

Case Study 18: Cornwall Home Health Project



This case study forms part of **Community Action for Energy (CAfE)**, a major programme designed to promote and facilitate local community-based energy projects. CAfE is a programme from the Energy Saving Trust.

Cornwall Home Health Project

Introduction

This case study provides an overview of a scheme to bring together a variety of funding sources to provide major energy efficiency measures for free to communities in Cornwall. In its first pilot phase, the project focuses on two areas of west Cornwall – one urban, one rural – using a ‘bottom up’ approach that utilises existing community networks to ensure that the most difficult to reach households are included.

When?

The project began in April 2002 and is ongoing.

Who’s involved?

The project is run by the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP), which is managed by Community Energy Plus (a charitable company and an Energy Efficiency Advice Centre). Members involved in this project include West Cornwall Primary Care Trust, Kerrier District Council, Penwith District Council, Kerrier Homes Trust, Penwith Housing Association, Age Concern, Sure Start, Pendeen Project and Pengegon Residents Association. The project is a partnership with the British Gas Here to Help scheme and EAGA Ltd.

How is it funded?

The Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes’ Community Action for Energy (CAfE) programme supports the employment of a dedicated community project manager and assistant. The Social, Economic & Environmental Development (SEED) Fund finances a community outreach and training officer post. The energy-saving measures (which include cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, hot water tank jackets and low-energy light bulbs) are funded as follows:

- households that qualify for Warm Front grants: EAGA Ltd
- Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties: 50% is paid by the RSL and 50% by British Gas
- owner-occupier properties: Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Low-energy light bulbs distributed under the scheme are funded by British Gas. The security measures installed under the scheme are funded 50% by British Gas and 50% by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund/Penwith District Council.

What are the targets and aims?

The pilot primarily focuses on two selected areas in west Cornwall, chosen because of the different types of housing they represent: Pengegon Estate in Camborne (mainly RSL housing) and Pendeen village (mainly private stock).

All householders in the target areas are eligible for works, regardless of income or status. The aims are:

- to make all the homes in these areas warmer, drier and healthier by encouraging the take-up of energy efficiency measures
- to identify pockets of deprivation and alleviate fuel poverty
- to educate and inform communities about sustainable energy issues
- to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through community education to encourage behavioural changes
- to provide training and education for local communities on the issues surrounding sustainable energy and the environment.

Cornwall Home Health Project

How was it implemented?

A network of community organisations has been set up that includes health workers, voluntary sector groups, public sector organisations and volunteers. All members of this network are visited by the Community Outreach & Training Officer and offered training in energy efficiency and to also act as a signpost to other forms of advice, such as crime prevention and benefits advice. Each network member receives an information pack about the project and a referral pack. Members use the packs in their daily work as and when they identify households that might require energy efficiency measures. In addition, West Cornwall Primary Care Trust provided a link between the scheme and local GP surgeries, identifying four practices that would participate in making referrals.

All households that are referred are surveyed by an EAGA Ltd surveyor to determine what energy-saving works are needed, and any insulation measures and heating systems are installed by EAGA's appointed contractors. Heating systems in RSL properties are installed by RSL's workforce or their appointed contractors.

At the same time as surveys are conducted, Community Energy Plus organises fun days in the area to launch the scheme, with entertainment as well as information for local residents. Other community organisations, public bodies and the local media are also invited.

The scheme is promoted by news releases to the local press (which have resulted in articles and radio interviews), adverts and articles in community organisations' newsletters and posters in shops and doctors surgeries. The CSEP team has also given presentations to local authorities and other statutory and voluntary organisations.



Achievements

As of March 2003:

- 890 of the 1433 homes in both areas have agreed to being surveyed (62%)
- 645 surveys have been successfully carried out (in 235 no measures were required)
- 22% of those requiring measures have been eligible to receive them under the Warm Front grant, showing that the scheme is reaching some of those most in need
- 537 loft insulations and 152 cavity wall insulations completed; 156 hot water tank jackets fitted
- every home in the area is receiving four low-energy light bulbs (even those not surveyed)
- 475 people have expressed an interest in a Benefit Health Check to ensure they are receiving benefits they are entitled to. 75 checks carried out so far, with 20 people identified as entitled to new/extra benefits
- 49 community organisations, volunteers and individuals are involved
- annual savings of 1027 tonnes of carbon dioxide have resulted from the measures installed
- the project has been used as an example of best practice by British Gas in the launch of their Here to Help scheme in other parts of the UK.

“A superb example of what happens when a range of organisations with differing responsibilities for the same population come together and work to a common good.”

Public health physician

Case Study 18: Cornwall Home Health Project

Key success factors

- catering for all householders, regardless of income or status, avoids any stigma that may be associated with projects that have eligibility criteria
- utilising networks that are already established and trusted by the community creates an understanding and trust of the scheme and increases the uptake of measures
- all partner organisations are fully committed to the project
- energy-saving works are carried out quickly so successes are tangible (on average, surveying an area takes three weeks; work commences shortly after and takes approximately four weeks per area to complete)
- securing matching funding.

Lessons learnt

- working effectively within the community means that the scheme is more likely to reach those most in need
- 'groundwork' done in the months before means that people are much more likely to agree to having their homes surveyed, as they feel better informed, they know where to go for information and they have a sense of ownership of the project
- by working quickly, with results that are immediately tangible, the project ensures that householders are less likely to feel forgotten
- multi-agency projects can have practical problems such as the plethora of logos and names being confusing for householders. In this case, this was partially overcome by most partners agreeing to go under the overall branding of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership
- rural housing presents particular problems such as a lack of access to mains gas and solid-walled properties. These require their own solutions, involving close partnership with the community and locally relevant advice.

Next steps

CSEP plans to roll out the project across west Cornwall in 2003–2005 and then across the rest of the county. Community Energy Plus is bidding for funding to tackle a further five areas in Kerrier and a further five areas in Penwith. If successful, it is believed that this programme will be replicable on a large scale across other areas of the UK. This is especially applicable in rural areas, provided a gradual staged roll-out process is followed, concentrating efforts in small areas at any given time.

Further information

For further information about this project contact:

Alec Rice, Senior Project Officer, Community Energy Plus, 2 The Setons,
Tolvaddon Energy Park, Tolvaddon, Camborne TR14 0HX

Tel 01209 614975 **Fax** 01209 614838 **Email** alec@cep.co.uk

To find out more about Community Action for Energy, contact the CAfE Team,
Centre for Sustainable Energy, The CREATE Centre, Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1 6XN
Tel 08701 261 444 **Fax** 0117 929 9114 **Email** CAfE@cse.org.uk
Web www.est.co.uk/cafe