



Energy efficiency

A practical guide to how your community can become more energy efficient

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Getting started

This Community Guide provides information on how your community can become more energy efficient and help to reduce fuel poverty.

What's involved

Understanding the energy needs of your community and thinking about introducing an energy champion initiative to promote domestic energy efficiency and affordable warmth.

Energy efficiency is at the heart of reducing bills, helping to protect the environment and ensuring longer term security of energy supplies.

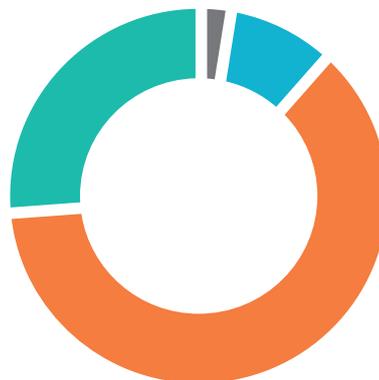


What is energy efficiency?

Energy efficiency refers to consuming less energy. This can include changing your behaviour to reduce the consumption of energy or making improvements to your home to make it more energy efficient.

Energy efficiency is at the heart of reducing fuel bills, helping to protect the environment and ensuring the longer term security of energy supplies. Action to conserve energy use, especially heat in homes will make a major contribution to achieving this goal. This is because the majority of energy we use in our homes, and therefore the majority of our energy expenditure is spent on heating (see the chart, right).

Domestic Energy Use



- Cooking 3%
- Lighting and appliances 15%
- Space heating 57%
- Water 25%



Home Energy Check

Calor's online tool providing energy efficiency advice tailored to your home.

hec.calor.co.uk

Domestic Energy Use

How you begin to improve energy efficiency is important and there are different things that households can do (see How can I be more energy efficient at home?).

Many households are increasingly interested in

making changes to their energy use including investment in new renewable heating or generation measures. However, it always makes sense to address household insulation and energy behaviours first. Energy Champions can help us do this.

