their energy consumption and carbon emissions while keeping warm. This may involve advice on dampness issues, help to find a cheaper energy supplier, help to set up an online account, or help to switch from a prepayment meter to a standard or smart meter.

An important part of ELREC’s home visit service is checking eligibility for financial help, and working with Home Energy Scotland is instrumental to offering this service:

“Our partnership with Home Energy Scotland has benefited our clients and our project immensely. With Home Energy Scotland and the schemes they administer, our clients have obtained free measures to help them improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Many inefficient or broken boilers have been replaced at no cost, which has been life changing for many of our clients who were previously in fuel poverty.”

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When visiting residents who may be eligible for financial help with energy saving home improvements, ELREC's advisors can call Home Energy Scotland's advice line to check whether the householder qualifies, or can refer them directly through the Home Energy Scotland online referral portal.

Home Energy Scotland advisors also do home visits with ELREC's Community Link officers, who provide energy advice in the householder's own language. This allows Home Energy Scotland to assess eligibility for energy efficiency schemes, while ELREC provide a point of contact for arranging any help available to the household.

Mr Bladocha received help from ELREC to replace his boiler and heating system. He explains: "Many members of our community don't speak English very well. I strongly feel that projects like Communities for Conservation are very much beneficial in terms of support and advice, not only for the Polish community but for others too."

Communities for Conservation looks to help residents overcome barriers like language, as South Asian Community Link Officer Asma Kassim explains: **"Most people do want to lower their bills and make their homes as energy efficient as possible, however many are restricted due to low incomes, lack of knowledge and information, or language issues which prevent them from seeking the help they need."**

The project has had a positive reaction from everyone and will continue to do so as it really does help people make changes and benefits them by giving them the knowledge they need to control their energy use and save some money in the process. It's a win-win situation for the people and the environment."



By November 2016 ELREC has referred 125 cases to Home Energy Scotland for support through Communities for Conservation. Almost a quarter were eligible for energy saving improvements through Scottish Government schemes.

As well as an excellent working relationship with Home Energy Scotland, ELREC work with a number of ethnic minority groups in order to deliver their project and outreach to a wide range of communities. They have created referral mechanisms with organisations including councils, housing associations, and Care and Repair.

"Our partnership with Home Energy Scotland grows stronger each year. We have now started a video project to gain testimonials from our clients who received help from Home Energy Scotland. This partnership is key to our success and we are looking forward to the continuation of our work with Home Energy Scotland to tackle fuel poverty in the BME communities."

You can watch ELREC's video case studies at www.youtube.com/user/ELRECUK

IF YOUR ORGANISATION WOULD LIKE TO PARTNER WITH HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND ADVICE CENTRE ON 0808 808 2282

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