

Training Professionals and Communities in Retrofit Advice

Upskilling people working professionally and in the community to ensure better outcomes for retrofit

How it works

Retrofit is a complex subject requiring significant skills and expertise. Professionals from the construction, planning and energy retrofit fields, as well as community-based services, all bring valuable knowledge from their field of expertise. But to give truly appropriate advice, it's necessary to develop a holistic understanding of household needs and retrofit measures, alongside special consideration of retrofit in traditional buildings, which make up 17% of England's housing stock.

Accredited training is available through formally registered providers, and is legally required for key roles working on PAS 2035 projects. If your project supports retrofit funded by grants such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), it's essential to meet these standards. Accreditation also gives assurance to households on any retrofit project that work is being delivered competently, and for traditional buildings there is a specific Level 3 qualification to support appropriate advice (see Resources section).

Unaccredited training can be a great starting point for roles that don't require advanced knowledge. Our LEAD projects have created free online webinar courses and other resources suitable for continuing professional development (CPD) or communities to ensure advice given in any context is informed and appropriate.

Case studies

All six LEAD projects had accredited staff involved in delivery. Unaccredited training was also delivered directly by two projects: **Green Heritage Homes LEAD** has created a listed building retrofit webinar and a series of short videos on measures in traditional buildings, while **Green Open Homes West LEAD** has developed Retrofit Basics – online webinars suited to introducing community volunteers to delivering retrofit advice. Webinar recordings are freely available online.



What you'll need

- A clear target audience and understanding of their retrofit training needs (in relation to their role and current knowledge)
- Clarity on whether training must be accredited (e.g. if working to PAS standards)
- For professionals, a commitment from senior managers to support integration of better retrofit into practice, including allowing adequate time for training
- For communities, relationships with groups running (or aspiring to run) local retrofit projects
- If using accredited training, access to funding and a training partner
- If using unaccredited free training, identifying the most suitable online courses or webinars for trainee needs

Why it works

Households access retrofit advice through many sources, including local councils, buildings professionals, advice organisations and friends, family and neighbours ([Brown et al, 2025](#); [Historic England, 2022](#)). It's important that advice promotes good practice, but there are still common myths about retrofit. Training volunteers involved in community-based retrofit advice (such as Green Open Homes) can help challenge these myths.

For professionals, common misconceptions are around planning and retrofitting traditional buildings. Historic building professionals rarely engage in retrofit and most lack confidence to do so ([Historic England, 2024](#)). Retrofit Assessors working with traditional buildings need relevant qualifications and training to ensure advice supports both good retrofit practice and compliance with heritage restrictions when suggesting works needing planning permission. Conservation Officers with retrofit knowledge are more able to recognise good and bad practice in proposals, and can be proactive in sharing information with households about what's possible within restrictions.

Top tips

- ✓ Training is a good element to include in retrofit advice projects as standard, regardless of any requirements – this helps reduce misconceptions and avoids accidental promotion of malpractice, especially in traditional buildings as these need a different approach to generic retrofit advice
- ✓ Professionals may not prioritise training if the topic isn't core to their role and accreditation isn't required, so senior advocates for training can help; unaccredited training can also provide valuable CPD
- ✓ Splitting professional training into smaller chunks, such as part-days, can make it more accessible, and delivery in the evenings (online or in an accessible location) can improve participation by communities
- ✓ Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings is highly recommended for anyone working with traditional buildings in a conservation, construction, repairs or retrofit role, and supports PAS 2035 compliance

Resources

- Energy Efficient Listed Buildings webinar training (15 May 2024) by BWCE and BathNES: [Part 1](#) (length: 48:32) and [Part 2](#) (length: 47:39) available on BWCE's YouTube channel
- [Retrofit Basics online course](#) (3 x units, each under an hour long) is freely available on CSE's YouTube channel
- Other relevant LEAD Toolkit contents (see [South West Net Zero Hub](#)): **Green Heritage Homes LEAD** (project summary), **Green Open Homes West LEAD** (project summary)
- SWNZH LEAD Webinar Series: [Innovations in domestic retrofit advice - Retrofit, Planning and Historic Housing](#) 22 Oct 2024 (see also [full slides](#))
- [ABBE](#) or [NOCN](#) Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings meets PAS35 and PAS2038 for Traditional & Protected Buildings in accordance with [BS 7913](#)
- Built heritage training centres cited by LEAD partners include [The Tywi Centre](#) and [Carrington Lime](#)



About LEAD

LEAD is managed by South West Net Zero Hub and funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The programme is trialling innovative approaches to retrofit advice for hard-to-reach groups and hard-to-treat homes. Find out more [here](#).

Publication date: March 2025