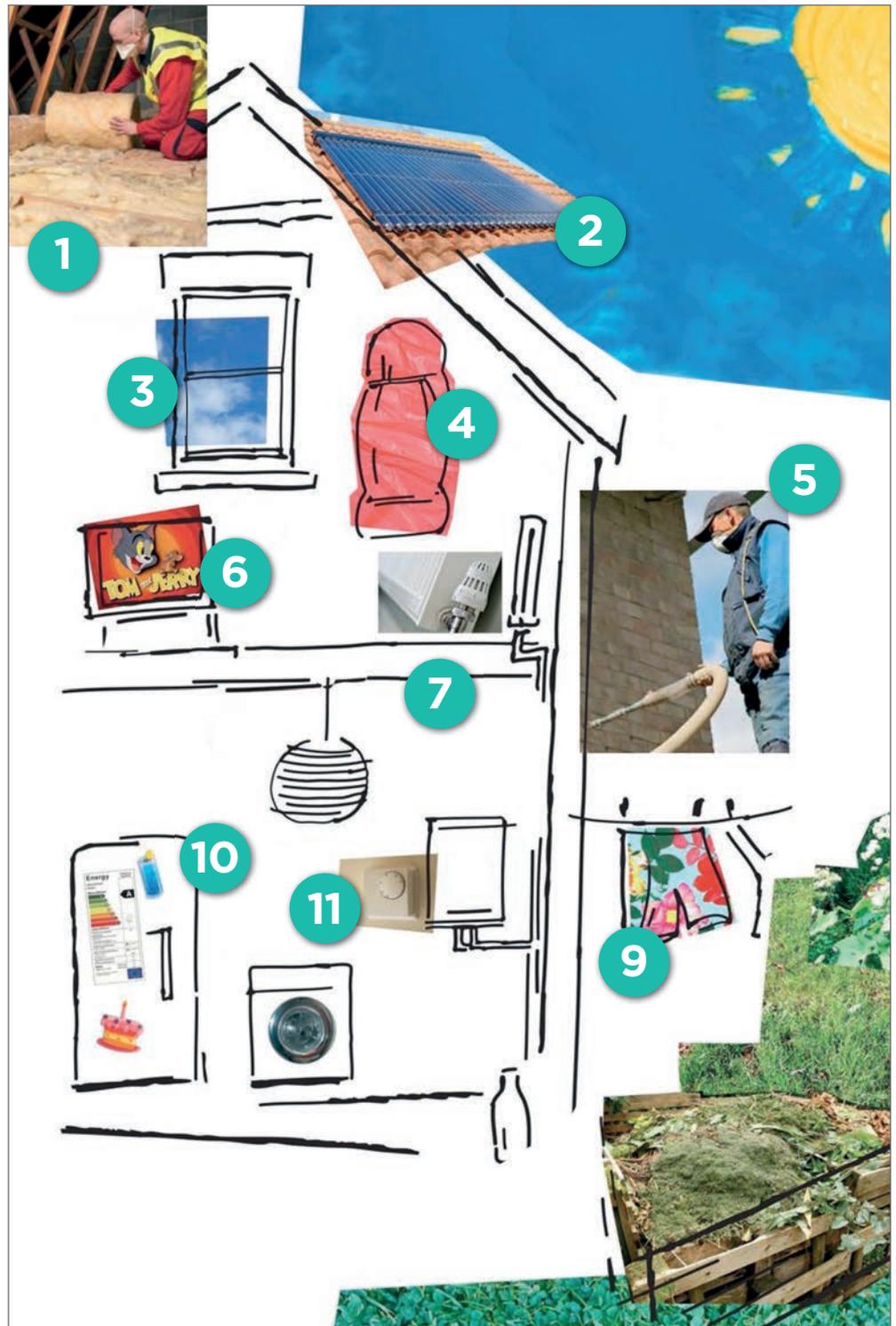


How can I be more energy efficient at home?

1 Loft insulation
A well insulated loft keeps the heat in - like wearing a warm coat on a freezing cold day. Your loft should have 270mm of insulation (about 12 inches), any less, and your expensively bought heat will leak out, costing you money and making your home colder.

2 Solar panel
The sun can pre-heat your water or generate electricity. Renewable energy isn't right for every home, but can be a money saver and cut carbon.

3 Draught-proofed windows
Double glazing could knock around £140 a year off your heating bills, although it is expensive and may not be worth it in every case. 'Secondary glazing' is where a second layer of glass or clear plastic is fitted inside an existing window frame behind the existing pane of window glass; it is cheaper to install but not so effective.



4 Insulated hot water tank

Most hot water tanks fitted in the last 20 years will have been 'factory insulated' and are probably okay in terms of insulation. If your hot water tank is either uninsulated or has a badly fitting old lagging jacket then you should definitely replace it. New jackets are cheap and you'll save money quickly.

5 Cavity wall insulation

If your home has cavity walls, they should be insulated. This will save you around £160 a year on your fuel bills and make your home more snug. There are also ways to insulate solid walls, but it is more expensive.

6 TV not standing-by

Don't leave your TV, computers or other equipment on standby - switch off at the plug. And remember not to leave laptops and mobile phones on charge unnecessarily.

7 Radiator controls

Thermostatic radiator valves allow you to have different temperatures in different rooms, and to turn off the heating in rooms that aren't used. They'll reduce your heating bill and save you money.

8 Low-energy light bulbs

Five low-energy light bulbs use about the same amount of electricity as just one ordinary bulb, so they can shave a lot off your electricity bill. What's more, they last up to 10 times longer, saving up to £45 over each bulb's lifetime.

9 Wise washing

If possible, fill up your washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher; one full load uses less energy than two half loads. Give your tumble drier a rest and dry your laundry the Mediterranean way. The sun and wind will do the job for free!

10 A-rated fridge (and other appliances)

If you're replacing your fridge, freezer, washing machine, dishwasher or kettle, look for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo. A-rated appliances will save a lot of money. Your fridge is on all day, every day, so you want it to run as efficiently as possible.

11 Heating controls

Heating controls allow you to choose when the heating is on, how warm it is, and where you want the warmth. They will also make sure that your boiler is only turned on when it needs to be. They can save you around 17% of your heating bill.



Why is energy efficiency important?

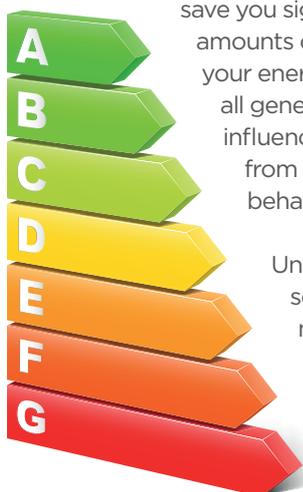
Energy is a particularly important issue. Use more than you can afford and you may be threatened with disconnection. Ration the use of energy and you may put yourself and your family at an increased of a cold-related illness or stress associated with living in a cold home.¹

Evidence shows that rural households are twice as likely as their urban counterparts to struggle to afford to heat their homes due to lower than average incomes, less energy efficient housing and lack of access to cheaper fuel supplies. Historically, rural areas have also benefited less from energy efficiency schemes and other services as it is often less economically viable for service providers to deliver services to more dispersed or remote communities. Also

those in most need are often more difficult to identify and engage.²

Instigating simple changes to your behaviour can also save you significant amounts of money on your energy bills and all generations can influence and benefit from wiser energy use behaviours.

Unfortunately some households may struggle to change their energy consuming behaviour.



This might be because they consider it too big an issue to tackle alone or because they don't have the money or inclination to instigate change, or simply because they don't know how. Volunteers in the community can often be best placed to help their neighbours and the wider community tackle energy efficiency. These volunteers are sometimes called Energy Champions who can help households to address these issues and in doing so help to bring affordable warmth, lower carbon emissions and promote more social inclusion in rural areas.



What is an Energy Champion?

An Energy Champion is someone who has the knowledge and skills to help others in their communities to use energy in the most socially conscious and environmentally friendly way. In short, someone who can enable others to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, save money on their energy supplies and potentially save carbon.

An Energy Champion is not necessarily an energy expert. But they are equipped with basic knowledge that can help them to identify needs and promote the availability of energy efficiency and other related services

to households. They are not expected to be energy experts - rather they are equipped to be able to identify needs, promote simple energy messages and be able to refer householders on to sources of professional advice and assistance as required. This is particularly relevant in rural areas as rural properties are very varied and may comprise mixed construction types, be using different forms of heating and contain different types of householders who may require more tailored advice that only specialists can provide. In addition, where feasible it is recommended that champions have access to mentors with

professional energy awareness qualifications to provide an additional level of assistance when progressing activities in the community.

A successful network of Energy Champions will be able to assist people with a variety of needs and aspirations. Remember that those who need help most may well not be the people who put their hand up to ask for it, or who come forward to volunteer. Extra efforts should be made to engage or at least communicate with those potentially less able to request assistance and/or whose needs may not be easily identifiable.

¹ You can read more about the health impacts of living in a cold home in the Affordable Warmth Topic sheet.

² Centre for Sustainable Energy, Quantifying Rural Fuel Poverty, August 2008

Government policy

Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations (ECO)

The Government has pioneered the Green Deal to encourage households to become more energy efficient and save money on their energy bills.

The Green Deal is aimed at households who want to improve their property but can't afford the upfront costs. The scheme lets households pay for some or all of the improvements over time through their electricity bills. Repayments will be no more than what a typical household should save in energy costs.

The Government has developed the Green Deal to encourage households to become energy efficient and has placed an obligation on energy providers to help the most vulnerable households take up energy

efficiency measures to tackle fuel poverty.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation on the 'Big 6' energy providers to deliver measures to low income households, vulnerable customers and homeowners living in older properties. £1.3 billion is available every year for energy efficiency improvements. There are three obligations under the ECO.

- Carbon Saving Community Obligation**
 This provides insulation measures to households in specified areas of low income. It also makes sure that 15% of each supplier's obligation



is used to upgrade more hard-to-reach low-income households in rural areas.

- Carbon Saving Obligation**
 This covers the installation of measures such as solid wall and hard-to-treat cavity wall insulation which ordinarily can't be financed solely through Green Deal.
- Affordable Warmth Obligation**
 This provides heating and insulation measures to consumers living in private tenure properties that receive particular means-tested benefits. See information box below.

Call the Energy Saving Advice Service (England, Scotland and Wales) on 0300 123 1234 or visit www.gov.uk/greendeal



Help from your energy supplier: the Energy Company Obligation

Households maybe able to get help from energy saving improvements to their homes if they are on certain benefits and own or privately rent their homes.

Households may get all or part of the cost of:

- Loft or cavity wall insulation
- Boiler repairs or replacements

Eligibility

You must own your property or rent it privately and have the owner's permission to do the work.

You must receive one of the following benefits:

- Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (and your income is £15,860 or less)
- Working Tax Credit (and your income is £15,860 or less) – plus one of the extra conditions below
- Income Support – plus one of the extra conditions below
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance – plus one of the extra conditions below
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance – plus the support or work related element, or one of the extra conditions below.

Extra conditions

For certain benefits, one of the following must also apply:

- You're responsible for a child under 16 (or under 20 if they're in education or training)
- You get Disabled Child Premium
- You get Disability Premium
- You get Pensioner Premium
- You're 60 or over (only if you get Working Tax Credit)

Contact the Energy Saving Advice Service to find out what help you can get – 0300 123 1234

Case study 1: Rural Energy Champions

An NEA initiative sponsored by the Department of Energy and Climate Change

Recognising that energy champions are a great way of disseminating information and encouraging action around fuel poverty and energy, DECC supported NEA to develop an initiative to do just that. In 2011-12 NEA worked with local partners in five areas to recruit 47 members of the public to become energy champions. Champions were recruited through local newsletter articles and community events.

Champions were trained to offer basic advice to local people in community settings (rather than to people in their homes – to avoid potential security issues and the need for Criminal Records Bureau checks). Champions were also provided with a simple information and signposting resource to help them provide basic energy advice and to prompt referral on to available energy efficiency and other services. All champions were also asked to keep a simple record of their activities for reporting purposes.

“There’s excellent work being done – I am pleased to be able to play a part in it.”

All the champions benefited from an increased awareness of fuel poverty and affordable warmth issues as a result of the initiative. To exemplify this, prior to the training the volunteers reported their knowledge to be mainly either “poor” (15 volunteers), or “fair” (17 volunteers). Post awareness training, their knowledge had increased to “good” (28 volunteers)

or “very good” (11 volunteers). Similarly, their knowledge of solutions to fuel poverty markedly improved too; before the training 14 said their knowledge was poor, 6 good and 2 very good. After the training 0 said their knowledge was poor, 24 said it was “good” and 13 said “very good”. In the example above the fact that the knowledge of the champions had increased was excellent; and thereafter this allowed the champions to apply their learning to provision of advice.

Of the training, one participant said: “There’s excellent work being done – I am pleased to be able to play a part in it.” This reflects well the enthusiasm among some people to become energy champions. However, maintaining this enthusiasm should be a key consideration for any energy champion initiative.

Participation levels in this NEA programme were lower than initially expected. Working with existing local service providers was key in helping to raising the profile of the initiative and encouraging people to participate. It is worth noting that you may initially receive many more expressions of interest from local people keen to become energy champions than who subsequently undertake training. Therefore it is crucially important that potential champions are kept motivated throughout the process to maintain interest.

In addition, the fact that champions have been trained doesn’t necessarily mean that they will go on to be active participants.



In the NEA initiative the range of households engaged by champions ranged between 0 and 120 households depending on the individual champion. The champion that reached 120 households did so by holding village events and working with the local authority to undertake thermal imaging of properties in the area. Another assisted their local authority with a mail-out of promotional information to 1,800 households. Interestingly, a further champion used social media including Facebook to promote the availability of free insulation to their networks. These examples reflect the diverse and creative ways that champions can employ to promote information to the public.

On being asked why their involvement was so extensive, one champion replied: “It is the volunteers...who have the relationship and consequently the trust of folk who could well be entitled to some help to keep warm during winter. They are far more likely to be successful in getting take up of any entitlements available...rather than strangers, or others, coming in to make a brief one-time presentation and then leave some leaflets.”



Case study 2: CORE: Calor off-gas rural energy champions' initiative

NEA, with support from Calor Gas Ltd, developed an energy champions' initiative in 2011-12 which sought to empower rural households without mains gas to achieve warmer, healthier and more energy efficient homes. NEA worked to recruit frontline professionals as champions who had direct access to individuals (in either the home or in community settings) and provided them with basic awareness training to help them to understand how to identify households at risk of living in a cold home; to promote 'top tips' on how to achieve affordable warmth; and to signpost householders to services that could provide energy, income and money management and debt advice as well as access to insulation and heating schemes.

Energy champions received basic awareness resources to help promote messages to households and to help signposting to services. All

The key to the initiative was that champions' were not expected to be energy experts or to be intrusive with householders, rather they were tasked with promoting pre-determined messages (the 'top tips') to anyone they engaged on a daily basis.



champions benefited from low-level support from mentors with recognised energy advice qualifications to provide more tailored support and advice on issues that arose during delivery of the initiative.

The key to the initiative was that champions were not expected to be energy experts or to be intrusive with householders, rather they were tasked with promoting pre-determined messages (the 'top tips') to anyone they engaged on a daily basis. This approach can work equally as well for any community-led energy champions' initiative as champions can be tasked with promoting key messages to local people in community settings that have a broad appeal (e.g. a 'something for everyone' approach).



Case study 3: Working with mothers as energy champions



The idea of energy champions is not a new one, though its popularity is growing and the concept can be applied in a variety of different settings and for different target audiences. In 2003 NEA was involved in an initiative which targeted mothers. Much of the recruitment and activity was focused on children's centres and some of the activities included both mothers and their children.

The initiative not only helped to raise public awareness of energy efficiency and services but also had broader outcomes.

Recruitment of volunteers was initially more difficult than expected – and reflects

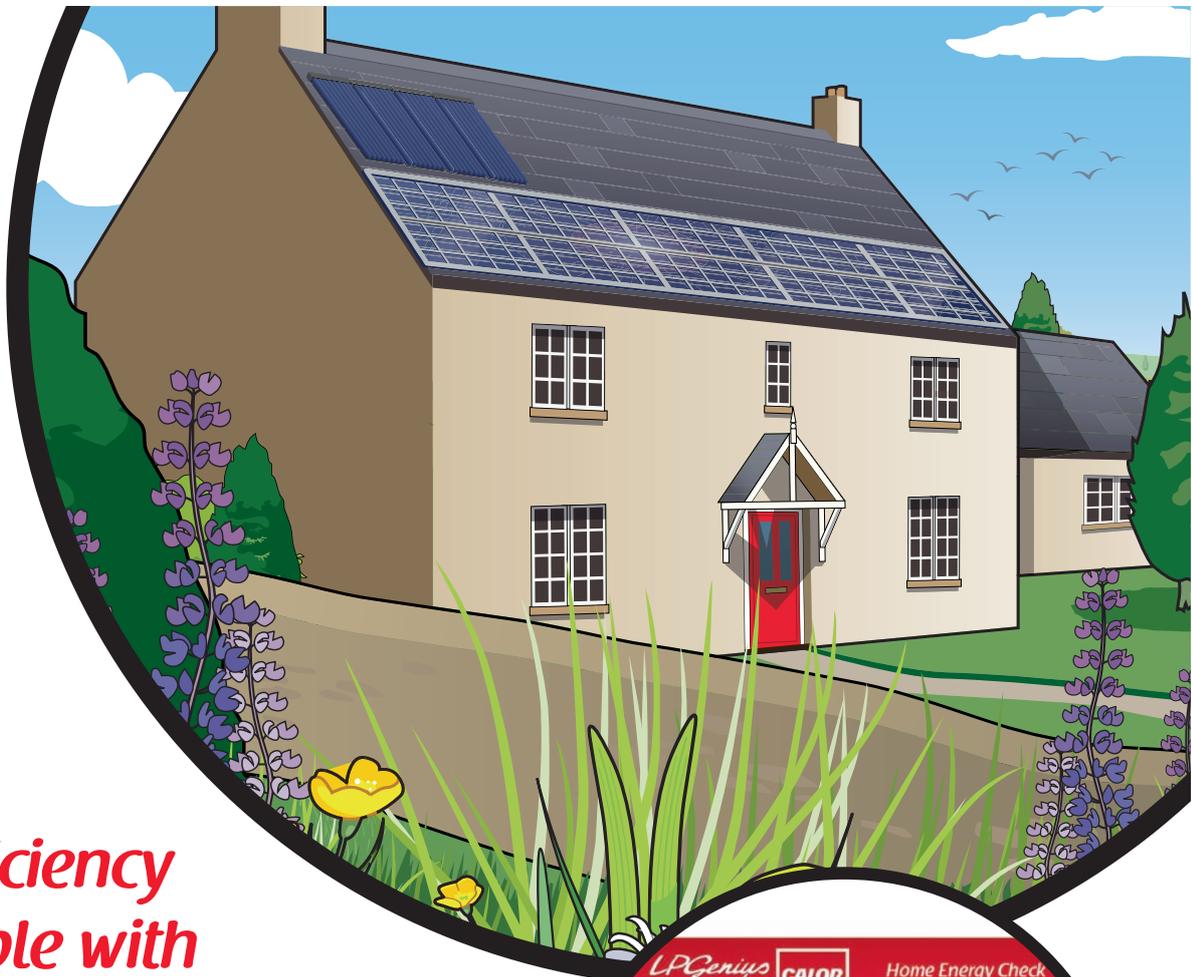
that in developing an energy champions' initiative you have to consider the needs of your target group and competing pressures and priorities they may have. Despite this, NEA recruited a variety of enthusiastic champions. All champions were given energy awareness training and resources to help them use advice sheets with others and to record their activities. Crucially, they were also incentivised with high street vouchers to acknowledge the value of their commitment as champions.

Mothers of different generations participated in the initiative and these women supported each other through the training and then in delivering their own community-based awareness

raising events. The level of support required from the NEA mentor was significant and this was a key lesson learned for future initiatives. For example, events and transport were largely organised by the NEA mentor, and the role of the champions was merely to attend events and discuss energy issues with the public.

The initiative not only helped to raise public awareness of energy efficiency and services but also had broader outcomes. In particular, the confidence of the younger women grew significantly as a result of their involvement. Furthermore, as well as sharing her knowledge on energy efficiency with others in their own local area, one champion went on to engage more generally in the children's centre and other community based activities.

THE INITIATIVE
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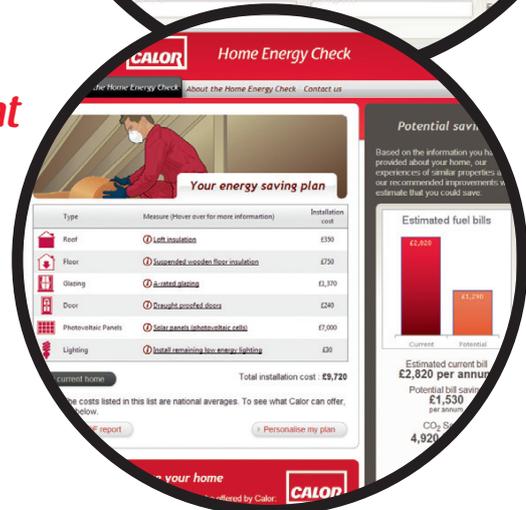
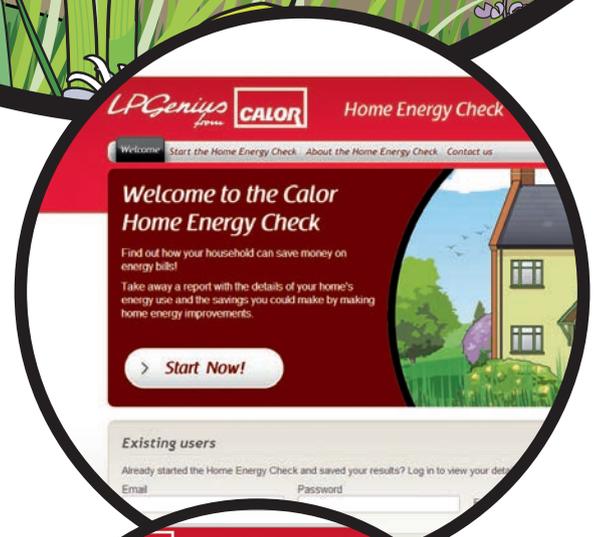


Energy efficiency made simple with Calor's Home Energy Check

Whether you're looking at home improvements, want to cut carbon, or are simply interested in reducing your energy bills, Calor's Home Energy Check is the place to start. Our online tool, powered by the Energy Saving Trust, can help you plan energy efficiency improvements specifically tailored to your home.

Discover how you can save money on your energy bills and become more energy efficient

1. Visit hec.calor.co.uk
2. Answer some simple questions about your home, lifestyle and energy preferences
3. We'll provide you with a free energy efficiency report for your home and suggest improvements to help you save energy and money!



Find out how much you can save today at hec.calor.co.uk



The Calor Home Energy Check is a unique tool backed by the expertise of the Energy Saving Trust. Results are indicative of potential savings based on your answers and some common assumptions. Actual savings will depend on many factors.

Further information and support

Information and help is available on energy efficiency.

Good places to start:

The ACRE Network

ACRE members are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities.

ACRE members can help you to develop a Community Plan for your area. Using ACRE's national Community Led Planning Toolkit, they can guide you through all aspects of the process, from recruiting volunteers, researching local

facts and information, using the most appropriate consultation techniques and brokering the involvement of different stakeholders to help deliver the actions you propose.

Please visit the ACRE website for more information, including contact details of your nearest ACRE member:

[www.acre.org.uk/our-work/
community-led-planning](http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning)

- **Local authorities**

Your local authority may have an energy offer or someone with responsibility for energy, fuel poverty/affordable warmth or climate change/sustainability issues. They may be located in the private sector housing, environmental health, community development, sustainable development and/or health and wellbeing departments

- **Energy agencies**

Many areas have established agencies undertaking energy related initiatives on a not-for-profit basis – ask your local authority for guidance or look online

- **Energy Saving Trust**

This web and telephone based organisation can give assistance on insulation and renewable energy. See www.energysavingtrust.org.uk or contact the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234 (local rates apply)

- **Health services**

You may wish to engage frontline health practitioners in your initiative. Look in your local phonebook or online at NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk for guidance on services available via Primary Care Trusts

- **Council for Voluntary Service**

Your local CVS may be able to advise on community initiatives operating in the area – you may be able to link up. See the phonebook for contact details

- **Energy companies**

Energy companies offer a range of services for customers and non-customers alike including access to energy efficiency schemes, priority services for vulnerable households, energy advice and so on. You may wish to promote or signpost these services as part of your initiative so check services online or contact suppliers direct – see the phone book for contact details

National Energy Action (NEA)

National Energy Action is the foremost energy efficiency and fuel poverty organisation in England. NEA has been campaigning to alleviate fuel poverty for over 30 years. With expertise in developing affordable warmth and renewable energy initiatives,

NEA offers a range of information, training, policy and practical services to members and others.

See NEA's website: www.nea.org.uk or contact NEA on 0191 261 5677.

Acknowledgements

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Who we are

Action with Communities in Rural England is the national umbrella body for the 38 charitable local development agencies who make up the ACRE Network.

Our vision is to champion vibrant, sustainable, inclusive and diverse rural communities by working in partnership with our members.

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Advice and support is available on projects relating to housing; Neighbourhood and Community-Led Planning; transport, facilities and services; fuel poverty and energy generation; broadband; and community assets, such as village halls.

For more information, or to find out how to contact your local ACRE member, please visit our website at www.acre.org.uk



The Network

- employs approximately 1,000 staff with a variety of specialist skills
- engages in 1,300 different partnerships, including working with 58 different higher-tier local authorities
- has over 12,000 fee-paying members and
- reaches 40,000 grass roots contacts and organisations in the 11,000 rural communities across England

Our members have years of experience in finding innovative solutions to the challenges facing rural communities.

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